

Film Review: Ben Affleck Can't Save Limp 'Runner Runner'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 4, 2013 - 9:06am

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CHICAGO – Off shore internet gambling sites, tons of money, glorious glamorous women, parties all the time – how the heck can all of that be dull? The new film “Runner Runner” found a way. Ben Affleck phones it in and Justin Timberlake is name recognition window dressing in this limp drama.



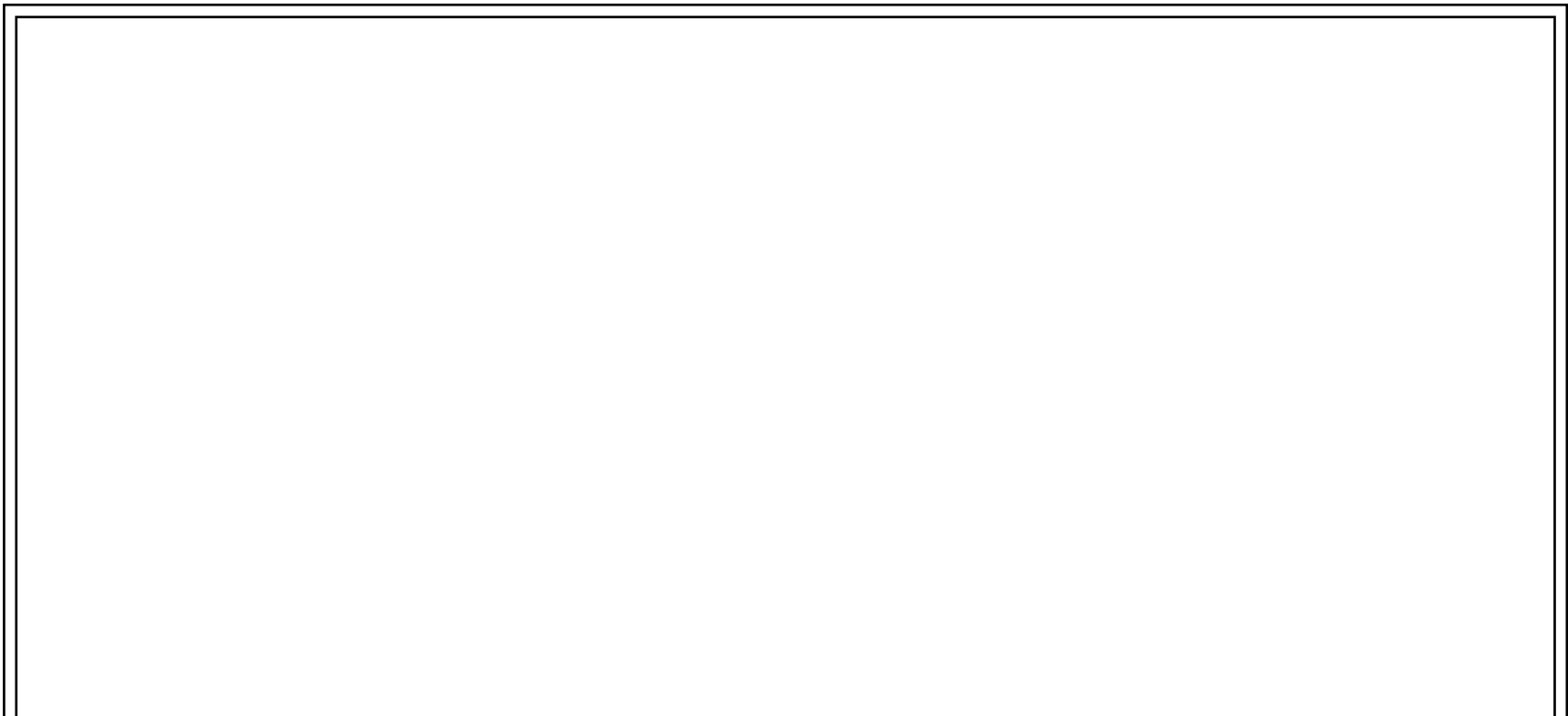
“Runner Runner” – the title is a poker term – is pretty choppy, it may have been cut and re-cut to try to revive any life it had in it. For example, Justin Timberlake moves from exiled Princeton student to landing in Costa Rica in about three scenes. Essentially it takes all of its exciting elements and makes it into a same-old-same-old “good vs. evil” story, as if being a mega-rich internet bazillionaire is inherently evil. Isn't he a job creator? There is nothing within the story to recommend it, except maybe the well-lit close ups of Ben, Justin and hubba-hubba Gamma Artherton.

In a strange high concept, Princeton grad student Richie Furst (Justin Timberlake) gets hauled before the a university Dean and warned to stop leading the high-priced students to internet gambling sites – he actually has a job doing that to pay for tuition. Cut off from that income, he naturally decides to take his entire savings and pay high-stakes internet poker to raise more funds. What, was Atlantic City closed?

After losing the whole nut, Richie figures out that the paradigms within the internet site were cheating him – again, don't you have homework? – and gets a plane ticket to Costa Rica to confront the owner of the internet gambling empire, Ivan Block (Ben Affleck). When challenged with the equations, Block is so impressed by the grad student that he hires him. As Richie gets more entrenched into the business machinations – which includes one of Block's partners and old girlfriend Rebecca (Gamma Arterton) – he finds himself within a web of corruption and FBI criminal investigations.

“Runner Runner” opens everywhere October 4th. Featuring Ben Affleck, Justin Timberlake, Gamma Arterton and Anthony Mackie. Written by Brian Koppelman and David Levien. Directed by Brad Furman. Rated “R”

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Richie (Justin Timberlake) Confronts Ivan (Ben Affleck) in 'Runner Runner'
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox



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