

Redbox Junkies

Now that the kids are back in school (2 out of 4 anyway), I have some (stress on the *some*, not a lot of) extra time to sit and blog again – something that wasn't made a priority over our busy summer. Among our summertime fun and adventures were many trips to the [Redbox](#). Surely you know what I'm referring to, for if we have such futuristic technology here in the NW Ohio boonies, then it must exist in most places. The Redbox is a machine (about the size of a gas station ATM on steroids) that distributes \$1 one-night dvd movie rentals. You can choose a movie for \$1 from any Redbox location (our small town has 3, just an example of how they are *everywhere*), and then you return your movie to any Redbox location by 9:00pm the next night. We first got hooked on the concept when we were on the way back home from Florida and the kids got sick of the movies we had brought for the car dvd player (poor things! Who's with me from the days when we were lucky enough to bring our Walkman on the trip with a couple of tapes!) . So anyway – we stopped at a Redbox at a McDonald's in Tennessee, the kids watched the movie a few times, and we returned it at a Walmart in Ohio – for just \$1! Ok, this is quickly and unintentionally turning into a plug...

So anyway, my husband and I got kind of hooked on the Redbox this summer, watching a movie almost every night – seriously! We went through a horror phase and watched many of a series called After Dark Horror Fest: 8 Films To Die For, and even though many of the movies (there were 8 movies in the series, but the series ran multiple years) in the series were low-budget, many were actually worthy of the recognition and worth watching. Among our favorites of the horror genre was Hack! starring none other than Danica McKellar, Winnie from the late '80's / early 90's tv show [The Wonder Years](#); as well as [The Hamiltons](#), a surprisingly great-for-what-it-is little horror flick.

Somewhere within the mix was a forgotten (though I liked it slightly more than my husband did) [Michael Moore parody](#) (making fun of Michael Moore movies, not done by Michael Moore) and the best Redbox movie **ever** called Sunshine Cleaning.

I highly recommend [Sunshine Cleaning](#). Don't let its similarities with another movie called [Little Miss Sunshine](#) get you confused. The two movies share the word *Sunshine* in their titles, an actor (the late Alan Arkin, wonderful in both roles), and some producers – but neither their plot lines nor their characters intersect. You can check out *Little Miss Sunshine* for yourself if you haven't already – I recommend that one as well. But *Sunshine Cleaning* is less mainstream and my husband and I enjoyed it immensely. It stars the talented Amy Adams as a single mom who, along with her flighty sister (Emily Blunt, also a really good actress), start a cleaning business, though it's not your normal, everyday cleaning business – they are hired to clean up extreme biological hazards, ie, crime scenes. What follows is a heartwarming tale which takes many entertaining and at times, comedic turns. The characters are well developed as is the plot, and the movie just makes for a well-spent evening – especially for just \$1. Again, I'm at risk here for sounding like a plug, but oh well! Go get *Sunshine Cleaning* from your local Redbox – you can even reserve online for pickup before you go!

Spread Some Sunshine

☒ Any family who sees themselves as dysfunctional needs to watch the movie *Little Miss Sunshine*. The Hoover clan gives new definition to the term. At the head of the household, we

have the motivational speaker (played by Greg Kinnear) who is himself a total loser. The frazzled, chain smoking mother (Toni Collette) whose idea of a home-cooked meal is a bucket of fast food chicken... cleverly disguised as NOT KFC. The clinically depressed, suicidal uncle (the brilliant Steve Carell) who lost the title of #1 Proust student to the new lover of his ex-boyfriend. The rebellious, teenage, Nietzsche follower who has taken a vow of silence (Paul Dano). **FINALLY**, we have the fun-loving, expletive shouting, drug addicted grandfather (Alan Arkin). They all pile into the family VW van in order to take little Olive (Abigail Breslin) from Albuquerque to Redondo Beach to compete in the Little Miss Sunshine beauty contest.

While on this road trip, the Hoover's learn some valuable lessons. You should never apologize for yourselves no matter how dysfunctional you are. Little girls who eat ice cream may or may not get fat. **AND** (strangest of all) pornography can be viewed as a sign from God; or at least be useful when pulled over by the police.

While the film contains a magnificent ensemble cast, one character in the movie deserves extra credit. The poor van that almost seemed to have a personality all its own. It should have been given a screen credit. Its broken horn gave voice to the pain it must have been feeling as it continued on the long journey with a bunch of kooks. Not since **THE ORIGINAL** Herbie the Love Bug has a Volkswagen been as memorable a character as any human.