

An American Girl – The Movie?

Because I have 3 daughters, I am no stranger to the American Girl doll franchise. Given their extremely high price tags, I was once a big opponent, however like any parent, once I saw how much my kids enjoy something, I've changed my mind. Grammie bought our oldest daughter an American Girl doll a few Christmases ago, and then her little sister got one for her birthday, so at least the fighting over who gets to play with the one doll has ended. Their other grandma has made clothes for their dolls, thus saving us money on the really expensive clothes. Overall, the dolls really haven't been that expensive for us, probably because we don't buy them any clothes or accessories; thankfully there isn't a place in our rural area that carries any American Girl doll stuff, so that helps also.

A few weekends ago, I took my girls and a friend to see the new American Girl doll movie, [Kitt Kittredge](#). I wasn't expecting much, but I just love [Abigail Breslin](#), and I also really like to learn about the Great Depression era. The movie did a great job of portraying life during this period in history, at least to the best of my knowledge. It seemed historically accurate; complete with hobo secrets and terminology. I really enjoyed it – it was a cute little movie, and it even had some twists and turns that I didn't see coming and which supplemented the plot nicely. Abigail Breslin was delightful as always, [Joan Cusack](#) was a riot, and [Stanley Tucci](#) was wonderful as a mysterious magician. Their roles were all well-played along with most others as the movie was very well-cast.

The only problem I had with it was that if you didn't know any better, it didn't seem to have much to do with American Girl, and especially not dolls. But if you know anything about the franchise, it makes sense. Each doll in the series has a "backstory" – she comes from a different background and time

period and there are books that explain the backstories. However, on our way to the movie, I asked my girls if they knew what the movie was about, and they suggested that maybe a girl's doll comes to life or something. But like I said, the movie actually had nothing to do with dolls at all – it was the backstory of the doll named Kitt Kittredge. The girls didn't seem disappointed, and only the 8-year-olds got a little rambunctious. I also had an 11-year-old with me who really liked it, and a 4-year-old who seemed to enjoy it also – especially the use of animals in the movie. My 4-year-old daughter LOVED the monkey and his antics.

Overall, it was an entertaining afternoon; well-worth the matinee price for the girls to see it, and I was entertained as well. My husband didn't want any part of it, so he stayed home with our 21-month-old who can't sit through movies anyway. But it's a good family movie; although it might add some wishes to my girls' list when they visit the American Girl doll store in Chicago with their grandma next week – not an accident on the part of the American Girl doll franchise, I'm sure.

A Teacher CANNOT...

...tape a student to a chair. That's the lesson an Illinois man is learning after being sentenced to probation following an incident in a McHenry County classroom. Sorry Derek – this is really a story for your blog... you have my permission to steal it. Hopefully they cover not taping kids, especially special education students, to their chairs in Substitute Teaching 101? Here is the full story:

Substitute Teacher Gets Probation For Taping Unruly Student To

Seat

A substitute teacher who taped a pair of rambunctious 8-year-old special education students to their seats was spared forced confinement himself Tuesday when a judge sentenced him to probation instead of prison on a pair of felony convictions.

Matthew Konetski, 32, of South Beloit, Ill., must serve two years probation, pay a \$1,500 fine and perform 80 hours public service under the sentence handed down by a McHenry County judge.

The sentence comes about six weeks after a jury found Konetski guilty of aggravated battery and unlawful restraint for a March 2006 incident in which he taped one of his students at Harvard's Jefferson Elementary School to his seat, then put tape over the boy's mouth when the boy would not sit still.

The taping, according to trial testimony, lasted between two and five minutes.

Authorities initially charged Konetski with doing the same to a second student, but prosecutors opted not to go to trial on those allegations.

The mother of the boy whose case did go to trial said she is satisfied with the sentence.

"I never wanted to put him in jail," she said. "I just wanted him held accountable."

In a letter to the court, the mother said her son, who's been diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, began acting out after the incident. At one point, she writes, the boy was hospitalized for more than 30 days.

"(He), 26 months later, still wakes up screaming 'Let me go!,' " the letter states.

During his trial, Konetski testified that he taped the boys as a last resort when they would not stop getting up in class. Although he was a first-year substitute with no special education training, Konetski was left alone with the special education students without two aides normally assigned to the class.

