

# The Big Lebowski

## Re-cap

Use the words below to complete the description of the film.

kidnapped slacker release unravel assaulted soundtrack composed  
 victim supporting inspired stars complex ransom comedy  
 characters directed

***The Big Lebowski*** (/ləˈbɑʊski/) is a 1998 crime \_\_\_\_\_ film written, produced, and \_\_\_\_\_ by Joel and Ethan Coen. It \_\_\_\_\_ Jeff Bridges as Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski, a Los Angeles \_\_\_\_\_ and avid bowler. He is \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of mistaken identity, after which The Dude learns that a millionaire also named Jeffrey Lebowski was the intended \_\_\_\_\_. The millionaire Lebowski's trophy wife is \_\_\_\_\_, and he commissions The Dude to deliver the \_\_\_\_\_ to secure her release; but the plan goes awry when the Dude's friend Walter Sobchak (John Goodman) schemes to keep the ransom money. Julianne Moore, Steve Buscemi, David Huddleston, and John Turturro also appear, in \_\_\_\_\_ roles.

The film is loosely \_\_\_\_\_ by the work of Raymond Chandler. Joel Coen stated, "We wanted to do a Chandler kind of story – how it moves episodically, and deals with the characters trying to \_\_\_\_\_ a mystery, as well as having a hopelessly \_\_\_\_\_ plot that's ultimately unimportant." The original score was \_\_\_\_\_ by Carter Burwell, a longtime collaborator of the Coen brothers.

*The Big Lebowski* was a disappointment at the U.S. box office and received mixed reviews at the time of its \_\_\_\_\_. Over time, reviews have become largely positive, and the film has become a cult favorite, noted for its idiosyncratic \_\_\_\_\_, dream sequences, unconventional dialogue, and eclectic \_\_\_\_\_. In 2014, the film was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

## **Reviews**

In the reviews below, find words which correspond to the following definitions:

- a) Mistake or fault -§1 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Extravagant, luxurious -§3 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Lack of intelligence or interest -§3 \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Not of the same quality in all its parts -§4 \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Careful examination of someone or something -§4 \_\_\_\_\_
- f) All over the place -§5 \_\_\_\_\_
- g) Skilfully made -§6 \_\_\_\_\_

“The great flaw in most of the Coens' work is, surprisingly, an inability to sustain a plot over a two-hour span.” Critic review – metacritic.com

“If it's all supposed to be in fun, why does it feel so much like an insult?” Ken Fox - TV Guide Magazine

“The clever dialogue, seductive camera work, and beautiful production design (the lavish dream sequences look like Busby Berkeley on Ecstasy) almost make you forget the vacancy at the movie's core, but in the end there's no escaping the feeling that the Coens are speaking a secret language.” Daphne Merkin -The New Yorker

“This is a comic amusement park ride – a wildly uneven movie that offers tremendous pleasure for the moment, even if it doesn't stand up well to post-screening analysis and scrutiny.” James Berardinelli - ReelViews

“Several of the lower scores by the reviewers refer negatively to how 'scattered' it is, but frankly that's what it's supposed to be. The metaphor is bowling as life...and we're the pins.” User review – metacritic.com

“Many people get frustrated with this film with the fact that the story does not make sense or go anywhere. To me, this is part of the reason why this is one of the best movies ever to be executed. It's more about the amazing characters created along with the perfectly crafted jokes and timing of them. This movie also has some great visual work. It is an original work of art. Perfectly cast, directed, and edited.” User review – metacritic.com

## **Speaking**

Now discuss the reviews in small groups. Which of the views expressed are the closest to your own? Justify your answers with details from the film.

## **Writing**

In your groups, write a review of the film “The Big Lebowski”. The aim of your review is to **help people decide if they might want to see the film**. You should provide the **names of the main actors and the directors**, provide a **brief outline of the plot** and give **your opinion of different aspects** of the film. Conclude by saying **whether or not you would recommend it**. Approximate length: 500 words. **This piece of work will contribute to one of your writing marks for the semester.** Marks will be awarded for the following:

- **Structure:** is there an introduction, a main body and a conclusion?
- **Content:** do you include the details mentioned above? Do you explain and justify your opinion effectively?
- **Language:** do you use a wide vocabulary including the appropriate terminology for discussing various aspects of a film? Are your sentences correctly formulated with accurate spelling?