

A Birdie In The Clinic In The Moonlight

Today, I took a huge step (IMHO) in my quest for professional theatrical experience. I had my first full-fledged, prepare a monologue audition for a paying gig. [Moonlight Productions](#) is a production company in my neck of the woods owned and operated by a friend of mine whom I met a few years ago through the WCCT. The film he is casting for is a cinematic version of a one act play that was written by a remarkably talented pal of mine in which yours truly had a rather significant part. This fact in no way guarantees me a role in the movie as I have no idea the experience and calibre of the other auditioners. BUT I AM REALLLLY EXCITED!

Quite a process. This is the first time in 8 years that I have needed to prepare a monologue. In my years in community theatre, most of the auditions have been cold readings from the script or singing a song from the musical (if that is the case). I chose to perform a monologue given by Mr. Harry Macafee from *Bye Bye Birdie*. Hey, it worked 8 years ago when I was cast as Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*! Note to self: time to search out monologue books!

Over the last few weeks while memorizing lines for the staged production of [The Hound of the Baskervilles](#) in which I am playing Barrymore, I have been polishing the dust off the old monologue I first encountered while assisting the director of a high school production of *Birdie*. Happily enough, it came back rather smoothly.

The last few days, I have been trying to figure out what to wear. I could have gone with the costume I wore in the stage version of *The Clinic*. It might have worked since the monologue takes place at the breakfast table after Harry has had a rather sleepless night after (among other things)

outside his window three harpies shrieked "We Love You Conrad" 4,732 times. However, I decided on a nice dress shirt, slacks, and my Looney Tunes necktie.

I arrived at the audition site my normal 15-20 minutes early and signed in at 9:11 AM. At about 9:25, the producer came into the lounge and told me (I was the first to arrive) that they would soon be ready. The space was really small. After having my mug shot taken, I announced to the video camera my name and monologue I had chosen. For my first time auditioning for a camera, I thought it went exceptionally well. I did notice one teeny-weeney mistake but I plowed right along as if nothing had gone amiss.

When I got home before I had to report to my day job, I had a message on my Facebook page:

First audition was very good, waiting on other actors to arrive! Good luck today everyone!

Thanks Jay! I hope this film makes your company grow and move forward!

And not to worry, [Mare](#)... my involvement (when it is made known) will in no way impede upon my performance in October ☐

My Favorite Movie At The Drive-in

I was so excited to receive the newsletter from my local drive-in movie theater this week, and I'm so glad I checked it

when I did – tonight there is a special showing of Wizard of Oz (which just happens to be my favorite movie of all time) at the drive-in! I can't wait to watch it under the stars! I am so glad that I didn't wait to open the newsletter; I can't imagine how disappointed I would have been if I had missed the email or had something else planned! I only checked it yesterday otherwise I would have put together a costume. But that's ok, I'm just happy to be going, and I will bring along my hard-cover coffee table book that just happens to have the full script printed inside it. Boy, will that drive my fellow drive-in friends nuts, but then again, it's not like I need the script in front of me to recite the movie. ☐

I am so excited!!

Just Too Scary...

My son is newly 2 years old, and he has a favorite movie: Monster House. He asks for it by name, and he just loves it – even if some parts are so scary that he has to watch it from behind his hands:



Non King James Related Sports Evening

For the last two days, it seems the nation has been in the thralls of LeBron fever once again. Holding out on his free agency decision until a live, hour-long press conference. I say... "Who cares?!" Who does he think he is... Tiger Woods?

I did however, enjoy a sports related movie totally unrelated to basketball. I enjoyed the 2004 movie, *Million Dollar Baby* starring Clint Eastwood, Hilary Swank, and Morgan Freeman. I must say that Clint has sure made an impression on me with his more dramatic films instead of the macho, big gun shoot fests.

The last few films I have seen have been poignant and emotional. He plays the curmudgeonly roles quite well.

Accomplished not only as an actor/director but as a musician as well along with his son, Kyle.

I was hoping that *Million Dollar Baby* was not going to be the typical boxer/trainer situation and I was not disappointed.

The movie was an intelligent, profound piece following the lives of a young female wannabe boxer and the very hesitant veteran trainer/manager. It's more about Maggie, the 31 year old's dream of beating the odds, rising from her "trailer trash" roots, and becoming a contender in the prize ring. I know, been done countless times in countless ways.

