

You Get What You Paid For At The Fun Park

Not so fun. Every once in a while our local movie rental place calls us up and tells us we've won a free rental. It happened just this week, so we made a stop there yesterday, and since we had all the kids with us, my husband just ran in and tried to be quick. He came out with a direct-to-video horror movie called [The Fun Park](#). It actually sounded pretty intriguing since it's about some teens who were murdered by the ghost of a clown at an abandoned amusement park. We know of an abandoned amusement park that we've visited, so we thought the movie would be extra scary. But we were wrong. It was awful – the 3.5 rating it got on [imdb.com](#) was no lie. Free movie = boring clown. For the first, I don't know, about 30 minutes of the movie, they're not even in the fun park. The movie wastes time setting up the characters' back stories – and who cares about that? So finally they get to the fun park, and it's not even scary. The movie has no suspense. There aren't any chase scenes, basically the movie is the clown cutting off people's faces. I think. The movie was so slow, I was dozing constantly. But I don't think I missed anything... It was awful. I would put it on my movie stinker list, but maybe it's not fair because I wasn't fully awake... never mind, who cares, it was that bad. At least it was a free rental. And as far as my worries about being scared of clowns the next time we go to that abandoned amusement park, no problem – that movie was not scary at all. The only thing scary about it was the idea that all the people involved in making it thought it was a good idea!

So here's my updated stinker list of the worst movies I've ever seen:

The Devil's Rejects

Doomsday

The Night Listener

The Love Guru

The Fun Park

Butts On The Floor – In The Grocery Store?

I don't know how this memory came about, but recently I was thinking about how acceptable smoking used to be in our society. You were allowed to smoke anywhere and everywhere – airplanes, restaurants, bowling alleys, and grocery stores, to name a few places. Yes, I said grocery stores. I have distinct memories of being a kid and playing with the floor at the grocery store. I was playing with the floor because it had colored tiles on it that resembled a maze, and grocery shopping is *so boring* for a kid that there really isn't anything else to do but look at the floor and play with it. While navigating my maze on the floor, I distinctly remember seeing – and stepping around – cigarette butts. People used to smoke cigarettes while shopping for food – ew. So does that mean that all the food that was brought home had packaging that reeked of cigarette smoke? It's hard to imagine, especially given society's view on smoking today. But I remember it, and I'm really thankful that we've come such a long way. I can no longer stand the smell of cigarette smoke, and if I had to smell it while shopping at Walmart, it would make the place that much more unbearable.

And while we're on the topic of inappropriate places to smoke, that reminds me of something I forgot to mention in my Mummy movie review post. While watching the movie, we kept smelling cigarette smoke; 2 or 3 times. Someone was definitely smoking

in the theater, but my question is, who would do something like that? Was their addiction so out of control that they honestly couldn't make it through an entire movie? And we're not talking about *The Dark Knight*, a movie that runs 2 ½ hours. The new *Mummy* movie was not even over 2 hours, and someone couldn't make it that long without a cigarette (or two or three)? That sounds like a problem they should get help for. At the very least, they should have stayed home then, where they could smoke all they wanted without bothering anyone else. I was really irritated. Not just because I hate the smell and wasn't expecting to have to deal with it at a movie theater, but mostly because I had our new baby with me and I didn't want his innocent lungs poisoned with cigarette smoke. I never saw who was doing it, but I suspected maybe it was some rebellious teenagers doing it because they could get away with it. But I didn't see any teenagers leaving the theater. I tried to smell everyone that walked by, but I came up with no suspects. Oh, well... if it happens again, I think I'll report it; I just didn't feel like missing the movie. And I really didn't think that after the first cigarette they'd go ahead and light another... How utterly rude and completely thoughtless. I hope the culprit saw the baby on the way out and felt guilty... but I'm sure that someone with the nerve to smoke in a movie theater wouldn't care enough to regret it.

We've Got To Get Away... We've Got To Run Away!

