

Chasing The Frog

When friend and fellow blogger Derek came to visit last weekend, he brought along his blu-ray player. For those of you who don't know, that's a type of movie player which plays a special kind of dvd in high definition – hope I explained that well enough; it's not like I know that much about it myself. So anyway, we chose the movie 21 – even though I've seen it, it was interesting to see it in superior visual quality. I really didn't think I'd notice a difference – it's not my style to care about such things, but I actually did notice the clarity. I could actually see the grain on the paper of the deck of playing cards. And the opening scenes of the movie are sweeping views of the city of Boston, which were really enjoyable eye candy on the blu-ray.

So anyway, while watching the movie again, I began to wonder exactly how much of it is a true story. I have my laptop right in the living room, so I looked it up while watching the movie. It was interesting because Jeff Ma, the “real” Ben Campbell (the main character in 21) actually makes a cameo in the movie -and I found this out in enough time to be able to spot him. I found out a bunch of other interesting info as well, and [here is a cool site](http://chasingthefrog.com) called chasingthefrog.com where you can compare famous movies with the stories upon which they were based. Here I found out that Jack Dawson's sketches in the Oscar-winning movie Titanic were actually drawn by the movie's director, James Cameron. Not that I can stand that movie – it think it's horribly exploitative to invent a romantic plot not even remotely based on reality about an historical disaster which claimed thousands of lives. I decided to give it a shot once, and I tried to open my mind a little, but I still didn't like what I saw – it seemed cheesy, hokey, and unrealistic, not to mention that it almost cheapened the very horrendous event whose story it attempted to tell. Anyway, I also found out from this site that there

was only one black victim of the Titanic disaster – a second class passenger named Joseph Phillippe Lemercier Laroche. As the website tells it, he loaded his wife and daughters onto a life boat and went down with the ship. Even more sadly, his wife gave birth to their son later that year. Here is a family picture:



The site only has a handful of movies to compare to actual events, but its comparisons are very interesting and insightful; including a picture to picture comparison of people and the actors who portrayed them – very cool, check it out!

21

There's been lots of talk of this number on my blog lately, but this time I'm referring to the movie [21](#), not the tv show. I have to admit, I was a little reluctant to see this movie because the previews reminded me of [Ocean's 11](#), and I was not a big fan of that movie. I also thought I might have trouble following the movie 21 because I don't know how to play many of the popular card games prominent in Las Vegas; like poker,

and most importantly Blackjack. But I didn't have trouble following the movie, and I actually enjoyed it from start to finish. It was a good mix of action, thoughtful dialogue, good acting, and plot twists; all of which add up to a well-balanced and entertaining film.

The movie revolves around a college professor, played by the enjoyable and versatile Kevin Spacey, who trains a "club" of gifted math students to excel at the game of Blackjack. They develop a system and take trips to Las Vegas to win lots of money. Enter student Ben Campbell, the club's newest recruit, who only wants enough money to pay for his dream of attending Harvard medical school. He gets caught up in the lifestyle, however, and it's interesting to see what happens next... I won't spoil it – it's a good movie, go see it!