

Blu-Ray Review: Natalie Portman, Ashton Kutcher in Decent ‘No Strings Attached’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 10, 2011 - 1:40pm

- [Ashton Kutcher](#) [2]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [Cary Elwes](#) [5]
- [Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges](#) [6]
- [Greta Gerwig](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Ivan Reitman](#) [9]
- [Jake Johnson](#) [10]
- [Kevin Kline](#) [11]
- [Mindy Kaling](#) [12]
- [Natalie Portman](#) [13]
- [No Strings Attached](#) [14]
- [Olivia Thirlby](#) [15]
- [Paramount](#) [16]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [17]

CHICAGO – I have become nearly exhausted by writing reviews about the modern decline of the romantic comedy, the genre most in need of a complete overhaul. Most of them nowadays are horrendous. So, no one is more surprised than this critic to say that “No Strings Attached” with Ashton Kutcher & Natalie Portman, now available on Blu-ray and DVD, isn’t bad. It’s no genre classic, but it’s an enjoyable comedy on a Saturday night.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

It helps to have an Oscar winner in your lead role, a remarkably talented supporting cast, and an accomplished director (Ivan Reitman) guiding the way. Reitman notes in his dry commentary that he was interested in the idea that “When Harry Met Sally...” asked if men and women could be friends without complications and times have changed in the two-decades-plus since to the point that “No Strings Attached” now asks if men and women be f**k buddies without complications.



No Strings Attached was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on May 10, 2011

Photo credit: Paramount Home Video

The man and woman in “No Strings Attached” are Adam (Kutcher) and Emma (Portman), teenage acquaintances who keep encountering each other as they grow up and eventually become sexual partners without attachment. Clearly inspired by the Judd Apatow-verse of

raunchy comedies with a heart, Reitman (“Stripes,” “Ghost Busters”) tries to join that club with a script by Elizabeth Meriwether that tries to play with themes of romance but doesn’t forget a dirty joke now and then. Also, like the Apatow movies, “No Strings Attached” is loaded with supporting characters, including Greta Gerwig (“Greenberg”) & Mindy Kaling (“The Office”) on Emma’s side of friends and Chris ‘Ludacris’ Bridges (“Fast Five”) & Jake Johnson on Adam’s. Olivia Thirlby, Cary Elwes, Lake Bell, and Kevin Kline also appear in a supporting cast that’s ludicrously crowded.



No Strings Attached was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on May 10, 2011

Photo credit: Paramount Home Video

In fact, it’s too crowded. “No Strings Attached” gets cluttered with characters, twists, attempts at romance, subplots, etc., and it kind of loses the focus it should have had on its two leads, who actually have more chemistry than one might expect. Kutcher is likable and Portman is typically fantastic. Reitman says he “*loves communities in films like this*” on the commentary track but he loses focus too often for it to work here. Bell is funny (which is something I’ve never said before) but over-used. Kline doesn’t fit. And it doesn’t help that Emma’s “side” is so much more interesting than Adam’s. Every time Gerwig and Kaling popped up, I wanted to just follow them.

More damagingly, there’s an occasional whiff of desperation to be cool by being dirty. Characters will throw in lines about sex or handjobs that no one would EVER say in that situation and it punctures the realism that Kutcher and Portman surprisingly achieve. The fact that they do ultimately make the film worth renting is a pleasant surprise. I never thought I’d say that I wanted LESS Kevin Kline and more Ashton Kutcher. Every movie has the potential to surprise a movie critic — even romantic comedies.

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o Sex Friends: Getting Together
- o Inside the Sassy Halls of Secret High
- o Modern Love: The Do’s and Don’ts
- o Commentary by Director Ivan Reitman

“No Strings Attached” stars Ashton Kutcher, Natalie Portman, Greta Gerwig, Mindy Kaling, Chris ‘Ludacris’ Bridges, Jake Johnson, Olivia Thirlby, Cary Elwes, Lake Bell, and Kevin Kline. It was written by Elizabeth Meriwether and directed by Ivan Reitman. It is rated R and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 10th, 2011.



[18]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 16 2024 - 3:55am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/14272/blu-ray-review-natalie-portman-ashton-kutcher-in-decent-no-strings-attached>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ashton-kutcher>
[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/cary-elwes>
[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chris-ludacris-bridges>
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/greta-gerwig>
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ivan-reitman>
[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jake-johnson>
[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/kevin-kline>
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mindy-kaling>
[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/natalie-portman>
[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/no-strings-attached>
[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/olivia-thirlby>
[16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/paramount>
[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
[18] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
[19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>