

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.

Supressing My Whim For Another Parrot...

Believe me, I am definitely not expressing that parrots are

pets to get on a whim, not that any pets should be obtained on a whim. But I wouldn't really even recommend parrots, the loud and moody (however beautiful and insanely smart) creatures as pets, except to the perfect parrot owner – which might just be as rare as the gorgeous birds themselves. Due to a set of circumstances that transcribed long ago, we've found ourselves adapting to a be a parrot family. Years ago we adopted Squawky, as a needy unwanted baby, a Scarlet Macaw, who is now somewhere just older than 8 years old. He is finally starting to calm down just a tad, but he still makes me think of putting him in a more unused room of the house on an almost daily basis. That being said, it's time to share with you the video of a bird who re-kindled my childhood desire (not that I ever really lost it, but 4 kids and little sleep will certainly give one pause about adding any new pet to the family) to raise an African Grey Parrot – the type of parrot known more for their uncanny impressions and ability to reason than for their beautiful feathers. As a kid, I read a book that made me want the parrot in the first place. It is called *Harry's Mad* by Dick King-Smith (this author also wrote the story that the movie [The Water Horse](#)'s screenplay (good movie!!) is based upon), and it's a great read for young adults (and maybe regular adults too? Might be basic, but fun – haven't tried it as an adult). And as for the video that made me again want an African Grey, despite the daily blows to my eardrums from the Scarlet Macaw? See for yourself; her name is Sylvia, and I especially love her Rhett Butler and Desi Arnaz impressions!

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.

Legitimate School Interruption or Propaganda?

Because I have two kids in the local city school system at the same time, I receive double the school memos. So while Friday's after-school-folder-clean-out yielded the usual classwork, homework and doodles, there were also some notices clearly indicative of these times in which we're living: a list of ~~swine-flu~~ H1N1 symptoms and (what I thought at the time anyway) to be a routine parental notice with optional exclusion form. You know the type – *I would not like my son / daughter to participate in the following school activity (fill in the blank, field trip, sex ed, open lunch, etc.), signed (parent's name)*. This time the form was in reference to an address by Barrack Obama, the President of the United States, to the students of the country. When I received the memo, I was all in favor. I would not be one of the parents who declined my child the opportunity to be involved with current events and history in the making. I thought it was great that the President was making an unprecedented, concentrated effort to make a positive influence on America's youth. But then I read CNN.com and the other news outlets, and I saw that some people seemed to be using this as a political soundboard, and I think it's just sad that some people use everything our President does as a reason to bring up racial tension.

I would like to steer my blog from most politics, however, I am a parent of two kids who are in American public schools, so this is an issue that hits close to home. So whether you watch the Obama student address or not, whether you approve of the President and/or his message to students, consider the significance of the Presidential address taking place this Tuesday, September 8, 2009 for what it is – history in the making.

Hamburgers and Root Beer

Years ago it was always a family treat to stop at the A&W to get root beer in a frosty mug. I remember as a kid getting the little ‘baby’ mug. I never thought it held enough root beer.

Slowly those stands started to close and were fewer and farther between. When I was in College, I only knew of two such stands in the ‘local’ area. One was in Delta Ohio and the other in Antwerp Ohio. The Delta Ohio A&W closed many years ago.

With my wife and children, we would sometimes make a slight detour on trips to Fort Wayne and stop at the Antwerp A&W. The children got the mini ‘baby’ mugs until they got a bit older. Always a good time and always good root beer.

In the past few years A&Ws have been making a bit of a comeback in NW Ohio. I know of two restaurants that are a combined A&W and KFC. Interesting letter combination. □ These aren’t the old drive ups, but the root beer is still as good. The charm of the place is somehow missing.

Now in a local town there is a Sonic drive-up. They have car-hops on roller skates and a fun atmosphere. But there are no

frosty mugs. I will say some of the drinks there are very good.

Today, on the way back from Fort Wayne, my youngest and I stopped at that A&W stand in Antwerp. It is still in business, and still serving Root Beer in the Frosty Glass Mugs. Many wonderful memories flowed. The root beer is still good.

□

Tale Of Tartar

I did not go to Walmart yesterday, but I still have enough of a complaint to sit and write a blog post about the place! In case you've missed my other (many) Walmart rants, I'll save you the search and link to a few of the various episodes depicting the times they wronged me. Like [this time](#). And [this time](#). And [this time](#), to name a few...

So anyway, back to last night – I needed tartar sauce for dinner and didn't realize it until after the kids got home from school, so I ran out (for what I thought was going to be) really quick to get some. I went to Walgreens first, but they don't carry tartar sauce, so I went across town to Dollar General, and they don't carry tartar sauce either. Is this a side effect of living in a small town – it's hard to find the things I need last minute if needed? If so, I will gladly take it in exchange for the traffic, air pollution, and the general stress that exudes from larger cities (see [hubby's blog post](#) about a recent news article about the most stressed cities – ew). But most likely the apparent lack of tartar sauce in rural NW Ohio is due to scenario #2 – ever since we got a Super Walmart a few years ago, the competitors have phased out certain grocery non-necessities like tartar sauce.