He apologized Tuesday for his actions, saying he never intended to harm or scare the boys.

"I was just trying to come up with a way to deal with a situation I didn't know how to deal with," he said.

County prosecutors had asked for a jail sentence along with the probation term, saying a stiff sentence would send a message to the public.

"(The victim) experienced being confined in his chair that day by this defendant," Assistant McHenry County State's Attorney Sharyl Eisenstein said. "We feel that he, in turn, should be confined in the McHenry County jail."

Konetski will not have to register as a sex offender because, Judge Sharon Prather ruled, there is no evidence his actions were sexually motivated.

He Is Here!



After months of blogging about my pregnancy, it's finally over and with the best result possible – a healthy, beautiful baby boy! His name is Christopher Vincent and he was 8 lbs. 2

oz. and 20.7 inches long when he was born at 2:53 pm on July 11. He is named for his father (at my insistence because my husband felt it was egotistical of him to duplicate his name – not when others do it, just him for some reason) and his middle name is after the baby's late grandfather, my husband's father who passed away from Lou Gehrig's disease when our oldest child was just one year old. So we've been waiting a long time for a namesake for Vincent, and now little Christopher Vincent is here. He is a perfect baby and rarely cries, although he does seem to have his days and nights mixed up. Today he slept for almost 5 hours until I woke him up to eat. But that's probably because last night he woke up every hour. I wish I had known he was going to sleep that long because I would have taken a nap! It's been difficult for me to sleep at night due to the extreme pain I'm feeling because of the emergency cesarean they had to do to bring little Christopher into the world.

Here's a warning – I'm going to get a little bit graphic medically here because I feel the need to explain what happened to me. That way, other moms searching for info about pregnancy,



cesareans, etc. can happen across my site, and maybe it will help educate them and ease their fears if they know some things they can expect. For the rest of you, I apologize, and I suggest just looking at the really cute pictures of the baby and moving on to my other posts.

So I went to the hospital Friday at 7 am to get induced... I was really excited, but also pretty nervous. It's ironic that I didn't allow myself to get as nervous as I was with my 3 previous pregnancies because my last birth went relatively smoothly, so I figured, why get all worked up when everything will probably be fine? But it wasn't. Well, in the end it was, but until I got to see Christopher, Friday was one of the worst days of my life. It all started when the nurse couldn't get my IV in. I always bruise like crazy from the IV, but they've never had trouble getting it in me before. In fact, I seem to remember writing a post in my blog about what good veins they always say I have. Anyway, the nurse was trying to "save me a poke" and get a blood sample at the same time she hooked up my IV. I ended up with two holes on my right hand that swelled up like balloons – and I still had to get the IV put into my left hand. All that and she STILL had to draw

blood from the vein like a regular blood sample, thus not “saving me a poke” at all as she had promised. But it didn’t matter because I never care too much about the blood draw since I’m used to it and my veins are so easy to find... but anyway, after all this, I had to make a stupid comment – I said to the nurse, “I hope this isn’t an omen for how the rest of the day will go...” Idiot. Apparently I cursed myself because things were just going to get worse.



The contractions started getting pretty painful and I called for the epidural, which if you don’t know, is a pain elimination procedure (supposedly) administered directly into the spine. It’s very uncomfortable to receive one, although it’s nothing compared to the pain of the contractions it relieves, provided someone poking around in your spine doesn’t bother you. Except that mine didn’t work, which I’m told is rare, so don’t worry, just research other options before you go... But for me, this is where things go from bad to worse. Once we’ve all determined that the epidural didn’t take, they make a call for the anesthesiologist to come back and discuss options. Except that, lucky for me (sarcasm), there was a shift change, so the person who messed up my first epidural was no longer around to mess up a second one. And, of course the new anesthesiologist didn’t want to do one on a patient who had been done by someone else. And I should note that every time they call the anesthesiologist, it takes forever and a day for them to come because they’re usually doing other patients in the hospital or who knows what. I wonder if it’s like that at larger hospitals... Our hospital is quite small, and I’ve often wondered if there are certain aspects of care that could be better as a result. Anyway, so the 2nd anesthesiologist is explaining my options to me, and she