Eastwood's character is well-defined as well. Not the typical one-dimensional trainer but so much more. Why is Frankie so hardened? Why does he play it safe with every fighter he manages when he knows they are worthy of their "one shot?"

Not so surprising but a very good movie which won Oscars for Best Actress, Supporting Actor, Direction, and Best Movie of

2004. And so much more entertaining than the question that **seems** to have been on the minds of tens of people.

How Long Did'ya Stay Fresh In That Can

Over 70 years and still as beautiful as ever. I may have seen *Wicked* on Easter Sunday. I may have enjoyed it... even appreciated it but there is not even a remote chance that I will ever LOVE it as much as the original 1939 masterpiece *The (Wonderful) Wizard of Oz*. I remember watching it as a young boy on CBS once a year on a Friday night pre-empting *The Dukes of Hazzard* and *Dallas* (heartbreaking that my mother would miss a week of J.R.). I was one of those kids who held a cassette recorder up to the television every time a song came on. I memorized where every commercial break would be. Tonight, Turner Classic Movies had its first of two trips down the Yellow Brick Road over the holiday weekend (tomorrow at 8PM is the final showing this time around).

Why is the movie so beloved? I don't think any two people has the same reason. For me, there are many reasons why I watch it year in and year out. The theatricality for one. The set looks like it was created on a huge stage. Painted backdrops. You can tell that the land of Oz is created artificially and that is part of the movie's charm.

The casting is brilliant. Even at 17, Judy Garland portrayed a magnificent young Kansas farm girl. She won a special miniature Oscar for the role in Best Performance by an Adolescent (I believe the official award was). To generate the on-screen chemistry between Dorothy and Toto, the dog

Terry lived with Garland for a time prior to filming. The actress became so enamored with the dog that she asked the owner for permission to adopt female canine. The trainer knew what a gold mine he had as he turned to offer down.

As has been reported quite frequently, the classic "Over the Rainbow" was actually cut from initial screenings of the film.

The song was thought to have slowed the action of the film. However, level heads soon prevailed and who can imagine the film without it. 1939 is considered to be the year of the classic movie. More classics were made during that year than any other in history. Another little film, *Gone with the Wind*, also premiered and was the odds on and run away winner at the Academy Awards. Oz was a cinematic hit from the start but it took a few years and re-issues before MGM felt that it was a financial success.

Of course my favorite part of the masterpiece, is one of my favorite character roles... The Cowardly Lion. But to carry around an 80+ pound costume must have needed a large amount of physicality. I could do it, though!

Who wouldn't mind getting up at 12; starting to work at one; taking an hour for lunch; and then at 2 be done? Or being clever as a gizzard? Wait a minute, clever as a gizzard? Unless there is a reference to something other than a bird's internal organs.

AHHHH... Togetherness

Today being Father's Day, the family took the three dads to dinner. Then... two of my siblings and I took a horde of crazies to see *Toy Story 3*! Definitely worth seeing although not sure the 3D was worth it... not much there that would not

have been just as enjoyable on a decent 2D screen.

Getting to dinner was an adventure, the parents were not interested in seeing the movie, so my sis and I followed them. We quickly got left in the dust! Thank goodness for cell phones. If someone had told me where we were headed, I could have easily gotten us there, but always interesting!

I found the latest installment in the adventures of Woody, Buzz, and the gang to be as enjoyable as the original and better than the sequel. This time, Andy is packing for college. He still sleeps in the same room but his toy box has been long forgotten until a week before he is ready to head out. His mother gives him a cardboard box in which to put everything he is taking with him and a garbage bag in which to put everything he wants to be put in the attic. Fortunately, the bag headed for the attic gets mistaken for garbage and the adventure begins.

Several themes run rampant through the movie: the power of friendship and sticking together; growing up; saying goodbye.

All of the favorite toys are here along with a gaggle of new toys many of whom have interesting backstories of their own.

And as always, the end credits are worth a look as the story doesn't end as they start to roll. Highly recommended! You are never too old for a Disney/Pixar movie!

The Singing Potter

Sunday night while watching the Tony Awards, Daniel Radcliffe was on stage, presenting some trophy (can't remember which one... sorry). Filming just wrapped on the finale to the Harry Potter film series and as can be expected, there was a sense of sadness over the cast. I would imagine that young adults

especially who have worked together side by side for half their lives would find it difficult to separate themselves.

