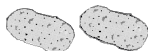


**ANDREW SMITH
TOLD ME HIS GIRL-
FRIEND WOULD GET
ALL EXCITED IF I
PUT HIS NAME IN
THE HEADLINE.
KNOCK YOURSELF
OUT, DUDE.**

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THE QUIET AMERICAN



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN



CHARMED

NO SPUD 4U

CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM



The Big Cold has taken on a life of its own. My life is all about Hall's Extra Strong, Fisherman's Friend (new Apple Cinnamon) bottle water by the gallon, Benylin DM Cough Syrup, Listerine, Tylenol, Drixoral and good old vitamin C. If I had to take a drug test they'd throw me in jail and toss the key. The Wife believes this is happening to me because I no longer have a sauna. I had one for 23 years and used it religiously every second or third day. I built a little stand so I could set my song lyrics on them and sing away where no one, mercifully, could hear me. Those were the good old days. Slowly but surely, in the last day or so, it does feel like I'm actually getting better. Or maybe I'm just too pleasantly drugged out to care about the fact that I'm not.

THE QUIET AMERICAN (TWO SPUDS)

My bud, and sometime contributor to these goings on, Andrew Smith and I hooked up downtown late last week to catch this flick at the Varsity. Being an east ender, upper beacher and now lower Scarberian, I had almost forgotten what it was like to be downtown at night. It's weird. It's dark and there were all these arty looking people walking around and filling up all these restaurants. I was astonished. I was also astonished by the fact that it cost \$13.50 to get into the goddam movie. (We're matinee people \$10 max).

Anyway, it was worth every penny, because *The Quiet American* is one of the best movies of the year that nobody will ever see. Based on a novel by **Graham Greene**, this story is set in the 1950s around the time the US invented the CIA and started screwing up things in Viet Nam, which 20 years later, led to one of their most horrendous blunders, The Viet Nam War.

The Quiet American stars Michael Kane, Brendon Fraser and a bunch of Asian actors who none of us know. Kane plays a married English foreign correspondent who is in love with this beautiful Vietnamese woman and is doing everything he can to remain there with her. Brendan Fraser shows up, allegedly as part of some US government sponsored medical mission, but Kane suspects that he's just blowing smoke. Yadda Yadda. Things become very interesting for Kane and Fraser and the embryonic, overly bullish US involvement in affairs they have no business being involved in.

The Quiet American is a slow paced film, but is very deliberate in its intent. There's enough local colour to keep you watching and a slow fuse of a mystery to keep you guessing. Michael Kane is outstanding. But he's one of those guys who always manages to quietly blow your mind with everything he brings to the party. The chemistry between him and Fraser is rock solid. My bud Andrew likes Brendon Fraser a lot. I personally think the guy is very versatile, and this is one of his best dramatic roles yet. He's kind of got that super wholesome Yankee look, but can also pull off the schnook thing too.

This movie is exquisitely photographed and the slow pace allows you to really appreciate all the craft at work here. It's also quite a

change of pace for big time Hollyweird action director Phillip Noyce, whose last film, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, also looks like it's also slightly left of mainstream.

I'm not sure why there isn't a lot more noise being made about this *The Quiet American*, pardon the pun. It's absolutely exquisite. But my theory, (there's always a theory), is that with the mighty US war machine, poised to eventually to plunge headlong into another Viet Nam-like adventure. (Iraq/North Korea take your pick), as it labours to eradicate the Axis of Evil, the timing is piss-poor for a movie, no matter how good, that exposes the roots of their last big failure. Am I right or am I right?

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN (TWO SPUDS)

Before *The Big Cold* hit me, the *Wife and I* snuck out and finally caught *Catch Me If You Can*. We're always late for everything because we hate sitting in crowded theatre with all the brain dead idiots who have to see everything on the first weekend.

Now every Steve Spielberg movie I have ever seen is *Two Spuds* all the way, so the rating for this flick is a foregone conclusion. I mean if there's one thing Steve knows how to do it's make great movies. And now that he owns his own production company, he's popping them out at an amazing rate. Dreamworks is easily the busiest studio and arguably the best studio in all of Hollyweird. So do I really have to review this movie? 'Cause, like what's the point? It was great. It was fun. It was exciting. It was everything it was a Steve Spielberg movie is supposed to be. And that's not me being a smart ass. It's me saying that if you know what you're doing, like Steve does, first you go out and find a great story. Then you hire the best people in Hollyweird to adapt it to the screen. You get the most popular actors on the planet to star in it. The best musical mind is show business to score it. The best craftspeople to work on it. And the world's best director (yourself) to direct it. So you're not going to end up with chopped liver. Not ever. Not even close.

