

= The Big Lebowski =

The Big Lebowski is a 1998 American crime comedy film written , produced , and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen . It stars Jeff Bridges as Jeffrey " The Dude " Lebowski , a Los Angeles slacker and avid bowler . He is assaulted as a result of mistaken identity , after which The Dude learns that a millionaire also named Jeffrey Lebowski was the intended victim . The millionaire Lebowski 's trophy wife is kidnapped , and he commissions The Dude to deliver the ransom 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 and Steve Buscemi also star , with David Huddleston , John Turturro , Philip Seymour Hoffman , Sam Elliott , and Tara Reid appearing in supporting roles .

The film is loosely inspired 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 unravel a mystery , as well as having a hopelessly complex plot that 's ultimately unimportant . " The original score was composed 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 release . Over time , however , reviews have tended towards the positive , and the film has become a cult favorite , noted for its idiosyncratic characters , dream sequences , unconventional dialogue , and eclectic soundtrack . In 2014 , the Library of Congress added The Big Lebowski to the National Film Registry of films deemed to be of " cultural , historical , or aesthetic significance " .

= = Plot = =

In 1991 Los Angeles , slacker Jeff " the Dude " Lebowski (Jeff Bridges) is assaulted in his home by two hired goons (Mark Pellegrino and Philip Moon) who demand money that the wife of a Jeffrey Lebowski owes to a man named Jackie Treehorn (Ben Gazzara) . The two soon realize they have attacked the wrong Jeffrey Lebowski and leave , but not before one of them urinates on the Dude 's rug .

The Dude meets his bowling friends , the timid Donny (Steve Buscemi) and the temperamental Vietnam veteran Walter Sobchak (John Goodman) . Encouraged by Walter , the Dude approaches the other Jeffrey Lebowski (David Huddleston) , the eponymous " Big Lebowski " , a cantankerous elderly wheelchair @-@ bound millionaire , to seek compensation for his ruined rug . Though his request is promptly refused , he craftily steals one of Lebowski 's rugs by telling Brandt (Philip Seymour Hoffman) , Lebowski 's sycophantic assistant , that his boss told him to take any rug in the house . The Dude subsequently meets Bunny (Tara Reid) , Lebowski 's young nymphomaniacal trophy wife .

Days later , Lebowski contacts the Dude stating that Bunny has been kidnapped . Lebowski wants the Dude to deliver a briefcase containing a million dollar ransom and see if he can recognize the culprits . Later , a different pair of thugs appear in the Dude 's apartment , knock him unconscious , and take Lebowski 's rug . When Bunny 's kidnappers call to arrange delivery of the ransom , Walter suggests they give the kidnappers a ringer instead , namely a briefcase filled with dirty underwear laundry . The kidnappers grab the ringer and leave . Later that night , the Dude 's car is stolen , with the real ransom briefcase still inside .

Jeffrey Lebowski 's daughter Maude (Julianne Moore) contacts the Dude and reveals she took the rug , explaining that Bunny is one of Jackie Treehorn 's porn stars . She reckons that Bunny " kidnapped " herself and asks the Dude to recover the ransom which Lebowski illegally withdrew from the family 's foundation . Lebowski is angry that the Dude failed to deliver the ransom and shows him a severed green @-@ painted toe , allegedly belonging to Bunny , delivered by the kidnappers . Later , a gang of German nihilists (Peter Stormare , Torsten Voges , and Flea) invade the Dude 's apartment and threaten him , identifying themselves as the kidnappers . Maude says the German nihilists are actually Bunny 's friends .

The Dude is forcibly brought before Treehorn , who asks about the whereabouts of Bunny and says he wants the money she owes him . He drugs the Dude 's White Russian cocktail , leading to an

unconscious dream sequence involving Maude and bowling . The Dude comes to in police custody , where he is verbally and physically assaulted by the Malibu police chief . During the cab ride home , the Dude gets thrown out after he asks the cab driver to simply change the radio station . A red sports car zooms past and the viewer sees that Bunny is driving , with all her toes intact .

The Dude finds his bungalow completely trashed and is greeted by Maude , who seduces him . He figures that Treehorn drugged him so that his goons could look for the ransom money at the Dude 's home . After Maude has sex with him , she says she hopes to conceive a child ; the Dude is about to protest the idea of being a father but Maude tells him that he doesn 't have to have a hand in the child 's upbringing . Maude also explains that her father has no money : her mother was the wealthy one and she left her money exclusively to the family charity . The Dude later tells Walter that he now understands the whole story : when Lebowski ? who apparently hated his wife ? heard that Bunny was kidnapped , he withdrew money from the foundation , kept it for himself , and gave the Dude a briefcase without any money in it , saying that it contained a million dollar ransom . The kidnapping was also a ruse : when Bunny took an unannounced trip , her friends ? the nihilists ? purported a kidnapping to be able to extort money from Lebowski . They confront the Big Lebowski , who refuses to admit responsibility , but is thrown out of his wheelchair by Walter , who believes that he 's faking his paralyses .

The affair apparently over , the Dude and his bowling teammates return to the bowling alley . When they leave , they are confronted in the parking lot by the nihilists who have set the Dude 's car on fire . They once again demand the ransom money . After hearing what the Dude and Walter know , the nihilists try to mug them anyway . Walter violently overcomes all three , biting the ear off one of them . However , in the excitement , Donny suffers a fatal heart attack .

Walter and the Dude go to the beach to scatter Donny 's ashes . Walter turns an informal eulogy into a tribute to the Vietnam War . After accidentally covering the Dude with Donny 's ashes , and after a brief argument , Walter hugs him and says , " Come on , Dude . Fuck it , man . Let 's go bowling . " At the bowling alley , the story 's narrator (Sam Elliott) tells the viewer that Maude is pregnant with a " little Lebowski " and expresses his hope that the Dude and Walter will win the bowling tournament .

= = Cast = =

Jeff Bridges as Jeffrey " The Dude " Lebowski , a bachelor slacker living in Venice , a beach neighborhood of Los Angeles . The film 's protagonist , he enjoys his living room rug , marijuana , White Russians , and bowling . His favorite band is Creedence Clearwater Revival and he dislikes The Eagles . Bridges had heard or was told by the Coen brothers that they had written a screenplay for him .

John Goodman as Walter Sobchak , a Vietnam veteran , the Dude 's best friend , and bowling teammate . Walter places the rules of bowling second in reverence only to the rules of his adopted religion , Judaism , as evidenced by his strict stance against " rolling " on Shabbos . He has a violent temper , and is given to pulling out a handgun (or crowbar) in order to settle disputes . He is a conspiracy theorist , stating that the Gulf War was all about oil and claims to have " dabbled " in pacifism . He constantly references Vietnam in conversations , much to the annoyance of the Dude . Walter was based , in part , on screenwriter and director John Milius .

Steve Buscemi as Theodore Donald " Donny " Kerabatsos , a member of Walter and the Dude 's bowling team . Naïve and good @-@ natured , Donny is an avid bowler and frequently interrupts Walter 's diatribes to inquire about the parts of the story he missed or did not understand , provoking Walter 's frequently repeated response , " Shut the fuck up , Donny ! " This line is also a reference to Fargo , the Coen brothers ' previous film , in which Buscemi 's character was constantly talking .

David Huddleston as Jeffrey Lebowski , the " Big " Lebowski of the movie 's title , is a wheelchair @-@ bound (he lost the use of his legs in the Korean War) apparent multi @-@ millionaire who is married to Bunny and is Maude 's father by his late wife . The film 's primary antagonist , he refers to the Dude dismissively as " a bum " and a " deadbeat " in the perspective of referencing the hippie lifestyle , and is obsessed with " achievement " . Although he characterizes himself as highly

successful and accomplished , it is revealed by Maude that he is simply " allowed " to run some of the philanthropic efforts of her mother ' s estate , and that he actually does not have money of his own .

