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

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Christopher Goff

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Joint Meetings, San Antonio, 2006

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?