

Save Me From Reality

I know that the transplanting of television series from one country to another is nothing new. However, I just found out today that one of the most popular reality series is not actually American based. Apparently, "Survivor" is a Swedish import (based on the series "Expedition Robinson" from the classic novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe) and had its initial run in 1997 before becoming Americanized and thus creating yet another series that needs no writers nor professional actors. Only people crazy enough to eat live scorpions, brains, intestines and attempt dangerous stunts. How many seasons has this been on the air and how many versions on how many different continents? If Jeff Probst took his teams to Antarctica, I would possibly watch. However, it seems you have to be placed in a more tropical locale to survive.

Whatever happened to the plot-driven series of the past? It seems that for every "The Office" there is another hideous flesh-peddling "Bachelor" (which is not available on DVD, thank you very much) which at times seems reminiscent of the by-gone nighttime soaps of the 80s that were full of catfights, padded dresses, and rich, boozing business people. "Three's Company," "[All in the Family](#)," and "[Too Close for Comfort](#)" are three shows from the past that were based on shows from other countries that are not reality based. But, I guess as long as producers find it more economical to keep rolling out new and improved reality series they will continue.

The half-day gamble

I am not really a gambling person, at least where money is concerned. I always tend to lose and it just seems like a waste of money to me. However, when it comes to subbing I do take some gambles. Unfortunately, it hasn't worked out well for me this year. In the past I have had a reasonable ratio of half days turned into full days compared with those I haven't. This year I am on the low side of things. Whenever I get a half day I always try to get a second job for the other half of the day if possible. I think this may have succeeded maybe once this year. To make matters worse, when it's too late to cancel an assignment only *then* do I see full-day assignments show up to mock me. Today was such a day. Think I saw no less than half a dozen such jobs show up this morning. I even saw a half-day assignment for the morning posted. Too bad this was the half of the day I was already assigned.

I tried a few times today even at work. Nothing. Then finally before I came home I came across an afternoon at a nearby school. Yes! Wait, no. It turned out to be a half day for Thursday. Sigh.

What was work today? Or yesterday for that matter since I didn't get around to posting... Well, that's something for another post. Stay tuned.

It just doesn't make any

sense

Yesterday I was talking with my friend, Rachel, about Star Wars, which is reall weird, since for the longest time she didn't even like having it mentioned. But yesterday, she was willing to listen and participate in my talking about Mara and how I didn't think that a poison dart should have been able to kill her. She was the Emperor's Hand for goodness sake! She was one of his personal assassin and knew so many tricks to the Sith, though she never was one herself. She didn't fall for Jacen's trick that he tried to pull when she had the roof fall on top of him. Why should she be kiled by something as simple as a poison dart? If the Karen Traviss insisted that Mara had to die, than couldn't she have thought of a way to do so that was fitting to the character?

Rachel and I have decided that Mara really wasn't killed, because in the Legacy of the Force series, Mara wasn't acting like herself at all. She was all passive and not willing to believe Luke when he tried to tell her that Jacen was turning to the Dark Side. Mara had seen the Emperor, had known Vader, she should have been the first one to believe Luke on this, and yet, for some reason, she wasn't. She didn't believe him until six books into the series. How can Mara change so suddenly in the books, from the woman that Timothy Zahn had created, to some different kind of woman, that someone else made her? Sure, she had a son, and yes, I agree that Mara would be protective of him, but the way I have seen Timothy Zahn write about Mara, she wouldn't become passive and almost scared to do things. She would be active, ready to do whatever necessary to protect him. She had sent him off while he was just born to safety and continued fighting against the Yuuzhan Vong, to keep the galaxy safe. With all this, Rachel and I came up with the clone idea, though of course Tony doesn't believe me. ☐ Just because they had her funeral and she became a force ghost! Though we have been talking, and his friend

said that we could bring her back with a Dark Jedi turning to the Light Side and sacrificing himself to bring her back, using the Force. That would be really nice. I could always write a fanfic and put it on one of those Star Wars fanfiction sites. I wouldn't get money from it, but at least I would feel like I had some say in the way the authors are writing. Timothy Zahn wasn't even told by Del Rey that Mara was going to be killed off. Talk about a shock when he read it.

Fun With Animals

Came across a few really cute animal-themed emails lately, so I thought I'd share. The first one is for people who don't have a dog or just have a very disobedient one. Enter a command in the text box and the cute doggie will do it. Try 'kiss'.

[swf]https://www.idodogtricks.com/site_template_v10.swf[/swf]

Then there's this video, which features the winning combo of a baby and a dog, awww... [Click here](#) to see "Childproof Drawer".

Finally, I got these really cute pictures in an email a few weeks ago... Seems a mommy tiger lost her cubs and "adopted" these piglets to take care of. See the 'pork chops':



Widowers in the Movies

***** Movie Spoiler Alert *****

I took my girls to see "Nim's Island" last week. Good movie overall, but I can't help to think of how they portray widowers and their families. (something personal here). This is the second recent movie that I've seen that has a widower as one of the main characters, the other was "Enchanted". By the end of both movies the widower dads were attached/married. Hmm, if only real life was that easy.

