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'The Mothman Prophecies'

by Daniel Stasiewski
staff writer

Ever since the first promo for "The Mothman Prophecies" was released, the phrase "based on true events" has been emphasized again and again. For most films such a tagline wouldn't be very peculiar, but for this one it's

mover. The over-extended initial character building, however, soon gives way to an onslaught of chills in a creepy "X-Files-esque" tale. There's no reliance on the cheap scares from a synthesizer boom in this film. "The Mothman Prophecies" is able to provoke pure terror based on its premise alone. With this solid

is the surprising standout among the cast members. Even with her short screen time, Messing gives a ghostly performance that never allows her to be forgotten.

While the cast does their best to work around Hatem's unenviable words, director Mark Pellington takes the creepy story and makes it



Richard Gere plays John Klein, a man trying to discover how his wife was killed in the thriller "The Mothman Prophecies."

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCREEN GEMS

another story. Based on paranormal occurrences in a small West Virginia town, "The Mothman Prophecies" asks for skepticism to be put aside in exchange for an above average sci-fi thriller.

John Klein (Richard Gere) is the star reporter for the Washington Post. Two years after his wife Mary (Debra Messing) died of a rare form of cancer, John is mysteriously drawn to the small town of Point Pleasant, W. Va. There he discovers the citizens are witnessing a giant moth-like entity, which happens to be the same creature his wife saw before predicting her own death.

One citizen named Gordon (Will Paton) starts to receive premonitions of disasters abroad from the mouth of the creature. Soon the premonitions turn into warnings of a catastrophe in their own town. With the help of Sgt. Connie Parker (Laura Linney), John hopes to determine the reason behind the enigmatic Mothman's appearance before its predictions come true.

At first, "The Mothman Prophecies" is an ambiguous slow

foundation, the film is able to hold water in the face of a few major hindrances.

Writer Richard Hatem causes a real setback with his dreadful stringing together of words that substitute for real conversation. Tremendous actors like Linney and Gere spew out Hatem's mechanical dialogue so uneasily, it often feels like the film is completely told by a narrator. Occasionally, the dialogue doesn't seem too distracting, but only during periods of tremendous suspense or superior acting. Without strong performances, Hatem's words could have been the flame to this moth.

Gere is unexpectedly impressive in his role as Klein. The psychological downward spiral portrayed by Gere is easily his best work since "Primal Fear." His co-star Linney is fantastic only because she receives some of the worst lines and manages to give an emotional performance in spite of them. Supporting actor Paton is extraordinary as he moves from abrasive to childlike. His pivotal role is played out to perfection. Messing

particularly chilling. While his blurring of lights and objects is nothing new, the tricks Pellington plays on the eyes seem more appropriate in a film that thrives on the unseen. His control over the massive and unpredictable climax proves he not only has talent but also knows how to utilize it. Although some lighting techniques are irritatingly ordinary, Pellington's achievements distract from any disappointments.

Even if "The Mothman Prophecies" isn't a brilliant film, its genuine thrills and chills make for a great popcorn movie. Entertainment may not be what the real Klein (John A. Keel) was hoping to accomplish, but the true story of "The Mothman Prophecies" is another spine-chilling escape from reality for the rest of us.



'My Sister's Keeper:' What is going on inside her head?

by Jeanine Noce
A & E editor

This past Sunday an extremely intense and emotional movie aired on NBC, "My Sister's Keeper." This compelling drama is based on the actual facts concerning a woman battling a mental illness. Millions of people in the United States deal with various types of mental illnesses everyday and this movie allowed viewers to analyze and understand the complexity of the disease.

The reality based drama dealt with two sisters, Christine and Judy, and their journey of discovery in life. The movie began with the two as young children. Christine is a chronically depressed and angry individual who constantly hears voices and sounds in her mind. Helen Chapman, who plays Christine and Judy's mother is a widow who never understood Christine's problem. She was not very understanding and patient with her.

Mrs. Chapman decided to enroll Christine in a boarding school to see if living with other young women would help her to become a happy individual. At the hospital, Dr. Bartolio discovered that Christine had a severe problem. Due to Christine's illness she was not able to sleep or eat. She continuously heard loud muffled noises and became dizzy quite frequently. It was disturbing to see how her mother was not able to understand that her daughter was not mentally stable.

Dr. Bartolio diagnosed Christine with schizo-effective disorder when she was 16 years old. This illness entails having thinking and feeling problems. It is extremely hard to watch her mother and sister begin to understand how to deal with her emotional battles, especially when they would attempt to speak to her and she would not be able to comprehend anything.

"My Sister's Keeper" showed the different stages of the mental illness and what can happen to a person who forgets or neglects to take medication. The emotional ups and downs, as difficult as they may be, made Judy and her mother stronger people.

