



THE INFORMANT!

USA | 2009 | 108m | 15

Director: Steven Soderbergh

Screenplay: Scott Z Burns

Cinematography: Peter Andrews

Editing: Stephen Mirrione

Original Music: Marvin Hamlisch

Leading Players: Matt Damon, Lucas Carroll, Eddie Jemison, Rusty Schwimmer

filmnote

Directed by award winning director Steven Soderbergh, best known for *Oceans Eleven* (2001) *Traffic* (2000) and *Oceans Thirteen* (2007), *The Informant!* is a captivating, eccentric dark comedy/thriller.

Mark Whitacre played by Matt Damon (*The Bourne Identity*, *Good Will Hunting*, *The Talented Mr Ripley*) works for the lysine developing company ADM and has done so for many years – until he is pressurised into working as a spy for the FBI. He is forced to be an informant against his own company who are illegally fixing the price of lysine, a food additive. As Whitacre starts to believe he is a true secret agent, we begin to see his whole world starting to fall down around him and we watch while he gradually starts to lose control. The story takes a different direction when Whitacre is revealed to be a fraudster himself.

Hearing Whitacre's thoughts throughout the film shows the duality of his personality as we start to see his intelligence, humour and imagination. Sandra Hebron writing for the BFI London Film Festival this year discusses the unreliable narration in the film, 'The convoluted twists and turns of Whitacre's imagination make it almost impossible to separate out fact from fantasy, and provide great dramatic and comic tension, helped by the combination of Soderbergh's confident direction and Damon's pitch perfect performance.'

Based on a true story and Kurt Eichenwald's book, *The Informant!* focuses on Whitacre's character and his breakdown throughout the film due to the pressure he is under whilst working for the FBI. This is played perfectly by Damon which is quite unlike anything else we have seen from him before. He conveys the characteristics of a man who is paranoid but at the same time a loving father and husband. As Jeff Robson states in eyeforfilm.com, Whitacre is 'a mixture of high intelligence and childish naivety, egotism and altruism.' which

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what did you think of the film? please mark or tear your vote ▶

excellent A

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B

fair C

D

poor E

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Damon captures and projects in his performance faultlessly. He had to put on weight for this part as well as sporting a moustache, glasses and a scruffy stereotypical middle aged business man hair-do. Perhaps he was attracted to the part of Whitacre because the character was the complete antithesis of Jason Bourne in the Bourne trilogy of films.

The Informant! will keep an audience asking questions throughout and like the duality of Whitacre's personality there is a mix of humour and seriousness, as well as intelligence and stupor, making for a very fascinating watch. '...an engaging, intelligent and very funny film that proves even cinematic narrators aren't always trustworthy, and that the cleverest people can often do stupid things.' (Jeff Robson, eyeforfilm.com)

BFF filmnote by Lillie King

This weekend at Bath Film Festival

Saturday 14 November, Little Theatre, 6.00pm | £7 / £5

Big River Man

John Maringouin | USA, UK | 2009 | 101m | 15 | sub-titles | bigriverman.com

This bizarre and captivating documentary begins as a humorous road (river?) movie but shifts to something much darker as barrel shaped Slovenian Martin Strel, having swum the Yangtze, Danube and Mississippi, makes an insane attempt to swim the longest and most perilous river in the world, the Amazon.

Saturday 14 November, Little Theatre, 8.10pm | £8 / £6

A Prophet / Un Prophète

Jacques Audiard | France, Italy | 2009 | 541m | 15 | sub-titles | un-prophete-lefilm.com

Audiard's fifth feature, his most ambitious amongst an ambitious bunch, was one of the highlights at Cannes this year, taking the Grand Jury prize. Terrific central performances, a steely palette with surreal touches, "...a flair for pulse-pounding set-pieces" (Variety) and a relentlessly gripping momentum ensure this is one of the films of the year, and a huge treat.

Sunday 15 November, Little Theatre, 1.15pm | £5 / £4

Encounters 2009 International Highlights

various directors | Denmark, Australia, UK | 2008 / 09 | 78m | 15 | sub-titles | encounters-festival.org.uk

A sneak preview of some international highlights from this year's Encounters Short Film Festival, which is celebrating 15 years as the UK's leading short film festival. Includes the BAFTA-winning *A Matter of Loaf and Death* starring Wallace and Gromit, and other amazing new films from Denmark and Australia.

Sunday 15 November, Rondo Theatre, 4.00pm / 5.50pm | £6 / £4

Bath Debut kicks off at the Rondo Theatre, Larkhall

Our run of eight films you shouldn't have missed earlier this year kicks off with Kelly Reichardt's touching US road movie *Wendy and Lucy* followed by Andrezej Jakimowski's delightful Polish comedy *Tricks*.



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