

## Gone Baby Gone



Good morning, y'all. A little windy, but otherwise a perfect day here in the mountains. It looks like we're going to have dry, pleasant weather for the next few days. That's good, because I'm a little behind on my landscaping and my Spring "honey do's". I'm not sure if the list gets longer each year, or if I'm slowing down. Either way, there's a strong possibility of running out of Spring before running out of list.

I did take time out of my busy schedule to ride into Blairsville to the Walmart with Mulva. They were having a "Black Friday" sale on Azaleas, five for \$20.00, so I thought I'd load up. Azaleas are just a good all purpose bush for the South. They're fairly easy to grow, they grow fairly quick, and they flower up each Spring real nice. The fact that you can buy them real cheap is just icing on the cake for me. It's funny that the Azaleas first cousins, the Rhododendrons are so much more expensive. It's like the Azaleas are the poor relations of the Southern flowering bush family. Maybe that's why I like them so much, I'm certainly the poor relation of my family.

Speaking of families, I picked a family themed movie for this week's Date night, without realizing how family themed it was. I chose **"Gone Baby Gone"** from the \$5.99 discount movie bin at the Walmart. I remembered seeing the previews at the Bijou back when the movie was coming out, but we never got the chance to see it. It stars Casey Affleck, little brother of Ben. Big brother Ben did the directing, which was one of the family "affairs" going on in the movie. The movie also starred Ed Harris and Amy Madigan, who are real life husband and wife. So there's lots of family interplay before we even start talking about the movie.

As the story starts, Casey Affleck delivers a soliloquy about how the things that truly define us, are the things that we can not change. **"I always believed it was the things you don't choose that makes you who you are. Your city, your neighborhood, your family."** Where we're born, when we are born, and who are family are, are all things we have no control over, but shape who we are. It was a nice setup to opening a story about a relatively stable couple who could not have

children, but doted on their niece. The niece is the daughter of the husband's drug addicted sister, and she has just been abducted.

As the story begins, the TV cameras show the mom pleading for the child's return. The character of the mom is played very convincingly by Amy Ryan. The mom's character is concerned about the child, as long as the recovery of the child doesn't cause her any inconvenience. The aunt and uncle are not content with the pursuit of the kidnapers by the Mom, or by the police. They enlist the aid of a private detective, played by Casey Affleck, to help negotiate the seedy underworld of Boston. Casey Affleck's character is ably assisted by his girlfriend who is played by Michelle Monaghan.

As the story unfolds, we find that the Mom's participation in ripping off her drug dealer might have been the motivation for the kidnapping. Casey Affleck's reconnecting with the miscreants of his youth provide the means of unraveling the tapestry that is the kidnapping. There are twists and turns aplenty and enough deviant characters to fill a banquet hall. Eventually the child is returned to her mother, but that's not necessarily the good news. Casey Affleck returns the child to the drug addicted slutty mom at the expense of all of the good people who were lined up to help the child attain a better life, including her aunt. The moral dilemma is doing the "right thing", when the right thing is going to eventually be the wrong thing.

If I was the Boston Chamber of Commerce, I think I'd ban Ben Affleck from setting a movie in Boston. I think he's done three or four movies that portray Boston as the Calcutta of the Northeast. I can think of only **"Good Will Hunting"** to offset the negative imagery of bank robbers, kidnapers, deviants and gangsters. It's funny that Affleck remembers Boston in such a seedy fashion. He grew up in Cambridge, the home of Harvard. Maybe there's more going on at Harvard than meets the eye.