



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

The UK's largest rural film festival

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Up in the Air (15)

Director: Jason Reitman

Starring: George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick, Jason Bateman USA,
2009, 1 hour 49 minutes

Jason Reitman spent much of November hopping around the continent on a promotional tour for his wonderful new film, *Up in the Air*. Wicked devil that he is, he spent part of each day making notes on the questions he was being asked, and noticing that everyone seemed to ask the same questions.

Late in the month, he issued a handy pie chart that reflected all the questions. Here were the top finishers among the questions Jason logged:

1. What's it like working with Clooney? 111
2. Timely, in view of the economy? 96
3. What attracted you to this project? 78
4. Real people played some of the people being fired? 77
5. Your dad is the famous producer-director Ivan Reitman? 69
6. The book it's based on? 67
7. What is your next project? 63
8. Working with Anna and Vera? 47
9. Hopeful? 26
10. Technology? 24

Here was my actual question: "George Clooney can do comedy, he can do romance, he can do drama. Here I think we see Cary Grant in *Death of a Salesman*.

Now Reitman is very smart. This is the same young guy who directed *Thank You for Smoking* and *Juno*. Here was his actual answer:

"We all know how charming he is, we all know how smart he is and how altruistic he is. But I've never seen him actually fall in love in a real way. I mean, he kinda kissed Julia Roberts in the *Oceans 11* movie but really like kissed the girl in *Out of Sight*, and even then he was in complete control of that relationship. I wanted to see that man out of control.

"I wanted to make a film about discovering the importance of companionship through loss. I wanted to make a movie where the kisser realizes that he can't have the girl that he feels for, and we as the audience, feel his need for companionship, need for something else.

"The big question was whether or not he was gonna be *willing* to do that. And on Day 2, we shot the scene of him on that monorail in the airport where he's on the phone with Vera Farmiga and she calls him a 'parenthesis' in her life. That's a big scene to do on Day 2. I mean, this is my first movie with a real movie star and it's Day 2 of shooting and now I'm asking him to do the thing that I've wanted to see him do his whole career that he's never done and, look, I wish I could sit here and tell you that it was my great directing that kinda yanked it out of him but on Take 2 he just did it and he knew exactly what I wanted and I guess that's part of the thing of George is, he's a director. He's he's fully aware of what I want and at that 'cut' moment it's just a question of whether he's willing to give it to me. And as soon as he trusts you, he'll give you anything."

Roger Ebert, rogerebert.suntimes.com

Winner of the BAFTA for Adapted Screenplay 2010

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