

Blu-ray Review: IFC's 'Brake,' 'ATM' Confine Audience in Glass Trap

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on July 30, 2012 - 8:58am

- [ATM](#) [2]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [3]
- [Brake](#) [4]
- [David Brooks](#) [5]
- [Gabe Torres](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [IFC Films](#) [8]
- [Josh Peck](#) [9]
- [Matt Fagerholm](#) [10]
- [Stephen Dorff](#) [11]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [12]

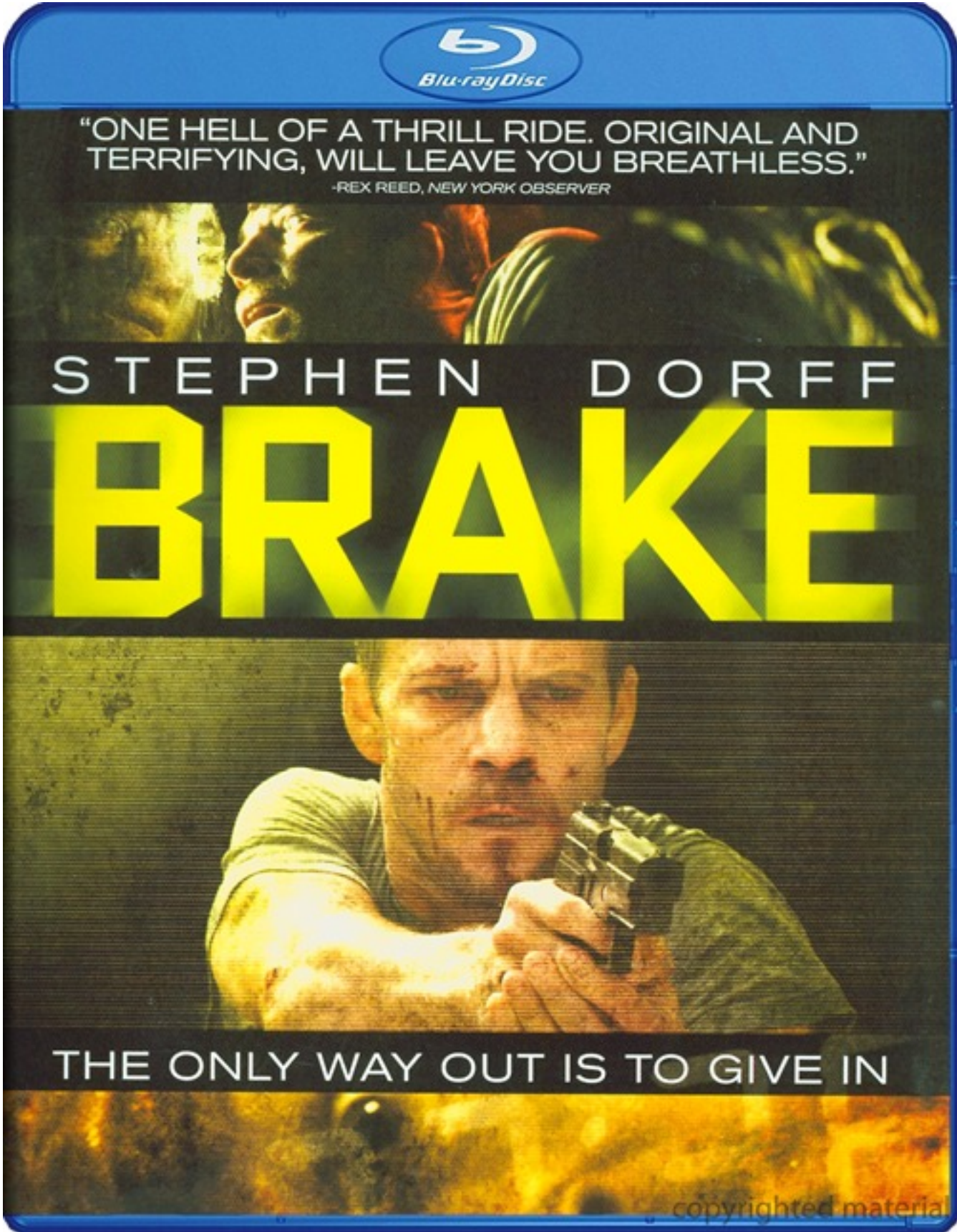
CHICAGO – The art of the confinement thriller is tricky to perfect. If it's done right, the audience will feel trapped within the suffocating confines of a prison, while their heart rate will move at the same pace as that of the onscreen victim. Yet since the world of the film is limited to such a small space, one misstep will cause the entire experience to crumble in an instant.