The first part of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* hits theatres November 19th. The finale hits mutiplexes July 15, 2011.

Radcliffe is no stranger to the stage. Just over a year ago, he was on Broadway in a tale about a boy and his horse. As he was introduced Sunday night, it was announced that he would be appearing on stage in a revival of [*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*](#). When I heard it, I thought it was a joke and dismissed it totally. Today, I read that he has indeed been cast in a new production of a 1961 musical that was last revived in 1995 when Matthew Broderick starred as J. Pierrepont Finch. This made me question how soon is too soon to revive a show. Or perhaps, it is a red herring much like the web-slinger's much delayed debut.

I think it would be interesting to see if the wizard can sing and dance.

Nightmare On... Elm Street?

We checked out the Nightmare on Elm Street remake a few weeks ago. It was better than the Friday the 13th remake and the Halloween remake but not comparable to the Texas Chainsaw remake, which was very well done and better than the original, in my opinion. Nightmare on Elm Street, not so much. For starters, I don't understand why the new Freddy Krueger was so short. His burned face was much less scary than the original Freddy, and I have to say that having high school kids tower over him did take away some of the intended fright. Also, Freddy's back-story changed for the new version, which now

includes allusions to child abuse of Freddy's victims at a preschool rather than all of the terrorized kids being from Elm Street. In fact, I don't really know what Elm Street has to do with the new version of Nightmare on Elm Street. Part of the reason we wanted to check this one out is because much of it was filmed in the suburbs of Chicago where we grew up, but we didn't recognize anything, and my husband did not recognize which scenes were filmed in his former high school. But not recognizing the filming locations was not what disappointed us most – the 2010 version of Nightmare on Elm Street is just not as scary as the original. Sure, the special effects are better and the throwback and remakes of certain key scenes were done well and appreciated, but the movie just didn't have the same effect.

We also recently took in the original My Bloody Valentine, the 1981 version, and it was a good horror movie. I read afterward that much of it is actually filmed in real mines, which must have been really dangerous, and I wish I had known that before I watched the movie. Many things were changed for the 2009 version, which I really enjoyed – probably my favorite modern day horror movie. But to enjoy the original version was nice too. We picked up the 2009 version on a sale at Walmart, and it came with both the 2D and 3D version and some glasses. I've never had any luck with the old red/green 3D glasses technology, and this time was no exception – my vision is just too uneven, I guess. It worked for my husband, but I ruined his fun because seeing everything in red and green was incredibly distracting for me.

We've also been watching the [After Dark Horror Fest](#) movies lately, and there have been too many to review, so I'll just make quick lists of recommended vs. terrible ones for any horror fanatics reading my blog and looking for some opinions.

Good:

[The Final](#)

[Kill Theory](#)

[Perfect Getaway](#) (more thriller than horror, but good)

[My Bloody Valentine 3D](#) (2009) – especially if you can get the 3D to work for you at home. The 3D for this one in the theater was amazing, and I really enjoyed my first horror movie 3D experience on the big screen when it came out.

Worth one viewing:

[Dread](#)

[My Bloody Valentine \(1981\)](#)

[The Graves](#)

Awful waste of time:

[The Broken](#)

[Grace](#)

And, I think I'll throw this one out there separately since it's not horror at all, but we also watched [The Prestige](#) again yesterday and it's very good – especially the second time around. It's a story about two rival magicians that takes place in the 1890's. If you're going to give it a try, pay attention! Oh, and I would not look too closely at the imdb entry for it – there is too much that can be given away. That's all I'm going to say other than I highly recommend it, but again -it is in no way a horror film; we just watched it again recently which is why I put it in this horror-movie-laden post.

Look What They've Started...

If you're a fan of Wicked, stop reading because the following post might offend you, by no means am I pulling any punches. I had kind of a stressful day that I can't post about, and then I read this article, so that was the icing on the cake. Think I'll take out my frustrations on pop culture – things

that don't really matter in real life.

I just read an offensive (to me) article detailing the no fewer than SIX Wizard of Oz spinoffs currently being developed in Hollywood. Luckily for the world and movie fans abound, most of them won't see the light of day, but unfortunately at least one or even a few will make it through production and be released into mainstream society, poisoning the legacy of Baum's characters and the 1939 MGM cinematic masterpiece we true fans hold dear. Before you think I'm overreacting, read the synopses I included below. If you're still not offended, do a google image search to dredge up the action figures from the Twisted Oz series, but make sure your kids aren't in the room first. What is this world coming to?

