

Film Review: Whale of a Tale For Drew Barrymore in ‘Big Miracle’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 3, 2012 - 9:12am

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CHICAGO – Whale of a tale (chuckle), no other headline writer has thought of that. “Big Miracle” is a family movie with Drew Barrymore, John Krasinski, Kristen Bell, Ted Danson and the voice of Ronald Reagan, that will not have adults seeking the emergency exits. It’s about whales.



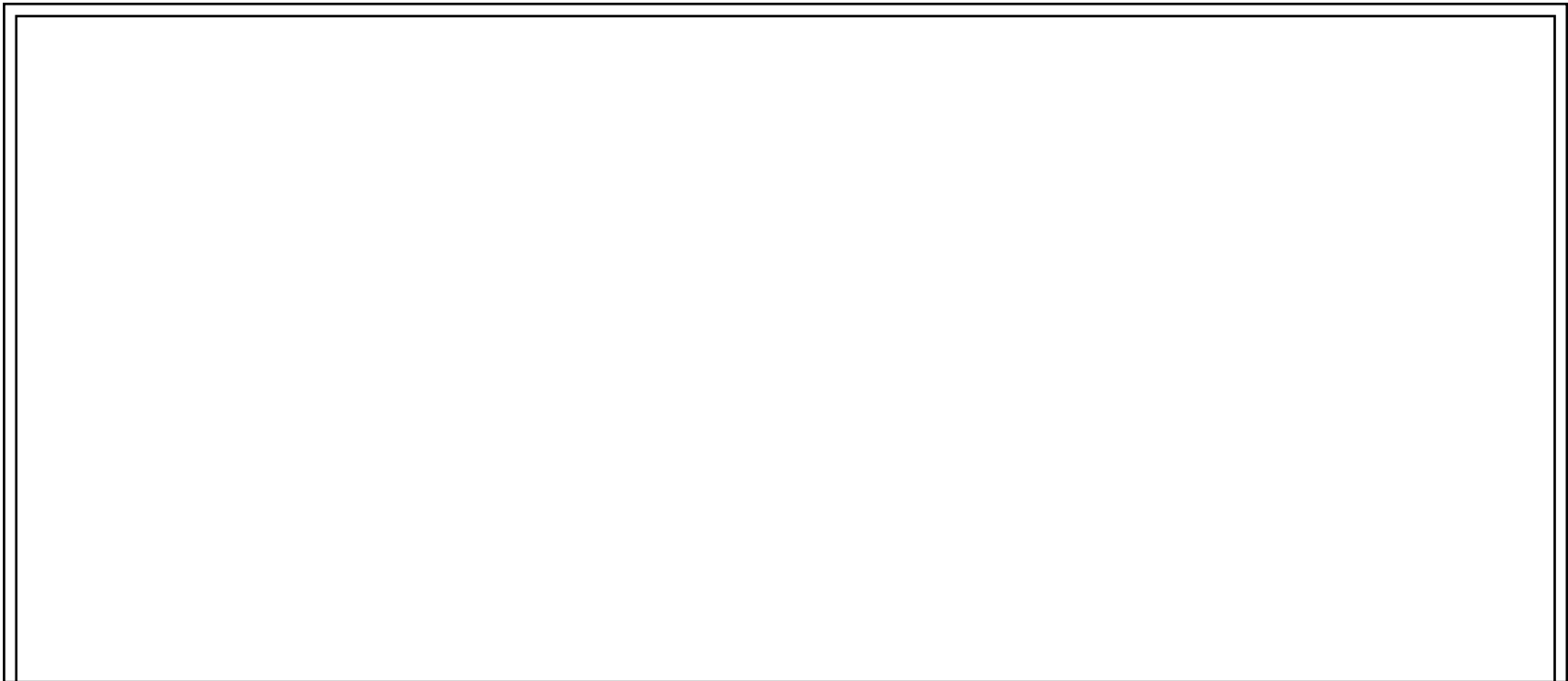
What is enjoyable about the film is its combination of inspiration and sincerity, without sticky sappiness. Set in the late 1980s, there are references to the era without overstating it, and a lot of aside commentary about the media, traditional Alaskan tribal values and balanced environmentalism. This is based on a true story, but unlike last year’s “Dolphin Tale,” it doesn’t rely on having to rework what happened to make sure all the characters look heroic. “Big Miracle” has a nice balance, which gives it a good karma.

Adam Carlson (John Krasinski) is an ambitious TV reporter in 1987, doing time in Barrows Point, Alaska, on assignment for “local angle” features. While filming an innocuous story, he happens upon a whale spray from a hole in the thick northern ice. It seems that three grey whales, two adults and a cub, are stuck in the frozen tundra and to breathe they need to take turns emerging from the solitary hole. The report that Adam files is picked up on the “Today Show.”

Once the story is on the wire, reporters and the media – including perky Los Angeles reporter Jill Jerard (Kristen Bell) – descend on Barrows Point to adopt the whales for their ratings. Following close behind is Rachel (Drew Barrymore) from Greenpeace, to monitor the rescue operation. An ice breaker ship is needed, and Texas oilman J.W. McGraw (Ted Danson) becomes an unlikely ally, volunteering his vessel. The story to free the whales reaches up to the highest level of government, as even Saint Ronald of Reagan and his chief of staff offer their Republican values to the effort.

“Big Miracle” opens everywhere on February 3rd. Featuring Drew Barrymore, John Krasinski, Kristen Bell, Ted Danson, Tim Blake Nelson, Dermot Mulroney and Rob Riggle. Screenplay by Jack Amiel and Michael Begler, directed by Ken Kwapis. Rated “PG”

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John Krasinski (Adam) and Drew Barrymore (Rachel) in ‘Big Miracle’
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

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