Rodrigo Cortés's "Buried" trapped Ryan Reynolds in a coffin for the entirety of its running time, and found multiple ways of opening up the world of its story without ever once cutting to an exterior shot. It played on the audience's imagination much like the 1943 radio drama, "Sorry, Wrong Number," while giving Reynolds the opportunity to deliver his best work to date. It wasn't a masterpiece, per se, but it sure was an ingenious and effective thriller.



Blu-ray Rating: **2.0/5.0**

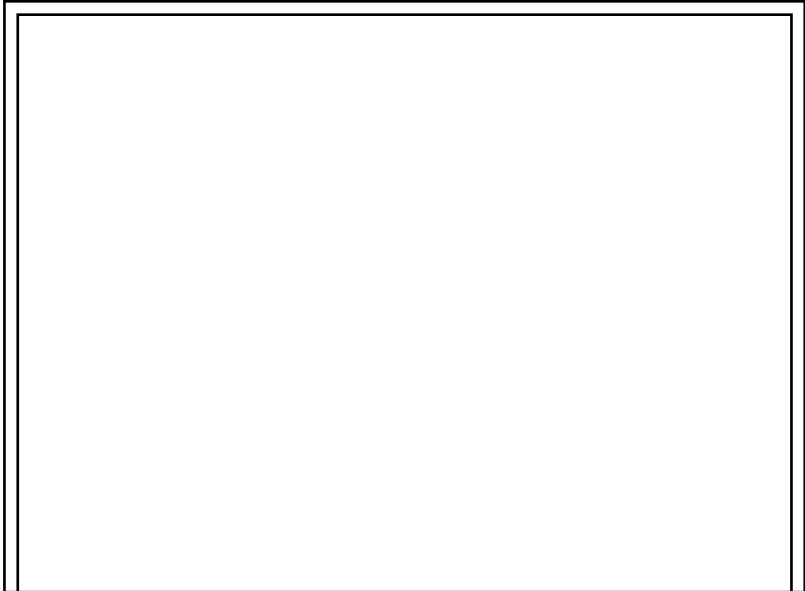
After sitting through IFC's latest double bill of underwhelming thrillers, I feel even more admiration for Cortés's film. It had the integrity to keep its plot grounded (in more ways than one), while creating characters that were actually worth caring about. Reynolds's American contractor ends up paying the price for his country's misdeeds merely because he "fits the profile," much like the countless anonymous prisoners who received similar treatment at Guantanamo Bay. His suffering resonated on a very real level, and the film worked both as an electrifying thriller and a potent social commentary. Gabe Torres's "Brake" is built on a remarkably similar conceit: it takes place within the glass box that has entrapped secret service agent Jeremy (Stephen Dorff) in the trunk of a car. His torturers relentlessly interrogate him about the secret bunker used to house the president in a time of crisis, while noises from the outside world suggest that terrorists are attacking the capital. Like Reynolds, Dorff apparently took this role to showcase his untapped strengths as an actor, and his mounting rage coupled with stubborn patriotism is quite convincing. As the voices of his endangered loved ones plead for him to give the terrorists what they want, Jeremy preserves his oath. The glass walls of his prison give cinematographer James Mathers more choices of angles than Eduard Grau had in "Buried," and though the script lacks the psychological complexity of Cortés's film, it still delivers the goods—until the last act.

