

# The first night off.

A rather rare treat for this production are three nights off. No rehearsals, no readings, nothing. A day off today, tomorrow and the next day. I'm using this time to get some rest and get a few things done. Tonight was the night for rest.

An old Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce Sherlock Holmes movie, a light snack and quiet time.

Back in the day Basil Rathbone was Sherlock Holmes. I never realized when I first saw these movies that they were set in the wrong time period. Of course, I saw the movies before I started reading the books. Even after reading the Holmes stories, I liked the way Rathbone played Holmes. For years when I thought of Holmes I thought of Rathbone.

Of course, some time ago I saw another actor in a series of shows that put Holmes in the correct time period. On a British and then PBS series, Jeremy Brett played Sherlock Holmes. After watching that series, I often thought of him while reading any Sherlock Holmes story.

There was one other actor I often think about when I think of Holmes. My college roommate portrayed Holmes in a college play. It was my first (and I thought my last), try at acting. This play gave me a line that to this day remains my favorite. "Don't worry, there are ways to inflict excruciating pain and yet leave no marks." Even after 30 years I remember that show.

And finally back to Rathbone. The movie "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is the only Rathbone Holmes movie that was set in the correct time period.

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# Two To Go

Everything is falling nicely into place... of course, there are a few minor details to be worked out before Friday's opening, but I would be even more surprised if there were not. I definitely have found a role that rivals even the visitor from another country in terms of ranking. It is so funny that fellow cast members who were at the audition site told me that I nailed the role of Henry F. Potter right then! Am I really that good at playing evil? There's that oxymoron again. I did get my ears lowered this afternoon. I don't think a man in the 1920s-40s would have long hair, particularly a gentleman of stature. I noticed that my goon, admittedly, was looking rather shaggy tonight as well (not to mention his attire). It is rather late in the game so there is really no chance of finding a replacement. I must say that good help is so hard to find!

There was a photographer taking shots for the paper tonight. She noticed my character and mentioned that if this kept up, I would become typecast. Why? Well... you will just have to come and see for yourself.

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## 3 shows in the book.

Sunday afternoon show and more family showed up. They really seemed to enjoy our attempt to entertain. We had another good crowd and show today. It always amazes me the energy the actors get from the crowd. When the audience gets into a show, it seems the show gets better. That is how it was this weekend. A series of good audiences and fun shows.

This morning I spent some time getting new tires for my truck.

While I was expecting to get new tires soon, I was hoping to be able to shop around a bit. I wasn't pleased to be forced into getting new tires before I had that chance. But the happenings of yesterday my choices just a bit. There are very few places in the boondocks that are open on Sundays. So again, my hand was forced. Such is small town life.

But getting the tires did allow me to drive my youngest daughter back to college after the show. I like the time I get to spend with my daughters, so it was good to get the tires today. Oh well, the truck does need a bit more work. The miles I put on it tend to wear things out.

Starting Thursday we have our final run of 4 shows. I hope they all go as well, and I have few vehicle problems.

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## **Now about them kids...**

I guess it's time to return to the topic of kids- subbing and at church. The past week I was back to two days of subbing after my big half-day Thanksgiving week. I was lucky to get even that as only one district I am signed up with had classes at all that week, and only Monday and Tuesday. Monday of course is a photo day for me which left only Tuesday for work. So this past week I did middle school for two days in two different districts. What happened in both cases was the teachers were taking a second sick day in a row, but fortunately this did not spell disaster like in that one BD/ED classroom in near-urban district. The first class was a Spanish class, and half of a husband-wife team. They even had classrooms right next to each other. This is the second time I have ever encountered this, the first being in hometown district where a husband and wife both teach the same grade of

science- one on each of the two teams for that grade. Incidentally at that school there is also another married couple, but in their case they teach two different things. So back to Spanish, it was a very easy day- for all classes I showed a video. Now, she teaches both 7th and 8th grades, but everyone still got the same video- the celebration of Christmas in Mexico. What was it? Oh, yes- Piñatas, Posadas, and Pastorelas was the title. I'm sure you're familiar with the first- a seeming staple of Mexican celebrations. The other two mean a party and a Christmas play, respectively.

