

Film Review: Javier Bardem Takes a Journey to an End in ‘Biutiful’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 28, 2011 - 7:58am

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CHICAGO – In the midst of life’s journey, what may seem like a long time suddenly can become short, what seems like the routine suddenly becomes desperate. The theme of these changes and the effect on a dying soul is explored in “Biutiful.”



The film is directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, best known for “Babel” and “Amores Perros,” and continues with his exploration of happenstance and chance encounters, this time fueled by a man who literally feels his life ebbing away.

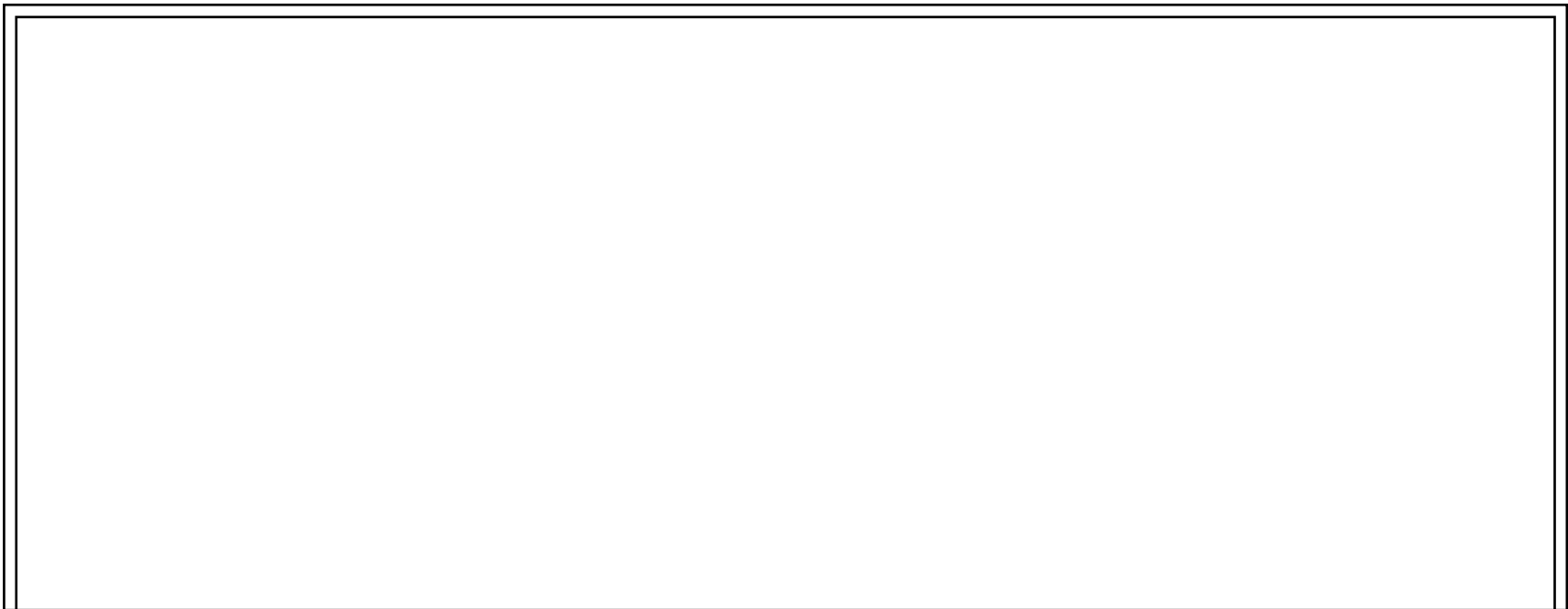
Javier Bardem is Uxbal, a shady character on the streets of Barcelona, Spain, who acts as a facilitator for black market immigration labor. He is raising two children on his own, after separating from his wife Marambra (Maricel Álvarez) due to her addiction problems. Despite copious sums of cash, Uxbal prefers a more modest existence, mostly because his Barcelona is one of the shadows and squalor, areas not frequented by tourists.

He finds out that he is dying, a rapidly spreading cancer. The revelation allows him to assess all areas of his life, and to find a caregiver for his children. He even takes in Ige (Diaryatou Daff), the wife of an African colleague who has been gunned down in a round of immigration raids. He is attempting to make amends, even finding space heaters for a dank labor camp hidden in one of the sweatshops in Barcelona.

Part of his plan involves the reconciliation with Marambra, in hopes of her taking the children once he is gone. But that goes awry as the childish woman has no concept of child-rearing, and it is actually Ige who stands by his side throughout the crisis. When a horrible accident occurs at the sweatshop, all of Uxbal’s sorrows seem to rise to the surface. He needs a sense of redemption from a life he feels guilty about, before he dies.

“Biutiful” continues its limited release in Chicago on January 28th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Javier Bardem, Hanaa Bouchaib, Maricel Álvarez and Diaryatou Daff. Screenplay by Alejandro González Iñárritu, Armando Bo and Nicolás Giacobone, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu. Rated “R”

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Everyday People: Javier Bardem as Uxbal and Hanaa Bouchaib as Daughter Ana in 'Biutiful'

Photo credit: Jose Haro for Focus Features



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