Mostly everything was normal, due to the help of an assistant named Grace, until their mother had a severe stroke and died. Judy, who was an art director in New York City, was faced with the problem of how to care for her mentally ill sister who did not want to be cared for.

The movie also showed the viewers how others being happy around a mentally ill person can make that person severely depressed. Christine was not able to accept others being successful and happy. The thought of happiness made her even more depressed and unhappy and she would frequently have to admit herself to the hospital.

At the end of the movie, Christine grows tremendously as an individual and begins to understand her problem. She eventually learns that medication is a needed step to helping her to stay clear of having a mental breakdown.

Christine's view on life is the same as thousands of others. Her perception of the simplest things can be altered by her mind. This problem and many other mental disorders can be treated with medication. This movie also allowed viewers to see that the perception of the world is astronomically different daily for people with mental disorders.

Kathy Bates (Christine) was excellent at expressing her character's full range of emotions. The struggle and pain were brought to life by her in this movie. Elizabeth Perkins (Judy) was a strong asset to the film. She showed how confusing and difficult it can be to have a mentally ill sister. Lynn Redgrave (Helen) showed the audience how a mother can overlook her own daughter's illness, which occurs frequently in the United States.

After viewing this film, many may become aware of a mental illness that they themselves or a close friend or relative may have. "My Sister's Keeper" was a well designed drama that can make an individual become more understanding of the problems people can face. The film ended with the website: www.thera-chat.com as a key to understanding the problem.



Chris Flix's Video Picks

A weekly entertainment guide to the current movie rentals

Once again, Behrend movie watchers, Chris Flix returns on the scene to give you this week's movie winner and stinker.

Right about now I'm sure many of you are starting to feel the weight of this semester's classes. I know I am. That is why this week's movie winner is a movie that will add some comic relief to your life. "Rat Race," starring the likes of Cuba Gooding, Jr., Seth Green and Whoopi Goldberg is a hilarious comedy about a bunch of gamblers set out on a race to win \$2 million. If you have even the slightest sense of humor, I promise this movie will have you laughing out loud. It has everything, from Lucy impersonators to a narcoleptic foreign guy, and I won't even begin to talk about the hilarious Hitler incident. Bottom line: any movie with Newman from "Seinfeld," John Cleese, Jon Lovitz and good old Mr. Bean is a guaranteed winner. I highly recommended "Rat Race" if you want a nice break from the spring semester blues.

Chris Flix Grade: B+

I feel bad doing this because the star of this week's stinker has had a rough couple of months, and I know I won't be the first person to give her movie a bad review. "Glitter," starring Mariah Carey and Da Brat, in all total honesty was not as bad as the world makes it out to be. I made it through the whole thing, which is a

lot more than I can say for many other movies. But don't get me wrong; it was a pretty bad movie. Carey plays Billie, a rising star with your typical rising star problems that you can pull out of any "Behind The Music" episode. This movie had more cheese than Wisconsin, and the acting was as believable as...well, let's just say that I doubt Da Brat will be picking up the Best Supporting Actress Oscar. The movie had its brief moments, and Carey looked good, but "Glitter" turns out to be nothing but a slow, predictable

two-hour music video with a little bit of drama thrown in to the mix.

Chris Flix Grade: D

Now you movie watchers need to get to the video store. Take my word for it. This is Chris Flix, your number one movie man, and I will see you next week.

Chris used to be a manager at a movie theatre in Virginia and is currently an employee at Blockbuster Video.



"Rat Race" is a comedy where people race against each other to win \$2 million.

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New Releases

Movies

- 'Birthday Girl'
- 'Slackers'

Video*

- 'Atlantis'
- 'The Princess and the Warrior'
- 'Rat Race'

Music*

- Shaquille O'Neal
- Charlie Daniels
- Global Hits 2002
- Arrested Development (Classic Hits)

DVD*

- 'Atlantis'
- 'Beverly Hills Cop I, II, III'
- 'Groundhog Day'
- 'The Sandlot'
- 'Rat Race'

*Release Date: 2/1

Movie picks

- ★ Outstanding
- Worthy effort
- ▼ So-so
- A bomb

	Chicago Tribune	Dallas Morning News	Detroit Free Press	Miami Herald	N.Y. Daily News	Orange County Register	Philadelphia Inquirer	Seattle Times
Black Hawk Down (R)	★	★	■	★	★	■	■	■
... Monte Cristo (PG-13)								
I Am Sam (PG-13)								
Lantana (R)	★							★
Mothman ... (PG-13)	●							
Orange County (PG-13)	●							
Snow Dogs (PG)	●							
Walk to Remember (PG)	●							

G All ages admitted
PG All ages admitted, parental guidance suggested

PG-13 Parents strongly cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13

R Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or guardian