Wednesday I filled in for an 8th grade resource teacher, though she had one 7th grade reading group. This was a bit more interactive than the Spanish class, at least for some of the periods. As mentioned, I worked with a reading group for one period, led an interesting homeroom activity where the kids picked sides with questions about what is more important to them and then some explained their choices, acted as an assistant in a language arts block, watched over a tutorial period, and led another block period with reading a story together and then watching over the kids as they defined words from the story. A varied day for sure, unlike typical middle school classes.

Next post: the kids at church this week- I'm already tired of writing...

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## **Favorite Christmas Movies**

The 'What's Your Favorite Christmas Movies / Tv Specials' poll has been done before, but I thought I would obtain my own consensus. After all, opinions change from year to year, and I'm also interested to see what people like. Feel free to

choose more than one answer and also to add something I may have forgotten.

[poll id="11"]

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## Christmas traditions

Some many moons ago, my wife decided to extend the Christmas season by just a little bit. Not to overwhelm the season, but to take the "I want" stage out of oldest child. We had the advent calendars, but they just seemed to bring on that inner consumer that my oldest daughter was (is???).

My wife decided to celebrate St. Nicholas Day. We told the story of St. Nicholas and how he eventually became known as Santa Clause. We also told how he gave to the people in need, not everyone. I like to think that this got more of the spirit of giving in our girls, but I never asked them. Anyway early on Dec 6 we would investigate our Christmas Stockings. The very first gifts of the season.

As parents we would put in a small gift that would take some attention away from the other getting. There would be fruit, candy and a Christmas Ornament from Grandma.

We carried on this tradition for many years. I know at least two of the girls (maybe 3) still celebrate the day. I hope it is the spirit of giving, not getting.

This is the 6th Christmas Season without my lovely wife by my side. A time mixed with dark thoughts and bright lights. With only my youngest at home, this may be one of the last time St. Nicholas visits this house. The traditions are changing as life changes.

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# On the way to the show.

It started off so well. I was leaving just a bit early so I could get some gas and other necessities. Oops, a mile from home I noticed that I forgot my boots. Important item for the play, so I had to turn around.

Back out for the second time, still early, but without as much leeway, I heard a funny noise from my truck when I turned a corner. Thinking I had something stuck, I got out and noticed that my tire was flat. ARRGH.

No problem, I have AAA... I called my daughter to say I would not be able to pick her up and got out my AAA card to call for service. Dang it expired in November. Why don't I remember the bill. I must have missed it.

Not to worry I can change a tire. Oops no flashlight, I couldn't find the jack!!! I couldn't see to change the tire. The countdown to the play was running fast. Call my daughter to pick me up!! Slowly move the truck to a safe location. And hope nobody tows the truck away before I could get the tire changed.

Show turned out well tonight. My oldest and youngest daughters were in attendance. As much as I love having friends in the audience, it is special when I get to entertain my family. Unfortunately, I was not able to spend as much time with them as I would have liked. I still had a tire to change.

Found a light, a jack and the lug wrench. A few chilly minutes later the temporary spare was in place. I was ready to go home for a cup of warm tea.

Tomorrow is another day, and I will have to see if I can find

someplace to get some tires before the 2:30 show. So now I know what Santa is getting me for Christmas. I don't recall asking for that.

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## The Holiday Season Can Now Begin

I have seen *Miracle on 34th Street*... not the 1947 classic, not the made for TV redux, nor the most recent big screen treatment. Tonight, I treated my sister and her two little angels to a live production. I absolutely **LOVED IT!** The entire cast was magnificent... from the smallest child, to the briefest cameo, to the big guy himself. The set was a stroke of genius. The entire production flew by. Everything that makes the classic film such a treasure was in place along with a few added bits that were pure delights.

