

## Blu-Ray Review: Strong Cast Makes For Fun Trip to ‘Cedar Rapids’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 28, 2011 - 10:48am

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CHICAGO – Millions more people have seen his work in the two “The Hangover” films but Ed Helms’ best performance to date is actually in the recently-released-on-Blu-ray “Cedar Rapids,” a clever and enjoyable slice of midwestern comedy that co-stars John C. Reilly, Anne Heche, Sigourney Weaver, and more. The excellent cast elevates a somewhat-inconsistent screenplay, making this fun film worth the trip.

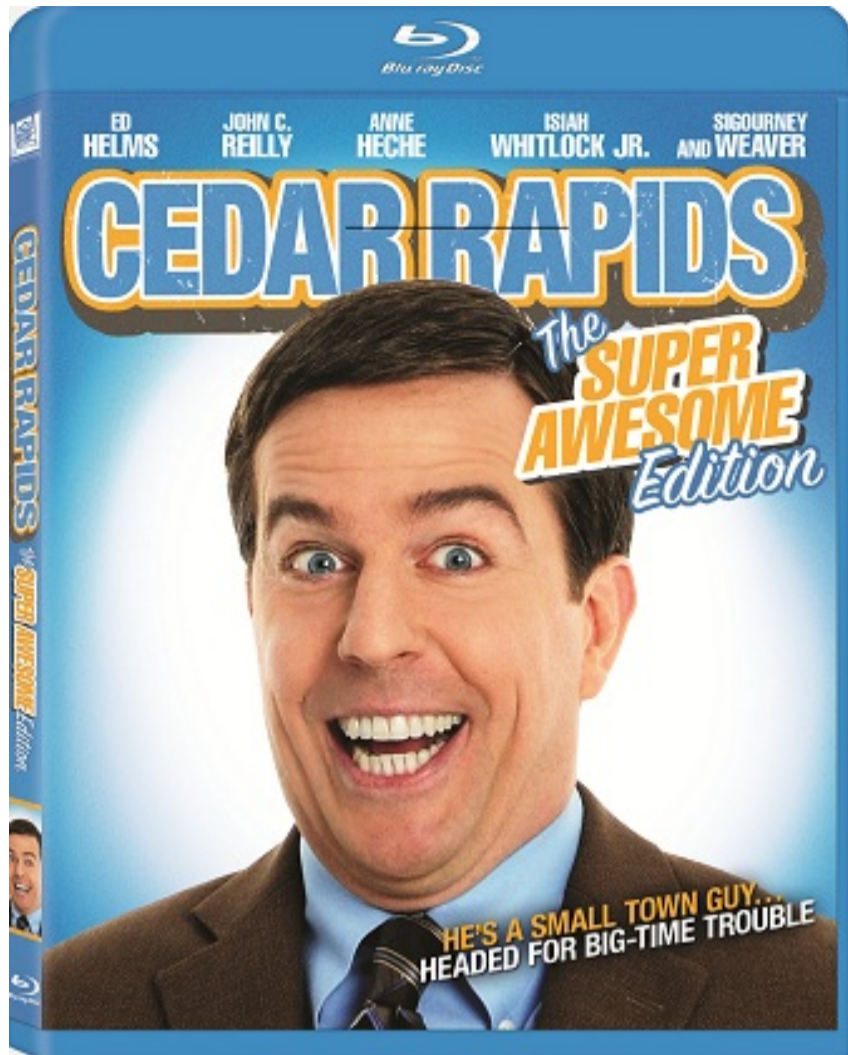


Helms plays a variation on the stuck-up characters he’s been known for in “The Hangover” and “The Office” but with a bit more heart and naivete. Tim Lippe is a sweet guy but almost uncomfortably so. He doesn’t drink, doesn’t swear, doesn’t tell dirty jokes, and certainly doesn’t sleep around or do drugs. All of that will change in one crazy trip to “Cedar Rapids.” Playing a Midwestern business trip to Iowa as if it is a crazy innocence-busting weekend in Tijuana was an undeniably clever idea. Poor Tim has been sheltered. That’s about to change. And in Cedar Rapids of all places.



Cedar Rapids was released on Blu-ray and DVD on June 21st, 2011  
Photo credit: Fox

Tim’s virginal worldview is shattered by the people he befriends at a hotel during a very important conference for his insurance company. The man who has never really broken a single rule is about to go on quite a bender after meeting the most obnoxious fellow salesman (John C. Reilly) at the convention and beginning a flirtatious relationship with the only other Midwesterner in the workout room (Anne Heche). What starts with a few awkwardly-sipped drinks eventually graduates to skinny-dipping, karaoke, and even pretty heavy drug use. Tim Lippe is on a bender before he even knows it.



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Photo credit: Fox

The idea that work pressure and time away from the sanctuary of home could make a mild-mannered man lose his way is ripe for comedic material especially with a cast this remarkably talented. Not only are Helms, Reilly, and Heche as good here as they've been in some time but the entire supporting cast is effective, including Arrested Development's Alia Shawkat, Isiah Whitlock Jr., Stephen Root, Kurtwood Smith, Mike O'Malley, Sigourney Weaver, and a cameo from Rob Corddry. It's one of the strongest ensembles of 2011. Director Miguel Arteta has a gift with casting, as proven by his ensemble work on "Youth in Revolt," "Six Feet Under," "The Good Girl," and "Freaks and Geeks."

The script for "Cedar Rapids" has a tendency to meander. The film feels much longer than its brief 87-minute running time and that's due to a herky-jerky pacing that doesn't quite fit the material. We don't get much of a sense of time passing, which leads to something that has hampered Arteta's film work — an episodic feeling. These adventures of Tim Lippe don't tie together quite as neatly as I wished they would.

But it's a minor complaint. Don't worry about the slightly-underwritten screenplay. Just focus on the performers. They're great.

#### Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o Gag Reel
- o Convention Connection
- o Mike O'Malley - Urban Clogger
- o Tweaking In The USA
- o Wedding Belles - Crashing A Lesbian Wedding
- o Top Notch Commercial
- o Fox Movie Channel Presents: Direct Effect with Miguel Arteta
- o Fox Movie Channel Presents: Writer's Draft with Phil Johnston
- o BD Live Enabled
- o Pocket Blu
- o Digital Copy Of Feature Film

*"Cedar Rapids" stars Ed Helms, John C. Reilly, Anne Heche, Isiah Whitlock Jr., Stephen Root, Kurtwood Smith, Alia Shawkat, Mike O'Malley, and Sigourney Weaver. It was written by Phil Johnston and directed by Miguel Arteta. It is rated R and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on June 21st, 2011.*



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