

SPLASH! It's Mr. Woodcock in Real Life

We went kinda crazy with the movies this weekend... We watched the 1984 classic [Splash](#) with the kids, and we also took in [Mr. Woodcock](#) and [Dan in Real Life](#) (for the adults). [Splash](#) is a [Tom Hanks](#) and [Daryl Hannah](#) movie about a mermaid who leaves the ocean to come to New York city and fall in love with Tom Hanks. It sounds dumb, but it's actually pretty well done and a movie with substance and heart. The special effects of her fins aren't bad either, considering they're over 20 years old and most likely made without computer assistance. Since I haven't seen the movie since I was a kid, I was wondering this time around about how many takes it took to film the underwater scenes... mainly the one where Daryl Hannah's character looks on a map in a sunken ship to find where Tom Hanks lives. Also, there's a scene in the movie where they are trying to choose a name for the mermaid, since her name is unpronounceable in English. They're walking down a New York street, and Tom Hanks mutters, "where are we, Madison..." to which Daryl Hannah replies, "Madison, I like Madison." That was a joke in the movie at the time, that the mermaid was named after a street in New York, but nowadays, the name Madison is almost TOO popular. We had about 4 Madisons or Maddies in a play we directed last year out of 21 kids! Anyway, I would recommend this as a good family movie, especially for little girls. There is actually some nudity (female rear end), and I could have done without a few of the kissing scenes, but overall, it is good family entertainment. I wonder if it would have gotten a PG13 rating if it had come out a few years later? I know there is a [Splash Too](#), but judging by the lack of returning actors, I haven't bothered to check it out. After a quick lookup on [imdb.com](#), I found that it got a whopping 3.0 rating with only 170 votes. Also interesting is that Madison the mermaid in [Splash Too](#) is

played by [Amy Yasbeck](#), who is nowadays best known for being [John Ritter's](#) widow. She was good in her bit part in [Pretty Woman](#), but still... I wonder if I should bother getting it from the library for the kids? Also in the original Splash is [Eugene Levy](#), who plays the bad guy trying to expose the mermaid – literally, by throwing water on her in public. This must be one of his first movies; I think he was a relatively unknown actor back then... Also, the late, great [John Candy](#) is hilarious as Tom Hanks' party animal brother, and those two have great chemistry in the movie... but on to the adult movies... ahem, I'm talking about the movies we watched without the kids...

Mr. Woodcock is a comedy starring [Billy Bob Thornton](#), who came no where near to reminding me of his character in [Sling Blade](#) – that's probably why he was nominated for an Oscar for that performance. I wasn't expecting much from this movie, but it was actually worse than I thought. It wasn't horrible, and I didn't feel like I wasted my time watching it, but it wasn't very funny, and there wasn't much to get from it. For one thing, I thought they would make the Mr. Woodcock character a little more nasty. As it turned out, he was really only nasty to little kids, which is still pretty bad, but I thought we'd catch him being nasty behind his girlfriend's back. Let me back up for a minute and give a plot synopsis – Mr. Woodcock is a horribly nasty gym teacher who terrorized kids so badly that a former student uses his experiences as fodder for an inspiring self-help book he wrote. This former student returns to his hometown in Nebraska to receive the “corn key to the city” only to find that his mom is happily dating Mr. Woodcock – his childhood nemesis! The successful author is played by [Seann William Scott](#), whose acting I wasn't thrilled with. His mother was played by [Susan Sarandon](#), and she was pretty good in the movie, given the character she had to play, who didn't have much depth. Like I said, I didn't feel like I wasted my time on this movie, but I don't know that I'd watch it again either. It definitely wasn't one of my favorite

comedies.

