

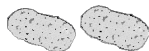
**ONE OF THE WORST
MOVIES I'VE EVER
SEEN AND ONE OF
THE BEST.
JUST ANOTHER WEEK
IN THE COTU.**

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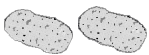
THE HARVARD MAN

NO SPUD 4U

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING



MIRACLES



VERITAS: THE QUEST



I guess you could call this the dog days of winter. Not a hell of a lot going on up here in the Deep Freeze that is the Centre Of The Universe. Slow and pokey. With a little bit of 24 hour flu thrown in for good measure. As I sit here I am completely in awe of the fact that at this time yesterday, I was feeling lower than a flea turd in a tire rut and yet, a mere 24 hours later, here I am back to my old perky self. The miracles of flat ginger ale and spring water. So let's see what there was to see this week.

HARVARD MAN (ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO SPUD 4 U)

File this under the "sacrifices I make for you" category.

*This film, written and directed by some yahoo named James Toback, whose only decent movie was **The Gambler (with James Cann)**, way back in the day, (1974), and who has been hanging around Hollyweird putting out little pieces of crap for the past quarter century. I made the mistake of thinking he was somebody else who actually had talent. So when I sat down to watch this movie, the abysmally bad story of a kid from Kansas who is going to Harvard, screwing a mafia princess and his philosophy professor, doing all the drugs he can find, looking for enlightenment and playing point guard for the Harvard basketball team, all I could think of was . ' Good Lord, save us from the Harvard educated' . I was actually fascinated by how bad this movie was on just about every level. So I hunkered down and watched it all the way through and I've got to tell you, this is far and away the most pretentious, badly directed, poorly acted, drastically overwritten, unimaginatively conceived, lazily photographed, cliché ridden piece of ersatz film making I have seen in a long, long time.*

Now comes you get to share my pain as I lay out the story here.

The Harvard Kid's parents lose their house in a tornado in Kansas. Of course they don't have any insurance. The Kid goes to the Mafia Princess (played with all the charm of a rat trap by Sara Michelle Gellar) and gets her to ask her father for one hundred grand so he can buy his folks a new house. The Mafia Princess gets The Kid to throw a basketball game so that she can bet a quarter million dollars on it. But the Bookie she uses is actually an FBI agent who, along with his Bimbo Girlfriend and having 3-way sex with a Philosophy Professor who secretly loves The Kid, is too cool to admit it, but saves his bacon when the FBI Agents/Bookies close in, concocting a scheme to blackmail them into leaving the Mafia Princess and her father alone so they won't put a contract out on The Kid, who they think will Rat them out.

Now that's just fifteen lines and you can imagine what the whole two hours must be like, especially when the better part of it involves watching The Kid have low budget hallucinations on the 15000 micrograms (lethal) of synthetic acid he took. It's called Sheer Hell. But I do it because I'm a hardworking Spud out to give my readers the truth. Well the truth is The Harvard Man actually give most movies that suck something to hope for.

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING (TWO SPUDS)

After weeks and weeks of trying to get out to see this flick, and being thwarted for one reason or another we finally connected with it up at the Kennedy Common, which for our money is the most comfortable theatre chain in the city, bar none. This chain is also a good place to catch a movie you may have wanted to see in

first run but not with a bunch of brain dead idiots. Oh sure, there are brain dead idiots everywhere, but out theory is the fewer the better and so we go to the Kennedy Common at lot.

I had a solid picture in my mind of what this movie would be like, but was delighted to see that apart from the principals, this was pretty much a Canadian-made flick. It was shot in Toronto and the supporting cast was pretty much all Canucks too. This film was written by and stars a lady named **Nia Vadalos** and pretty much has "This Is The Story Of My Life" written all over it. What surprised me the most about this film was just how genuinely funny it was, especially **Michael Constantine** as Nia's ultra-Greek father and **Andrea Martin**, as the craziest of her aunts.

The writing in this film is absolutely superb, especially when you consider just how hard it is to write a comedy that has nothing to fall back on but the characters. A lot of the humour in this film comes from the writer's ability to take the characters right to the point of overexaggeration, and only occasionally cross the line. Coming from an ethnic background myself, a lot of the stuff I saw rang so true (only in Italian), that I was chuckling pretty much all the way through this movie as my uncles and aunts and cousins all paraded across the screen. Greeks. Italians. What's the difference? Not much, Nia. Not much at all.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding was based on a play that Nia wrote when she was working at Chicago's Second City. Legend has it that it was seen by **Rita Wilson**, or **Mrs Tom Hanks**, who insisted that they produce it for the screen. The rest is history. This film has grossed nearly 200 million clams which just goes to show you that a lot of people will come out to see a movie, even if there are no car chases, murder and mayhem or trash talkin' street wise hip hoppers anywhere in sight.

