

Meryl Streep

Tom Hanks

A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM

The Post

MOVIE MOMENTS

Nick and Carol Pollard from EthosMedia.org share thought-provoking reflections on the latest films.

The Right Risk?

Is a risk-taker a hero or a fool? For many, it simply depends upon whether the risk paid-off. Steven Spielberg's film *The Post* could perhaps cause us to reconsider that assumption.

Set in the time of Richard Nixon's presidency of the USA, the story begins with the military analyst, Daniel Ellsberg, so disgusted by the government's deception about the under-resourcing of soldiers in the Vietnam war that he copies top-secret documents - the Pentagon Papers. Eventually these pass to the editor of the Washington Post, Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks), who asks the paper's owner, Kay Graham (Meryl Streep), to approve their publication, despite a restraining order that could get her indicted for contempt of court. In nail-biting scenes, as the print room waits, she must decide whether to take the risk of fighting for freedom of the press.

Kay has much to lose; not only for herself but also for all women, because many doubt a woman can run a newspaper. If she takes the risk and it pays off she could be a hero, but if it doesn't then she would be the fool who damaged the advancement of women in the workplace. The fundamental question is whether a decision to take a risk should be calculated on the odds of success, or on a point of principle.



Spielberg builds the tension brilliantly. And with a device reminiscent of the red-coated girl in his award-winning *Schindler's List*, this film has its own little girl, Bradlee's daughter, starting her life as an entrepreneur. Perhaps, the value of risk-taking should not be assessed by looking back at consequences, but by looking forward into the type of world we can build together if we remain true to our strongly held beliefs.

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