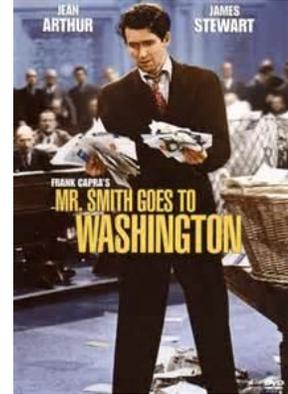


Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

(1939; 2 hours, 9 minutes)

Directed by: Frank Capra

Starring: Jimmy Stewart, Jean Arthur, Claude Rains



It is important at the outset for me to confess my affinity to all things political. I like political dramas and novels; I read books on the history of politics and politicians and I enjoy reading books about current events and political processes in our country.

I also follow politics very religiously – I watch the primary election returns. I observe the goings on in Washington and I suspect that I will be sitting for an extended period of time come election night (as is my custom) just to see who wins, who loses and to see what is in store for the next years for our country.

I will readily admit that in my years of observing the political scene that I have become quite cynical and disappointed in politicians of all political leanings. And that is why, every time I am feeling cynical, depressed, disappointed or discouraged about our politics I pull out this movie and I dream.

The plot is fairly straight forward – a small town, dew-eyed, innocent man is drafted to become Senator and is ushered into the deceptive world of political lies, shenanigans and back-room deals, designed to enrich a selected few. Though the movie is nearly 80 years old, there is a relevancy in the topic that still resonates today. Stewart, as the innocent young man, takes on the system and just when you think he is licked, he carries the day.

I recognize that this is an optimistic outlook on the corruption of politics coming face to face with justice and everyday common goodness – but one can dream. And in our world of corrupted politics, bloviating politicians and a society cynical about governmental ethics, dreams such as these are important as well as inspirational and aspirational.

I watch this movie quite regularly and heartily recommend it because it inspires me – it inspires hope that our politics could rise above partisanship and division.

I watch this movie because it helps me to believe in the conviction that right will ultimately win over wrong and corruption.

I watch this movie because it makes me feel better about the world we live in – and the world we could live in.

I watch this movie because it makes me want to make a difference in the world in which I live – I want to be the Mr. Smith of my life – the one who stands for that which is right; the one who takes on the David and Goliath challenges and the one who experiences the triumph of the good over the evil.

I highly recommend the movie, not just as a movie, but as an inspiration for what our politics could be and should be!