

Up in the Air: Reitman Strikes Again!

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A Review by
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By now, you've heard all the accolades being received by "Up in the Air," the new film from director Jason Reitman (who also wrote/directed "Juno" and more importantly "Thank You for Smoking"—which if you haven't see, you should). Reitman is a screenwriter/filmmaker who's not afraid to take box office gold and go against Hollywood customs. He was nominated for an Oscar for his directing of "Juno" which also was nominated for Best Picture. This year, he will undoubtedly be nominated again for both categories for "Up in the Air."

Ryan Bingham (Clooney's character) is an executive who travels around the county firing people until his company decides to try firing by videoconferencing—and grounds him. But not before one last trip with a relatively new employee, Natalie (portrayed by Anna Kendrick), who proposed the long-distance approach. There are several stories going on in this tale, masterfully orchestrated by Reitman.

Clooney and Vera Farmiga (who plays his love interest Alex) are completely golden together. This is their first time together on the big screen but hopefully not the last. And Kendrick, who has achieved fame via the "Twilight" series in the supporting role of Jessica, is fabulous in this film. Along with Kendrick is another actress we've seen a lot who is proving to be an asset in the supporting role is Melanie Lynskey, who plays Bingham's younger sister in this film. Earlier in the year, she played Matt Damon's wife in the Golden Globe nominated "The Informant." (Most of you might know Melanie as the odd neighbor of Charlie Sheen in the television show, "Two and a Half Men.")

Another great character actor who you will find in this film is J.K. Simmons in a much smaller role than even what he's used to doing. He's best known as Spider-man's boss, J. Jonah Jameson, in that series of films. In this film, Simmons is being fired by Bingham in a scene that was a little Hollywood but still very believable and touching. In the scene, Bingham notes on the resume of Simmons' character that he once took a more than passing interest in French cooking. "How much did they pay you to give up that dream?" Bingham asks. The once angry character settles down and says, "\$24,000 a year." Very moving for anyone who has ever had to sit on either side of that table. As a bit of trivia, Simmons was one of only a few actors used during the "firing" scenes. In most cases the people used had actually been recently laid off and were asked to conjure their emotions of the event for the film (source: IMDb.com).

Go see this film if you're interested in entertainment that has depth and style, but then go rent "Thank You for Smoking." Get to know Jason Reitman.