Dan in Real Life is a touching comedy (just falls short of a dra-medy, I would say, not quite sad enough, thank goodness) about a columnist widower named Dan (the ever-awesome [Steve Carell](#)) who is raising 3 daughters alone. The girls seem to be about 16, 14, and 9. For starters, let's just say that this movie had me dreading my life in about 10 years – the movie depicted teenage girls as frightening challenges for parents! Anyway, Dan takes his girls to visit their extended family for a few days, and when he first arrives, he really falls for the 'perfect woman'. He gets to his mom and dad's house, and wouldn't you know it, the 'perfect woman' turns out to be his brother's girlfriend. After a few days of torture... well, I'll let you watch the movie, I don't want to spoil anything for you. It's a really cute romantic comedy. If you have sons, you will be amused at Dan's daughters' antics. If you have daughters, be afraid, be very afraid! On another note, Steve Carell has beaten out Tom Hanks as my favorite actor – he is just amazing and so fun to watch, whether it's in [the Office](#), [Evan Almighty](#), or Dan in Real Life. His characters never remind me of each other, and it's not like they're mentally impaired like Billy Bob Thornton in Sling Blade or Tom Hanks in [Forrest Gump](#) – sometimes those types of characters are actually easier to play since they have a very specific demeanor about them. Steve Carell plays 'regular' guys, yet he gives them such depth and character that it really helps draw you into the movie and / or show. I never watched the tv show [Get Smart](#), but with Steve Carell playing Maxwell Smart in the big screen version of [Get Smart](#) due this summer, you can bet I plan on checking it out! Dan in Real Life is funny and heartwarming, and it makes me look forward to having huge family get-together weekends at our house someday with the kids and their spouses and kids... providing we survive the teenage years of course – that remains to be seen!

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah

It is very hard to imagine but one of the most controversial movies of all time is a Disney film. Released in 1946, *Song of the South* has never been released on video nor DVD in the U.S. It won an Oscar for Best Song and has been re-released in theatres several times (most recently in 1986). However, the powers that be at Disney feel that the movie has a strong racial tone. As recently as 2007, the issue has been raised with the same result: no release. However, the movie has been released on video in foreign markets.

It also seems peculiar that there is an attraction based upon the film at Disney World. Splash Mountain takes riders on a journey through the Briar Patch which is populated by Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Bear, Br'er Fox, and other characters from the stories of Uncle Remus.

As explained in the following [article](#), it seems highly unlikely that *Song of the South* will be released in this country in the near future. However, outlets such as ebay.com may have access to copies.

The Good Girl

Bet you think this is going to be about one of my kids, don't ya? Well, the truth is, they're all good. Unless you count yesterday, when #2 and #3 were acting up... but it was another snow day, so I think they had cabin fever. And luckily for me, my friend and neighbor called out of nowhere and asked if

she could take the older 2 sledding with the kids she watches. I was having a bad day, especially since the dogs were being needy about going outside constantly (with a new one, it's not really a fun gamble to see if she's "lying" about having to go potty!), and as I said, the kids were acting up, so I was very agreeable to the sledding plan! It was like a miracle – I SOOOO needed that break, and the kids needed to get out of the house, so in the words of my friend Morat – EVERYONE WINS!!! THANK YOU SHELLEY!

Now, for what the post is really about: The [Jennifer Aniston](#) movie, [The Good Girl](#). We watched it last night. You're probably thinking, wow, they watch lots of movies, and you're right! We have a lovely library system where you can search almost every Ohio library online for almost any movie you can think of, and they will ship it to our home library for free – you just have to wait a few days, sometimes longer if it's a popular movie with a waiting list. So, almost every night, hubby and I like to sit down with a movie during our "parent time", providing the kids willingly go to bed, which of course is not always foolproof... But most of the time, it works, so last night the movie was [The Good Girl](#). The movie started out kinda slow, but it did get better. I would classify it as a dark comedy. [Jennifer Aniston](#) plays a bored, depressed housewife who decides to have an affair with a co-worker, played by [Jake Gyllenhaal](#). Her morals (if she had any to begin with that is) and behavior spiral out of control from then on, and the movie is an entertaining look at modern day suburban life gone awry. It is a good dark comedy, like I said, it takes some getting used to, but we liked it overall. [Jake Gyllenhaal](#) probably stands out as the best actor in the movie (along with [Mike White](#) – more on him later); his character was just this crazy 22-year-old man-child. [Jennifer Aniston](#) was ok, but it took me about 20 minutes to get past her just acting like Rachel from Friends with a southern accent. Maybe an actress playing the same character for 10 yrs. in a hit sitcom clouds a

viewer's perception, I don't know... I did really like that show and have seen every episode at least once, some MANY times. Once I got used to her in this movie, she did a good job of bringing her character to life, although none of the main characters in this movie were really all that likable. That probably has to do with it being a dark comedy – more on those later. You have to really feel sorry for her husband in the movie who is a real dip (not to mention a pothead), but comes nowhere close to deserving all the crap she makes him put up with, not that I know who would... [Zoey Deschanel](#) is great in this movie; she doesn't play a likable character as far as being a nice person, but she is hilarious and provides much of the movie's comic relief.

