

## Blu-ray Review: Brendan Gleeson, Don Cheadle in Clever ‘The Guard’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 12, 2012 - 5:01pm

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CHICAGO – Rarely has a film been more successfully driven by two great actors than John Michael McDonagh’s “The Guard.” The sheer incredible personalities of Brendan Gleeson and Don Cheadle give two of the most enjoyable performances of the year, bringing to life a clever, unapologetic script from their writer, who is also making a strong directorial debut. “The Guard” fell relatively flat at the box office but it’s the kind of quality comedy that will almost certainly find a big audience on the home market and was recently released on Blu-ray and DVD.



Blu-ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Sergeant Gerry Boyle (Gleeson) opens the film by stealing drugs from the scene of a car accident, taking some acid, and staring at the water. Don’t worry. This is not an Irish “Bad Lieutenant,” even if it might have been in someone else’s hands. Boyle is an anti-hero. The guy who doesn’t care what other people think of him but is probably the smartest guy in most room’s he’s in. Oh, he’s a racist jerk too with no social tact whatsoever, but he may be the last good cop in Ireland.

Boyle and his new partner Aidan (Rory Keenan) soon stumble upon a brutal murder scene, not a commonality in their sleepy Irish burg. It’s not long before Aidan is missing and Boyle has discovered an impending major drug deal involving a trio of true maniacs (Liam Cunningham, Mark Strong, David Wilmot). The deal is so major that the F.B.I. has tracked it across the pond and sent Agent Wendell Everett (Don Cheadle). Virtually on their own (as Irish cops are apparently very easy to bribe), Everett and Boyle become an odd dynamic duo.



The Guard

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

The overarching plot of “The Guard” isn’t nearly as important as the details. This is not a movie with notable twists and turns like your average American buddy cop thriller (there’s very little in the way of actual suspense until the very end), and so the joy is in the way it unfolds more than in traditional action movie clichés. Boyle may be an obnoxious jerk who does drugs and sleeps with whores but he’s also portrayed as the only pure man left in his half of Ireland. He speaks and often acts before he thinks but he often has the best of intentions (even if those intentions are often to satisfy his own needs). And when he’s partnered with the more-traditional Everett, what could have been a clichéd oil-and-water buddy movie in a lesser writer’s hands feels organic and genuine.



The Guard was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 3, 2012

Photo credit: Sony

The script is strong but the main reason that “The Guard” avoids cliché is that McDonagh was lucky enough to attach two of the best working actors to his project. Yes, he consciously avoids the traps of his buddy genre in his writing but Cheadle and Gleeson have a way of making anything feel fresh and real. There are elements of McDonagh’s script that are relatively routine but Cheadle and especially Gleeson make even them feel new. They’re both fantastic here.

McDonagh’s film isn’t overly visually strong (in fact, his eye for composition may be its greatest weakness), but Sony still produces another stellar HD transfer for their film. Sony is simply doing Blu-ray as well as anyone right now in terms of video and audio. There are a few other studios (Fox, Lionsgate, more) who could give them a call and get some pointers.

Sony also regularly treats even their smallest films like blockbusters, giving them commentaries, deleted scenes, etc. Such is the case with “The Guard” as all three of the key players — Cheadle, Gleeson, & McDonagh — took the time for an audio track.

#### Special Features:

- o Outtakes
- o Deleted & Extended Scenes
- o The Second Death Short Film
- o Commentary with Director John Michael McDonagh and Actors Don Cheadle & Brendan Gleeson
- o BD Live Enabled

*“The Guard” stars Brendan Gleeson, Don Cheadle, Liam Cunningham, David Wilmot, Rory Keenan, Mark Strong, and Fionnula Flanagan. It was written and directed by John Michael McDonagh. The film is rated R and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 3rd, 2012.*



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