

Mystery Alaska

With Alaskan Sarah Palin's eye on the White House and all the northern exposure in the media lately, we decided to pull out one of our old favorites the other night and watched the 1999 movie [Mystery Alaska](#). It's a pretty good movie and obviously has lots of replay value, at least for us, because we've seen it lots of times. It was interesting watching it this time since I think this is the first time we've seen it since we've moved into a small town, and the movie is all about small town living. The main difference between Mystery Alaska and my small town is the climate, of course.

In Mystery, residents' lives seem to revolve around hockey (and sleeping around, but don't let that give you the wrong idea about the movie. Every small town has its sordid secrets). Boys in Mystery grow up with the "goal" (pun intended) of getting to play in the famed Saturday Game. [Hank Azaria](#) plays a former Mysterian who left town because he was never good enough to play in the game. He becomes a writer for Sports Illustrated instead, although his success in the real world does not make him feel any more acceptance in Mystery, even if he does arrive in a helicopter. He gets the brilliant idea to bring the New York Rangers to Mystery to play the Saturday Game, and well, you'll have to watch the movie to see what happens. As in any small town, there is a bit of drama, and the movie is successful with its character development as it follows the lives of the most popular residents of Mystery. [Russell Crowe](#), who is not normally one of my favorite actors, is pretty good in this movie as the family man / town sheriff who is growing too old to play in the Saturday Game and must face some tough decisions about what is best for his family versus what is best for Mystery and the integrity of the Saturday Game. [Burt Reynolds](#) is excellent as the no-nonsense judge who also struggles as he raises his teenagers. In fact, perhaps the funniest line of

the movie is said to his character by his wife. She is consoling their teenage daughter, and he wants to know what's wrong. "Walter," his wife says, "if you don't leave, I swear I'll tell you!" If you have kids, especially teenagers, you can appreciate the truth and the humor in that line, more so if you see the movie and know the daughter's issue to which she is referring.

Even if you don't like hockey, this is an entertaining film with dramatic moments interspersed with comedy. Its one shortcoming is the fact that there is too much adult content for it to be considered as a family film. However, adults will enjoy the fine performances by the large ensemble cast which make *Mystery Alaska* a well-rounded, heart-tugging and entertaining film – definitely recommended by this blogger!