Why should they carry old crusty tartar sauce when no one buys it there because everyone shops at Walmart? I begrudgingly include myself in that category – you can read those previous posts of mine if you really want to know more about my Walmart paradox and why I shop there. (At least my kids were never [slapped by strangers](#), and I haven't shown up [here](#) – yet.)

If you're still with me – I've linked all over the internet in this post, so I wouldn't be surprised if I've lost some people – I'm going to blame Walmart for my lack-of-tartar-sauce problem. And in case you're wondering how it all turned out, it really wasn't a problem after all. We just convinced the kids to try ranch dressing instead of the tartar sauce, and they actually liked it – well, until the ranch dressing came out too fast and spilled and incited a tantrum that caused a chain reaction that ruined dinner, but that's another post! And before my comment board lights up with healthy eating advice, I'm already aware that the kids really shouldn't grow up so sauce-dependent. But in these parts where the kids outnumber the adults, you must adapt to survive, and “pick your battles” is essential parenting advice!

Quite Possibly My Worst Nightmare

Did you hear about [this](#)? Seems a man settling back for a quiet afternoon in his *tiki bar* (that's a whole 'nother story, I guess. Us Midwestern folks can't really identify...) when he opened his can of Diet Pepsi, took a big gulp and began to gag. His wife came over, and to make a long story short, found a blob in his pop can that was tested and discovered to be a *gutted* frog or toad. For more of the gory details, click

the link above, and you can find out how (and this is a direct quote from the frog-drinker's wife), "what started out as a normal afternoon in our tiki bar has blown up into this crazy thing."

I titled this post appropriately because while I love all animals, I'm scared of frogs and toads. It's a weird thing and I won't go into it (more scared of the "ugly" harmless ones than the pretty poisonous ones, go figure), but the only thing I can think of worse than finding a gutted amphibian in my pop is to find a live one or even a dead one that still resembles its living form. That being said, in all seriousness, my true greatest fear is something bad happening to my family, but I thought this made for interesting reading anyway. I smell a lawsuit.

Just after midnight

and I was asleep, but I woke to an intense headache. Two aspirin and a glass of milk later, the headache is receding and I'm wide awake. Hmmm...

Anyway, this reminded me of what I do when sleep eludes me. I like to read and now post in a blog. So why not combine the two.

Just last Sunday, there was a discussion of movies with the main plot being people hunting people. This has occurred in many places, but it always reminds me of a short story I read in my youth. I needed to find that story so I did a quick search of one place I go to find reading material. And I found the story. I'm fairly certain it predates most movies with that theme, if not a lot of other stories. It is on Feedbooks.com so you can read it on your computer or other

electronic device. For your pleasure [The Most Dangerous Game](#). Written in 1924, I read this story some time in the late 60's or early 70's. I don't remember what anthology had it, but I do remember reading it more than once. It was a good story then and it holds up well today. I'm going to do more searching to see if this story type had earlier roots.

Speaking of good places to find free books, I found the following sites:

www.feedbooks.com

[Project Gutenberg](#)

[Google Books](#)

Late night, insomnia hitting? Nothing better than a good story. And now no excuses about cost or making a trip to the library.

Now all I need is a Kindle or some other small electronic reader and I can take them wherever I go. Not as good as a hard copy, but I might be able to get used to it.

I need sleep, but I just saw a story that might be interesting... ☐

A Case of MPD?

Monday night at rehearsal, we had about half the cast present without either of the directors. This greatly limited the amount of work we could accomplish. It was decided that we would once again run lines. Quite often in these situations, actors are asked to read multiple roles. I ended up being three of the four male parts. At times this was quite humorous but most of the time it gave me even more insight into my own character; who is Harnell Chesterton and what makes him tick (or in terms most theatre performers can

relate: What is his motivation? UGH!) I believe I have a firm grasp on Mr. Chesterton's persona. However, for reasons that will hopefully be quite clear to those in the audience, I am having a bit of trouble with his lines, but they are getting there. I have such a grasp that the assistant director told me that I was perfectly cast. Two weeks in and my reputation has already preceded me! C'est impossible! No worries... by week's end, I should be good. I just need to visit my area Goodwill's for a white dinner jacket.

What was that word again?

It has been too long since this morning, but I heard something on the radio this morning that made me do a double take. The thing is, what I heard was not what was said. I totally misheard what was said. Unfortunately, I can't remember the word, or what I thought I heard. All I remember is that it sounded like something I would blog about.

How many times do we mishear something? I've written before about misheard song lyrics, so I know this is something that happens to a lot of people.

What I'm wondering today is this: How many times did a misheard word cause trouble? This isn't something I can easily answer, but the concept is something that caught my attention. I was especially close to this while married. My wife did have a hearing loss and she would often mishear what was said. This did cause a problem or two. Most of the time it was handled well when everyone understood about the hearing loss. I've also experienced the problem and I don't have a hearing loss.

Then again, I wonder how many times mishearing actually helped the situation. I don't have any experience with this, that I

can remember. Anyone?

Just some random thinking for this evening.