Julianne Moore as Maude Lebowski , an avant @-@ garde artist and feminist , whose work " has been commended as being strongly vaginal " . Though fond of her mother ? she took back the Dude 's replacement rug due to it being a maternal family heirloom ? her pursuits and lifestyle lead to a falling out with her conservative father . She may have introduced Bunny to Uli Kunkel . She helps the Dude along with his quest of finding Big Lebowski 's missing money for the sake of her mother 's estate , and in the end , beds the Dude solely to conceive a child , and wants nothing else to do with him . She is straightforward in manner , and has a very precise style of speaking .

Tara Reid as Bunny Lebowski , the Big Lebowski 's young gold digging " trophy wife " . Born Fawn Knutson (correctly pronounced " Kuh @-@ nootson ") , she started as an attractive high school cheerleader and ran away from the family farm outside Moorhead , Minnesota to find stardom and riches in Los Angeles . She soon found herself making pornographic videos under the name " Bunny La Joya " , and eventually led to her marriage with the Big Lebowski . According to Reid , Charlize Theron tried out for the role .

Philip Seymour Hoffman as Brandt , the Big Lebowski 's personal assistant , who plays mediator between the two Lebowskis .

Sam Elliott as The Stranger , an old @-@ time cowboy , who is also the narrator , and who sees the story unfold from a third @-@ party perspective . He has a thick , laid @-@ back Texas accent . Towards the end of the film he is seen in the bar of the bowling alley , enjoys " a good sarsaparilla , " and converses directly with the Dude on two occasions . He expresses disapproval of The Dude 's use of profanity and his laziness , and adds the qualifier " parts of it anyway " when speaking to the camera commenting that he enjoyed the story .

Ben Gazzara as Jackie Treehorn , a wealthy pornographer and loan shark , who lives in Malibu , and employs the two thugs who assault the Dude at the beginning of the film . Bunny owes him a large sum of money . He states his disappointment of how the nature of the porno enterprise market has fallen from erotic romantic buildups and " the brain " to purely raunchy sexual material . The Dude describes him as a man who treats objects like women .

Peter Stormare , Torsten Voges , and Flea play a group of nihilists (Uli Kunkel , Franz , and Kieffer , respectively) . They are German musicians (Kunkel , as " Karl Hungus " , appeared in a porn film with Bunny) , who , along with Kunkel 's girlfriend (Aimee Mann) , pretend to be the ones who kidnapped Bunny . The character of Uli originated on the set of Fargo between Ethan Coen and Stormare , who often spoke in a mock German accent .

John Turturro as Jesus Quintana , an opponent of the Dude 's team in the bowling league semifinals . A Latin American North Hollywood resident who speaks with a thick Cuban American accent , and often refers to himself in the third person as " the Jesus " , using the English pronunciation of the name rather than the Spanish . According to Walter , he is a " pederast " who did six months in Chino for exposing himself to an 8 @-@ year @-@ old . Turturro originally thought he was going to have a bigger role in the film ; when he read the script , he realized the part was quite small . However , the Coen brothers let him come up with a lot of his own ideas for the character , like shining the bowling ball and the scene where he dances backwards , which he says was inspired by Muhammad Ali .

= = = Minor characters = = =

Jon Polito as Da Fino , a private investigator hired by Bunny 's parents , the Knutsons , to entice their daughter back home . He mistakes the Dude for a " brother Shamus " .

David Thewlis as Knox Harrington , the video artist

Mark Pellegrino as Treehorn 's blond thug

Philip Moon as Woo , the rug @-@ peeing " Chinaman "

Jimmie Dale Gilmore as Smokey

Jack Kehler as Marty , the Dude 's landlord

Leon Russom as Kohl , Malibu police chief

Dom Irrera as Tony the chauffeur

Asia Carrera (uncredited) as the actress who co @-@ starred with Bunny in the pornographic film Logjammin

Barry Asher (uncredited) as the bowler in the final scene . (He was also the bowling consultant for the film .)