is talking so slowly, I swear I was close to kicking her – I could still feel my legs, after all, and that was their fault, not mine. As she's explaining my options to me (not that there were many left), the nurse decided to check me and that's when she discovered we didn't have time to do *anything* – the baby was coming! The anesthesiologist was shooed away and the doctor was called, but of course with the way things had been going that day, she had gone home and so we had to wait for her to get back to the hospital. She got there and I was finally able to start pushing, except the baby wouldn't budge. I think the pain was worse than it's ever been, and I could tell the baby wasn't being pushed, and then the worst news yet – the baby's heart rate started dropping. Everyone started running around, honestly, it was total chaos, but I couldn't even think straight through all the pain. They wheeled me into the surgery room where there were like 10 people wearing surgery masks all doing different things. I was actually in favor of them knocking me out – the sooner, the better. Of course because of the epidural not working, I felt them cut me open, but in retrospect I don't know if it hurt more than I was freaked out about being able to feel them cut me open. My arms and legs were tied down and I will be honest – it was a horrible experience – I couldn't sleep my first night in the hospital because right when I'd fall asleep, I'd have a flashback of the experience and jolt awake. Then, I smelled something funny in my oxygen mask and the next thing I know, I'm being wheeled out of the room – it was over! They had gassed me after all – lucky for everyone involved! But now I'm stuck with the awful recovery process of a c-section. One of the worst things about it besides the pain is the fact that I can't lift heavy objects – including kids. The second I got home, my 21-month-old reached her arms out and said "Mommy!" with a big smile, and promptly started crying when I couldn't pick her up. Between the lack of sleep, the hormone changes, and me missing her, I started crying, but luckily grandma saw me lose it and stepped in to rescue us; giving my daughter ice cream to feed me that made

it all better for both of us. Now, only 2 days later, my daughter seems used to not being picked up, and the pain seems to be getting better, finally. Yesterday the pain was getting worse instead of better; when I woke up, every square inch of my body throbbed with pain, and I couldn't move at all – it was awful and totally discouraging. But, I had forgotten that the doctor said to also use ibuprofen along with my pain meds, so ever since I've been trying that, it's been working for me. But believe it or not, another pain remedy is baby-smelling. You just sniff the head of the newborn baby and give him kisses and it makes the pain better too! The worst part of the whole thing is that I had really wanted more kids, but after Friday, I just don't know if I have it in me to go through something like that (or worse!) again... But for now, I am enjoying mommyhood immensely, and the girls LOVE their new little brother. Taylor and Sammie want to hold him all the time, and Sammie especially can't keep her hands off him. She's always petting his head or touching his hands, or softly kissing him... she is so gentle; it's very sweet. And Disney, being almost 2, is getting her own ideas on how to care for Christopher as well. Yesterday she tried to insist that he be put into his car seat and of course she threw a tantrum when it didn't go her way... But overall, things are going great and will be even better once we unmix Christopher's days and nights and get some more sleep!

Oh, and one more hint that will give you a fun momento for the baby book. If you mail a birth announcement to the White House, they will send you a congrats card from the President! Signed by an intern, of course, but hey, for some people in the '90's, that would have been Monica Lewinsky! Here is the address you send it to, you can also do this for wedding invitations, though I'm not sure the address is the same. I would just do a google search for "white house wedding announcement" or something like that.

Send your baby's name, birthdate and address to:

White House Greetings Office
Room 39
Washington, DC 20500

The Mole – Week #6

The following contains information and possible spoilers about the Mole episode that aired on July 14. Do not keep reading if you haven't seen it – consider yourself warned!

We're getting down to the nitty gritty – there is only one woman left for one thing, who would have thought that it would be Nicole. It was a rarity, but my 8-year-old daughter was the last one standing last night, so she was invited to watch the Mole with us. I know it's rated TV-14, but it's just for language, and she knows better than to repeat some things they say... it did bring it to my attention though; I would otherwise ignore it, but why can't they just leave it out? Do they really need to say words like (fill in the blanks) a** and c*ap on tv? I don't see why they can't just edit them out. But anyway, she really liked the show, and she said that everyone acts suspicious. Her final guess for the most mole-y behavior is Nicole though, so I will add her to our poll at the end of this post.

