

## Blu-Ray Review: Brilliant ‘Broadcast News’ Joins Criterion Collection

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 1, 2011 - 10:30am

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CHICAGO – James L. Brooks “Broadcast News” should serve as a stark reminder of how far the romantic comedy has fallen. Believe it or not, young readers, there was a time, not that long ago, when rom-coms weren’t mostly horrendous dreck. There have even been a few nominated for Oscars, including even Best Picture. One such work is the brilliant “Broadcast News,” an amazingly insightful piece of cinema that displays multiple talents at the peak of their careers. When it was announced that “Broadcast News” would join The Criterion Collection, an entire generation of critics, myself included, jumped with glee.



Blu-Ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

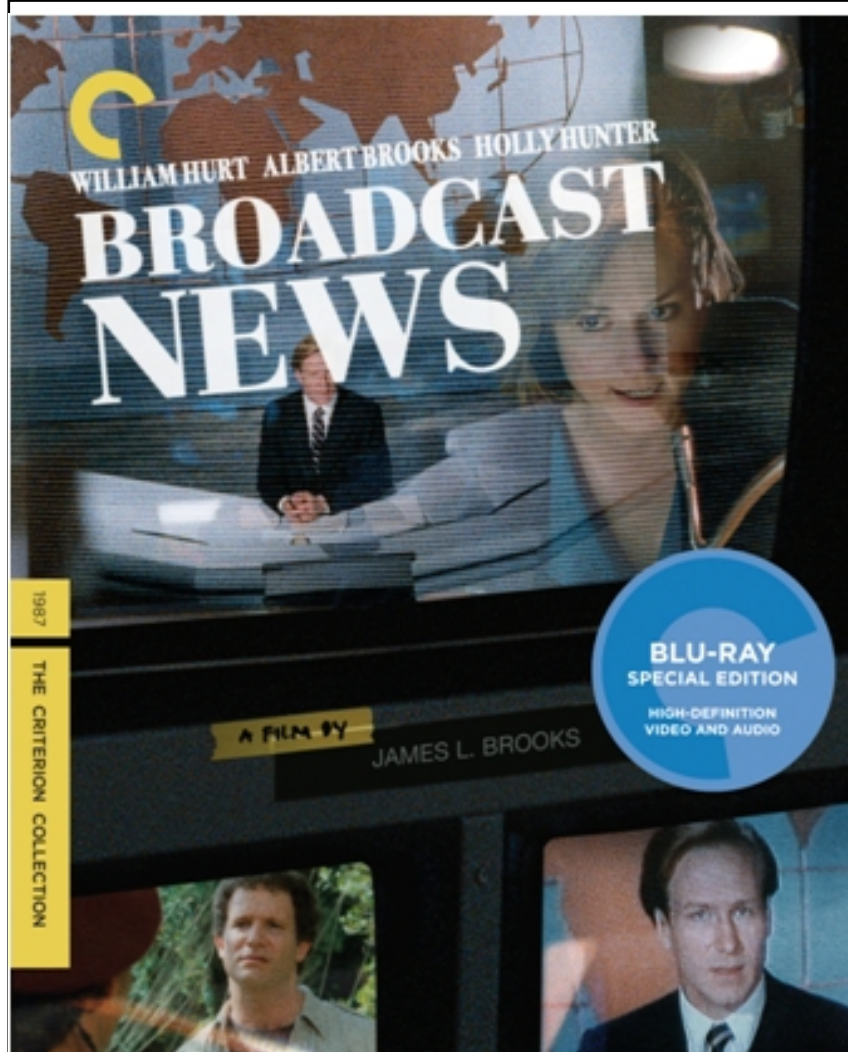
Written and directed by a man who knew TV as well as anyone, having created hits like “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” “Lou Grant,” and “Taxi,” while working on countless others, “Broadcast News” perfectly captures the changing tide in televised journalism in the mid-’80s. A young producer (Holly Hunter, in her breakthrough role and arguably never better, except perhaps “The Piano”) falls for what she hates about the new era, a hotshot, handsome reporter (William Hurt). A love triangle ensues when her talented best friend (Albert Brooks), an old-fashioned reporter who may not be pretty enough for TV but gets the story, enters the romantic picture.



Broadcast News was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on January 25th, 2011

*Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection*

“Broadcast News” is funny, smart, insightful, and incredibly well-made. Hunter, Hurt, and Brooks were perfectly cast, a trick that Brooks had employed well in the past. He always seemed to know when to pick the right actor for the right part, as he did in “Terms of Endearment” to Oscar glory just a few years earlier. “Broadcast News” was nominated for seven Oscars (sadly, winning nothing against the wave of “The Last Emperor”). Unlike a VAST majority of the films that came out in 1987, it’s an even better film now. It has aged beautifully.



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*Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection*

Watching it again, made this critic nostalgic for the careers of Hurt, Hunter, and both Brooks — none are working nearly as much as I'd like or approaching this level of brilliance. It also made me nostalgic for a time when romantic dramedies felt made for adults instead of teenage girls. The cinema of 2011 needs a lot of things but perhaps nothing more than another James L. Brooks. Maybe this edition could inspire one.

A Criterion Collection edition of "Broadcast News" exists mostly to remind people of the greatness of the film and offer some cool special features. In other words, the remastered HD picture is nice but not really a necessity for a film like this. The movie looks like it should, probably better than most 1987 comedies due to Criterion's dedicated remastering, but it's not the kind of thing you're going to use to show off your TV.

The special features are the real draw, including a new commentary by the director and editor Richard Marks. It's mostly Brooks' show and he's a great commentator. He also offers audio over an alternate ending and deleted scenes. The new documentary, "James L. Brooks — A Singular Voice" focuses on Brooks career through television and film. Running around 35 minutes, it's a nice tribute to a great talent.

It would have been nice for the three stars to return to offer some retrospective look at the work or the director in some form. I'd love to hear from even one of them, if not all three, and it's a shame that couldn't be organized. The material that features them is pretty slight, including archival interviews from the set. Finally, the release includes the original trailer and a piece on Susan Zirinsky, the producer of "48 Hours" that allegedly inspired the Holly Hunter character.

I know it sounds like something an old critic says but they just don't make movies like "Broadcast News" any more. With the exception of perhaps the Judd Apatow-verse, the romantic comedy is in seriously dire straits. They don't get seven Oscar nominations any more, that's for sure. I think there are multiple reasons for the death of the rom-com and won't get into it here, but the main one is that writing this kind of material is much harder than it looks. There are only a few writers of James L. Brooks caliber out there. Pick up the Criterion edition of "Broadcast News" and see for yourself.

#### Special Features:

- o New Audio Commentary Featuring Brooks and Marks
- o James L. Brooks - A Singular Voice
- o Alternate Ending and Deleted Scenes, With Commentary by Brooks
- o New Video Interview With Veteran CBS News Producer Susan Zirinsky
- o Featurette Containing On-Set Footage and Interviews With Brooks, Hunter, and Actor Albert Brooks
- o Original Theatrical Trailer
- o Film Booklet Featuring Essay by Film Critic Carrie Rickey

*"Broadcast News" stars William Hurt, Holly Hunter, Albert Brooks, Jack Nicholson, and Joan Cusack. It was written and directed by James L. Brooks. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD by The Criterion Collection on January 25th, 2011. It is rated R and runs 132 minutes.*





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