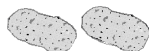




**HAVE I BEEN WATCHING
TOO MUCH TV OR
WHAT? I DIDN'T
REALIZE I WAS THAT
FAR BEHIND AT
THE VIDEO STORE.**

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DOOR TO DOOR



UNDERCOVER BROTHER



ORDINARY DECENT CRIMINALS



A bitter cold hovers over Spud Central. It leaks though the big ugly wooden front door, which appears to be impervious to any attempts I make at sealing it off with the plethora of insulating weaponry I have at my disposal. I feel so small and puny in the face of this cold. The Wife has decided that a gothic solution is what's needed here and that we should hang something heavy over the whole door and be done with it. Normally I would scoff at such an idea, but I feel she might be onto something here. The Princess of Pain has more or less healed up from the bronchitis that was keeping her housebound and has disappeared leaving us as ersatz empty nesters again. Unfortunately it's too damn cold to be doing much of anything except puttering around the house and watching TV. I'm still waiting for the much ballyhooed now shows to appear on the horizon, but until then we do what we can. There has been some awfully good football and basketball lately, which is my saving grace and the long Xmas re-run season is over so life is, as the Boy is fond of saying, all good.

DOOR TO DOOR (TWO SPUDS)

William H Macy is slowly but surely turning himself into a phenom in the movie business. I can't recall having seen him in a movie in which I wasn't totally impressed with his performance.

In *Door To Door*, Mr. Macy takes it to a whole other level. In this delightful little indie flavoured biopic, (originally made for HBO) which he also wrote, he plays a man named Bill Portman who is afflicted with cerebral palsy, a disease that, like a lot of other things in the fifties, was completely misunderstood.

Right out of the gate Mr. Macy has this character figured out completely. Playing someone whose speech, walk, movement, posture and attitude are all dramatically afflicted is the most difficult thing an actor is called upon to do. Only a few pull it off and these people are giants like **Daniel Day Lewis** (*My Left Foot*) **Leonardo Di Caprio** (*Gilbert Grape*), **Dustin Hoffman** (*Rain Man*) and **Mickey Rooney** (*Bill*) Well in this spud's opinion Mr. Macy is right there with these dudes.

Bill Portman was a door-to-door salesman with the Watkins Company, a company that seemed to sell just about everything. He got the job by volunteering to take the worst route the company had to offer and with patience and persistence he made it go, working it for almost his whole adult life. And as the relationship between Bill and his customers grew over the years, he became a friend and confidante to many of these people. He didn't inspire them with his courage or any of that crap. He just became a part of their lives and made a life for himself out of it.

The dignity with which Mr Macy plays this character is really something to marvel at. He has you wrapped around his finger throughout the whole film without anything even hinting at contrivance. He has you so solidly that you end up feeling sorry for him, not because he is so afflicted with this terrible disease, but because he is such a goddamn workaholic. You keep wishing he would just take a day off or something.

Door To Door is very well put together. It flows nicely through time and on top of everything else he has to do in this movie, Mr Macy much age fifty years. Wow.

This is a very a gentle movie that with a completely compelling performance that was done, I'm sure, strictly for the love of it. Not many people will see this movie and Mr. Macy will never get nominated for much of anything for his work in it. But that in no way diminishes the quality of his performance, which has to be seen to be believed.

UNDERCOVER BROTHER (ONE SPUD)

It's that old Steven Wright adage about the difference between fishing and standing on the shore looking stupid when you try to make a campy movie like **Undercover Brother**. Some people (like me and the Princess of Pain) thought it was campy and cute. Others (like The Wife), thought it was just plain stupid. Well there you go. I can't disagree about it being stupid. But then The Wife can't really disagree about it being campy and cute.

Because *Undercover Brother*, was campy, cute and stupid, the plot obviously doesn't matter and, even though I only saw it last night, I honestly can't remember what it was...just snippets ... Black President ... *Undercover Brother* ... Lot of jumpsuits and white leather ... Big-ass afro ... Cute bimbos ... Chris Kattan trying to be sinister (nice try) ... Gold Cadillac ... Plot to conquer the world ... James Brown ... Yadda Yadda.

None of this stuff matters. It's all like some two hour technicolour tone poem. If you like campy sends-ups of blaxploitation spy thrillers with cheesy effects and characters who look like they'd crack if you left them out in the sun for a few hours, then *Undercover Brother* (Pronounced Undakuva Brutha) is right up your cul-de-sac. If on the other hand, you tend to watch a lot of period dramas, are perfectly willing to judge a book or movie by its cover and only prefer certain types of humour that are either broader or narrower than campy cute humour, then you'd be wise to let this one slide.




ORDINARY DECENT CRIMINALS (TWO SPUDS)

I saw this movie a few years ago. It was called **The General** and it starred **Brendan Gleason** with a thick real Irish accent as a big time Irish mobster and thief. **Ordinary Decent Criminals** stars **Kevin Spacey** with a thinner, well-faked Irish accent as a big time Irish mobster and thief. In *The General*, Brendan Gleason has two families. So does Kev. In *The General*, Brendan Gleason swears up and down that he's just a regular fella trying to make a living. Ditto for Kev. In *The General*, Brendan Gleason is revealed to be a megalomaniacal sociopath who has a longstanding resentment of authority. You guessed it. Same for Kev. In *The General*, Brendan Gleason gets blown up in the driveway of his suburban tract house by the IRA, who repeatedly thumbed his nose at. Kev repeatedly thumbs his nose at the IRA too but does something slightly more interesting in the end, so I guess I didn't quite see the same movie. But I have to admit that though I liked *The General* a lot better, Kev was pretty damn good in this flick, in spite of the fact that it was a stone rip off.

Well that's all she wrote for this week. Have a great Super Bowl.



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SPUD RATING LEGEND	
	Check It Out / Was Worth It
	Take It Or Leave It
	Just Plain Sucks