This post is titled after a line from my favorite movie, [The Wizard of Oz](#). In case you live in a hole or you're Amish, the movie is about a girl named Dorothy who runs away and gets

swept into a mystical land. Of course, if you're Amish, I don't know why you're reading my blog, but I'm glad you are. But the reason I'm writing this is that it's happened – we've had our first threat of running away from a kid. For those of you who know our family, you get only one guess as to who it was. Got your guess? Ok, it was Samantha – SURPRISE! It's funny because my husband and I were just discussing this a few days ago. We talked about how seemingly every little kid plans to run away at one time or another. We also talked about how if any of our kids were going to run away, we both thought it would be Samantha (she's 4, by the way, if you don't know us, and she's *always* been a firecracker, even as far back as her womb-dwelling days). And now here we are, mere days later, and she brings it up. She didn't attempt it or say it out of anger; what happened is this: She was bouncing on our bouncing zebra toy, which actually belongs to her little sister, Disney. Since Disney is almost 2, seeing Samantha on the bouncing zebra made her suddenly decide that she wanted to play on it, of course. So I asked Sammie to give Disney a turn, and she refused. I started threatening things like making her take a nap, time-out, and taking toys away, and for each punishment, she had an answer.

"I'm going to have to make you take a nap then." was met with "I won't sleep."

"Then I'll have to take away one of your toys." was followed by "Then I'll run away."

Well, the situation was resolved when Disney asked for a popsicle. I was more than happy to give her one because she is being SO good today; polar opposite of the hellish day she made for me yesterday. The new popsicles I bought today weren't frozen yet, and all we had was some random soccer ball popsicle I found in the freezer. I gave it to her, totally over-emphasizing what a good girl she's been today so hopefully she'll get the message and stay this way. But I gave it to her knowing we might have a problem when I didn't

have any for the other kids, which is a golden rule of parenting that must not be broken: if you have 2 kids, obtain things and give them out in twos. If you have 3 kids, you must always have 3 treats, toys, what have you. Whatever it is, there always has to be one per kid – I call this the ‘separate but equal law of parenting’. So today I broke the separate but equal law, and guess what I got in return? A tantrum, of course. I explained to Sammie that Disney got the popsicle because she was being good, and that Sammie was not being good. She said, “But I’m being good now!” And I agreed, but I also explained that I had said she would be punished for not doing as I said by sharing with her sister and so this was her punishment. She threw a tantrum, but got over it rather quickly. I think she might have actually learned a lesson.

But back to the running away. I think every kid tries it or at least thinks about it. But of course, since they’re kids, the plans are never very well thought out. Like everyone, I tried it to, and my plan was packing a can of spaghetti in a suitcase. I was thinking ahead about being hungry, but of course I hadn’t planned where I would be going or even how I was going to open that can of spaghetti. I don’t even remember what prompted my decision to run away, which says something about how insignificant my parents’ wronging me really was. One time when my sister wanted to run away, she went so far as to call our aunt to come pick her up – luckily my aunt called my mom to double-check, but at least my sister had a plan. Most kids who think about running away don’t have a good solid plan, and many of them realize this before they actually leave the house. Let’s hope we are lucky enough to have that happen with Samantha if she decides to follow through on her threat.

The Pineapple Express

I actually hadn't heard much about this movie before I saw it, but it happened to be playing at the time we needed in order to be able to see a movie that day. Having 4 kids = a hectic life. Our weekly date night has become a date day (still weekly though, YAY!), partly because my husband is in a show and we have rehearsal or meetings most nights, and partly because the baby still has his days and nights mixed up, thus guaranteeing that he sleeps during the date if it's during the day. But anyway, back to the [Pineapple Express](#). The movie is all about marijuana. I did read the plot synopsis before I went, but I didn't realize exactly how much drug content there would be – the characters smoke pot constantly! It tells the tale of a stoner ([Seth Rogen](#) – does he smoke pot in every movie he's in?) who witnesses a murder committed by a cop. The whole movie has him fleeing the bad guys – while smoking marijuana, of course – with his drug dealer, who he didn't know all that well before they fled together. Seth Rogen wrote the screenplay for this film, and I like his natural way of delivering lines. He's not a very diverse actor, but his characters seem like real people because of the way he delivers his dialogue.