Since we have a new baby in the house, I am SO tired, and it seems like the more tired I am, the worse my short-term memory is. So I don't remember too many details about the Mole, even though it was just on last night. I was not surprised to see Alex booted, and if I had had one eye on the clock, I would have known that the first person's quiz results they showed would be red this time. They do that at least once a season – eliminate the first person whose results were given. I

figured Alex wasn't the Mole, so it was no surprise when he was booted. It was fun to watch how scared everyone got before they dove backwards off the plank. I didn't get much out of the brainteaser game because I would normally like to play along with something like that, but my brain is so fried lately and they didn't give us enough time to think about the answers, so I just spent the challenge answered my daughter's questions about the show instead. But I'd have to say, aside from the language, it's a good family show since it kept my 8-year-old's attention, and I think my 4-year-old would like it too.

Mole Guesses for this week:

Taylor – Nicole

Chris – staying with Paul

Taylhis – staying with Nicole

Jamiahsh – staying with Paul

Hmmm... interesting. The two people with the strongest personalities have the most guesses. I guess we think they could be exaggerating their attitudes. At least that's how I feel with Nicole. I've begun to wonder, could anyone REALLY be that much of a total b*tch?

The Weed Saga

We became home-owners about a year and half ago, and as fellow home-owners know, it's a lot different than renting. For one thing, we now have a yard to maintain and being 2 very busy people who know absolutely nothing about landscaping, we've found this aspect of home ownership quite challenging. As

many of you know, my husband is a very hard worker, and when he is off work, we are usually out and about with the kids – no Saturdays working on the yard for us! So I usually venture outside while I'm playing with the kids in the summer and make a haphazard attempt at pulling weeds and trying to make the yard presentable. The good news is we have yet to receive a complaint notice on a stick from the city, like I sometimes see in other less fortunate yards. The bad news is that if we were to ever get one of those notices, I fear now would be the time since I have been immobile with my pregnancy so far this summer.

So my awesome husband tried to make arrangements with a local fellow to have the weeds done for me on my birthday, but the guy showed up and was gone by the time we returned from lunch, etc. less than 3 hours later. He did get some of the weeds, but not all that many, and lo and behold, the other day we received a bill from him – for \$140!!! Even if he had been here 3 hours, that would be over \$46 / hour and he didn't even do nearly everything he was supposed to do! Needless to say, I'm going to dispute the bill, but first I'm going to have a baby and get out of the hospital, so he's going to have to wait. In the meantime, we've enlisted a friend who is a landscaper to help, and he's going to visit and work hourly on Thursdays... not the immediate weed relief I was hoping for, but I'm sure he will do a much better job for a much more reasonable rate. He already visited after weed guy #1 and confirmed that there are still LOTS of weeds in our yard. I just don't know what weed guy #1 was thinking... it's tough times in the economy and he seemed nice enough, but he must be crazy if he thinks we're going to pay him that much for what little weed relief he gave us... My town is going to be offering college classes soon so maybe I should just take a horticulture class and do the landscaping myself from now on...

FINALLY!

Unless I finish some of the drafts I've been working on today, this will be my last post for a little while – the Dr. finally gave us the green light to have our baby tomorrow! I am to report to the hospital at 7 am for an induction, and hopefully (unless this baby takes after 2 of his older sisters who were actually born a day after their induction) we will have a healthy baby soon after that. I would like to thank everyone who has been thinking about and praying for us, and I will ask hubby to email and / or call people when there is news tomorrow or Saturday. We will send pictures ASAP!

Thanks again so much for your thoughts and prayers – it means a lot to us!

Pringles ≠ Potato Chips

I caught the tail-end of a news story the other day... something about a judge ruling that Pringles are not potato chips. What in the world? I wondered why a judge would be ruling on such a thing and also if they're not potato chips, what are they? Since I have limited time, I did limited research on the subject, and I found the answer to the first question; see below:

LONDON – Britain's High Court has ruled that Pringles are not a potato snack, and thus are not subject to value-added tax.

Friday's ruling by Justice Nicholas Warren is expected to save

millions for the manufacturer, Procter & Gamble Co.