I really only like to compare movies in the same genre, so it'd be difficult for me to rate this one compared to other movies I've watched lately, like [Vantage Point](#), [The Hitcher](#), or [As Good as It Gets](#). I can't really remember the other dark comedies I've seen, but I know I liked them; [Heathers](#) and [Drowning Mona](#) come to mind, but I'll have to watch them again cuz it's been awhile. Overall, I would say that if you like dark comedies, I recommend this one, but I don't think dark comedies are for everyone. The script is interesting, and some of the acting is pretty good. [Mike White](#) wrote the movie, and I have to say, I like his work. He is best known (to me anyway) as Ned Schneebly from [The School of Rock](#), which he also wrote. Maybe it's because he writes the characters he plays that he is fun to watch, and this film is no exception – his character (a religiously religious security guard who moonlights as a minister) is actually quite likable, especially compared to all the other characters! Also to Mike White's writing credit is [Nacho Libre](#), but I don't think I was a big fan of that one. Since we try to cram in so many movies, some are watched while we're ultra-sleepy or being interrupted by kids, and Nacho Libre just might be one of those because I don't really remember it. Either that, or it was just bad. Again, if you like dark comedies, go rent [The](#)

[Good Girl](#), it's certainly "different" as far as comedies go...

Snow Day #11,572

Ok, I'm exaggerating just a tad on the number of snow days we've had, but that's what it feels like by now! I suppose with the new dog in the house, today was as good a day as any to have yet another snow day, but my poor husband is going to go crazy from shoveling all this snow! It's become almost a daily chore – just what he needed! And, the weather guys are saying that they're tracking ANOTHER system due here on Friday! They won't use the dreaded 4-letter "s" word though, it's kinda funny. They'll just call it a "weather system" and "let's see what it drops on us" – as if there's any chance it will bring something other than snow (that dreaded 4-letter word!), yeah right.

Hubby and I braved the weather last night to venture out to a movie for date night. Our date night is once a week on Tuesdays, and wouldn't you know it, it's snowed for the last like, 5 Tuesdays in a row, no exaggerating this time! Last week, our movie theater was CLOSED because of the snow – that stank. Instead of having a nice dinner, we got snacks at KFC cuz we were running late for the movie, and then we got there, and they were closed! So sick of this weather already! What did that groundhog say again?!? So anyway, we ventured to a neighboring town with a movie theater that's a little bigger; that way we could be assured it would be open. We saw Vantage Point, an action movie with Dennis Quaid, Forrest Whittaker, and Matthew Fox. And speaking of Groundhog Day, if you've seen that movie, even though it's a comedy, Vantage Point actually had something in common with it in that they kept showing the same scene over and over. The point of the movie

was to take the audience through an incident of terrorism, one perspective at a time. Dennis Quaid and Matthew Fox played secret service agents, and Forrest Whittaker was a tourist bystander who happened to catch everything on video. It was a satisfying action movie – MUCH better than Gone Baby Gone... I might actually say it was kinda like Groundhog Day meets In the Line of Fire, if you've seen that movie, since Dennis Quaid's character had been through an assassination attempt on the President before and was jumpy – just like Clint Eastwood's character in In the Line of Fire. If you like action movies, this one won't disappoint. I was actually surprised there wasn't a little more to the plot, and I can't believe the constant violence earned it only a PG13 rating. But when I think about it, I suppose you could see the same type of violence on tv any given night or even on cable during the day – it's just what has happened to entertainment these days, I guess. Vantage Point has constant action, the movie is never slow, and seeing the action from the different people's perspectives (vantage points ☐ get it?) was interesting and not at all confusing like I was concerned about. I found something at the end of the movie incredibly hokey, but then again, that's common in action movies, you gotta appreciate them for what they are.

imdb quiz

If you haven't been to the site imdb.com and you like and/or watch movies, I give you permission to take a break from my blog and visit it now: imdb.com

This site has everything about pretty much every movie: a list of the actors and crew involved with clickable links so you can see where else you've seen them if they look familiar

or where else to find them if you like their work, trivia about movies, quotes, discussion boards, and much more. They also have a movie rating system for users, so you can see if a movie is going to be worth the time to watch it according to popular opinion. Imdb lists keywords for movies, which I've often thought would make a fun game. I've posted some below for you to try. These are the keywords imdb has listed for some popular movies – I will give a hint – all but 2 are movies made pre-1990. Keep in mind that I didn't choose these keywords; imdb chose them for whatever reason and some can be quite strange! Let me know if you would like additional hints, I can give you genre, actors, or just random hints, happy guessing!

