

## Film Review: Quiet Desperation Gets Louder in 'Nebraska'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 21, 2013 - 1:16am

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CHICAGO – Bruce Dern is an actor who has turned in some indelible performances in his over 50 year film career. He saves one of the best for now, as he breathes life into an old man who wants one more time in the sun. So begins a journey with his son, portrayed by Will Forte, in "Nebraska."



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

It is Dern who understands his role, as the man that life has passed by. He's barely holding onto the end of the road, but he desires dignity before that road rises up to meet him. It's a full characterization, and he communicates Bob Nelson's screenplay with more gesture than dialogue. Throw in the stark black and white vision of director Alexander Payne ("The Descendants"), and a unique view of family is realized. The conclusion is a bit precious, and Will Forte does seem overmatched by Dern's character, but "Nebraska" is a reminder of a generation in America that thought every promise was certain, without the harsh realities of old age.

Woody Grant (Bruce Dern) is an aging retired mechanic who receives some good news in the mail. It seems he has won a mail order sweepstakes, a million dollars, and the certificate indicates he can pick up his prize in Lincoln, Nebraska. This of course is sent to millions of people, but Woody is convinced he has won and that he must get to the promised land in Lincoln.

This absolutely devastates his fed-up wife Kate (June Squibb), a crass and vain woman who shrieks when she speaks. Woody's son David (Will Forte) volunteers to drive his father to Nebraska to claim his "prize," after finding him trying to walk there. This will include a stop in the small Nebraska hometown in which Woody grew up and met Kate, and they greet his million dollar news with joy and skepticism, especially from old friend Ed Pegram (Stacy Keach). All roads lead to the nirvana of Lincoln, if Woody can ever get there.

*'Nebraska' continues its nationwide release in Chicago on November 22nd. Featuring Bruce Dern, Will Forte, June Squibb, Bob Odenkirk and Stacy Keach. Screenplay by Bob Nelson. Directed by Alexander Payne. Rated "R"*



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Bruce Dern as Woody Grant in 'Nebraska'  
Photo credit: Paramount Vantage

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