

Putting It Together... Again

The title seems vaguely familiar so, I added to it. The next week will be exciting, nerve wracking, late, but overall great fun. The week leading up to the performance. The cast and crew got a taste of that this evening when the elaborate effects were added for the first time. There are many light cues and sound effects throughout the play. It took a bit of time to get them all set up so we got started with the rehearsal a bit later than usual which was fine with all involved. We would have to do it eventually anyway. It gave those of us on stage a chance to reminisce about some of the worst movies ever made. Bo Derek in the blockbuster movie [Tarzan the Ape Man](#) was tossed out. Honestly, I have never seen that version of the legend. Some mentioned that Ms. Derek's role in the feature *10* was better since her role was nothing more than running along the beach. Has anyone seen the (I imagine) horror classic, [Basket Case](#)? Me, neither. Finally, we did get to the Ed Wood classic [Plan 9 From Outer Space](#) which I have seen and I agree with most critics in saying that IT IS the worst movie ever made. However, I still think it is hard to beat the original holiday classic [Santa Claus Conquers the Martians](#).

Finally, about a half-hour late, we did get through the show with only minor trouble. However, with still a few rehearsals left, I'm sure it will be all good. At least we did not wait until Sunday to put it all together. The rain outside also added a new dimension of intrigue.

I just learned that if you are interested in attending a performance (October 9-11), you may now make reservations on-line through the following [link](#)

Ah, the excitement is building!

Time To Blog...

I think I could use a Tivo. That way, I could Tivo Dr. Phil and watch it when I fold laundry – that would certainly be better on my ears and more entertaining than the screaming parrot. Well, actually, I don't know how Tivo works – I could probably only watch what I ~~tape~~ record (I grew up in the 80's – we "taped" our movies and our music) on the tv that has the Tivo, right? But anyway, I could pause it when someone needed a diaper change or help with something or a snack or a drink to be able to watch more tv instead of just never getting to commit to watching shows (except really good ones like The Office) because of my lack of time and my lack of Tivo. I wonder how much they cost; I have no idea. It occurred to me that I don't watch much tv anymore; a hobby I really liked as a kid. It's not a bad thing, really, I'm busy doing other more worthwhile things. But I do miss getting to watch Dr. Phil – my tv has been hijacked by the likes of Dora, Diego, and Max and Ruby in the morning when it's on, and I don't like not being able to watch the Office until it's available online. We try to watch The Office when it airs on Thursday night and without fail, all hell always breaks loose with the kids even though it's on at 9 and they should be in bed.

I got the movie Mr. Mom from the library for the kids to watch. I figured since my husband and I liked the movie as kids, we should show it to our kids – after all, they *loved* Annie (the 1982 version, the update is awful). But apparently Mr. Mom came out before the MPAA came up with the PG-13 rating – there were a few scenes (funny how neither one of us remembered they were in the movie) I would rather not be in the type of movies my children enjoy. At least we were able to skip over the strip club scene without them even noticing,

yikes. I surely don't remember **that** from watching that movie as a kid. Maybe there was an edited-for-television version... Anyway, all this got me to thinking that they should have a function for dvd players where you can edit the movie to play while skipping certain parts of your choosing. Maybe this already exists, but I don't know a lot about the latest gadgets and such.

Well, anyway... sorry for the randomness, just had a little time to blog for a change, so I just wrote what was on my mind at the moment! Maybe I'll check into that Tivo...

The Informant!

I haven't reviewed a movie on my blog in awhile – mostly because movie-watching was a favorite summer activity this year, so I saw too many to mention. I don't think I'm going to start reviewing them now, but today's experience at the movie theater (saw *The Informant!* with Matt Damon) is worthy of mentioning. Not for the movie itself – it seemed to be an interesting enough plot line, but I couldn't follow the entire trail of corporate deception and greed, so I dozed a little. And I wasn't the only one. The guy two rows behind us began snoring very loudly in the middle of the movie! It was distracting, and he began by breathing heavily, so first we were worried about him (seeing a man drop dead at a Chinese buffet will make you a little paranoid). But then he started the snoring, so we knew he was ok; but then it became obnoxious. So we tolerated that for the rest of the movie, and then he woke up during the last scene with a loud "BURP!". Well.

