

Post Victory Horror

tonight after watching the Bombers take game one in the ALCS thanks in no small part to C.C. Sabathia's excellent pitching plus some errors in the field by the Angels, I watched my latest DVD rental. I have never seen a Sam Raimi directed effort apart from the blockbuster *Spider-Man* films. Apparently, he was well regarded as a low-budget horror maker and made his return to the genre last year in the aptly titled, [*Drag Me to Hell*](#). This decidedly B-movie was equal parts fright, gore, and humor (mainly from some of the ridiculous situations, but I think this was the intent... not taking itself too seriously).

The film follows a bank loan employee who is a possible candidate for a promotion to assistant manager. Christine is approached by an elderly gypsy woman (complete with a creepy glass eye) who is in need of an extension on her delinquent mortgage payment. When the request is denied, the old beggar woman takes it quite personally and places an evil spirit upon our heroine and (you guessed it) strange, horrific things begin to happen that only Christine is witness to.

Christine's boyfriend, Clay, is skeptical to say the least. However, he does accompany her to a psychic who knows how to rid the woman of her problem before she is literally... well... you know dragged to hell. Goofy, yes but is there a b-grade horror film that isn't? Plus, you get to see the wide acting ability of Justin Long who you may remember from the live-action *Alvin and the Chipmunks...* so maybe not so much since he was the voice of Alvin.

A Bus, A Bus, My Kingdom For A Bus

After our adventures on our own tour of Times Square, the time was near to get on the bus for our twilight tour. I had never gone on a guided tour of the area so I thought it would be kind of neat to sit back, ride around, and learn about the area. We got on top of the two-level bus in the back. There was a canopy that covered half of the bus that some of us had to be wary of or we could end up with a lump on the head. The vehicle took us from So-Ho to No-Ho (hehe), across the Brooklyn Bridge, to Greenwich Village, and pretty much all over. Some of the landmarks we were able to see included the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the Washington Arch (which was constructed to commemorate the centennial of President Washington's inauguration). the Flatiron Building (which served as the facade for the Daily Bugle in the Spider-Man movies). The tour itself was awesome by starlight with the lights and atmosphere... even if it was below 40 degrees. I bundled up the little guy as best I could.

While the tour was enjoyable, the guide was not so enjoyable at times. Quite frequently, he would get carried away with his commentary and we would be at a new location when he was still lecturing about the previous one. He even quipped that the info would be beneficial if any of the passengers were ever going to be on Jeopardy!

Following the tour, we departed the bus. Then the real fun began! We had to find a Waterway bus to get us back to the Ferry to take us back across the Hudson to our Jersey hotel.

This turned into a comedy of errors. To quote Admiral Kirk, "We looked like a cadet review." Apparently, finding one of the buses required a bit of timely luck. We first had to find a location where we thought one would eventually arrive. So we asked police officers, hotel personnel, and


other people who looked like they would know. The most we got was some pointing and mumbling neither of which were extremely helpful. I thought about asking the Dark Knight himself who we saw earlier. Now if Spidey had been patrolling the area, I'm sure that he would have been more than happy to help us. He is from Queens after all.



We eventually got to the location for a bus arrival (I won't say that we were at one time a corner away from it). And we waited, and we waited, and we waited. Chris approached a horse-drawn carriage driver to see if he would take us to the pier (for not less than \$75). A taxi would have been just as bad. Finally, C decided that he would jump out in front of the first Waterway bus that came along. Finally, our hero came along. I think it was two hours after we began looking for one. So, another late night for all. Still no major meltdowns. I was really proud of the kids. However, this would not be the last encounter we would have with Waterway buses.

A Geek in The White House

Yes, our president-elect is a self-proclaimed comic book aficionado. Mr. Obama is such a fan of the [Amazing Spider-Man](#) that he is being featured on the cover of an upcoming issue as well as a story within its pages. This is not the first time that comics have met the real world. Many heroes took part in stories following the events of September 11, 2001 especially the web-slinger since his home turf is in fact Queens, New York. Presidents are not new to comic book pages, either.

- President John F. Kennedy was seen in the pages of Action Comics #309 which was published months after the

assassination. 

- President Clinton and Hillary were part of the [World Without a Superman](#)
in the pages of Man of Steel. 
- President Ronald Reagan (or some artist's rendering of him) was seen in the ground-breaking series [Batman: The Dark Knight Returns](#).



Yes, sometimes the worlds of fantasy and reality do merge.