Catch Me If You Can is a solidly entertaining, larger than life true life story of a kid, played with great zeal by **Leonardo Di Caprio** with "Father" issues, who turns into this incredible con man, gets rich, lives high, and eventually gets caught by a persistent bloodhound of an FBI guy, played by Steve's buddy **Tom Hanks**. It's great. Just like all the Steve Spielberg movies are. Just like they always will be. Cause let's face it, Steve gets it. I won't tell you to go see it, because you eventually will anyway. Anybody who goes to the grave without having seen every Steve Spielberg movie doesn't get into Valhalla. That's a little know fact that you now know.

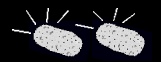
CHARMED (NO SPUD 4 U)

Last week, Andrew Smith gave me a tape of an episode of a WB series called *Charmed*. This show has been on the air for a couple of years now, and I guess has a niche with people like Andrew, who have the odd synapse misfire every now and then and fall in love with a show that's total crap. But he swears he's really hooked on it and I had never seen it, so I gave it a spin. Well I got through about 20 minutes and even though I was heavily sedated with all kinds of cold remedies, I found myself getting extremely anxious. I thought about it for



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THE ESSENTIAL PHILIP NOYCE



THE QUIET AMERICAN (2002)
RABBIT-PROOF FENCE (2002)
THE BONE COLLECTOR (1999)
THE REPAIR SHOP (1998)
THE SAINT (1997)
CLEAR & PRESENT DANGER (1994)
SLIVER (1993)
PATRIOT GAMES (1992)
BLIND FURY (1989)
DEAD CALM (1989)
ECHOES OF PARADISE (1987)

a moment and decided that the source of my anxiety was, very clearly, this show.

Andrew my brother, you have got to be kidding me. I mean the witch chicks are cute, I'll give you that, albeit Hollyweird cute, like Buffy. But they're all nothing more than vacuum-headed valley girls, and not in Paula Abdul's league. Every time they use their little Witch Powers, they appear to have to ask permission from what I can only assume is the warlock jock man boy who appears to have knocked up one of them. What the hell kind of witches are these? Certainly not the take charge type. They're as whipped as witches get. And the script writing bears all the earmarks of having been stitched together from the hard work of a thousand monkeys with highlighters and copies of the Witches Spellbook.

Now Andrew's gonna say, "Dude, don't you think that's a bit harsh?" To which I will reply, "Dude, it's a harsh world where quality is quality and crap is crap." My theory here is that Andrew thinks I've gotten a little soft, since my gushy review of the Gangs Of New York, (and especially Daniel Day Lewis' stellar performance), so he gave me something he knew was crap to review, hoping that dissecting this sick little puppy of a show would help me get my edge back. Thanks Andrew. I needed that.

CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM (TWO SPUDS FOR ME, AT LEAST)

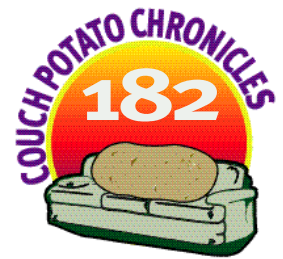
This is an adult sitcom that's been running for a couple of years on HBO and has finally made it up here. It's created by and stars **Larry David**, who is the zillionaire Hollyweird guy who created, among other things, but most notably, **Sienfeld**.

I must confess to liking certain things about this show every much and finding one thing about it slightly irritating. What I like is that it's very much about the ordinary flotsam and jetsam of life like Sienfeld was. Larry David plays himself, basically a Jewish guy who lives in LA, who doesn't appear to work, although he has an office and an agent, who mostly acts like a real dick to everybody around him including his best friend, manic comedian **Richard Lewis**, and appears to be trying to have whatever passes for a normal life out there. Each episode is very much a 'What goes around, comes around' type of scenario, where Larry acts like an asshole in act one then gets his slightly delayed karma in act two. And this is what irritates me about the shows--that they are, specifics aside, all kind of the same. You notice this even more when you see two episodes back-to-back as Showcase has been airing them.

But you know what--it's not a big deal. These shows are funny and nutty and filled with intelligence. I find myself relating to Larry David, in spite of the fact that I am nowhere near the zillionaire he is. He worries and gets pissed off about a lot of the same things I do. In fact, if I was a big shot in LA, we'd probably have Lakers' season's tickets in the same section of the Staple's Centre.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT 24

When you watch as much TV as I do, you tend to gain a little perspective. So here's what I know as of right now. There are, most thanks to reality programming, way more crappy shows than good ones. There are a few great shows. And then there is **24**. It's still in a class of it's own. Still head and shoulders above anything out there for pure adrenaline, addictiveness, action, anticipation and just about anything else you can think of. Till next week adios my spudos.



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SPUD RATING LEGEND



Absolute Must See



**Check It Out /
Was Worth It**



**Take It
Or Leave It**



**Just Plain
Sucks**