

Blu-ray Review: Steven Soderbergh Delivers Again With Riveting 'Contagion'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 11, 2012 - 4:32pm

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CHICAGO – January 2012 is Steven Soderbergh month. The man's newest film, "Haywire," opens in theaters on January 20th (and we'll have a review up shortly before it opens) while Criterion is upgrading his Oscar-winning "Traffic" to Blu-ray and re-releasing their DVD edition on the 17th of the month (you can, of course, also expect a review of that to run soon). The first wave of the Soderbergh trifecta is the Blu-ray and DVD release of "Contagion," another expertly-made piece of filmmaking from a man who seems to know how to do nothing less.



Blu-ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

"Contagion" was the scariest movie of 2011. There was no haunted house to escape, no creatures living in the basement, no demonic possessions, no aliens — the horror is everywhere. It's on the train, on the bus, in CVS, and standing in line at Starbucks. God bless you if you choose to take a plane or train after watching "Contagion."



Contagion

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

One of the best living directors continues to prove his remarkable versatility by turning his gaze to the what-if scenarios presented by each new health scare. Swine Flu, H1N1, West Nile. Every time that a new disease turns up somewhere in the world, we all ask ourselves those questions – Is this the one? The one that will be more than just a headline? The one that will kill someone I know? The one that will change the

world? "Contagion" features an all-star cast, one of our best directors, and an excellent screenwriter turning those questions into things of realistic fiction. Soderbergh's riveting film, much of which was shot in Chicago, is fictional...for now.



"Contagion" is an ensemble piece, approaching the nightmare scenario from different levels in different locations. Consequently, it's arguably a bit cold of a film that doesn't allow for much character development but it's also a speeding train of a film. There's no time for character when the world is coming to an end. The piece is sometimes reminiscent of an Irwin Allen film in its A-list ensemble and breakneck pace, but it's a lot more serious than "The Towering Inferno." And Stephen Mirrione deserves an Oscar nomination for his editing, which always keeps the viewer engaged and never lost in the potentially sterile and labyrinthine plot.

The entire cast of "Contagion" is great — particularly Matt Damon, Laurence Fishburne, Kate Winslet, and Jennifer Ehle (who really should have been on the Blu-ray cover with the more household names) — but this is a technical, directorial marvel, primarily. It's so confident. From the very beginning, one can sense the fact that they are watching the work of a master — every shot, every angle, every line. Sure, it may be a bit sterile from some viewers but given its subject matter can you blame Soderbergh for wanting to sterilize?

Special Features:

- o The Reality of Contagion
- o The Contagion Detectives
- o Contagion: How a Virus Changes the World
- o BD Live Enabled
- o Ultraviolet Digital Copy
- o DVD Version

"Contagion" stars Matt Damon, Laurence Fishburne, Jude Law, Marion Cotillard, Kate Winslet, Jennifer Ehle, Bryan Cranston, John Hawkes, Sanaa Lathan, Enrico Colantoni, and Gwyneth Paltrow. It was written by Scott Z. Burns and directed by Steven Soderbergh. It is rated PG-13 and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 3rd, 2012.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]
 Content Director
 HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

Source URL (retrieved on Feb 29 2020 - 7:02am):

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