

Get On Up



Good morning, y'all. The weather is a little better, as is the coughing and hacking that has become my existence. We had a few hours of high winds, the blowing variety, not the tornadic variety. I understand some folks lost power due to the lines blowing down. I understand that burying lines underground keeps them from all sorts of peril. Would a lineman still be a lineman if the line was buried underground?

This was one of the great mysteries I pondered as we drove over to the Walmart in Blairsville. I was intent on picking out a good movie for our date night after being short changed last week by the Bread brood. I figured I'd go all the way to the \$11.99 discount bin if necessary to find a good movie. Heck, I might even look at the racks. I needed something with an adult theme, not too adult mind you, to get back on track after last weekend.

The \$2.99 and \$3.99 bins were filled with anime and Care Bears stuff. Just what I was trying to avoid. I found a copy of "***Steel Magnolias***" in the \$7.99 bin, and that was going to be my fall back if nothing better turned up. Fortunately the \$9.99 bin held a winner, "***Get On Up***", the story of James Brown. Being a movie specifically about a black person that was not involved in a group of white people blowing things up, the movie had not played at the The Bijou. Although he was born in South Carolina, most of us consider James Brown one of the most famous Georgians ever. After all, he started singing gospel over in Toccoa, which is just down the road a bit from here. He lived all of his life in Georgia and died in Atlanta, so I'm willing to call him a native son.

The movie recounts Brown's life from the time he recognizes he is alone in this world and has to hustle for himself, until the end. In the early scenes Brown appears to be about eight when he is out hustling on the streets trying to take care of himself. He is influenced by the showmanship of an Evangelical minister and finds that he has a voice as well. As Brown hones his craft and his voice, he teams up with a group of singers that bill themselves as "***The Flames***". The band evolves into James Brown

and the Famous Flames and all of the hard feelings that come from one member being more famous than the others, rises to the top.

Eventually all but one member of the original group quits, and James Brown goes on without them. The movie reinforces the fact that James Brown was a perfectionist, but he expected perfection from his self as well. He was a man whose talents allowed him to meet Presidents and heads of state, but he never lost his common touch. He continually worked to reinforce pride within the black community, and his iconic, **"I'm Black and I'm Proud"** has stood as an anthem for black children since it was released in 1968.

James had an eye for the ladies and was married at least four times. After his death, there was a huge squabble over his will, as there always seems to be. Ex-wives and children were coming out of the woodwork to claim their share of James Browns legacy. In fact, I don't know if it is settled today, the movie did not cover that part.

The movie did cover a lot of his music with Chadwick Boseman doing a very fine job of portraying Brown through the years. I can't imagine how hard Boseman must have worked to get Brown's dance steps down, even for the little short bursts shown on the film. It was good to see Dan Akroyd in the role of Brown's manager and Octavia Spencer in the role of Brown's aunt. In fact the movie was very well cast with Craig Robinson playing the part of Maceo "come blow your horn" Parker.

It was good a Date night pick, more so for the songs than the theme. I'll leave you with the reminder of what a great entertainer Jame Brown was. This song was originally cut in 1955: