



FILM: **AMERICAN ANIMALS**

FDG RATING: 2.5 ☹️ 😐 😐 🕒 🕒

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Bart Layton: *director*  
Barry Keoghan: *actor, Spencer Reinhard*  
Evan Peters: *actor, Warren Lipka*

DATE: July 22, 2018

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **AMERICAN ANIMALS**

The name of the film probably has a double reference: first as a derogatory descriptor of the four college friends who stupidly decide to steal the rarest and most valuable books that are secured in locked displays in Transylvania University's library. Worth millions of dollars, they actually thought they could pull it off and achieve the misguided American dream of extravagant wealth.

The second tie-in to the film's title is an extremely rare, gigantic, volume of John James Audubon's Birds of America, the main object of their desire, worth more than twelve million dollars. Note that the bird group is one of six basic animal groups. Massively displayed in a locked glass case, the gorgeous illustrations really are worth coveting.

Spencer Reinhard, Warren Lipka, Eric Borsuk and Chas Allen are "good kids", from good families, living an ordinary existence in Lexington, Kentucky. Watching the film unfold, it's hard to believe that this is a true story. These four actually attempted, what has been described, as one of the most audacious heists in US history. It's a comedy of errors, that is propelled forward by peer pressure and a feeble attempt to inject purpose and excitement into their ordinary lives. Director, Bart Layton, effectively used the cinematic approach of interspersing the action of the characters with narrative commentary from the real young men (a la I Tonya) who contradict each other as they recall what happened.

Some funny scenes were when they decided to be disguised as old men "so they wouldn't be noticed", and meticulously applied their make-up, styled their hair and clothing. One of the worst scenes was watching them "neutralize the librarian" using a taser to get her keys to the locked cases.

Many critics praised the film as an audacious crime caper, but most participants in our film discussion group didn't care for the premise and only a few made the effort to see the film which quickly left our local theaters. Those who saw it thought it was too slow. Watching four smirking, bored young men, botch a stupid crime, probably isn't worth the cost of the tickets and 2 hours of time. The result is a low esteemed score of 2.5 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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