1. Punch / Kiss / Musclemans / Eggs / Fistfight
2. Bikini / Used Condom / Champagne / Broken Window / Brother Brother Relationship
3. Coming Of Age / Controversial / Fantastic / Wish / Wish Fulfillment
4. No Opening Credits / Tragic Incident / Talking Animal / Copyright Infringement / Falsely Accused
5. Planet / Concert Scene / Box Office Flop / Laser / Physicist
6. Miniaturization / Shrinking / Remake / Sword Fight / Toy Soldier

The Hitcher

Hubby and I watched this movie last night. Plot inconsistencies aside – it is a horror movie after all, so we

weren't expecting much – it was actually better than I thought. I really enjoyed how they let the main characters keep slipping away from the Hitcher, the bad guy, only to be back in danger... but I kept wondering, ok they're safe now, but the movie can't be over, so how are they going to get back in The Hitcher's clutches? The answers to these questions are an entertaining combination of extremely stupid and horrible decision making on the part of our "heroes" and also some pretty good plot maneuvers on the part of the script. There was also a lot of police involved in this movie, which, for a horror movie, is pretty rare. Usually once the main characters encounter the police, they are safe, but without spoiling TOO much for you, this film is different from the norm. Like I said, it was better than I expected. Not super-great, but I was never bored or grossed-out, both of which I can't say during my recent viewing of Saw IV – now that was an awful movie. I think part of it is the pregnancy, but I just couldn't handle the gore. It never bothered me before, but I always did find it annoying when they use lots of gore just for shock value. Now it's both annoying AND so gross I can't even watch it. And what was with the casting of Saw IV? They chose 2 actors who look exactly alike! Even if I was making a serious attempt to follow the plot of the film, which I wasn't anyway since I constantly had to divert my eyes and ears from all the gore, I wouldn't have been able to follow the movie because of the 2 identical actors they cast who were not supposed to be the same character but looked like it! Anyway, back to The Hitcher – I liked it better than Gone Baby Gone, but then again, it's a totally different kind of movie. If it weren't for some plot unbelievabilities and some of the STUPIDEST decisions I've ever seen main characters make, the movie would have been better. In review, if you like horror / suspense movies, see The Hitcher. By the way, I'm talking about the newer version, don't know anything about the older version, maybe I should give it a try. If you like pointless gore fests, I still wouldn't recommend Saw IV – I wouldn't recommend that movie to my worst enemy. If you want to sit

through a terrible movie, try The Night Listener – at least it has Robin Williams!

On an unrelated note, for those of you who have read my Walmart rant, during my weekly visit today, the “*magic price increase of the day*” was yogurt – up from \$.44 per container to \$.46 each. By the way, have you noticed that computer keyboards do not have a cents sign? If I’m mistaken, let me know, I have actually gone to use them before!

Oscar Party

We had an Oscar party last night. It was a lot of fun! We asked the guests to bring a \$5 item from home they would have put in a garage sale. Everyone filled out a ballot, and whoever got the most correct guesses (my husband out of sheer luck, can you believe it? He doesn’t know anything about the Oscars! Congratulations Honey!) chose an item first, followed by the person with the next most correct guesses, and so on. So, we got a cool looking food chopper. Haven’t tried it yet... I didn’t do too badly on the guessing, I got to choose fourth... but I was disappointed because the item I really wanted (needed, actually) had been taken by then... but I am happy with the food chopper, I’ll have to see how it works. What I really wanted were the set of metal padlocks, it sounds weird, I know... but we have this escaping parrot who needs all the doors on his cage padlocked – there are 3 – and he can bite thru plastic padlocks. The other day he got out of his cage and chewed the light switch plate off the wall... so I’m afraid we’re going to come home one day to fried parrot. But, who would have guessed that the padlocks would be in such high demand. Not my husband, who did get to choose first but thought the padlocks would be left for me to choose, so

instead he chose the food chopper for me – awww. But I really recommend doing award show parties, sports-watching parties, etc. this way, it's lots of fun, and it's really interesting to see what kind of stuff you end up with.