Warren overruled a VAT Tribunal decision that Pringles should be subject to the 17.5-percent tax because it met the definition of "potato crisps, potato sticks, potato puffs and similar products made from the potato, or from potato flour, or from potato starch."

The judge found that Pringles were only 42 percent potato, and thus exempt.

P&G spokeswoman Marina Barker says the company is pleased with the ruling.

Umm... so what else is in Pringles besides potato? Do we really want to know? And while searching for this tidbit of info, I came across another interesting article about my favorite potato chip, er, potato-ish snack food, though maybe I should have posted a link on JustJ's recent morbid post about the discarding of human bodies... Ahh, the Internet. Everything you ever wanted to know and some things you didn't – all at your fingertips!

Cincinnati, OH – Dr. Fredric J. Baur was so proud of having designed the container for Pringles potato crisps that he asked his family to bury him in one.

His children honored his request. Part of his remains was buried in a Pringles can – along with a regular urn containing the rest – in his grave at Arlington Memorial Gardens in Springfield Township.

Dr. Baur, a retired organic chemist and food storage technician who specialized in research and development and quality control for Procter & Gamble, died May 4 at Vitas Hospice. The College Hill resident was 89.

ONE More Time, She Says...

Yeah right. I've heard that before. I went to the dr. today and we were supposed to schedule an induction date – AGAIN. But we have to wait and see how I'm doing at another appointment – AGAIN! My body is very slow to react and I think that if I weren't induced, my babies would never come out. But Thursday is the new day, so we'll see how I'm doing then, and she said *hopefully* Friday I can be induced. Hopefully is the key word here because after going to the dr 4 times to get an induction date and not getting one, I'm starting to lose optimism. My husband says let's just wait until the 21st... that's funny because our first daughter was born on December 21st, our second daughter was born on May 21st, and our 3rd daughter was born on October 20th (the 21st was a Saturday and the dr. was off work and didn't want to induce me on a Saturday). So it's only fitting we should have a July 21st or even July 20th baby, right? But this whole pregnancy my dr. said she wanted to induce me a week before my due date (which is July 14 and she is adamant that it is correct) because I have large babies. My first was 7 lbs 2 oz which is normal, but my youngest two were 8 lbs 12 oz each with the last one being even a half ounce more than her sister... so it seems that they just keep getting bigger. Except today the dr. said this baby doesn't seem to be as large as the others, and since my body is not cooperating anyway... it's the waiting game we play.

I guess we've gotten spoiled with being able to set a date for having the other kids; we've gotten used to knowing when the babies are going to come, and it's hard to remember and realize the fact that it's not an exact science even in this day and age. I want him here ASAP of course, not only to meet

him, but also for selfish reasons; mainly involving having my body back so I can do some things other than eating and sleeping. I feel so guilty about my lack of participation around the house, but physically, it's become impossible to even push myself to do things like I was a few weeks ago... I can no longer bend over to let the dogs out, and bending over to do laundry is becoming more difficult by the day since we have front-loading machines. My muscles most of the time feel so tired that I worry they won't even hold up my own (very heavy) body, let alone strong enough to chase kids around... and my kids have been acting horribly lately – what timing. Hubby has really had to pick up some extra slack around here, well more than that really, he's doing almost everything... and I feel badly but what can I do but wait. My biggest wish of course is a healthy baby, and wish #2 on the list is an easy, painless labor, so if I get my wishes, all this waiting won't be so bad in retrospect. But in the meantime, I have so many people waiting on us... Grandma's been on standby from 2 states over for a week now since she is planning to come and watch the kids... Hubby's work is somewhat on hold since he must take frequent breaks to referee the kids. He's waiting until I'm in the hospital and Grandma has the kids, then he's going to work like a maniac in the empty house to build up our finances which have also been neglected during the waiting game... Not to mention all the wonderful friends and well-wishers who want to meet little Christopher! Maybe on Thursday I will have some better news... or I could actually start going into labor on my own before then... yeah right! ☐

88 Minutes

We finally saw the movie [88 Minutes](#) the other night. I don't know what we were so busy with when it came out in the

theaters, but we somehow didn't get around to seeing it then. The reviews were so unfavorable that I forgot we had missed it; I guess I just wrote it off. I've learned time and time again to go opposite what most reviewers say, so I don't know why I let them get to me this time...

