



FILM: **THE BLACK MASS**

FDG RATING: 3.25



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

Director: Ridley Scott

Actor: Johnny Depp (Whitey)

Actress: Jessica Chastain (Melissa Lewis)

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2015

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE BLACK MASS**

Possibly the most important thing we learn from the film, *The Martian*, is that potatoes could sustain human life on Mars. Also, never go without duct tape. The story is about a mission to Mars that is forced to abort its exploration of the planet and follow directives to return to earth without astronaut Mark Watney, who is presumed dead, following a fierce storm. Luckily, Watney is not dead and happens to be a scientist who summons all of his Mac Gyver ingenuity to survive with only meager remaining supplies.

According to our own resident past aerospace employee, the film was very realistic. Our film critics who had spent years as school teachers appreciated the focus on problem solving and that science was actually put to practical use.

Although predictable, we were pleasantly entertained, even as Matt Damon's performance as Watney was a far cry from his much more exciting role in the Bourne Identify series.

The cinematography and special effects were convincing, the desert landscapes of the Red planet radiated a sparse beauty, not at all cruel or menacing, helping Watney to stay hopeful, even in the face of unimaginable odds. One reviewer noted that Mars looked very much like Utah. The effect was a sense of cosmic galactic and familiar mundane at the same time. (The actual film locations were Budapest, Hungary, where approximately 20 sets were built on one of the largest sound stages in the world. Wadi Rum in Jordan was also used as a practical backdrop for filming.)

Several reviewers commented that the book was much better, more suspenseful with more challenging mishaps. All in all, a better than average Hollywood film, sprinkled with humor, and a feel good ending without being too sappy, we gave *Martian* a respectable 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



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See you at the movies!

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