In "Nim's Island", the father hooked up with his daughter's favorite author. A dad and daughter out in the middle of the ocean, and an agoraphobic author from San Francisco meet. Wow, that was easy. This was computer dating at its very best (worst?). The daughter seems to set them up too. (Come on girls get your acts in gear... ☐)

Now all I have to do is set up some sort of research on a south sea island (doesn't sound too bad), and I will be able to find a future Mrs. Somehow I don't think things are ever that easy.

And on to "Enchanted". I enjoyed this movie, and all the ins to other "Disney" shows. Cartoon characters come to life in New York. Of course the beautiful princess meets up with the widower, thanks to his daughter (again, girls, you aren't working things right!!!). Singing and Dancing ensue. At the end through many trials and of course defeating the "Evil Stepmother", the widower and princess are together. One happy little family.

Then of course there is another widower meets girl picture. Can anyone say "Sleepless in Seattle"? This time the son of the widower calls up a radio talk show to get dad a wife. Cross country trips occur, and they walk off to what is assumed another happy family, Hollywood style.

I will admit that “Sleepless in Seattle” did a admirable job of actually portraying what a widower goes through, at least if you have enough money to pull up roots, and have the luck and or skill to get another high paying job in another city. Yes, there were many a night that I didn’t sleep, even less than my normal sleepless patterns. Yes, I’ve daydreamed about talking with my late wife. Yes, I had to get up every morning and remind myself to breath. I don’t normally need to remind myself of that anymore, but it was there. There were many things I have gone through that were in that movie. This in itself gets my vote for a good movie. Most movies I’ve seen with widower or widows don’t even touch the problems with losing a spouse. It is for good reason that losing a spouse is on the top of most lists of traumatic life events.

My last question. Why are a lot of movies about hooking up widowers? Doesn’t that fly in the face of all the “Evil Stepmothers” of fairy tale fame?

Pinata Pilgrimage

I didn’t blog all weekend because we made a few-hundred-miles trek to the Chicago suburbs for my nephew’s 5th birthday party. We stuffed ourselves silly over there because as much as we love where we live, the restaurant choice can grow kind of boring. So, being in a different area had us stopping for food every chance we got, but by the end of the weekend, we were a wee bit regretful... I think that midnight case of White Castles are what did us in. Since there aren’t any White Castles near us, we had to stock up and buy a whole case since they reheat pretty well. We stopped there on the way out of the area, and then we had to smell them all the way home – yuck. They taste good but don’t smell so great, especially

when it's time for bed... So, as you can see, we did fit in a bit of culture on our trip. For those who aren't familiar with White Castle, it's a fast food chain found in the midwest that specializes in mini-hamburgers, also known as "sliders". They aren't just mini-hamburgers, though, they're steam-grilled, and they have a very unique taste... not to mention an, ahem, interesting side effect when you feed them to pets and small children. I will not elaborate; let's just say that my kids really like them, but the next day our noses were paying for it.

We also found time to stop at an ethnic grocery store for something my husband has been looking for called *Halva*, which is a Middle Eastern dessert. I had never tried it before, and I really like to try ethnic foods, so we picked some up. It is pretty good! The halva we got was actually from Macedonia, and though it tastes nothing like it, I would best describe its texture as that of the 'astronaut' ice cream. You know, the freeze dried ice cream that they sell at space museums?

And to round out our cultural experience, my nephew had a pinata at his birthday party. Pardon my spelling it wrong, I can't find the special n with the tilde over it they use in the spanish alphabet. So in my blog, it will be known as a pinata. Just in case you are not familiar with what a pinata entails, check out Wikipedia's explanation:

A succession of blindfolded, stick-wielding children try to break the piñata in order to collect the sweets (traditionally fruit, such as sugarcane) and/or toys inside of it. It has been used for hundreds of years to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and Easter.

Seems that Wikipedia figured out how to do the tilde... but anyway, yes you read that right – **blindfolded, stick-wielding children!** Actually, it's customary to use a baseball bat instead of a stick, yet oddly enough, I don't think I've ever been part of a pinata party where a parent didn't have to step

in and break it open themselves – this one being no exception. It went pretty well, though we did almost have a casualty – my nephew took his first whack at the pinata, and his dad had not cleared the area, so CRACK went the bat against the cell phone he was wearing... but I guess all was well, especially since someone had talked them out of their original plan: giving a bunch of 5-year-olds an *aluminum* bat with which to whack at the pinata. Thank goodness for the insight! If you get a chance, you should check out the pinata scene in the movie [Parenthood](#), it's hilarious... the kids at the party lose interest after not being able to get it open, so the scene cuts to [Steve Martin](#) beating the heck out of the thing as it lays on the floor. Nothing like that at my nephew's party, in fact, his pinata opened rather easily. And when it did break open, there wasn't the usual melee either... the kids were actually quite orderly in picking up the pinata "guts". I was a little worried because the last time I was at a birthday party with a pinata, the kids all piled in a heap on top of each other, and the kid at the bottom ended up with a bloody lip.