The movie entertained me; some parts were funny; although it did get pretty violent. I missed some of the violence though because I fell asleep... just tired, I wouldn't call the movie terrible or anything like that. It's not one of my favorites, though, and I'm not sure if it even has replay value. But if you read my blog regularly, you'll know that my husband and I see LOTS of movies, so this was just another theater experience, and those are always fun!

It's Amazing How Different They Are...

I think that "It's amazing how different they are" is something that you hear many people say when they're talking about their kids, and I'm no exception. My two oldest daughters have the most contrasting behaviors between each other; it's probably because my youngest two don't have fully developed personalities yet, so it's hard to say about which siblings differ the most from each other. But here is the example that made me reflect upon this:

Tonight the kids were given glow sticks to play with. The glow sticks came with a plastic wheel. Our eldest, Taylor, who is 8, used her wheel to make a flower out of her glowsticks. Really, it was quite creative and also pretty cool-looking and beautiful. Her 4-year-old sister, Sammie, put her plastic wheel on her face and used it to make funny faces. Both creative, but Taylor's idea was so much... well, it was a better idea, let's be honest. And you might be saying, well, that's the difference between 8 and 4. A perfectly logical response, but if you knew my girls, this wouldn't surprise you, and I'm not convinced that it's their age difference more than their personalities. Taylor is much more artistic while Sammie is a clown. We love them both equally of course, but it's really fun to note their variety. It's amazing how different they are...

Let There Be Lights

Recently there was an article on cubs.com about how it's been

20 years since Wrigley Field started night games for the Chicago Cubs, i.e. got lights in their stadium. That made me feel kind of old because I remember that event, and it was 20 years ago: 8-8-88. Sigh. Since when can I remember 20 years ago? But anyway, I remember an elderly gentleman (turns out he was 91 in 1988 and actually remembered the Cubs winning the World Series in 1908 – a stark reminder that there is NO ONE left today who can say the same...) flipped the switch to turn on Wrigley Field's lights for the first time ever. Funnily enough, it was a bit too early in the evening, and many fans and spectators said they couldn't see a difference in the lighting on the field. But it was symbolic, and Wrigley Field finally had its lights, even if it was the last major league ball park to get them. And the event was proven even more symbolic than functional that night when the game was postponed because of rain. So the first FULL baseball game at Wrigley under the new lights was actually 8/9/88.

Apparently the lights were snuck into the field in the middle of the night, under cover, literally. They were hoisted into place quickly by helicopters, for fear that protestors would shoot them in order to try to preserve the neighborhood's charm and innocence. But the plan was not foiled, and 20 years later, we still get to enjoy night games at Wrigley. **GO CUBBIES!!!**

The Mole – FINALE!!!

SPOILER ALERT!!! *The following blog post contains a synopsis of the final episode of the ABC reality show, The Mole. Do not read if you don't want to know what happened!*

Last night's Mole finale did not disappoint. Well, maybe for

those of us who got 0 points in the tangents.org mole poll... But as far as dragging out the results episode like most reality shows do, the Mole was not guilty of this. The episode was only an hour long, they still had one elimination to reveal, and they revealed the winner of the game without dramatizing things by adding a commercial break. Turns out, good guy Mark took home the cash, all so his wife can stay home with the kids and not work anymore (be careful what you wish for; sometimes I wish *I* could go back to work and get away from the daily chaos of the chorus of crying kids!). Then, it was time to reveal the mole... but first a dramatic commercial break, of course! We returned from commercial, and they milked it even further with some more dramatic pausing... and then we learned – CRAIG is the MOLE!