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The Dude is mostly inspired by Jeff Dowd , a man the Coen brothers met while they were trying to find distribution for their first feature , Blood Simple . Dowd had been a member of the Seattle Seven , liked to drink White Russians , and was known as " The Dude " . The Dude was also partly based on a friend of the Coen brothers , Peter Exline (now a member of the faculty at USC 's School of Cinematic Arts) , a Vietnam War veteran who reportedly lived in a dump of an apartment and was proud of a little rug that " tied the room together " . Exline knew Barry Sonnenfeld from New York University and Sonnenfeld introduced Exline to the Coen brothers while they were trying to raise money for Blood Simple . Exline became friends with the Coens and in 1989 , told them all kinds of stories from his own life , including ones about his actor @-@ writer friend Lewis Abernathy (one of the inspirations for Walter) , a fellow Vietnam vet who later became a private investigator and helped him track down and confront a high school kid who stole his car . As in the film , Exline 's car was impounded by the Los Angeles Police Department and Abernathy found an 8th grader 's homework under the passenger seat . Exline also belonged to an amateur softball league but the Coens changed it to bowling in the film , because " it 's a very social sport where you can sit around and drink and smoke while engaging in inane conversation " . The Coens met filmmaker John Milius , when they were in Los Angeles making Barton Fink and incorporated his love of guns and the military into the character of Walter . John Milius introduced the Coen Brothers to one of his best friends , Jim Ganzer , who would have been another source of inferences to create Jeff Bridges ' character . Also known as the Dude , Ganzer and his gang , typical Malibu surfers , served as inspiration as well for Milius 's film The Big Wednesday .

According to Julianne Moore , the character of Maude was based on artist Carolee Schneemann " who worked naked from a swing " and on Yoko Ono . The character of Jesus Quintana was inspired , in part , by a performance the Coens had seen John Turturro give in 1988 , at the Public Theater in a play called Mi Puta Vida in which he played a pederast @-@ type character , " so we thought , let 's make Turturro a pederast . It 'll be something he can really run with , " Joel said in an interview .

The film 's overall structure was influenced by the detective fiction of Raymond Chandler . Ethan said , " We wanted something that would generate a certain narrative feeling ? like a modern Raymond Chandler story , and that 's why it had to be set in Los Angeles ... We wanted to have a narrative flow , a story that moves like a Chandler book through different parts of town and different social classes " . The use of the Stranger 's voice @-@ over also came from Chandler as Joel remarked , " He is a little bit of an audience substitute . In the movie adaptation of Chandler it 's the main character that speaks off @-@ screen , but we didn 't want to reproduce that though it obviously has echoes . It 's as if someone was commenting on the plot from an all @-@ seeing point of view . And at the same time rediscovering the old earthiness of a Mark Twain . "

The significance of the bowling culture was , according to Joel , " important in reflecting that period at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties . That suited the retro side of the movie , slightly anachronistic , which sent us back to a not @-@ so @-@ far @-@ away era , but one that was well and truly gone nevertheless . "

= = = Screenplay = = =

The Big Lebowski was written around the same time as Barton Fink . When the Coen brothers wanted to make it , John Goodman was filming episodes for the Roseanne television program and Jeff Bridges was making the Walter Hill film Wild Bill . The Coens decided to make Fargo in the meantime . According to Ethan , " the movie was conceived as pivoting around that relationship between the Dude and Walter " , which sprang from the scenes between Barton Fink and Charlie Meadows in Barton Fink . They also came up with the idea of setting the film in contemporary L.A. , because the people who inspired the story lived in the area . When Pete Exline told them about the homework in a baggie incident , the Coens thought that that was very Raymond Chandler and decided to integrate elements of the author 's fiction into their script . Joel Coen cites Robert Altman 's The Long Goodbye as a primary influence on their film , in the sense that The Big Lebowski " is just kind of informed by Chandler around the edges " . When they started writing the script , the Coens wrote only 40 pages and then let it sit for a while before finishing it . This is a normal writing process for them , because they often " encounter a problem at a certain stage , we pass to another project , then we come back to the first script . That way we 've already accumulated pieces for several future movies . " In order to liven up a scene that they thought was too heavy on exposition , they added an " effete art @-@ world hanger @-@ on " , known as Knox Harrington , late in the screenwriting process . In the original script , the Dude 's car was a Chrysler LeBaron , as Dowd had once owned , but that car was not big enough to fit John Goodman so the Coens changed it to a Ford Torino .