I bring Wicked into this because I blame the franchise – once someone decided to write a book imagining their own version of Baum's characters, the door was blown wide open. Sure, there have been uncountable Wizard of Oz spinoffs. The Muppets had one, the Veggie Tales had one, and countless sitcoms from the last 7 decades had their shots at putting their main characters in versions of Munchkinland. But not until Wicked took off in popularity have people really started abusing the integrity of Baum's original characters and, more importantly to me, massacring the sweet and innocent 1939 MGM movie – my favorite movie for many reasons, the main one being how advanced in many ways it truly was for its day. Sure, 1985's debacle Return to Oz was no picnic, but did it really do any significant damage? Not really, it was never really liked nor taken seriously. I like to make this comparison: take another movie classic, say, Gone With The Wind. Now take an "author" (really just some who is literate enough to be able to put words together to make a story) and imagine them creating a "backstory" for the Civil War characters Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara. Let's make Rhett, oh, let's say he was an astronaut before he met Scarlett and let's make her an ER doctor – that's why she has trouble attaching to people;

it's because she loses them in the ER. Doesn't make much sense, does it? Probably because *Gone With the Wind* is what it is – an epic story set during the 1800's when those professions did not exist as we know them today. Do you see my point? *Wicked* has the witches going to school and other ridiculous scenarios – I'm not going to falsely claim to be an expert as I've never read the book nor seen the show. Perhaps if I saw the show, I would like it – everyone seems to rave about it, and the costumes are supposed to be amazing. Maybe so, but they should have left my favorite movie alone! They could have started from scratch, wrote their own stories with their own characters, and I would have been perfectly happy to check out *Wicked* the show. But they had to steal Baum's ideas and MGM's visions just to put a brand-name on a product to sell, and this my friends, is called "selling out".

And as a result, we might be faced with the following junk polluting our theaters in the future (taken from [this article](#) from moviefone):

• *'Surrender Dorothy'*

Who's behind it? Drew Barrymore's production company, Flower Films

What's it about? According to Pajiba, the latest version of the script, by Zach Helm ('Stranger Than Fiction') is an 'Enchanted'-like story that sees the Wicked Witch of the West still alive and threatening to take over our world as well as Oz. It's up to Dorothy's great-great-granddaughter to figure out how to use the ruby slippers to defeat her.

Status: Barrymore's been developing this project since way back in 1999, when she was still a fresh-faced ingenue who'd just played Cinderella in 'Ever After.' Today, Pajiba says, the 35-year-old is unlikely to star in it, but she would direct it as her follow-up to her directing debut in last year's 'Whip It.' Pajiba imagines she might cast 'Whip It' star Ellen Page, who would indeed make a fine Dorothy. Still, with 11 years having gone by, it doesn't seem like

Barrymore's exactly in a hurry to get this off the ground.

- *'Oz the Great and Powerful'*

Who's behind it? Disney and 'Alice in Wonderland' producer Joe Roth

What's it about? The script by Mitchell Kapner ('The Whole Nine Yards') tells the backstory of how the wizard went from earthbound carnival mountebank to becoming the fearsome and mysterious sorcerer of the Emerald City.

Status: Given the success of the Roth-produced 'Alice,' Disney is likely to fast-track this movie, which was formerly titled 'Brick' (as in "yellow"?), according to the Los Angeles Times. Now that the next James Bond movie has been postponed and his schedule freed up, Sam Mendes has been approached to direct and Robert Downey Jr. to star, reports FirstShowing. Neither has yet said yes.

- *'Oz'*

Who's behind it? Temple Hill, the production company behind the 'Twilight' movies

What's it about? According to the Los Angeles Times, the script by Darren Lemke ('Shrek Forever After') is a faithful retelling of L. Frank Baum's first novel in the saga, 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.' Imagine the Judy Garland movie, but with more action and no music.

Status: Coming from the New Line division of Warner Bros., this has the potential to launch a vast franchise based on the 22 'Oz' books. Which is why it's the most likely of the three competing 'Oz' projects at Warners (see below) to see the light of day.