MIRACLES (TWO SPUDS) (MONDAY 8PM ABC)

With the demise of the X-Files, a gaping hole has opened up in what I like to call 'Propellerhead TV'. So far this season there has been little if any attempt to fill it until **Miracles**. **IN A NUTSHELL: Skeet Ulrich** plays a disillusioned and cynical 'miracle' investigator for the Catholic church, who starts to question his faith because he's essentially good at his job, which turns out to be disproving miracles and breaking the hearts of the faithful. Skeet has a dishevelled **Johnny Depp** thing going on and is quite likeable and sympathetic in this role, which, in Propellerhead TV, counts for a lot. The production values are very much on the gritty side, but the music is outstanding and the religion is more political than spiritual.

The pilot episode, about a young kid who can heal people by hugging them, was kind of cliched, but I gave up looking for originality on TV back at Gilligan's Island. There are some nifty bits of business and a few threads that get woven into the story, designed primarily to set up the series premise. Needless to say, good old Skeet doesn't stay with Mother Church, cause, well, he's cynical and disillusioned and just naturally belongs in the private sector.

Overall *Miracles* was kind of interesting to watch. I'm pretty sure it has the legs to make it. But generally speaking, shows that have anything to do with organized religion hardly ever last on TV. I'm not sure why that is. It could have something to do with the fact that, for example, the Monsignor to whom Skeet has to report his findings, looks more like a cynical pompous ass Spanish Inquisitor than a man



of God sincerely looking for signs of divinity on earth. I'm sure that gets up the collective noses of just about every card carrying Catholic on the continent.

In the final scenes of the opening episode, the story started to veer away from the Church and over to the vacated X-Files parking spot. Good thing too because I'm thinking that an (anti) religious central theme will do in a show like *Miracles* long before it runs out of stories to recycle. I'll say a little prayer for this one.

VERITAS: THE QUEST (ONE SPUD) (MONDAY 10 PM ABC)

Oh oh, it's the Curse of Indiana Jones rearing its dusty head again as we witness yet another attempt to turn archaeology into a full contact sport. Despite its ultra-pretentious name, **Veritas: The Quest**, is actually a lot better series than you might think. First of all, it's a few notches up the food chain from the jiggly formula crap of **The Relic Hunter**. It was produced by the same dudes who did **Lara Croft--Tom Raider**, so there's lots of good fake archeological lore, Spielberg lighting and dust everywhere. **IN A NUTSHELL:** A father, an archaeologist workaholic, and his son, who can't seem to stay in school, investigate archaeological mysteries together, deal with their issues (cause in America there are always father/son issues), have a bunch of bad guys on their tail most of the time, seem to be well funded (cause archaeology on this level is a big budget gig), but no one is really sure by whom, and appear to be on some sort of mission to save the world from whoever it is that wants to take it over with all the cool archeological stuff they are finding. A mystery within an enigma. Oi! **FEARLESS FORECAST:** This is a big budget show whose fate is going to be in the hands of the audience and the advertisers. I thought there were logic flaws big enough to drive a Hummer through in the first episode, although I still thought it was mildly enjoyable to watch. But I don't really see this show going anywhere, mainly because I think this is the straw that breaks the back of glam archaeology shows for a while and it's too big a production to be supported by the cablenets and indies, so I'd have to say it's going probably going to tank after 6 weeks or so. Catch it while you can. It will soon return to dust, only to be dug up by future generations of derivative filmmakers.

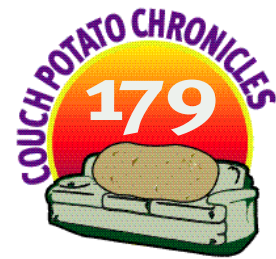
ARSEHOLE OF THE WEEK AWARD

The Wife and I are in firm agreement that this week big black smelly hole award goes to the programming geniuses at CTV who have moved one of the seasons best new shows into an obscure time slot that is impossible to remember.




The Show is **Everwood Colorado** one of the better written, acted and produced shows on TV. These CTV airheads have, in their wisdom, moved it from Monday night to Saturday afternoon at 5:00 PM. I'm not sure what these yahoos hoped to achieve by doing this but it's a real bonehead move for the simple reason that we have not seen it since it did move because we cannot, no matter how hard we try, remember to tape it or watch it at that time.

Thank God the show is doing well in the US, where the TV jugheads are obviously a lot more programming savvy than the clods at CTV. Hopefully, I will have trained myself to tape it by re-run time, when these dog biscuits will probably move it again.

Well that's all I got to say for this week. Take it easy, eh. Its slippery out there.



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