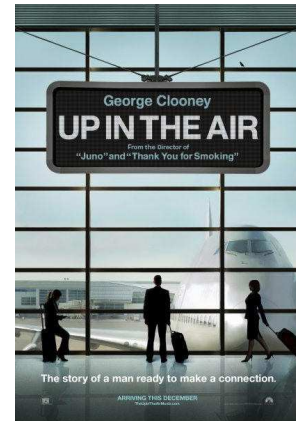


Up in the Air

Director: Jason Reitman
2009 (120')



Ryan Bingham loves his job. He gets to fly around the United States, visit companies and meet their employees, and stay in nice hotels. He doesn't have to stay in one place for too long and he doesn't have to stay with the same people for too long. But Bingham has a particular job; his job is to travel around the country and tell people that they are fired. And he is very good at doing that. This is a very entertaining, and well-made film.

...a superb existential rom-com, and the most entertaining lesson in contemporary socio-economics that you could hope for. The Independent

Vocabulary and expressions:

To have a lot of gall: Used in a negative sense in order to say that someone has a lot of nerve in trying to do something = How dare you!

You have a lot of gall coming in here and firing your number one producer.

To be fired/get fired: To be told that you have lost your job

To fire someone: To tell someone they have lost their job

To sack someone: To fire someone

Dumbfounded: To be incredibly surprised or shocked by some information or news

To have the balls to do something: To have the courage to do something

They don't have the balls to sack their own employees.

Backpack: Rucksack

Knicknacks: Various objects, bits and pieces of everyday life

Zeal: Enthusiasm

I admire your zeal

To be mad at someone or something: To be angry with

Are you mad at your computer?

To downsize: In business to reduce the size or capacity of, for example, a company

To clock in/clock out: To show when you enter and leave the workplace

To waltz in (to a place): To casually enter a place

To cut the line: To jump the queue

He just waltzes in and cuts the line.

Kooky: Informal word for strange or odd (US)

My sister is kooky.

Severance package: The money and benefits you receive when you lose or leave your job

It's part of the trade: Expression used to say that something is normal practice in a situation

A prick: Vulgar word used to say that someone is an idiot or to insult

What a weasly prick!

To fit the bill: To be suitable; to be just right or perfect

He really fits the bill

To cross one's mind: To come to one's mind

How does it not cross your mind?

To be up for something: To feel ready and able to do something (inf.)

To be game: To be ready and willing (inf.)

Natalie, are you not up for it?

Yes, I'm game.

To be out of line: To do or say something wrong

I'm sorry what I said about Alex. That was out of line.

Cute: Nice; lovely

They're a cute couple.

To have or get cold feet: To change one's mind about doing something and not want to do it (often at the last moment)

Jim's got cold feet about getting married

Discussion themes:

People being fired and the impact it has on their lives.

How did the film portray this? How important was it to the film? Does it reflect realities of modern life?

What's in your backpack?

Are we weighed down by other people and possessions? Is it better to have a 'backpack' or be 'free' from constraints?

The recession is good for business.

Is it OK to profit from someone else's misfortune? What is good about a recession?

What's the point?

Is there any point to getting married, to travelling 10 million miles? Does the film make any valid points?

Up in the air.

What do you think of the title of the film? Is it better to be up in the air or down on the ground?

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