So anyway, the movie is about a very well known forensic psychiatrist played by [Al Pacino](#). A serial murderer he testified against is hours away from execution when Pacino receives a phone call saying he has 88 minutes to live – tick tock tock. Much action and plot twists ensue, and at the conclusion, I found myself very satisfied with this movie as a thriller – something I can't say about the last few thrillers I've seen. There are a whole bunch of characters, and the movie manages to make all of them interesting and VERY suspectable. What surprised me was my ability to keep them all straight – that is usually something I have a problem with when watching movies – I tend to mix up characters especially when the actors playing them look the slightest bit alike, and I also have trouble remembering names. Although I can't put my finger on what was different about this movie, I was able to differentiate between all the characters; not only remembering who was who but their names and relationship to the main character – rarities for me. Adding to my enjoyment of the movie was the fact that it kept you on the edge of your seat, and its many plot twists and turns kept you guessing and didn't come out too cheesy in the end, which can sometimes ruin a good action movie. Al Pacino was good and believable in his role, though believe it or not I don't think I've seen him in anything else. [Lee Lee Sobieski](#) and [Amy Brenneman](#) also rounded out the supporting cast with strong performances. Overall, a very good action suspense film and I would definitely recommend it to fans of the genre. Others who might enjoy it are true-crime buffs and CSI fans.

The Fourth, Fireworks, and a False Alarm

We had a wonderful Independence Day – happy birthday USA! Went to the local airport where they have a fly-in breakfast every year. There are lots of planes to look at; some grounded, some taking off and landing... and they even have a few that give rides. My middle daughter, the daredevil, was the only one who wanted to try an airplane ride, and she went up by herself! My husband doesn't like to fly, our older daughter is scared of everything including her own shadow, and I've developed a fear of flying over the years that left me frightened for my daughter on her airplane ride. But it turned out ok, she had a blast, and the pilot and other people there were very surprised that she was so unfazed for a 4-year-old going up in an airplane for the first time by herself. I'm really glad she got the opportunity to do so because I really don't want to pass down my fears to the kids. Seems our oldest somehow got the fear of flying, but its hard to tell from where since she is afraid of EVERYTHING. Maybe I can convince her to go up in our friends' plane next time he comes to visit... though that won't be any time soon because he was actually on his way here a few weeks ago and had engine trouble. Had to set down in South Bend and the airplane has been out of commission ever since... oops. At least nothing catastrophic occurred.

At night on July 4th, we spend the evening at the country home of some friends for a barbecue and fireworks. It was really nice chatting under the stars between the cracks and pops of the fireworks. I'm so glad we were able to have fireworks on the 4th because one of the things I just cannot get used to about rural life is their affinity around here to celebrate

Independence Day with fireworks in late June. It drives me crazy because my birthday is on the 3rd of July, so my whole life it's been birthday and fireworks together, and that's the way I like it! And speaking of birthdays, they turned the barbecue into a birthday celebration for me... it was SO nice! It was supposed to be a chance for us to get together, and I kind of invited ourselves over because my husband has had fireworks sitting in our garage that he's been waiting to use for years, but we couldn't find a place. So when they mentioned last week that their son likes to blow off fireworks on the 4th at their house... opportunity knocks. But then they got me a birthday cake and presents (including such CUTE little boy outfits for the baby and also some things just for me), and it was all very nice. So thanks so much to everyone who reads this blog who was there – it was lots of fun!

Saturday we took the kids swimming at a local hotel's pool since my husband has a business acquaintance staying there and had a meeting. I love being in a pool while pregnant – all the extra weight just melts off and I can't describe how wonderful it feels to actually be able to move my legs again... though I'm still paying for it today with soreness... but oh well, I think this is what I can look forward to from here on out – and it won't be long, at least that's what I keep telling myself. I really thought it wouldn't be long Saturday after I went swimming because I started having contractions. We were about ready to go to the hospital when I got up and walked around and they stopped. I think after being in the pool all day, I was so hungry and thirsty at dinner that I ate and drank a lot and just filled myself up too much... my body wasn't ready to sit down I guess and when I did, muscles began to protest. Such fun. But I did learn something... after I finish this blog I better go and finish packing my hospital bag... just in case!