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

PolyGram and Working Title Films , who had funded Fargo , backed The Big Lebowski with a budget of \$ 15 million . In casting the film , Joel remarked , " we tend to write both for people we know and have worked with , and some parts without knowing who 's going to play the role . In The Big Lebowski we did write for John [Goodman] and Steve [Buscemi] , but we didn 't know who was getting the Jeff Bridges role . " In preparation for his role , Bridges met Dowd but actually " drew on myself a lot from back in the Sixties and Seventies . I lived in a little place like that and did drugs , although I think I was a little more creative than the Dude . " The actor went into his own closet with the film 's wardrobe person and picked out clothes that he had thought the Dude might wear . He wore his character 's clothes home because most of them were his own . The actor also adopted the same physicality as Dowd , including the slouching and his ample belly . Originally , Goodman wanted a different kind of beard for Walter but the Coen brothers insisted on the " Gladiator " or what they called the " Chin Strap " and he thought it would go well with his flattop haircut .

For the film 's look , the Coens wanted to avoid the usual retro 1960s clichés like lava lamps , Day @-@ Glo posters , and Grateful Dead music and for it to be " consistent with the whole bowling thing , we wanted to keep the movie pretty bright and poppy " , Joel said in an interview . For example , the star motif featured predominantly throughout the film , started with the film 's production designer Richard Heinrichs ' design for the bowling alley . According to Joel , he " came up with the idea of just laying free @-@ form neon stars on top of it and doing a similar free @-@ form star thing on the interior " . This carried over to the film 's dream sequences . " Both dream sequences involve star patterns and are about lines radiating to a point . In the first dream sequence , the Dude gets knocked out and you see stars and they all coalesce into the overhead nightscape of L.A. The second dream sequence is an astral environment with a backdrop of stars " , remembers Heinrichs . For Jackie Treehorn 's Malibu beach house , he was inspired by late 1950s and early 1960s bachelor pad furniture . The Coen brothers told Heinrichs that they wanted Treehorn 's beach party to be Inca @-@ themed , with a " very Hollywood @-@ looking party in which young , oiled @-@ down , fairly aggressive men walk around with appetizers and drinks . So there 's a very sacrificial quality to it . "

Cinematographer Roger Deakins discussed the look of the film with the Coens during pre @-@ production . They told him that they wanted some parts of the film to have a real and contemporary feeling and other parts , like the dream sequences , to have a very stylized look . Bill and Jacqui Landrum did all of the choreography for the film . For his dance sequence , Jack Kehler went

through three three @-@ hour rehearsals . The Coen brothers offered him three to four choices of classical music for him to pick from and he chose Modest Mussorgsky 's Pictures at an Exhibition . At each rehearsal , he went through each phase of the piece .

= = = Principal photography = = =

Actual filming took place over an eleven @-@ week period with location shooting in and around Los Angeles , including all of the bowling sequences at the Hollywood Star Lanes (for three weeks) and the Dude 's Busby Berkeley dream sequences in a converted airplane hangar . According to Joel , the only time they ever directed Bridges " was when he would come over at the beginning of each scene and ask , ' Do you think the Dude burned one on the way over ? ' I 'd reply ' Yes ' usually , so Jeff would go over in the corner and start rubbing his eyes to get them bloodshot . " Julianne Moore was sent the script while working on The Lost World : Jurassic Park . She worked only two weeks on the film , early and late during the production that went from January to April 1997 while Sam Elliott was only on set for two days and did many takes of his final speech .

= = = Architecture = = =

The scenes in Jackie Treehorn 's house were shot in the Sheats Goldstein Residence , designed by John Lautner and built in 1963 in the Hollywood Hills .