We go to the movies almost every week and I've never heard

someone so full of rude noises, including teenagers! I feel badly for the guy, but mostly, I just want to know why he paid \$6.50 to take a nap – the movie theater seats aren't *that* comfy! As for **my** dozing, it wasn't really a nap, and I was (mostly) entertained during two hours of *The Informant*. I don't know that I would recommend it – if you like to unravel these kinds of movies, then go for it. But I sometimes find myself zoning out, and by the time I'm back to the movie, something has happened or there are too many characters who look alike for me to be able to follow the plot, as both were the cases here. I did find Damon's character, Mark Whitacre, quite entertaining, as was the narrative style of the movie. It kind of reminded me of a Coen brothers movie – you know, greed gets the best of people, a plot to gain money unravels, and people get killed, except *The Informant* was decidedly less violent – rated R only for language, in fact. An entertaining two hours for some, but apparently not for all!

A Little Push From J.S.

I just finished watching a little movie that was released last winter/early spring that received little notice but was released by the same distribution company as *Knowing*. Unfortunately, the latter got more publicity. I will direct you to a much more in depth description of [Push](#) from [taylhis](#). I will say that I absolutely adored this little gem. It is very action-packed and filled with enough twists and turns to keep me glued to the seat. Much more enjoyable than watching a NASCAR race.

What I found fascinating was the choice of casting the male lead. Chris Evans previously played Johnny Storm aka The Human Torch in *The Fantastic Four* and its sequel (odd that I

have not seen Rise of the Silver Surfer but from what I have heard... I'm not missing a great deal... maybe one day). In Push, Mr. Evans plays Nick who has the power of telekinesis... the ability to move objects with one's mind. My question is: has any other actor played more than one character with a unique superhuman ability? I know multiple actors have played the same superhuman character (Batman, Superman, the Hulk, etc) but I think this reversal is unique. The closest I could come up with is Hayden Christensen who played Anakin Skywalker in Star Wars episodes II and III and went on to star in *Jumper*, but that is a stretch.

Death In Arena Seats

Ok... ok... if you have seen any two of the now four *Final Destination* flicks you know what you are going to get. Tonight, Megan and I went to a very nice cineplex which has very comfortable stadium seats very spacious to catch the latest installment aptly titled *THE Final Destination* (is this a sign that this will be the last final destination?) Judging by the box office from last weekend, I wouldn't be at all surprised to see The FINAL Final Destination hitting big screens in a year or two. It even beat up the latest installment in the Rob Zombie reboot of the Halloween franchise. I have yet to see the previous film... I really enjoyed the original John Carpenter creation with Michael Myers wreaking havoc in a Captain Kirk trick or treat mask.

This time, a young man has visions of death while sitting at a stock car race. After the premonition, Nick quickly begins to warn his three friends and others seated around him of the approaching doom. I assume the travesty was due to either the age of the venue or faulty construction. A few days later,

the body count begins to climb as the survivors of the tragedy at the track die horrible, mysterious deaths. Nick “sees” visions of these deaths and eventually comes up with the pattern Death is playing out. But can Nick and his twentysomething aged friends stop the pattern before Death visits them all one by one?

I wouldn't say that I liked or disliked the movie... I'm on the fence on this one. As I previously noted, this has been done before only with four different locations for the starting off point (a commercial airline flight, a highway pileup, and a theme park roller coaster were the previous three). Plus as with most films of this genre, there was an ample amount of blood and gore. But Megan and I both agreed that while it has been done before, it was fun... maybe it was the company. Selected theatres also have the added attraction of 3D something that seems to be making a comeback as of late in both horror and animated features.

Redbox Junkies

Now that the kids are back in school (2 out of 4 anyway), I have some (stress on the *some*, not a lot of) extra time to sit and blog again – something that wasn't made a priority over our busy summer. Among our summertime fun and adventures were many trips to the [Redbox](#). Surely you know what I'm referring to, for if we have such futuristic technology here in the NW Ohio boonies, then it must exist in most places. The Redbox is a machine (about the size of a gas station ATM on steroids) that distributes \$1 one-night dvd movie rentals. You can choose a movie for \$1 from any Redbox location (our small town has 3, just an example of how they are *everywhere*), and then you return your movie to any Redbox location by 9:00pm the

next night. We first got hooked on the concept when we were on the way back home from Florida and the kids got sick of the movies we had brought for the car dvd player (poor things! Who's with me from the days when we were lucky enough to bring our Walkman on the trip with a couple of tapes!) . So anyway – we stopped at a Redbox at a McDonald's in Tennessee, the kids watched the movie a few times, and we returned it at a Walmart in Ohio – for just \$1! Ok, this is quickly and unintentionally turning into a plug...

