

## Blu-Ray Review: Clever ‘(500) Days of Summer’ is Smart, Sexy Fun

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 20, 2010 - 12:00pm

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CHICAGO – Marc Webb’s “(500) Days of Summer” became one of the sleeper hits of 2009. Sure, the Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Zooey Deschanel romantic comedy didn’t light the box office on fire like “The Hangover,” but it did crack the top ten and work its way to a remarkable \$32 million domestically on a reported \$8 million budget. That’s a monster arthouse hit.



And it wasn’t just audiences. Critics fell in love with the film as well; The Chicago Film Critics Association nominated Webb for Most Promising Filmmaker and The Hollywood Foreign Press Association picked the film as one of the five choices for Best Picture (Comedy or Musical) with The Independent Spirit Awards picking it as one of the five Best Features of 2009 (the film was also nominated for Best Male Lead and Best Screenplay). Most Oscar pundits expect the screenplay by Scott Neustadter & Michael H. Weber to get a Best Original Screenplay nod in the near future.



(500) Days of Summer was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 22nd, 2009  
*Photo credit: Fox Home Video*

This is all build-up to a Blu-ray and DVD release that I expect will have an enormous following. With this kind of critical and relative box office success, films like “(500) Days of Summer” undeniably have a word of mouth power that always thrives on the home market. Webb’s debut is a clever dissection of not just romance but the very concept that drives the genre of the love story - that we all have that one person out there and we’re simply waiting for the day when we cross their path, birds sing, lightning strikes, and we find true love.



It does not take spoiler warnings to reveal that “(500) Days of Summer” is not a love story. The narrator tells us as much from the very beginning: “This is a story of boy meets girl, but it isn’t a love story.” Even though that statement is undeniably true on the surface, the film says more about love than the entire filmographies of Ashton Kutcher and Matthew McConaughey combined.

The boy in the statement is Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and the girl is, of course, Summer (Zooey Deschanel). In the first scene, they’re breaking up. The rest of the film jumps back and forth between various days of their relationship with a number to let the audience know where we’re at in the tale of Tom and Summer.

The set-up might make “(500) Days of Summer” sound like nothing more than an elaborate trick. Except for a slightly rocky start, as the film seems to struggle a bit finding the right pace, the jumping back and forth works is surprisingly seamless. In one of the best recurring motifs, the film keeps showing us two sides of a similar situation from different eras of the relationship. A laugh may be cute on day 50 and nauseating on day 400.

The daring structural choices are often matched by wonderful visual sequences, including a dance routine to Hall & Oates and a brilliant scene in which Tom’s expectations of what might happen at a party and the reality of what actually did happen are split-screen shown at the same time. Those narrative and directorial risks, along with another spectacular Gordon-Levitt performance, made the film a hit and will make it an even bigger one on Blu-ray.

The Blu-ray release of “(500) Days of Summer” includes a lovely collection of special features highlighted by a commentary with Webb and Gordon-Levitt. Joseph is easily one of the most talented actors of his generation and it’s always great to hear from A-list stars on audio tracks. The featurettes are also surprisingly dense, including “Not a Love Story,” “Bank Dance, Directed by Marc Webb,” “Mean’s Cinemash: Sid and Nancy/(500) Days of Summer,” “Conversations with Zooey and Joseph,” “Music Video: ‘Sweet Disposition’ by the Temper Trap,” and “Filmmaking Specials: Summer @ Sundance, Audition Tapes”. Like most Blu-ray releases, the title also includes a digital copy. Unlike most, I can actually picture people watching this film on their iPod on the way to work. It’s that addictive.

*‘(500) Days of Summer’ is released by Fox Home Video and stars Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Zooey Deschanel, and Clark Gregg. It was written by Scott H. Neustadter & Michael H. Weber and directed by Marc Webb. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 22nd, 2009. It is rated PG-13.*



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