Deakins described the look of the fantasy scenes as being very crisp , monochromatic , and highly lit in order to afford greater depth of focus . However , with the Dude 's apartment , Deakins said , " it 's kind of seedy and the light 's pretty nasty " with a grittier look . The visual bridge between these two different looks was how he photographed the night scenes . Instead of adopting the usual blue moonlight or blue street lamp look , he used an orange sodium @-@ light effect . The Coen brothers shot a lot of the film with wide @-@ angle lens because , according to Joel , it made it easier to hold focus for a greater depth and it made camera movements more dynamic .

To achieve the point @-@ of @-@ view of a rolling bowling ball the Coen brothers mounted a camera " on something like a barbecue spit " , according to Ethan , and then dollyed it along the lane . The challenge for them was figuring out the relative speeds of the forward motion and the rotating motion . CGI was used to create the vantage point of the thumb hole in the bowling ball .

= = Soundtrack = =

The original score was composed by Carter Burwell , a veteran of all the Coen Brothers ' films . While the Coens were writing the screenplay they had Kenny Rogers ' " Just Dropped In (to See What Condition My Condition Was in) " , the Gipsy Kings ' cover of " Hotel California " , and several Creedence Clearwater Revival songs in mind . They asked T @-@ Bone Burnett (who would later work with the Coens on O Brother , Where Art Thou ? and Inside Llewyn Davis) to pick songs for the soundtrack of the film . They knew that they wanted different genres of music from different times but , as Joel remembers , " T @-@ Bone even came up with some far @-@ out Henry Mancini and Yma Sumac . " Burnett was able to secure the rights to the songs by Kenny Rogers and the Gipsy Kings and also added tracks by Captain Beefheart , Moondog and the rights to a relatively obscure Bob Dylan song called " The Man in Me " . However , he had a tough time securing the rights to Townes Van Zandt 's cover of the Rolling Stones ' " Dead Flowers " , which plays over the film 's closing credits . Former Stones manager Allen Klein owned the rights to the song and wanted \$ 150 @,@ 000 for it . Burnett convinced Klein to watch an early cut of the film and remembers , " It got to the part where the Dude says , ' I hate the fuckin ' Eagles , man ! ' Klein stands up and says , ' That 's it , you can have the song ! ' That was beautiful . " Burnett was going to be credited on the film as " Music Supervisor " , but asked his credit to be " Music Archivist " because he " hated the notion of being a supervisor ; I wouldn 't want anyone to think of me as management " .

For Joel , " the original music , as with other elements of the movie , had to echo the retro sounds of

the Sixties and early Seventies ". Music defines each character . For example , " Tumbling Tumbleweeds " by Bob Nolan was chosen for the Stranger at the time the Coens wrote the screenplay , as was " Lujon " by Henry Mancini for Jackie Treehorn . " The German nihilists are accompanied by techno @-@ pop and Jeff Bridges by Creedence . So there 's a musical signature for each of them " , remarked Ethan in an interview . The character Uli Kunkel was in the German electronic band Autobahn , a homage to the band Kraftwerk . The album cover of their record Nagelbett (bed of nails) is a parody of the Kraftwerk album cover for The Man @-@ Machine and the group name Autobahn shares the name of a Kraftwerk song and album . In the lyrics the phrase " We believe in nothing " is repeated with electronic distortion . This is a reference to Autobahn 's nihilism in the film .

= = Reception = =

The Big Lebowski received its world premiere at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival on January 18 , 1998 at the 1 @,@ 300 @-@ capacity Eccles Theater . It was also screened at the 48th Berlin International Film Festival before opening in North America on March 6 , 1998 in 1 @,@ 207 theaters . It grossed USD \$ 5 @.@ 5 million on its opening weekend , grossing US \$ 17 million in the United States , just above its US \$ 15 million budget . The film 's worldwide gross outside of the US was \$ 28 million , bringing its worldwide gross to \$ 46 @,@ 189 @,@ 568 .