Since purchasing the tickets on-line Tuesday, I had been overwhelmed by shrieks of anticipation by a certain 6 and 4 year-old. Finally, the night arrived and I treated everyone to McDonald's before going to the theatre. A miracle in itself was that the girls actually were done eating BEFORE the time I said we had to head out.

During the show, Sydney was on my lap the whole time and was totally enthralled by the magic on stage. Alyssa, on the other hand, was asleep before intermission. After going down to the "confession" stand (as the 6 year old calls it), Sydney began to share her M&Ms with Megan and I. How cute was that? And on the other side of me, Alyssa was again sawing logs.

After the show in the reception line, I told the girls to go

sit on Santa's lap but they wouldn't... until I apparently moved down the line. I didn't see it.. I saw some fans in the audience who asked why I was not on stage and I put in a plug for a little show coming up in a mere 5 days. **I CANNOT WAIT!!!!**

Once again... brilliant job one and all. You created the Christmas spirit in everyone in the audience and made us all believe. **BRAVO!** My favorite part as it is in the movie... I just love the little Dutch girl who hasn't a friend but sits on Santa's lap and they begin singing a song from her native land.

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## Miracle Squared

Our weekend began with the likes of a Christmas play to which we took our two oldest daughters. The play was Miracle on 34th Street, and we were a little up in the air about bringing our 5-year-old because we want to milk the Santa thing as long as possible – we didn't want to put ideas in her head about 'not believing'. But when it came time to go, we felt too badly to leave her behind, so we had a nice half-family outing without the little ones who wouldn't have been able to sit through the entire show.

At the play, I was really having a great time. We ran into more than a few friends, and the seasonal cheer of the almost sold-out audience emitted a wonderful family feel. The first act of the show was thoroughly enjoyable; everything was so cozy and Christmas-y, and I couldn't wait to see how Kringle finally proved himself to be authentic (I haven't seen either version of the movie). Unfortunately, some unnecessary drama taking place at intermission almost ruined the entire show for



me. I was so upset that I could barely pay attention to the second act. But as I sat and seethed – and I don't think I've ever been so angry while literally just stuck sitting in the middle of a crowd with no where to go and no way to vent – I began to come to terms with the situation and to actually feel sorry for the person who'd completely overblown a simple misunderstanding and hurt my feelings with her unbecoming actions. How incredibly sad that her negative attitude cast a cloud over what must have been such hard work by so many to pull off a show of this magnitude. During the second act, I was thinking about what I was going to say in my blog to vent about it, but now that a few hours have passed, I really don't need to share all of the ugly details. As if by miracle, I am completely at peace with the situation – I'm usually not the type to just get over something without hashing it out with the person. The bottom line is, I truly believe I handled the situation the best way I knew how, and I'm going to pray that the other person can find peace as well.

So all that's left that needs to be said is, congratulations to those of you who were involved in Miracle on 34th Street; everyone that I know who was involved and who reads this blog did a really super job! Keep up the great work, and best wishes for the success of the rest of the run of your show!

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## Family Time

This morning, Mom and Dad and I went to pay our respects at the funeral home. None of us could go last night so we went for the gathering before they processed to the church. We KNEW that the rather small church would not hold many people and with 10 children, 38 grandchildren, and who knows how many great grandchildren, there would not be many places available

for other than very immediate family members. I was hoping to catch Britt there but she must have been running late.

After, we returned to watch Elizabeth play basketball. A riot watching the young girls begin to develop. Autumn was great although she missed a shot and her mother yelled "**USE THE BACKBOARD!**" Yep, definitely her father's daughter ☐ . I thing Elizabeth did more sliding across the slippery floor. More than once, she got the ball and OOPS... whistle blows and traveling called.

I was also asked if I would like to get tickets to *Wicked* coming in April. Of course... most musicals are worth at least a try.

And tonight, I am taking my sister and two young ladies to see the [Santa Claus](#) play. They have been asking, and asking about it and finally it is almost here. I must say that I am pretty excited myself.