

# Analyzing big lebowski; an introduction

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



## **The Big Lebowski**

According to Robert B. Ray's "The Thematic Paradigm," classical Hollywood develops "character(s that) magically embody diametrically opposite traits (299)." This method is used to appeal to "a collective American imagination steeped in myths of inclusiveness (299)." In other words, characters that portray a wide variety of traits, in many cases opposite traits, appeal to the American audience by embodying a portion of each viewer in the character. This method is clearly portrayed through the characters in the movie, "The Big Lebowski."

"The Big Lebowski," is about "The Dude" (Jeff Bridges), a down-and-out, unemployed drifter who is still living in the haze of the '60s. Most of his time is spent moping around his apartment, doing nothing and puffing on joints. On rare occasions, he makes his way over to the bowling alley for a league game with his two best friends: Walter (John Goodman), a veteran who still suffers from post-traumatic stress from his days in Vietnam, and Donny (Steve Buscemi), a moron. Most of the time, however, The Dude is content to stay at home, which is why he's known as the laziest man in Los Angeles County. That is, until a group of crooks confuse him with The Big Lebowski, one of the city's richest businessmen.

The Dude finds out that the crooks are looking for Bunny Lebowski, The Big Lebowski's wife, who owes a great deal of money to porn producer Jackie Treehorn. Treehorn's men mistake The Dude for the The Big Lebowski and it takes them a while to realize their error. After the crooks soil The Dude's carpet, The Dude arranges a meeting with the Big Lebowski. However, rather

than going home with a new carpet, The Dude finds himself employed as the courier handling the ransom for the Big Lebowski's kidnapped wife. However, Walter thinks The Dude should keep the money. In a twist, Maude Lebowski, The Big Lebowski's daughter, wants the money returned to her family. In the meantime the Dude's car is stolen with the one million dollars in the back seat. To top matters off, there's some question about whether Bunny is really in any danger.

In this movie, "The Dude," embodies contradicting characteristics. At one point, he is lazy, mellow, carefree, while at critical moments he is conscientious and assertive. Throughout the movie glimpses of these traits are shown. The first scene for instance, introduces us to the Dude, the bum. He is in a grocery store when he opens a carton of milk, smells it, and then proceeds to drink it. Then when he is checking out he writes a check for a total of . 87 cents. This epitomizes the deadbeat. We immediately see that the Dude cares for nothing more than a fresh carton of milk. However, later in the movie, Dude shows glimpses of intelligence when he plans to deliver the ransom money. However, Walter takes over and botches the whole delivery. Then later in the movie, Dude overcomes his laziness and stupidity and solves the case of the missing money. He perseveres and deduces that "The Big Lebowski," duped everybody.

Then there is Walter, who starts off the movie as an ultra conservative who would never even think about cheating at bowling. On the other hand, later in the movie, he tells the Dude that they should steal the money for the Big

Lebowski. This portrayal of contradictory personality traits represents a wide array of the American population thus making viewers feel included.

In conclusion, Robert B. Ray says that by creating characters that represent a wide variety of personality traits classic Hollywood connects with the American psychological pattern that suggests Americans base their “ ego identity on a tentative combination of dynamic polarities (300).” Overall, The Dude and Walter in the movie, “ The Big Lebowski” both employ this method in order to make the viewers feel like they are part of the character.