

Blu-Ray Review: 'Burn After Reading' Hilarious Movie, Horrible Blu-Ray

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 22, 2008 - 12:23pm

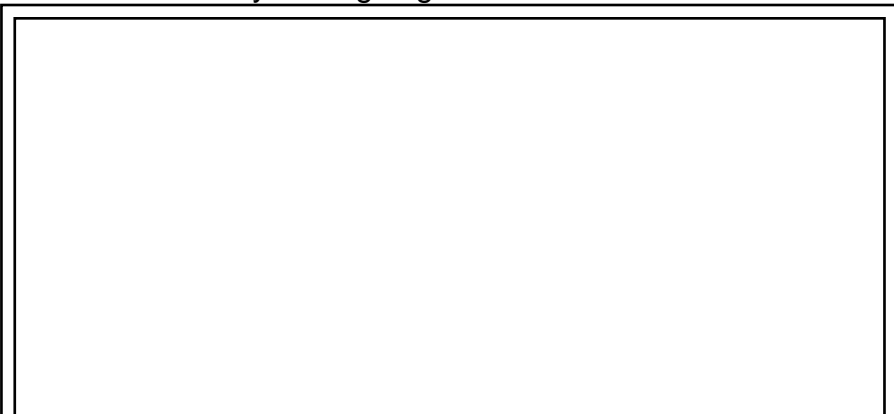
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CHICAGO – It's impossible for a critic to thoroughly defend something he finds funny but fully realizes that a large majority of the audience may not. Sometimes a film just hits your funny bone in right way. "Burn After Reading" does so for me, but may not for audiences without a little bit of a mean streak.

Fitting snugly into the Coen Brothers' resume of slightly-demented comedies, "Burn After Reading" disappointed audiences expecting "No Country For Old Men 2", but like "Raising Arizona", "The Hudsucker Proxy", and "The Big Lebowski", should have an extensive life on the home market.



Every time the Coens have made a "serious" movie, they've followed it with a lark of a comedy. "Arizona" came after "Blood Simple", "Hudsucker" followed "Barton Fink", and "Lebowski" was an odd choice after " Fargo". They've all thrown audiences for a loop. It happened again with "Burn After Reading", a dark, vicious comedy about people who think they understand espionage because they've seen a lot of spy movies. The Coens have often been accused of making fun of their characters and I've usually defended them as laughing *with* their lead. Not this time. They're laughing *at* these morons.





The morons in question include an all-star cast headed by Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Frances McDormand, Tilda Swinton, Richard Jenkins, J.K. Simmons, and John Malkovich. The entire ensemble is clearly having a blast and it's infectious. Some critics were upset at not being able to find the deeper meaning in a story about a disc of government secrets that makes its way into the hands of some stupid fitness experts. Guess what? There is no deeper meaning. That's the point. Just have fun with "Burn After Reading".

Perhaps Universal knows they have an eventual cult hit and held back the special features for an inevitable special edition but that kind of double-dipping is getting really old. Universal has been consistently releasing the most comprehensive and well organized Blu-Rays of the season, so we'll forgive "Burn After Reading" as the exception. Special features? Three lonely featurettes - "Finding the Burn", "DC Insiders Run Amuck", and "Welcome Back, George" - don't really qualify as "special", especially considering they run less than twenty minutes COMBINED.

"Burn After Reading" does include Universal's BD-Live functionality that allows viewers to cut their favorite scenes and send them but this common addition doesn't really qualify as a special feature. It's really just bookmarking with an internet connection.

Technically, "Burn After Reading" looks and sounds great with a 1080p HD Widescreen transfer in its original 1.85:1 aspect ratio and an audio track an English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1. Both the video and audio won't be used to show off new home theaters, but are also never distracting.

Universal clearly intended the Blu-Ray release of "Burn After Reading" to be a rental. If they wanted more purchases, they would have put more effort into the special features. Luckily, the movie itself is funny enough to make the dearth of bonuses easier to overlook.

'Burn After Reading' is released by Universal Home Video and stars Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Frances McDormand, Tilda Swinton, John Malkovich, J.K. Simmons, David Rasche, and Richard Jenkins. It was released on December 21st, 2008.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

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