Many critics and audiences have likened the film to a modern Western , while many others dispute this , or liken it to a crime novel that revolves around mistaken identity plot devices . Peter Howell , in his review for the Toronto Star , wrote : " It 's hard to believe that this is the work of a team that won an Oscar last year for the original screenplay of Fargo . There 's a large amount of profanity in the movie , which seems a weak attempt to paper over dialogue gaps . " Howell revised his opinion in a later review , and more recently stated that " it may just be my favourite Coen Bros. film . "

Todd McCarthy in Variety magazine wrote : " One of the film 's indisputable triumphs is its soundtrack , which mixes Carter Burwell 's original score with classic pop tunes and some fabulous covers . " USA Today gave the film three out of four stars and felt that the Dude was " too passive a hero to sustain interest " , but that there was " enough startling brilliance here to suggest that , just like the Dude , those smarty @-@ pants Coens will abide " .

In his review for the Washington Post , Desson Howe praised the Coens and " their inspired , absurdist taste for weird , peculiar Americana ? but a sort of neo @-@ Americana that is entirely invented ? the Coens have defined and mastered their own bizarre subgenre . No one does it like them and , it almost goes without saying , no one does it better . "

Janet Maslin praised Bridges ' performance in her review for The New York Times : " Mr. Bridges finds a role so right for him that he seems never to have been anywhere else . Watch this performance to see shambling executed with nonchalant grace and a seemingly out @-@ to @-@ lunch character played with fine comic flair . " Andrew Sarris , in his review for the New York Observer , wrote : " The result is a lot of laughs and a feeling of awe toward the craftsmanship involved . I doubt that there 'll be anything else like it the rest of this year . " In a five star review for Empire Magazine , Ian Nathan wrote : " For those who delight in the Coens ' divinely abstract take on reality , this is pure nirvana " and " In a perfect world all movies would be made by the Coen brothers . " Roger Ebert gave the film three stars out of four , describing it as " weirdly engaging " . In a 2010 review , Ebert gave The Big Lebowski four stars out of four and added the film to his " Great Movies " list .

However , Jonathan Rosenbaum wrote in the Chicago Reader : " To be sure , The Big Lebowski is packed with show @-@ offy filmmaking and as a result is pretty entertaining . But insofar as it represents a moral position ? and the Coens ' relative styling of their figures invariably does ? it 's an elitist one , elevating salt @-@ of @-@ the @-@ earth types like Bridges and Goodman ... over everyone else in the movie . " Dave Kehr , in his review for the Daily News , criticized the film 's premise as a " tired idea , and it produces an episodic , unstrung film " . The Guardian criticized the film as " a bunch of ideas shoveled into a bag and allowed to spill out at random . The film is infuriating , and will win no prizes . But it does have some terrific jokes . "

The Big Lebowski currently holds an approval rating of 81 % on Rotten Tomatoes , based on 88 reviews , with an average rating of 7 @. @ 2 / 10 . The site 's critical consensus reads , " Typically stunning visuals and sharp dialogue from the Coen Brothers , brought to life with strong performances from Goodman and Bridges . "

= = Legacy = =

Since its original release , The Big Lebowski has become a cult classic . Ardent fans of the film call themselves " achievers " . Steve Palopoli wrote about the film 's emerging cult status in July 2002 . He first realized that the film had a cult following when he attended a midnight screening in 2000 at the New Beverly Cinema in Los Angeles and witnessed people quoting dialogue from the film to each other . Soon after the article appeared , the programmer for a local midnight film series in Santa Cruz decided to screen The Big Lebowski and on the first weekend they had to turn away several hundred people . The theater held the film over for six weeks , which had never happened before .

An annual festival , Lebowski Fest , began in Louisville , Kentucky , United States in 2002 with 150 fans showing up , and has since expanded to several other cities . The festival 's main event each year is a night of unlimited bowling with various contests including costume , trivia , hardest- and farthest @-@ traveled contests . Held over a weekend , events typically include a pre @-@ fest party with bands the night before the bowling event as well as a day @-@ long outdoor party with bands , vendor booths and games . Various celebrities from the film have even attended some of the events , including Jeff Bridges who attended the Los Angeles event . The British equivalent , inspired by Lebowski Fest , is known as The Dude Abides and is held in London .

