

Blu-ray Review: Terry Gilliam's 'Brazil' Remains One of '80s Best

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 19, 2012 - 3:15pm

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brazil](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Ian Holm](#) [6]
- [Jonathan Pryce](#) [7]
- [Robert De Niro](#) [8]
- [Terry Gilliam](#) [9]
- [The Criterion Collection](#) [10]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [11]

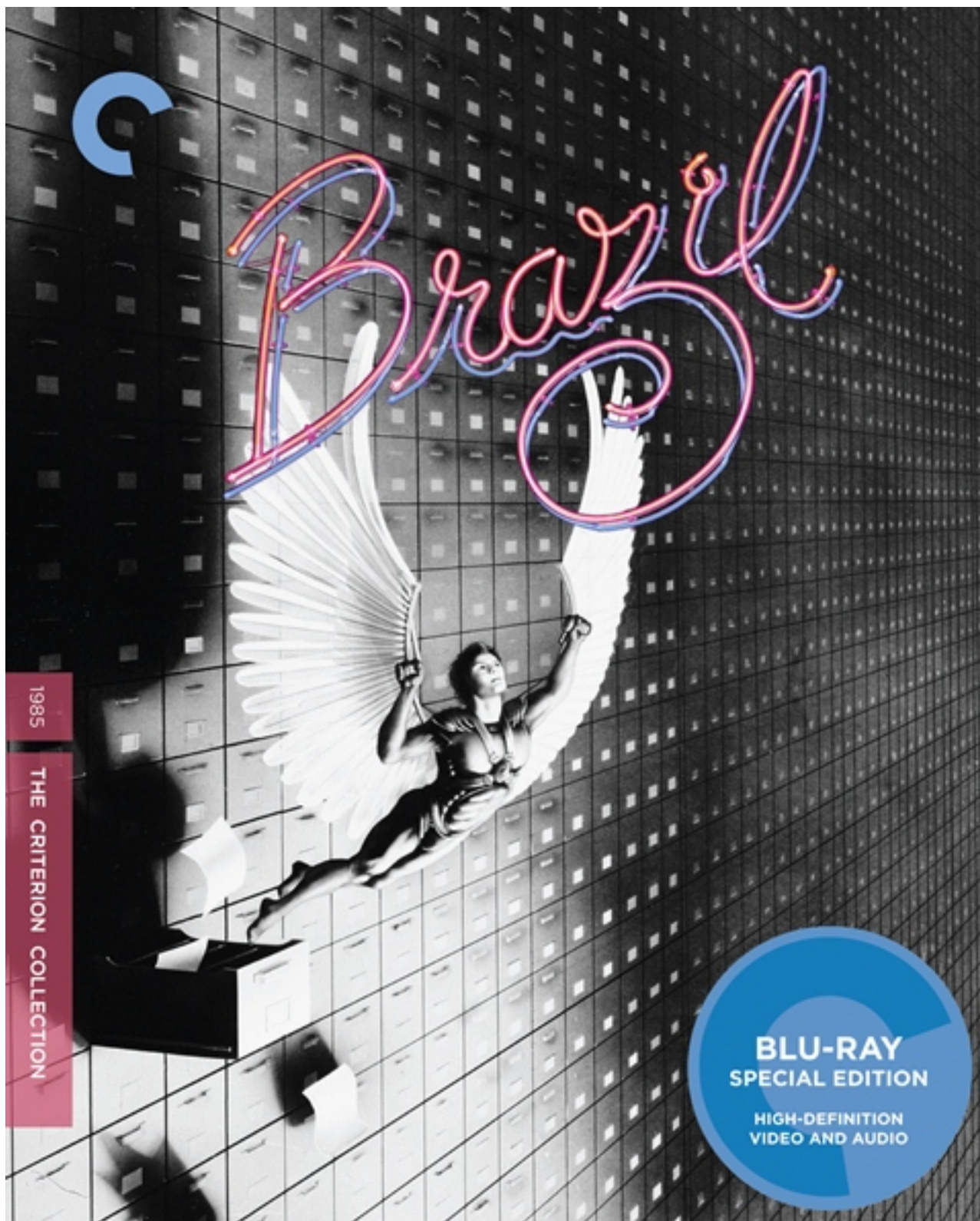
CHICAGO – “Brazil” is more than a movie. The story behind the film’s tumultuous production and release became nearly as essential to its history and arguably more so than the film itself. The special feature on the new Criterion release, “The Battle of Brazil” is a fascinating examination of expectation, ego, and commerce vs. art that all movie fans must see. And, of course, the movie is an undeniable sci-fi masterpiece.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

When “Brazil,” Terry Gilliam’s futuristic satire about bureaucracy, screened for audiences before its release, studio heads called it a disaster. They took it away from Gilliam and mangled it. And then the real fun began. Most of the special features on the Criterion version of “Brazil” center on the drama around its release. They even go so far as to include the “Love Conquers All” version of the movie, the 96-minute cinematic crime (Gilliam’s cut runs 142 minutes) that the studio released with a commentary by “Brazil” expert David Morgan.

When it was first announced that Criterion would begin upgrading their collection movies to Blu-ray while also releasing new ones, my first hope was that they would get to “Brazil” sooner than later. The movie is still a visual marvel, a film that features so much personality and style that it has held up significantly better than most films from 1985. It looks spectacular in restored high-definition, which was approved by Gilliam himself. Nearly thirty years later, Gilliam sat down and watched another version of “Brazil,” this time in HD. I wonder if he thought back on all the drama that got him to this point as his best work was being ready to be appreciated by yet another generation.



Brazil was released on Criterion Blu-ray and DVD on December 4, 2012

Photo credit: Courtesy of The Criterion Collection

Synopsis:

In the dystopian masterpiece Brazil, Jonathan Pryce plays a daydreaming everyman who finds himself caught in the soul-crushing gears of a nightmarish bureaucracy. This cautionary tale by Terry Gilliam, one of the great films of the 1980s, has come to be esteemed alongside anti-totalitarian works by the likes of George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. And in terms of set design, cinematography, music, and effects, Brazil is a nonstop dazzler.



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["Brazil"](#) [12]

Special Features:

- o What Is Brazil?: Rob Hedden's On-Set Documentary
- o Production Notebook
- o Collection Of Interviews And Video Essays
- o The Battle Of Brazil: Documentary About The Film's Contentious Release
- o Booklet Featuring An Essay By Film Critic David Sterritt

"Brazil" stars Jonathan Pryce, Robert De Niro, Katherine Helmond, Ian Holm, Bob Hoskins, Michael Palin, Jim Broadbent, and Kim Greist. It was written and directed by Terry Gilliam. It was released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD on December 4, 2012.

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [14]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [13]



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