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Is Hollywood Good for Mathematics? (a brief discussion).

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Is Hollywood Good For Mathematics?

(a brief discussion)

Christopher Goff
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Question

- How are mathematicians and their mathematics being portrayed in film and on television?
  - Good Will Hunting ($138M)
  - A Beautiful Mind ($170M)
  - Proof ($7.5M)
  - Stand and Deliver ($14M)
  - NUMB3RS (13.9M viewers)
  (figures from imdb.com and usatoday.com)
Question

• What ramifications do these portrayals have on our students and on the general public?
  – Will Hunting
  – (Crowe’s) John Nash
  – Catherine
  – (Olmos’) Jaime Escalante
  – Charlie Eppes
Agree or Disagree?

• Hollywood raises awareness of mathematics.
• Hollywood humanizes mathematicians.
• Hollywood equates mathematical ability with social, psychological, or medical disorder.
• Hollywood portrays real math.
• Hollywood deals in stereotypes that may discourage students.
Is Hollywood Good For Mathematics?