For Your Eyes Only

Is it just me or do some of the titles on my posts seem misleading. I am nothing if not creative. Today, I escorted my mother to the eye doctor to have her eyes dilated. Believe it or not there were some rather humorous moments waiting in the reception area. There was a patient who must have been extremely bored as she got up, walked to the 12" TV/VCR/DVD combo and attempted to get it to play something besides the Toshiba menu making its way across the screen. Finally, she managed to start the disc playing. She commented that it was the same disc that was playing the last time she was in the office (I sense a link coming up there... but hey, ya know). The woman must be a regular.

The movie playing was [Seabiscuit](#) starring [Tobey Maguire](#). Since it has been a few years since I have seen the movie about the thoroughbred and his jockey, I cannot honestly give a full review but I remember that I did enjoy it. I do recall that Maguire needed to lose a fair amount of weight after playing Spider-Man to portray Red Pollard. Then after

filming was completed for *Seabiscuit*, he had to hit the gym again to bulk up to play the superhero a second time. At least Maguire will not be typecast as a popcorn idol, summer blockbuster star as he has made several other films before and since which have been well received by critics and viewers ([The Cider House Rules](#), [The Ice Storm](#), and [Pleasantville](#) to name a few). Additionally, he also served as Executive Producer for *Seabiscuit*.

Although it did get a bit boring once the television whiz got called for her appointment, there was an adorable 3 year-old girl who kept those of us waiting entertained by explaining the trials and tribble-ations of a child. Apparently, a scary monster hid under her bed one night causing her to run into her parents' room to be consoled. She was not exactly sure what the creature looked like it was definately "big and UUUUUUGLY." The monster "sure did" go away after the precocious tot told it to.

The colorful people waiting in the lobby kept the waiting to a minimum; however, next time I will have to remember to take a book of some kind... hopefully a script. It has been a few months since I have had one. Perhaps by then I will begin to make my titles better fit the post... BUT I DOUBT IT!!!!!! That would just be no fun.

The Amazing Spider-Man

Returning to the genre of superhero franchise movies, one of the most successful series of movies in the last decade has been the three Spider-Man films. I believe that what has made these films so special is that they each retain the same core cast: Tobey Maguire (Peter Parker/Spider-Man), Kirsten Dunst

(Mary Jane Watson), and James Franco (Harry Osborne). Plus, Sam Raimi has been the director of each of the movies. So many times a franchise fails because it goes through multiple directors. The four main people involved in these films have each stated that if any of the others were to leave then they would also. I do not think a good Spider-Man movie could be made if any of them were to step aside.

Each of the films develops the three characters in new ways, primarily the main character. The original film shows how Peter becomes the webslinger and begins to accept the sage advice of his Uncle Ben: "With great power comes great responsibility." *Spider-Man 2* finds the hero attempting to find a balance between his life behind the mask and that of Peter Parker. *Spider-Man 3* takes Peter on a journey of his dark side and forces him to see how far his power can take him.

So many times action/adventure movies are just that: action, adventure but no character. With a director such as Sam Raimi who really cares about the characters he is putting on film, the three Spider-Man films thrived. Not only do audiences thrill to the escapades of "your friendly neighborhood superhero" but they also see into the life of Peter Parker and the characters around him.

Sunday Bloody Sunday

Well... another Oscar night has come and gone. I was actually please with my ballot results this year: 10/24!!!! I usually do much worse. Perhaps it was the thrill of actually having something to win that created the competitive urge in me. Most of the movies nominated this year in the BIG categories were

not ones you would expect to see in Northwest OHHO so you do the best with what you have.

I started off on a roll. I think I successfully picked 4 or five in a row. THEN, we got to the technical awards. Most of these were won by *The Bourne Ultimatum*. I have seen the first two films in the Matt Damon starring spy trilogy but have yet to see the third and that won for Best Sound Mixing and Sound Editing. How terrible would it have been if it had won one and not both awards.

Another downfall was in Best Song. I should have known that when a movie (even a Disney movie) is nominated more than once in the same category, it is the kiss of death. I know very little about the movie *Once* from which the song "Falling Slowly" comes.

The contest came down to the final award: Best Picture. Three of us were tied. I picked *There Will Be Blood*. **WRONG!!!!** AH, well... I was really pleased with my results. I won two packages of gift bags which is a quite useful prize and did not end up with the Spider-Man cap that I provided as a prize.