So anyway, my husband and I got kind of hooked on the Redbox this summer, watching a movie almost every night – seriously! We went through a horror phase and watched many of a series called After Dark Horror Fest: 8 Films To Die For, and even though many of the movies (there were 8 movies in the series, but the series ran multiple years) in the series were low-budget, many were actually worthy of the recognition and worth watching. Among our favorites of the horror genre was Hack! starring none other than Danica McKellar, Winnie from the late '80's / early 90's tv show [The Wonder Years](#); as well as [The Hamiltons](#), a surprisingly great-for-what-it-is little horror flick.

Somewhere within the mix was a forgotten (though I liked it slightly more than my husband did) [Michael Moore parody](#) (making fun of Michael Moore movies, not done by Michael Moore) and the best Redbox movie **ever** called Sunshine Cleaning.

I highly recommend [Sunshine Cleaning](#). Don't let its similarities with another movie called [Little Miss Sunshine](#) get you confused. The two movies share the word *Sunshine* in their titles, an actor (the late Alan Arkin, wonderful in both roles), and some producers – but neither their plot lines nor their characters intersect. You can check out Little Miss Sunshine for yourself if you haven't already – I recommend that one as well. But Sunshine Cleaning is less mainstream and my husband and I enjoyed it immensely. It stars the

talented Amy Adams as a single mom who, along with her flighty sister (Emily Blunt, also a really good actress), start a cleaning business, though it's not your normal, everyday cleaning business – they are hired to clean up extreme biological hazards, ie, crime scenes. What follows is a heartwarming tale which takes many entertaining and at times, comedic turns. The characters are well developed as is the plot, and the movie just makes for a well-spent evening – especially for just \$1. Again, I'm at risk here for sounding like a plug, but oh well! Go get Sunshine Cleaning from your local Redbox – you can even reserve online for pickup before you go!

Greetings Starfighter!

You have been recruited by the Star League to defend the frontier against Xur and the Ko-Dan armada.

Thus begins Alex Rogan's adventures. In the beginning of *The Last Starfighter*, the teenager who dreams of escaping the dismal world of the Starlight Starbright trailer park finds freedom in the Starfighter video game. Little does he realize that the game is much more than your average quarter muncher. After breaking the high score on the box, a mysterious, fast talking man drives up in a futuristic car and whisks Alex off to the stars to play the game for real. So much for thinking escape meant going anywhere but city college.

Has it really been 25 years since I sat in a Dallas, Texas multiplex with my brother to watch this extremely cool movie? I have been searching for a long time for this lost gem from 1984 and until Tuesday have met with disappointment. I received an email announcing the release of a [25th Anniversary](#)

edition but nothing on a regular DVD (ok, so it is available on [DVD](#)^x, just was not at the store I was in). Last night, I introduced my niece and nephew to one of my childhood favorites (ok, so I was in double digits when it was released). Noah and Elizabeth really enjoyed it. Noah totally ignored his still playing Nintendo DS. At first, Elizabeth wanted to watch *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, but I convinced her that this is much better.

The space battle scenes look just like those of an 80's video game which is part of the movie's charm. Although the story of the young man longing for something more closely resembles that of Luke Skywalker, *The Last Starfighter* does not try to become the next great sci-fi franchise (this was a year following the release of *Return of the Jedi*).. No huge name actors and none that I can think of that became everyday names: Lance Guest? Catherine Mary Stewart? The only name that is immediately recognizable (to me, anyway) is Robert Preston who plays the brilliant Centauri. Of course when I was 11 years old, I had no idea that he originated the role of Professor Harold Hill. I still would rather watch him in this even if the roles are similar in most respects: smooth talking traveling salesman. Plus, the musical score for the movie is just great as any good sci-fi movie must have. A big, brassy fanfare plus heroic moments full of romance that get the adrenaline flowing.

I would say this is very family-friendly except for a few expletives spouted off by Alex's younger brother Louis. And it looks and sounds even better on Blu-Ray. I had to look to find that another lowlight of Lance Guest's career was *Jaws: The Revenge*. Not one I will be looking for anytime soon.

Rock Racing

Sunday afternoon in an attempt to beat the heat, I went to my brother's for a swim. After, I watched *Race to Witch Mountain*. Last winter when it was in theatres, I really was unsure about seeing it. I really liked *Escape* and *Return* but have found most updates/reboots/prequels to be less than ideal. Also, the added attraction of Dwayne "the (c)Rock" Johnson was enough to make me question it even more. I am pleased to say that the movie was not THAT bad. The action and effects were heightened from the original movies from the 70s but there were nice touches from the previous films to delight fans.