But enough about us and our party, let's move on to the real party... I didn't really see any of the red carpet this year – oh darn – cuz we were busy playing a game and then we watched Barbara Walters interviews, which I don't usually watch. I did see Hillary Swank, who I mistook for Halle Berry – don't know what that was about, but she looked really different, barely recognizable. I thought the show was supposed to start at 8, but it started closer to 9, which could explain why our poor friends were stuck here until midnight on a work night! I thought Jon Stewart did pretty well as host. He was pretty funny, but my favorite Oscars host is Ellen – I really wish they'd have her back. I got 8 of the 24 votable categories correct. Not an outstanding score, but among our party of about 10, I think it was about average. The only award contenders I saw this year were *Gone Baby Gone* and *Juno*. See one of my previous posts for a review of *Gone Baby Gone* and you'll see why I wasn't broken up about it losing out on its Oscar chance. I was glad to see *Juno* win for one of the screenplay awards – it was a really well written movie, and I recommend it to anyone who is not a teen. If you have a teen, watch out, and do not let them see this movie, as it totally glorifies teen pregnancy, makes it seem easy, and will most likely have them saying, what's the big deal, I can handle it, no problem. Enough of my rambling, here are the Oscar winners in case you can't find them anywhere else for some weird reason:

Best Motion Picture: “No Country for Old Men.”

Lead Actor: Daniel Day-Lewis, “There Will Be Blood.”

Lead Actress: Marion Cotillard, “La Vie en Rose.”

Supporting Actor: Javier Bardem, "No Country for Old Men."

Supporting Actress: Tilda Swinton, "Michael Clayton."

Director: Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, "No Country for Old Men."

Foreign Language Film: "The Counterfeiters," Austria.

Adapted Screenplay: Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, "No Country for Old Men."

Original Screenplay: Diablo Cody, "Juno."

Animated Feature Film: "Ratatouille."

Art Direction: "Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street."

Cinematography: "There Will Be Blood."

Sound Mixing: "The Bourne Ultimatum."

Sound Editing: "The Bourne Ultimatum."

Original Score: "Atonement," Dario Marianelli.

Original Song: "Falling Slowly" from "Once," Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova.

Costume: "Elizabeth: The Golden Age."

Documentary Feature: "Taxi to the Dark Side."

Documentary Short Subject: "Freeheld."

Film Editing: "The Bourne Ultimatum."

Makeup: "La Vie en Rose."

Animated Short Film: "Peter & the Wolf."

Live Action Short Film: "Le Mozart des Pickpockets ('The Mozart of Pickpockets')."

Visual Effects: "The Golden Compass."

Gone Baby Gone

Saw the movie *Gone Baby Gone* the other night... Had a free rental at the video store; every once in awhile they call and give us one... but I hate standing there forever trying to choose a good movie! So we had *Saw IV* in hand, and my husband's like, you know, we really haven't liked the last 2 *Saw*'s all that much, compared to the first one. So I said yeah, and I saw *Gone Baby Gone*, and since I'd heard it was supposed to be good, we went with it. Besides, it got Oscar nominated, and I always like to be in on Oscar buzz... Not my kind of movie. Not that it was bad, but just a lot of dialogue and violence... not my kind of movie. It was entertaining, and I appreciated the twists and turns without seeing them coming, though I can't say the same for Hubby. We like to give movies we watch our own imdb (internet movie database – cool site!) ratings, so I gave this one a 6.2. Hubby gave it a 4.2. I appreciated the movie for what it was, and I can't say much more without spoilers, so I won't. The bottom line is, if you like violent crime dramas with intense dialogue, this movie is for you. I personally have trouble following movies where they talk about a bunch of characters and the audience is expected to keep them all straight, but that's just me. A few plot inconsistencies, but my rating was kinda high because I did appreciate the complexity of the plot, even if it was a bit difficult for me to follow at times... so to quote one of my favorite movies, That's all I have to say about that.