So, overall, great weekend, even if it lacked sleep – lots of driving and we didn't get home until 3:30 in the morning! And I have a few weeks to decide whether or not we will be brave enough to attempt a pinata at my daughter's 4th birthday party... maybe that will be enough time for her to forget that her cousin had one...

One thing is for sure, if we have a pinata, we will *not* have an aluminum bat on the premises!

Big Papi's Curse

There have been several rivalries among sports teams over the years ([Ohio State/Michigan](#), [Chicago Bears/Green Bay Packers](#), and [Chicago Cubs/St. Louis Cardinals](#) to name a few). However, one of the most celebrated rivalries in all of sports is the extreme battle between the [New York Yankees](#) and the [Boston Red Sox](#). It dates back to 1920 when the Red Sox sold one of the most famous sluggers of all time, Babe Ruth, to the Yankees. From 1920-2004, the team from Bean Town was unable to win the World Series. Many 'Sox fans jokingly blame the deal; however, there were several more radical followers who faithfully curse the day the Babe put on the pinstripes. In order to curse the new Yankee Stadium, a Red Sox fanatic working as a construction worker, buried a David Ortiz jersey at the site. Although the jersey has since been unearthed and is going to be auctioned off for charity, I say **FIRE THE BUMB!!!!**

[The Big Dig: The Yanks Uncover a Red Sox Jersey](#)

Ironically, the curse seems to have worked **IN REVERSE**. Big Papi has batted an embarrassing .070 hitting just 1-for-29 since April 2. Hopefully, recovering the jersey will not have a positive impact on Ortiz' average.

Who's Got Even More Talent?

So.... yet another reality show has come and gone... this one lasted only one episode and for good reason. "Secret Talents of the Star" **attempted** to pit stars from various outlets against each other in order to show their dreams beyond what they have already accomplished. Haven't enough celebrities attempted to go beyond their day jobs and persue other

avenues. Michael Jordan retired from basketball (the first time) to pursue a second career as a major league baseball player.

While he was on the television series "[Moonlighting](#)," Bruce Willis recorded a rather forgettable album entitled "The Return of Bruno." Whoever Bruno is and from where he returned is a question better left unanswered. A good thing Mr. Willis stuck with his acting gig and action films such as the [Die Hard](#) quadrilogy.

In the category of should have known better, George Takei tried his hand at country singing on the celebrity reality showcase. The actor who played Mr. Sulu on [Star Trek](#) obviously failed to hear his captain's rendition of "Rocket Man" which may or may not have been one of William Shatner's many attempts at self-parody.

I am sure there must be a few examples of performers who found limited success in more than one outlet. Anyone care to share any or name other attempts? Was it Garth Brooks who tried to go from country superstar to Major League baseball player... even creating a new persona to do so?

Books Are Now Movies

About a month ago, I saw *The Other Boleyn Girl*. I had heard mixed opinions about it. A friend of mine told me that it was not historically accurate and did not follow the book very well at all, but my sister told me that it was really good and that I should go watch it. I love the book. In fact, I own it. The book was written by Philippa Gregory and she has written many historical fiction, like the book I'm reading right now, *The Virgin's Lover*. The movie was as both my friend

and my sister said. As long as I could forget about the book, it was a movie that I would watch again. If things from the book popped into my head, it was a terrible movie! Whether I buy this movie or not is debatable still. If the movie is going to not go by the book, it should at least get some things right. They never explained what happened to Mary Boleyn's first husband, he just disappeared and suddenly she was married again! How was that explained in the movie? It wasn't and it drove me crazy! Why must movies be based on books and then not be like the book? Ella Enchanted is a movie and a book. I love both, but they are so completely different. If they are going to rewrite the book to make a movie, why base the movie on anything?

Ernie the Klepto Take II

A couple of quick updates I have to post:

1. After just one episode, your favorite new show and mine, "Secret Talents of the Stars" was CANCELLED!!! Just kidding. At least about the favorite show part – this awful show was actually cancelled after airing just one episode, and we will never find out who wins. Boo-hoo. Probably would have been a bigger disappointment to waste more time watching it than it will be not knowing which celebrity won.

2. I did some research, and didn't find anything about the Starburst commercial (see my Mediocrity post) and whether or not it stars Steve Buscemi – just LOTS of speculation on the internet, no definite answers – but I watched the commercial again, and I no longer think it's him. Unless he's found a way to age in reverse, that is. But the actor in question definitely seems to be imitating him, and should probably look

into getting a paid gig as a Buscemi impersonator, if he hasn't already. Sorry for the misinformation.