

# American President



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Not too long ago I was reminded of one of my favorite romantic movies, *The American President*. The film stars Michael Douglas as President Andrew Shepherd and Annette Bening as Sydney Ellen Wade, a lobbyist for an ecological group. President Shepherd is something unusual in the U.S. Presidency, though not in movies, a single father. Shepherd is nearing the end of his first term, up for re-election and wondering if the real reason he was elected was due to a sympathy vote after his wife died of cancer during his campaign. Now, after a little over three years of widowhood, he spots Sydney at a meeting taking place at the White House and decides he would like to ask her out. The problem, obviously, is that he is the President of the United States. His life is a fish bowl and there is a dignity that goes with the office that makes it difficult to have close friends. His oldest and best friend now refuses to call him anything other than "Mr. President" even during their private games of pool. So just how does a President ask a woman out on a date? What happens when that date is successful and they find themselves strongly attracted to each other?

The movie could be classified in a number of different ways. It could be classified as a romance, a political drama, a political comedy and of course a romantic comedy. It really is all of these and it handles the balance very well. There are funny situations, but they are somehow believable. Honestly, how would you react if you received a phone call out of nowhere from someone claiming to be the President asking you out on a date? I think most people's responses might be just that of Sydney's, "Is this some kind of a Joke?" There is humor in the situations but they seem to be real situations. Because of this, I'm not sure it fits in any one of the genres I mentioned above. I think if this arose in real life it might play out close to the same way this movie does. There is some language in the film but no violence. The film also has some strong but well-handled political overtones but mixes them so well with the story that you might not think about them "at first. The supporting cast is strong and fun; Martin Sheen, and Michael J. Fox among them. In all, I found the film fun, tender and enjoyable.

Posted by Keith C. on May 11, 2016

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