

Blu-ray Review: Unsatisfying ‘The Words’ Desperately Needed a Rewrite

Submitted by [mattmoviemann](#) [1] on January 9, 2013 - 10:11am

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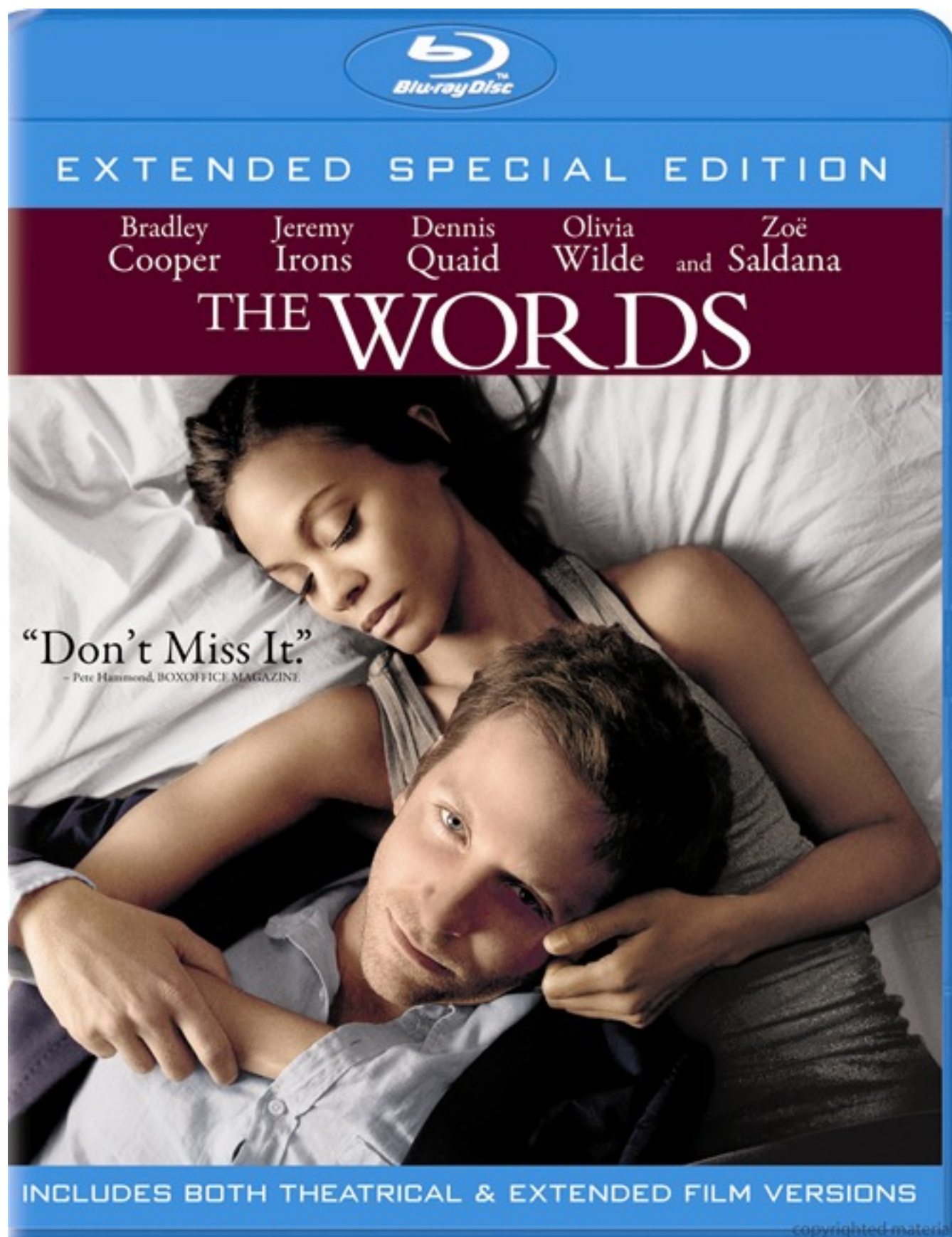
CHICAGO – What sins can a man commit and manage to live with for the rest of his days? Can he enjoy the rewards of unearned praise and adoration? These provocative questions could easily serve as the basis for a compelling thriller, as proven by a multitude of titles including Woody Allen’s “Crimes and Misdemeanors” and “Match Point.”

First-time filmmakers Lee Sternthal and Brian Klugman (nephew of Jack) are skilled at threading these questions into a multi-layered narrative, but have no idea of how to explore them in any meaningful way. Their debut feature, “The Words,” spends the majority of its running time stringing the audience along before abandoning them just when the narrative has started to become interesting. All the goodwill built from a series of intriguing, often well-acted scenes is lost in a single, unforgivably premature cut to black.



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

In light of the enormous critical acclaim he’s received for his funny, poignant turn in David O. Russell’s Oscar hopeful, “Silver Linings Playbook,” Bradley Cooper probably hopes that “The Words” will quickly evaporate from audience’s memories. No matter how much effort Cooper earnestly puts into portraying the role of Rory, a failed writer-turned-plagiarist, he can’t hide the fact that he’s been grossly miscast. The role clearly requires an actor who projects a youthfulness and insecurity that Cooper likely grew out of once he hit puberty. Nevertheless, the most effective scenes occur in the film’s first act, as Rory’s latest unpublished novel receives an unending stream of rejection letters (a struggle that Klugman and Sternthal are undoubtedly familiar with). There’s a painfully frank scene between Rory and his father (J.K. Simmons), who urges him to grow up by “accepting his limitations.” Instead, Rory does the most childish thing possible: he stumbles upon a brilliant manuscript and claims to have written it, thus transforming him into an overnight success. Nearly half the picture has passed before the script finally gets around to revealing its obvious twist, but by that point, the audience is already too detached to care.



The Words was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 24th, 2012.

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Strong supporting work from Jeremy Irons, Zoe Saldana and Ben Barnes does little to sway the viewer's deepening dissatisfaction with the script's needlessly cluttered parallel plot-lines, which serve mainly to obscure the overarching story's fatal lack of substance. The scenes involving Dennis Quaid as an embittered writer (who may or may not be a middle-aged version of Rory) add nothing but confusion and should've been axed entirely, thus relieving the viewer of Quaid's nonstop, utterly excessive narration. In the disc's scant special features, the filmmakers seem to pride themselves on the fact that their movie doesn't wrap up everything in a neat little bow. Yet their film doesn't come to any sort of deliciously ambiguous conclusion. It doesn't come to any conclusion at all, therefore confirming that the filmmakers had nothing to say in the first place.

"The Words" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 1.85:1 aspect ratio) and includes both the theatrical cut and an extended version adding six minutes to the running time. Unfortunately, the new footage doesn't make the film's jarringly unfinished finale any less maddening. In a brief making-of featurette, Cooper reveals his longtime friendship with co-writer/director Klugman, suggesting that it was the star's budding popularity that helped the 11-year project finally make it to the big screen. Consumers who don't own a Blu-ray player can rest assured that they won't be missing anything on this disc. The two Blu-ray exclusive extras promising "in-depth character profiles" each clock in well under two minutes.

'The Words' is released by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment and stars Bradley Cooper, Jeremy Irons, Dennis Quaid, Ben Barnes, Zoe Saldana, Nora Arnezeder, Olivia Wilde and J.K. Simmons. It was written and directed by Brian Klugman and Lee Sternthal. It was released on December 24th, 2012. The theatrical cut is rated PG-13.

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