Dudeism , a religion devoted largely to spreading the philosophy and lifestyle of the film 's main character , was founded in 2005 . Also known as The Church of the Latter @-@ Day Dude , the organization has ordained over 220 @, @ 000 " Dudeist Priests " all over the world via its website .

Two species of African spider are named after the film and main character : Anelosimus biglebowski and Anelosimus dude , both described in 2006 . Additionally , an extinct Permian conifer genus is named after the film in honor of its creators . The first species described within this genus in 2007 is based on 270 @-@ million @-@ year @-@ old plant fossils from Texas , and is called Lebowskia grandifolia .

Entertainment Weekly ranked it 8th on their Funniest Movies of the Past 25 Years list . The film was also ranked No. 34 on their list of " The Top 50 Cult Films " and ranked No. 15 on the magazine 's " The Cult 25 : The Essential Left @-@ Field Movie Hits Since ' 83 " list . In addition , the magazine also ranked The Dude No. 14 in their " The 100 Greatest Characters of the Last 20 Years " poll . The film was also nominated for the prestigious Grand Prix of the Belgian Film Critics Association . The Big Lebowski was voted as the 10th best film set in Los Angeles in the last 25 years by a group of Los Angeles Times writers and editors with two criteria : " The movie had to communicate some inherent truth about the L.A. experience , and only one film per director was allowed on the list . " Empire magazine ranked Walter Sobchak No. 49 and the Dude No. 7 in their " The 100 Greatest Movie Characters " poll . Roger Ebert added The Big Lebowski to his list of " Great Movies " in March 2010 .

John Turturro has suggested a number of times that he would be interested in doing a spin @-@ off film using his character Jesus Quintana . If the project got off the ground , the Coens would not direct it but may have a part in writing it .

= = = Use as social and political analysis = = =

The film has been used as a tool for analysis on a number of issues . In September 2008 , Slate published an article which interpreted The Big Lebowski as a political critique . The center piece of this viewpoint was that Walter Sobchak is " a neocon " , citing the film 's references to then President George H. W. Bush and the first Gulf War .

A journal article by Brian Wall , published in the feminist journal Camera Obscura uses the film to

explain Karl Marx 's commodity fetishism and the feminist consequences of sexual fetishism .

It has been used as a Carnavalesque critique of society , as an analysis on war and ethics , as a narrative on mass communication and US militarism and other issues .

= = Home media = =

Universal Studios Home Entertainment released a " Collector 's Edition " DVD on October 18 , 2005 with extra features that included an " introduction by Mortimer Young " , " Jeff Bridges ' Photography " , " Making of The Big Lebowski " , and " Production Notes " . In addition , a limited @-@ edition " Achiever 's Edition Gift Set " also included The Big Lebowski Bowling Shammy Towel , four Collectible Coasters that included photographs and quotable lines from the film , and eight Exclusive Photo Cards from Jeff Bridges ' personal collection .

A " 10th Anniversary Edition " was released on September 9 , 2008 and features all of the extras from the " Collector 's Edition " and " The Dude 's Life : Strikes and Gutters ... Ups and Downs ... The Dude Abides " theatrical trailer (from the first DVD release) , " The Lebowski Fest : An Achiever 's Story " , " Flying Carpets and Bowling Pin Dreams : The Dream Sequences of the Dude " , " Interactive Map " , " Jeff Bridges Photo Book " , and a " Photo Gallery " . There are both a standard release and a Limited Edition which features " Bowling Ball Packaging " and is individually numbered .

A high @-@ definition version of The Big Lebowski was released by Universal on HD DVD format on June 26 , 2007 . The film was released in Blu @-@ ray format in Italy by Cecchi Gori .

On August 16 , 2011 , Universal Pictures released The Big Lebowski on Blu @-@ ray . The limited @-@ edition package includes a Jeff Bridges photo book , a ten @-@ years @-@ on retrospective , and an in @-@ depth look at the annual Lebowski Fest . The film is also available in the Blu @-@ ray Coen Brothers box set released in the UK , however this version is region free and will work in any Blu @-@ ray player .