At least I don't have to go back and count up points for our tangents.org mole poll – I believe Jamiahsh is the only one who ever guessed Craig, therefore, with 1 point, he is the winner of our tangents mole poll!

After the big reveal, which happened quite early in the hour I might add, compared to the way they've done things in past mole seasons, time was spent recapping episodes with the knowledge of the mole's identity. It was fun to see the different contestants' reactions to Craig being the mole, and it was even more fun to watch the clips that were recorded during the playing of the game of them suspecting Craig. I always like when they explain the hidden clues from every episode that (supposedly) pointed to the mole. I say supposedly pointed to the mole because a few of the clues were far-fetched; for example the business about the latitude and longitude. One of the clues I liked is the one where they altered the background where Craig was giving an interview. There were two "i" statues, and they altered them so there were 4 "i" statues when Craig was doing his interview. Get it? 4 "i"'s = four eyes – Craig is the only player to wear glasses.

Anyway, it was a great season like always. Even though I lost the tangents.org mole poll, I'm actually glad I did because if Nicole (she was my guess) was the mole, I would have felt it was so obvious it actually would have dampened my enthusiasm for another season. But since I was SO taken by surprise, as far as another mole season goes, I say, bring it on, and soon!

RIP Caray

Recently Skip Caray passed away, a son of famed Chicago Cubs announcer Harry Caray. Skip was actually famous for his work announcing the Atlanta Braves rather than the Cubs, but his death in the news made me think of his father and everything he brought to Cubs games.

Since I didn't watch many Braves games, I wasn't really familiar with Skip's work, so I looked him up on wikipedia.com and found the following:

Skip Caray's broadcasts were characterized by his witty and sarcastic sense of humor, a personality trait that endeared him to most fans, but alienated him from others. For example, during a particularly long losing streak in the 1980s, Skip declared at the start of a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates "And, like lambs to the slaughter, the Braves take the field". More recently, in a game against the Florida Marlins, the Braves had loaded the bases, to which Caray quipped, "The bases are loaded, just like (Marlins manager) Jack McKeon probably wishes he was." During the 2004 season, Caray frequently made fun of Braves relief pitcher, Jung Bong, declaring every time the opposing team got a hit against him, "that's another hit off of Bong". In 2008, a player popped a fly ball so high that Skip said "That would've been a home run

in a phone booth."

Sounds like a funny guy, and I'm sure he'll be missed by legions of fans, much like his late father, Harry Caray, the voice of the Chicago Cubs.

Rollback, Shmollback

Now that I'm well on my way to full recovery after being unable to do normal things for so long because of the pregnancy and cesarean, I've resumed my big grocery shopping days at Walmart. And since I haven't been there much in the past few months, I was shocked to find how much many of the prices have raised. So this inspired me to make a list of all the prices I remember from when our Super Walmart opened 26 months ago. I did some math, and this is what I came up with. The first price is how much the item was for the first few months the Super Walmart was open. The second price is how much the item is now, and the percent is the percentage the price has increased in 26 months.

parmesan cheese – \$2.94 to 4.18 = **42%**
american cheese singles – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%
shredded cheese – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%
garbage bags – 1.67 to 2.98 = **78%**
bananas – 19¢ to 58¢ per pound = **almost 49%**
toilet paper – 1.00 to 1.24 for a six pack = 24%
baby wipes – 1.44 to 2.16 for one pack = **50%**
baby formula – 10.64 to 11.88 per can = 11%
milk – 2.00 to 3.80 = **90%**

I'm no math whiz, but if I did the calculations correctly, this is insane. I realize there is inflation, the economy is terrible, and food comes in on trucks which use gas whose cost

has also skyrocketed, but this is still ridiculous. I used to love Walmart for their one-stop shopping concept, but now I hate them for ruining the little guy and for always changing their prices. It makes it impossible to shop around for the best price unless you have no job or kids – and they know it. **WALMART SUCKS!** But I will keep shopping there, and they know it. Why? Because with 4 kids, I don't have time to go to a bunch of stores trying to find the best price. I need to go where I can get it all under one roof.