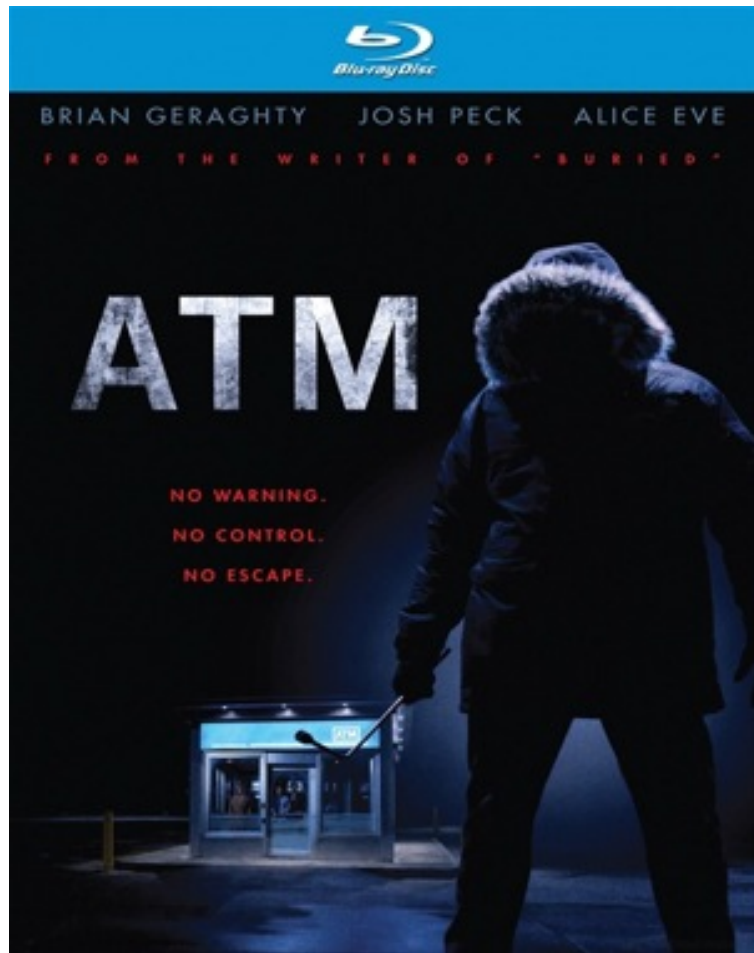


Brake was released on Blu-ray and DVD on July 24, 2012.
Photo credit: IFC Films

The final ten minutes of “Brake” are so incredibly awful that they ruin everything that came before them. It begins with an initial twist that destroys any shred of claustrophobic atmosphere, and then slaps on an even more insulting twist before mercifully cutting to black. These scenes expose the film for what it is: a simple-minded machine designed to provide an assortment of knee-jerk jolts. If the plot is so ridiculous that it defies the logic of its own contrived world, nothing will resonate with viewers beyond the final frame, except for feelings of frustration and betrayal.

Another film in serious need of revisions is David Brooks’s “ATM,” which was written, oddly enough, by “Buried” screenwriter Chris Sparling. It traps three characters within the glass walls of an ATM vestibule, while a killer stands patiently outside in the shadows. The killer must’ve gained an immunity to subzero temperatures, since he has no problem waiting around all night in the frigid cold for his prey to be driven mad. He’s one of those silent Michael Myers types whose master plans are so diabolical and airtight that they are impossible to escape—or care about in the slightest.





ATM was released on Blu-ray and DVD on July 31, 2012.

Photo credit: IFC Films

As the central everyman, Brian Geraghty sports such a consistently mopey expression that it's unclear how he's managed to seduce the starry-eyed blonde played by Alice Eve. Both actors emote efficiently, though Eve never once appears to be in the process of freezing. The most compelling actor in the slim cast is Josh Peck, the wonderful star of "Mean Creek" and "The Wackness," who hasn't been offered a decent role in years. It's sad to watch Peck straining to bring depth and nuance to a character so thoroughly obnoxious. Peck's character motivates Geraghty to ask out Eve, and then proceeds to sabotage their evening. It's his whining and moaning that results in the trio's ill-fated visit to the ATM, though Geraghty makes the dumb decision to park his car exceedingly far away, just enough for their easiest escape route to be out of reach. The characters are so stupid, and the plot twists are so obvious, that despite some undeniably tense moments, "ATM" suffers the same fate as "Brake." It leaves the viewer completely cold.

"Brake" and "ATM" are presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 1.78:1 aspect ratio), accompanied by English and Spanish subtitles. Of the two discs, "Brake" offers more extras, including a director's commentary where Torres admits that the film's final twist was dreamed up during a conversation he had with Dorff and executive producer Ryan Ross. They felt the film needed a final kick—not realizing that such a kick would ultimately dismantle everything they had so carefully built. He does offer an interesting analysis of the bee attack sequence by highlighting the real bees (flying behind an additional layer of plexiglass), freeze-dried bees (attached to Dorff's face), and paper bees blown through the box. In a 23-minute featurette, Torres refers to the film as "'Die Hard' in the trunk of a car," while ignoring the Willis franchise's sense of fun that this picture clearly lacks. Composer Brian Tyler utilized car parts to create his moody soundscapes, which are further showcased in an extended music video. "ATM" offers little more than a shallow 7-minute featurette comprised of mutual back-slapping. It also has one of the rare unrated director's cuts that's actually shorter than the theatrical version (by five minutes). Brooks's cut axes the unnecessary intro that sets up the film's lame final scene. In fact, the theatrical version's end credit roll lasts a whopping ten minutes, since it keeps cutting back to more footage of the scene, which merely accentuates the ludicrousness of the plot.

'Brake' is released by IFC Films and stars Stephen Dorff. It was written by Timothy Mannion and directed by Gabe Torres. It was released on July 24, 2012. It is rated R.

'ATM' is released by IFC Films and stars Brian Geraghty, Alice Eve and Josh Peck. It was written by Chris Sparling and directed by David Brooks. It was released on July 31, 2012. The theatrical cut is rated R.



[13]

By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]

Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

matt@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 17 2024 - 8:15pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/19358/blu-ray-review-ifc-s-brake-and-atm-confine-audience-in-glass-trap>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/mattmovieman>

- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/atm>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brake>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/david-brooks>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gabe-torres>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ifc-films>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/josh-peck>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matt-fagerholm>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stephen-dorff>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [13] <mailto:matt@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#MATT>