

You Delivered My Pizza, But Please Don't Watch Me Eat It

We had a great weekend, even though the weather on Sunday was horrid – so cold my Christmas teddy bear got frozen to the window! Friday night was an all-night work session to finish up the planning and organization of our community theater's awards show, which is where we went Saturday night. But first on Saturday afternoon, it was a birthday celebration for our oldest who turned 9 on Sunday with a MUCH anticipated visit from family who live out of state. We had a great time catching up and watching the kids open their birthday and Christmas presents, and the kids got to have a sleepover in the hotel with Grandma, Papa, and Uncle Bud while we went to the awards show. The awards show was lots of fun, as always, and I got to watch 2 very good friends win much-deserved achievement awards. Congratulations, guys!

It was lots of fun putting the show together, even if we didn't have much time to do so due to last minute notice from the theater. It was fun and also rewarding to watch the individual skits, shorts, songs, and awards presentations start as ideas on paper and then watch when they came together as a whole. It's also a fun excuse to get everyone together, and it's always nice to see long-lost busy friends who are unable to get together but for this one night. It might be fun to produce the awards show again next year, but then again, I'd love to have my best friend sitting beside me to watch them because I missed him this year – even though he did make an excellent host. If there are a few individuals in the theater community who have a hard time because they don't win awards, then let them have their hard time. There is talk of cancelling this awards show, and I would be very sad if that happened. It's definitely a whole ton of fun for most of us, and I really don't think we should let a few individuals ruin

it for everyone. That's all I'm going to say on the subject for now, but expect to hear more from me once this very topic is discussed at the next production board meeting.

Sunday we had major Grandma-let-down, and because we didn't want our oldest daughter to be depressed on her actual birthday, we let her have a friend sleep over. During football season, we usually set aside Sundays for low-key stuff, like watching football, reading newspapers, and blogging, but we always end up with crazy kids so it's never exactly low-key. But I don't usually cook dinner on Sundays, and today we ordered pizza. Five minutes after the pizza was delivered, we noticed the delivery guy was still parked out front and that he was standing outside of his car. Turns out, he had locked himself out of the car, and so we offered him a warm place to wait for his ride. Since the temperature outside has been hovering around 0° all day, with wind chills near -20°, he gratefully accepted. And he stood in our front hall for almost 30 minutes! If he were outside, he would have frozen to death. But it did feel a little awkward eating the pizza he delivered while he stood there. We offered him a seat in the living room, but he opted to stand in the entryway, and I'm kind of glad because at least we were then eating out of his view. Our 2-year-old kept asking about "the pizza guy", and then he became scary to her – "I scared pizza guy" – probably cuz he was just standing there, doing nothing, and she's never seen anyone do that in our front hall before. But finally his ride came, thank goodness, and he left. I wonder if he gets paid for the time he was standing in our house? I wonder who pays for the gas that was used in his running car while he was waiting for his ride? Should we have offered him some pizza? It was kind of a weird situation, but it does make for interesting blog fodder. Of course it had to happen on the coldest day of the year – that guy has a new story to tell!

Now THAT Is One HORRIBLE Stage Manager

Wow – what happened here? Due to a props department mix-up, an actor was doing a suicide scene with a real knife instead of a fake one. Luckily, he wasn't killed, but this qualifies as a bit more than a simple mistake, wouldn't you say? Perhaps I'll think twice about offering to stage manage anything in the future – apparently there's a lot at stake. And for you actors who read this, how much trust do you have in your props people? And how much will you trust them after reading something like this?

From Time.com

by Adam Smith

Try this for an Agatha Christie plotline: performing on stage inside Vienna's Burgtheater, one of Europe's oldest and grandest, an actor takes a knife to his throat in his character's desperate attempt at suicide. As audience applause fills the opulent theater, blood pours from the actor's neck. But something's not right. Buckling and staggering his way off stage, the actor collapses to the floor. That's because the knife, and the harm that it's done, are both tragically real. Unfortunately for Daniel Hoevels, a 30-year-old actor from Hamburg, those pages from a murder-mystery came to life last Saturday night during a performance at the Burgtheater of Mary Stuart, Friedrich Schiller's play about the wretched life of Mary Queen of Scots. Rushed to the nearby Lorenz Bohler hospital having sliced through skin and fat tissue but thankfully not his main artery, Hoevels was fortunate to survive. "Just a little deeper," said Wolfgang Lenz, a doctor who treated him, "and he would have been drowning in his own blood."

The police investigation into the calamity points more to a foul-up than foul play. Viennese police say they're not probing the possibility of attempted murder; press reports had speculated a "jealous rival" could have had a hand in Hoevels' injury. Instead, investigators are focusing on possible negligence within the props department of Hoevels' Thalia Theater ensemble. According to local media, the company picked up the knife in Vienna to replace one brought from their Hamburg base that was then found to be defective. One possibility: that props staff forgot to blunt that new blade, which, police say, still had the price tag on it.

*Hoevels himself seems to have put the snafu behind him. "I am now absolutely fine again," he told local media, "but I will always for the rest of my working life have a strange feeling about this scene." After reprising the role Sunday, albeit with neck bandaged, Hoevels headed back to Hamburg Monday in preparation for his role in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In that play, the long-suffering title character winds up shooting himself in the head. Someone might want to double-check the gun.*

Review Debut!

As you may know, we are heavily involved in our local community theater. For each play in which we were involved, part of the fun was to see what the newspaper critic would publish about it. Well, the newspaper reviewer has been canned, and so my husband was asked to take over. Not wanting the responsibility of the fallout that one might incur when writing about specific individuals in a small town (not to mention his extremely busy work schedule), he agreed to only do the review about the most recent play because he and I produced it. The following is my husband's review debut that

was (supposed to be) published in the newspaper, and I'll go ahead and give myself a secondary byline for editing. I must note however, that those of you who have seen this particular edition of the paper might notice more than a few differences between the two reviews. And my husband did not write the paragraph about his credentials that appears at the end of the print version – the newspaper wrote it with info my husband supplied when asked how he was qualified to do the review. It's just funny that for the past few years, we've been assuming the quirks of our play reviews were the fault of the reviewer when in actuality, the newspaper changes much and does lots of editing!

Don't Hug Me is a Winter Treat

This past Wednesday evening my wife and I had the privilege of attending a preview of *Don't Hug Me*, a comedy by Paul Olson.

As we took our seats, my eyes were immediately drawn to the brilliantly detailed set. Just a quick glance at the rustic wood paneling, Paul Bunyan style restroom sign, and moose head beer tap and I was instantly transported to a northern Minnesota bar.

This first little scene sets the stage for the show perfectly. Minnesota gets cold in the winter, and Gunner is tired of it. He wants to escape the frigid temperatures and move to Florida, but Clara's heart is in Minnesota. This conflict is the basic central plot throughout *Don't Hug Me* and Roberts and Snider deliver it with a very nice chemistry together. Their bantering back-and-forth comes across as genuine and is also very funny.