American Gangster Premiere - The Apollo Theater 10-19-07:

We arrived at the theater on a rainy humid evening in New York City. You could spot the searchlights from blocks away. MB left me near the marquee and went to search for a place to park. I was directed across the street and back again at the next traffic light to the sign in table. Our tickets were there in good order, and after waiting for daughter to arrive, we went inside. It was suggested by staff that we take the elevator up to our seats - A good idea, since they were one row from the back of the theater in the balcony.

It was nice to spot several Crowe fans that had also made the trip to the event. Hi to all of you!

They had the web cam running on the screen for our entertainment, so we got a good view of all the celebs arriving, Dani and Russell among them. Both looked great. Dani was wearing an elegant full length gown in a blue green color and Russell was sporting his wonderful main of shoulder length chestnut hair.

The film is riveting. It is more a character study of the two men, and Ridley masterfully intercuts their lives throughout the movie.

Three scenes stand out for me in a film of many unforgettable ones – Frank and his family attending church, while Richie and his crew break up and destroy all Lucas’s businesses (Remember Godfather? the christening and the gang massacres?) – Frank and Richie across the table from one another – you know you are watching two actors at the top of their craft. Neither is over the top, both use humor, but you understand that Lucas, after all his successes, is finally beaten by Roberts, and acknowledges that fact by agreeing to Richie’s demands – and, finally, Frank leaving prison after several years, the doors shutting behind him as he looks out on a changed world.

The look and sound of the film – the grittiness of New York City – underscores and strengthens the plot. I will go again to see it, without all the distractions of a premiere night.

The after party was held in a tent right behind the Apollo. We entered into a scene of noise, flashing strobe lights, and hundreds of elegant people. Thanks to my daughter, we found our way to Russell’s table. He gave us a wave and motioned us to stay and sit. I felt we shouldn’t, but we did chat briefly with RC’s parents, Jocelyn and Alex, and then with Russell and Dani, who is a true beauty. Her dress was simple and elegant, her manner outgoing and yet dignified. A table was brought over for us, and a Crowe sign added - Such a kind touch by Russell or Keith. The Crowe party left after a bit, and so did we. It was a big night for everyone, and a tiring one! But one I will add to my Crowe memories, along with Cinderella Man and France.

Thanks, Russell, for giving so generously of your talent and your friendship. I highly recommend American Gangster and expect it to pick up Oscar speed as the weeks pass.