

A Beautiful Mind

Directed by Ron Howard & Written by Akiva Goldsman

Reviewed by Mia Foglesong

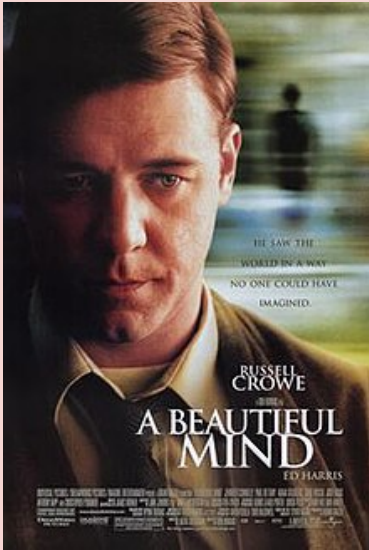


Image by North American theatrical release poster

A Beautiful Mind is based on the life of John Nash who is an American mathematician noted for his contributions to game theory and who also has Schizophrenia. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton in 1950 and spent most of his life at MIT. In 1994, he won the Nobel prize in economics.

In the movie, we slowly see how schizophrenia manifests starting with visual hallucinations, delusions, and then paranoia showing the rift between John Nash's mind and reality. This movie also shows how the hardships stemming from schizophrenia can manifest in work life and also in family.

The movie goes through John Nash's life starting around when he first attended Princeton and when the doctors said he most likely started manifesting symptoms of Schizophrenia. Nash seems to have a hard time making friends and begins struggling to find out what his topic for his doctorate topic will be. His success on his topic launches into his career at the Wheeler Lab. He then goes to the pentagon to decipher a code that is said to be intercepted from Moscow. Throughout this movie one person from the pentagon, William Parcher, follows Nash to continue his work with the government. Because of the danger and the corner Parcher puts him in, Nash becomes more and more paranoid to the point of having delusions of persecution. Nash ended up getting married and having a child. As Nash receives treatment (electroconvulsive therapy and then medication), the movie shows how difficult it is for him to continue taking his medicine because of the side effects that impacts his ability to work and home things. The movie ends showing us Nash figuring out how to deal with his hallucinations.



There are of course inaccuracies with John Nash's life. John Nash never had any visual hallucinations, only auditory hallucinations, and he also had irrational fears that weren't mentioned in the movie. An example of this irrational fear is if he saw a red tie he would assume that the person wearing it was a Communist conspiracy member. The movie does a good job at introducing people to schizophrenia without adding a lot of stigmatization or painting the disorder as crazy. Showing it as a disorder that changes people's realities. It does have its fall back. It misses out on a lot of other ways the disorder can manifest like through speech like neologism (made-up words) and alogia (poverty of speech), loose associations in speech, catatonia (inability to move), different types of delusions, anhedonia (loss of motivation), etc. But overall I thought this was a very interesting movie and I had fun reviewing it. I definitely suggest watching this.

Sources

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