

J. Edgar

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What do I know about J Edgar Hoover? He died when I was six years old. I grew up with the more of the folklore of J. Edgar Hoover than the historical look. The same might be said about the new film, J. Edgar, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

Here's what I knew about Hoover going into the film: he was perhaps a cross-dresser, had a lot of dirt on a lot of influential people, was all about wire tapping, and he was the director of the FBI. I came out of the film with a better awareness of what made Hoover tick, thanks to a well-written historical account and very good performance from DiCaprio. I also gained very interesting insights into the Lindberg kidnapping case of the 1930s, and how that gave rise to the FBI's jurisdiction and investigative prowess.

The problem with the film was several sluggish sequences and an overall laborious pacing. The film traveled between 1930s to the late 1960s, but the transitions were sometimes jarring and clumsy. The subject matter was presented in a straight-laced format that could have done more to capture the essence of this eccentric character. The folklore remains, no true answers are offered, and the performances were all very good but nothing truly outstanding. So instead of leaving the theater saying, "What a great film," you say, "Eh, not bad I guess, got through it."

Still, I do expect to see this film nominated for an Oscar or two. Certainly, DiCaprio will be hoping to finally receive the pinnacle award that has eluded him thus far despite being nominated three times. Or maybe that nomination will have to wait another year (rumor has it he will be starring as Frank Sinatra in a film to start shooting next year, and he is starring as Jay Gatsby in another iteration of The Great Gatsby filming now). More likely the award will receive a supporting nomination, perhaps for make-up. DiCaprio's look was outstanding (not as much with co-stars Armie Hammer and Naomi Watts).

You see how I'm doing that... already talking about the Oscars? Well, it is about that time of year. So here's a little "save the date" for the Cape May Film Society's "Pre-Oscar Party," Sunday February 26 at 6:00 p.m. at Mad Batter. This was a big hit last year with red carpet, wonderful buffet, cool prizes, and a time to talk movies with good friends. And to get a free ballot for great prizes, be the first to email the answer to this question (without looking it up!) to capemayfilm@hotmail.com: name two of the three movies DiCaprio for which has been Oscar nominated!