Ok, I'm done venting... at least until my next Walmart trip...

10 DUI's in 16 Years

I feel very strongly against drunk driving. It's one thing to make the choice to drink too much; that's up to the individual, but when they make the choice for others and expose them to the danger of an intoxicated motorist on the road, that's extremely selfish and dangerous. It's also very preventable; if you really want to drink enough to make yourself unsafe behind the wheel, there is absolutely no reason why you can't plan ahead, find a driver ahead of time, walk home, call a cab, call a friend, take a bus, stay home and get drunk in the first place... the list of ways to prevent driving under the influence goes on and on. That being said, there was a story on dailyherald.com (suburban Chicago newspaper) recently that caught my interest. It was about a man who had been caught drunk driving 10 times in the last 16 years. How does this happen? I believe the guy had a serious problem, and I'm a person who believes in getting people help before throwing them in jail, however, it seemed that this guy was not going to learn until he killed someone... and unfortunately, that's just what happened – and it was himself

that he killed. I don't know why he was out roaming the streets still after getting busted that many times; especially when you read the article and see that in 1996, he had drunk driving arrests on April 7, April 14, April 26, and May 1. 4 times in less than a month?!? I don't understand how he was released between each of these instances and not only that, but after all this, he was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail. He got out early, of course, had a few more busts, and then this latest one on July 2 of this year, which is when his story caught my attention. A few weeks later, he died while in police custody. In the article, they say he had seizures and a brain bruise, and it's my theory that his alcohol withdrawl caused his seizures, which led to him hitting his head and causing the brain bruise. Whatever happened to him, it's a very sad story; a man with a severe problem who never got help. At least his family never had to deal with the added grief of his causing injury or death to another person. Here is the story and the mugshot, he's not the healthiest looking fellow. And note the oxygen tank; he had cirrhosis of the liver but still kept drinking:

Patrick J. Kolman, who was arrested for DUI at least 10 times in the past 16 years, died from chronic alcoholism Wednesday night, the Cook County medical examiner's office said.

Besides alcoholism, the Arlington Heights resident also suffered from a brain bruise and seizures, the medical examiner said. It was unclear when the contusion occurred.

Kolman, 58, had already been convicted of DUI nine times when police spotted his car weaving between lanes a few blocks from his home around 2:30 a.m. on July 2.

Kolman had DUI convictions dating back to 1993. Though he'd been in and out of jail, he received one-year sentences for many of his drunken driving crimes. He had also been convicted of bank robbery, for which he got a much longer sentence, and

faced domestic abuse charges.

Kolman's downward spiral began in spring 1992. He was arrested for DUI in Rolling Meadows with a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal limit at that time.

"I am an alcoholic," he told law enforcement officials then. "I can't drink at all."

Kolman was once diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, but continued to drink after treatment and against medical advice. He appeared in his July booking photo with an oxygen tank.

Details about the length of some of Kolman's DUI sentences is sketchy. A 1995 DUI arrest resulted in a one-year jail sentence and placement in a drug and alcohol program. But in 1996, he was charged with DUI on April 7, April 14, April 26 and May 1. He was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail.

Kolman likely served only half that time because of good behavior credits. He was stopped again in mid-1997 for driving after his license had been revoked. He was sentenced to two years and served time at the Dixon Correctional Center, according to corrections department records.

Kolman, of 124 S. Vail St., appeared in bond court for his most recent DUI arrest in Rolling Meadows just last month. After he told the judge he was unable to post the \$150,000 bond, he appeared to suffer from a medical problem and was rushed to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights.

After the bond court hearing, Kolman was transferred to the Cook County Jail's infirmary where his health likely declined, said Cmdr. Nick Pecora of the Arlington Heights Police Department.

Kolman's car, a 1991 Lincoln, is still in police custody where it will remain until one of Kolman's family members pays the

\$500 fee to get it released, Pecora said.