Johnson plays Jack Bruno, a Las Vegas cabbie who has grown irritated with transporting weird Sci-Fi fans (including two Stormtroopers) to a convention at the Planet Hollywood. Enter siblings Sara and Seth, two seemingly innocent young teens who hand Jack a huge wad of money for transportation to a remote, run down shack in the middle of nowhere.

Like the original children, Sara and Seth are victims of a spacecraft crash landing. The government has acquired it and is hot on the trail of the survivors to "study" them. Unlike the previous installments, the children are being pursued by an alien "Assassin."

Sara and Seth's powers are basically the same as Tia and Tony's with a few additions... probably due to the limited budget restraints of the 1970s. Sara's touch with animals harkens back to her predecessor only this time the trio is joined by a canine companion instead of a black cat. A Winnebago RV is also instrumental in the action. Also, don't miss a creative cameo by the original actors all grown up. I was expecting them to pop up as Sara and Seth's parents or other adult aliens, but that would be too logical. For fans of *Star Trek II* who aren't already in the know, Ike Eisenmann (who played Tony in the original movies) had the role of

Engineer's Mate, Peter Preston. In the extended Director's Cut of *The Wrath of Khan*, it is discovered that he is the nephew of Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott.

I would recommend *Race to Witch Mountain* to fans of the original movies. There is a lot of action that may be a bit much for the really young, but it is a Disney movie.

Watching Watchmen

Watchmen is a very entertaining, interesting, and very graphic take on the world of superheroes. The movie is adapted from a one shot 12-issue comic series released in the 1980s. The setting is an alternate world circa 1985 in which President Richard Nixon is still in office (apparently, the 22nd amendment was appealed). Instead of the disgrace of Watergate, Tricky Dick's actions concerning Vietnam painted him a hero.

The masked heroes of the piece are in danger of being outlawed by order of the president. One of these, the Comedian, is murdered. The rest of the members of the disbanded group of characters, known collectively as the Watchmen, investigate to determine who was behind the death of their fallen comrade.

During the movie there are flashbacks which delve into the past of each hero. Silk Spectre, Nite Owl, and Ozymandias are the supporting heroes but it is the mysterious Rorschach and the tragic Dr. Manhattan who held my fascination throughout. Rorschach wears a mask that continuously changes revealing different ink blots (his own personal Rorschach test, yes?). Dr. Manhattan started life as a physicist but following a catastrophic nuclear accident was transformed into a blue, glowing mutant with several powers (oops... and for the most

part, naked with glimpses of all his outer extremities... not enough to warrant anything but the R-rating). Some of the good guys are so conflicted that it is difficult to say that they are indeed heroic or just as evil as the people they fight.

As I touched upon, there is a lot of graphic violence here. Lots of crunching bones, blood, and slo-mo action. One scene involves a baddie having his henchmen's arms sawed off his body. Definitely not for the young or squeamish. Plus, the nearly three hour film could turn off some people, but I enjoyed it. A very different comic hero film.

The Haunting In The Redbox DVD

So, following Broadway Cabaret night at the Little Theatre, Megan decided to take me up on my pizza/DVD night at the house while I am still alone (one more week... and it is still standing). I suggested venturing to Wal-Mart to check out the redbox kiosk... rent a movie for \$1 per night, return when you are done or after 25 days it is yours. After going to Electronics, I met Megan at the box and we made our choice of two movies... more on those in a bit.

We then travelled to casa Shaffer where I gave her the grand tour, upstairs, downstairs, beauty shop. Did I show C&L the shop the other night? My memory fails me. So, after the pizza was baked, we put in the first movie. [He's Just Not that Into You](#) is just what you would expect: a chick flick. While it was no *Pretty Woman* it was not all that bad and Megan wanted to see it and I gentlemanly let her pick one.

However, I chose a movie which [taylhis](#) has posted about and a friend recommended the other day. Megan had already seen [The Haunting in Connecticut](#) (for some reason, I thought it was A Haunting, but no big deal) and it scared the xrap out of her. I must say that I enjoyed it very, VERY much and it did give me a good jump or 5. Even more so knowing that it was based on a true story. I will have to check out the frog site thingamajig to get the lowdown on how much accuracy is involved. If you like a good horror film with lotas of thrills and chills, check it out.

However there was a downside to the DVD: it was badly scratched and about half way through it began to skip. UGH! Way to almost ruin a great movie! I did send an email to the customer service dep of redbox to request a free rental or refund. Megan asked me to watch out for the minister and see if I could recognize him. I must admit that I was unable to. [Elias Koteas](#) is the same actor who played Casey Jones in the ORIGINAL Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movies. Never would have guessed since it has been years since I have seen it.

All in all, another fun night of music, friendship, pizza, movies, and great times!