

US MUSTS

MOVIES

BY THELMA ADAMS

OPENS FRIDAY 9/12

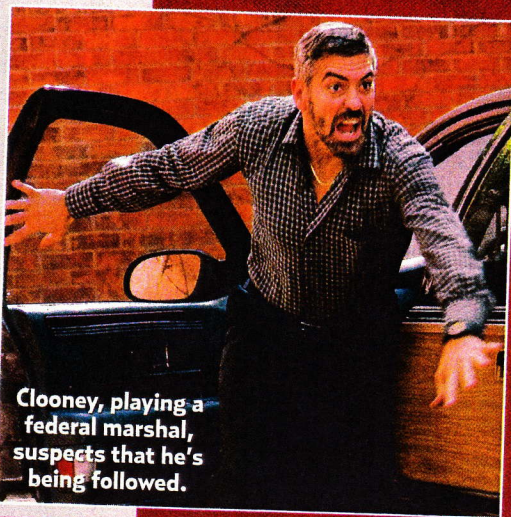
Burn After Reading

Brad Pitt gets big laughs in a sharp satire

★★★★☆

This Washington, D.C.-set story links several plotlines with delightful, dramatic — and shocking — results. It opens with a CIA man (**John Malkovich**) getting axed from the job for drinking too much. But he tells his icy doctor wife (**Tilda Swinton**) that he quit to write a memoir. She, in turn, considers leaving him for her lover (**George Clooney**), who's hooking up behind her back with women he meets online, including a plastic surgery-obsessed personal trainer (**Frances McDormand**). Enter her dopey, hyperactive coworker at the gym (a frosted-blond **Brad Pitt**). His hilarious quirk? Grooving to his iPod during a stakeout. All the actors excel in this tight story from director-writers **Joel and Ethan Coen** (*No Country for Old Men*). With its clever plot twists and finessed dialogue, the film is an enjoyable — albeit eccentric — ride.

BRADLEY JACOBS



Clooney, playing a federal marshal, suspects that he's being followed.



Doofus Pitt finds a computer disc that contains a CIA agent's notes.