

## A great weekend for friends, family and movie viewing

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor  
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I had the opportunity to do something this weekend I haven't had the opportunity to do in a while — take in a movie with a friend and another with my son. Each was a different genre and each I recommend you watch if you're looking for quality entertainment to while away an afternoon.

What started as an impossibly long weekend, with a work day that spanned more than 12 hours, turned out to be great. See my reviews of the two films below.

### ***The Lincoln Lawyer***

First, I enjoyed *The Lincoln Lawyer* Saturday with coworker Terry Mathews, long a fan of Michael Connelly's series about Lincoln lawyer Michael "Mickey" Haller. As we arrived, she was greeted by a few friends who also happen to be fans of the books. All happily reported afterward pleasure at the screen adaption of this tale of good, bad and gray.

While I admit I've not read the book on which the movie was based, I have read one in the series and really enjoyed the tales of Mickey Haller, who as the name would infer works not out of an office, but his car.

I'll admit, when they said Matthew McConaughey was playing Haller, I was a bit surprised. When I read the book, I pictured and heard in my mind Albert Finney as Ed Masry in "Erin Brockovich." But, knowing McConaughey's success a few years back playing an attorney, I was willing to give him a chance. I'm so glad I did. McConaughey did a fabulous!

And they knew what they were going when they hired Marisa Tomei to be his ex-wife Maggie McPherson, whose staunch dedication as a prosecutor to doing what is right earned her the nickname Maggie McFierce. Tomei looked the part and was incredible. I loved her. I think is her best role to date, one I hope to see her reprised in the future.

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The entire cast, from Trace Atkins as a motorcycle thug and William H. Macy as a defense investigator Frank Levin to Josh Lucas as prosecutor Ted Minton and Frances Fisher as rich mom Mary Windsor, was superb. Trace Adkins as Eddie Vogel, part of a motorcycle gang paying him to set his “lifer” friend free, lends credence to the rougher side of the city and element that is Haller’s client-base. I totally bought him as the tatted up bike dude.

Aside from a few minor glitches in scripting — time references out of sequence — this movie was wonderful. It was true to the nature of the books. Don’t ever discount any person introduced in the story, no matter how insignificant they may seem. Later on, they could just prove the key to making the whole thing stick.

This movie included courtroom drama and a thrilling mystery outside the courthouse yet related to the case. It puts main character Mickey Haller in an ethical quagmire, which true to his nature, Haller finds a way to make right.

He is faced with the one thing his father warned him about, an innocent defendant, which Haller learns only after being (unbeknown to him) handpicked to represent rich “kid” Louis Roulet (played by Ryan Phillippe) accused of attacking a hooker in her apartment. Roulet set Haller up so that Haller can’t openly present information that’d set his other client, serving a life sentence in prison for murder, free, because to do so would get his other client in trouble.

Leave it to Mickey to figure a way around client-attorney privilege and statutes. This guy is the king of “favours,” but always delivers — even when the client has been in prison for more than a year serving a life sentence. Unlike many lawyers, however, he delivers.

*The Lincoln Lawyer* was well crafted and completely enjoyable, a riveting crime drama that will keep you on the edge of your seat to the end. (Be sure to visit the restroom on the way in, or you’ll be kicking yourself at missing any part of the show). The viewer hangs on every action, but doesn’t feel drained at the end of the movie like so many other movies of this genre. And there’s a few laughs and some great lines too.

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It all works out in the end, or at least until the next court appearance — which based on the praise this film has received likely won't be too long in coming. The door definitely left open for a movie series based on the books.

Catch *The Lincoln Lawyer*, which garnered a R rating for some sexual content and violence, at 1:30 p.m., 4:15 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. daily through Thursday, at Starplex Cinemas, located on 621 East Shannon Road.

### ***Mars Needs Moms***

One Sunday evening, my son and I finished out his spring break by watching *Mars Needs Moms*. Honestly, I didn't plan to watch this movie but it turned out to be very enjoyable. It seemed to silly for me, and it was. But, in a fun and innocent manner that kept us giggling throughout the movie.

I'd heard a bit about it. How Seth Green was the model for the computer generated animation, but that at the 10th hour they got a real kid to voice the lines of young Milo. A Green fan from way back, it was a bit disconcerting to hear someone else's voice coming out of almost realistic image on the screen. I quickly go to over though and enjoyed the show.

I thought Joan Cusak was a great pick for the "mom," who is kidnapped by the inhabitants of Mars. Milo, unable to sleep after uttering harsh words that hurt his mom, gets up to apologize. Good thing he does, or mom would have been toast by sunup. He catches the Martians taking her away to their ship, which begins to launch before he can stow aboard. He gets caught in the landing gear, and it tossed inside. He gets found and put in the martian jail. He gets out of the citadel thanks to Gribble (played by a sometimes hilarious Dan Fogler) who calls to him over electronic devices, and lands in the earthling's trash haven below.

From there, Milo is determined to rescue his mom, especially after learning they plan to take

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away her memories, and sneaks back into enemy territory to get her back, with a little help from his friends.

The Martians are ruled by a supervisor. Residents of the red planet are hatched, digging their way to the surface. Males, which like to touch and hug and dance — all things the supervisor things are wastes of time, are tossed out from the fortified world she's created level, to essentially survive as cave men working in garbage. Girls are trained inside the walls of the city by nanny bots, which utilized the extracted memories of certain pre-selected earth moms to teach them.

To do this, the earth mom is put in an extractor machine which at sunrise injects and huge needle into her head and “toasts” or fries her. Milo is determined to protect him mom.

He does, with help from his new friend Gribble and native inhabitant Ki (played by Elizabeth Harnois), a rebel female who learns that the supervisor has lied; their people once lived as families, not sequestered sexes. Years before, Ki saw a video of the hippies era, and talks and dresses similarly. She also paints bright flowers on the walls of the girls' world, brightening it up. A romance brews between Gribble and Ki. Mom is ultimately saved, just in the nick of time; she and Milo return home, where he's learned a better appreciation for his mom.

After the movie, I got a big hug from my kid and a reminder that he loves me. I think he also realized that his mom isn't so strict or unusual in the responsibilities she assigns her kid. At various times during the movie he'd look and point at me, identifying with the kid whose choses included taking out the trash and whose mom stayed after him to eat vegetables, not feed them to pets.

Overall, Mars Needs Moms was a good feel good family film I was glad to have shared with my son.

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Go see it. Starplex will be showing it at 1:45 p.m., 4:35 p.m. and 7:05 p.m. nightly through Thursday. It's just what the doctor ordered to tickle your funny bone.