- *'The Twisted Land of Oz'*

Who's behind it? Comic book gorehound and toymaker Todd McFarlane ('Spawn')

What's it about? Based on McFarlane's own decidedly R-rated 'Twisted Land of Oz' line of figurines, his Oz includes a Scarecrow who's torn apart by ravenous birds, a Tin Man who's a junkpile of Edward Scissorhands-like limbs, a flesh-eating

Lion who's not at all cowardly, a Wizard who's a gas-mask-wearing mad scientist, a carnivorous creature dubbed Toto after it eats Dorothy's dog, and a nubile Dorothy who's bound and molested by depraved Munchkins.

Status: There was confusion in the trade press (including some strewn by McFarlane himself) between this project and Josh Olson's, (see below) since both were pitched to production company Thunder Road, with an eye toward distribution by Warner Bros. Last we heard from McFarlane (via MTV), back in September, he was grumbling over Thunder Road's apparent decision to go with Olsen's more family-friendly script instead of his own. McFarlane also claimed at one point that Michael Bay was interested in directing, but we imagine he's a little too busy making movies based on another line of toys.

- 'Oz: Return to the Emerald City'

Who's behind it? Screenwriter Josh Olson ('A History of Violence')

What's it about? In a plot that sounds a lot like 'Surrender Dorothy,' a descendant of Dorothy Gale (this time, her granddaughter) living in contemporary America (she's a young associate at a top Chicago law firm) is called upon to defeat a new witch making trouble in Oz. Aiding the young woman are the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion that she's been hearing her grandmother talk about for years.

Status: Olsen has denied ever being affiliated with the McFarlane 'Oz,' telling MTV in January that the script he delivered to Thunder Road and Warner Bros. was based on his own original pitch. Dakota Fanning was rumored at one time to be up for the younger Dorothy, but that rumor proved false (makes sense, since Olsen's granddaughter character is an adult). Of course, both Olsen's and McFarlane's projects have to compete with Temple Hill's for Warners' favor.

- 'Wicked'

Who's behind it? Universal

What's it about? It's a film version of the Broadway smash about what Glinda the Good Witch and the Wicked Witch of the West were like when they were schoolmates, well before Dorothy showed up. (Think 'Mean Girls' with green face paint.) Winnie Holzman, who wrote the book for the musical, has also written the screenplay.

Status: Universal is a co-producer of the stage show and has owned the film rights since the play opened seven years ago. Despite an IMDB listing that cites a 2012 release date, there's been no sign of progress beyond script stage. No one has been cast, though let's hope this gets rolling before original stars (and recurring 'Glee' guest players) Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel are too old to reprise their stage roles.

Am I A Denzel Fan?

I've heard a lot of people say they are Denzel Washington fans, and I didn't really get it. But then I watched [Inside Man](#), and I enjoyed it. I then saw [Book of Eli](#) in the theaters, which I really liked a lot, and it's become one of my husband's favorite movies of all time.

Last night we watched the 1998 movie [Fallen](#), also starring Denzel, and it was one of the best crime-thrillers I've seen in a long time. As usual with these types of movies, I hesitate saying too much because I don't want to ruin anything for anyone. Let's just say that I highly recommend Fallen; especially if you like the genre; especially if you like Denzel. Always intriguing; at times it was genuinely creepy, though never gory, and most importantly, it did not leave the audience distracted with guessing possible twists – just a

good crime drama which left one waiting to see what unfolds next. John Goodman, James Gandolfini, and Donald Sutherland all provide excellent performances rounding out the acting roster. At one point, there was an expression on Denzel Washington's face that was utterly perfect for the circumstance at hand, and that's when I realized that I was starting to become a fan of his acting. If you would have asked me before today who my favorite movie actor is, I would have said Tom Hanks. I loved Forrest Gump, Splash, League of Their Own and Toy Story, and I thoroughly enjoyed a host of other Hanks films: The Terminal, Castaway, and Big just to name a few. Hanks' diversity, comedic abilities, and every-man qualities make him fun to watch. So after thinking about all these great movies again, I guess I would still maintain Tom Hanks as my favorite movie actor, but because I judge movies more from a whole-picture perspective, Denzel's films are starting to catch my eye – he knows how to pick 'em!

I've seen Bone Collector (push-knob car locks have never been the same), but it's been a long time, and I don't remember much about the movie except that I liked it (and those darn push-knob car locks). So now, being a Denzel Washington fan, I will have to watch Bone Collector again.

So the point of this post is? See Fallen – it's good. And we have SO broken the stinker movie trend around here. Hallelujah!! And thank you Denzel!