

Telephone Operators On Skates?

Last Friday, I watched one of last year's most talked about movies (at least in my circles). I must say that the Clint Eastwood helmed/Angelina Jolie-starring film *Changeling* was well worth the months I have been endeavoring to watch it. The story itself was harrowing made even more dramatic by the fact that is factually based.

Since [taylhis](#) has already given an excellent synop, I will mention the pains taken in the creating of late 1920-early 1930s Los Angeles. Costuming, set design, the music, everything put you right there. The only building that is still standing in the greater LA locale is the City Hall itself which has been seen in numerous television series and movies (I can think of two immediately: *The Naked Gun* and the watchable if laughable updated *Dragnet* starring Tom Hanks and Dan Aykroyd). Eastwood even resurrected the LA streetcar (which have been out of service since 1961). The multi-talented director also composed the musical score for the film which he has done in many of his efforts... primarily with his passion for jazz. The costume design was totally period. Did telephone switchboard operators really move along on roller skates... complete with key?

And here is my extreme geek topic of the day. The fact that *(The) Changeling* is a title of a TOS episode was not lost on me. In fact, some theatres received the film under the name *Nomad* which was the name of the space probe from the 1967 season two episode. Not a total geek, I had to cheat on the year the episode premiered.

A truly memorable viewing experience. Again, totally robbed at Oscar time (and Clint was not even nominated).

Doubt

We saw the Oscar nominated film [Doubt](#) the other night. Normally, I like to see as many of the major Academy Award contenders before the awards show airs as it did a few weeks ago, but it's usually not possible to see every single one in time. Even though it didn't win any of the 5 Oscars for which it was nominated, the buzz that surrounded Doubt was so intriguing that we decided to check it out.

For a movie being based primarily on dialogue, it is very fast-paced. I was never bored, which is something I can't say about a Good Will Hunting, an Oscar winning movie we watched last week. Good Will Hunting a long movie, so it took us two nights to watch it, and I fell asleep both nights during the movie. Not that it was a horrible movie; I don't know much about it – I was sleeping!

Ok, back from the Oscar tangent, back to Doubt. This movie is based on a stage play, and the author of the play also wrote the screenplay and directed the film version; which I think is very important so nothing was lost in the translation between stage and screen. The story is compelling; it's about a Catholic school in 1964 where the principal, a nun brilliantly portrayed by Meryl Streep, suspects the priest is having an inappropriate relationship with the school's only African-American student. Amy Adams portrays Sister James, a naive freshman nun who is caught in the middle of the conflict. Amy Adams is one of the actors from this movie who was nominated for an Oscar, and it's understandable when you see what a far cry Sister James is from Adams' purse-selling ex-cheerleader Katy on The Office or the character Leslie Miller from her first film, the teen beauty pageant spoof Drop Dead Gorgeous from 1999. Phillip Seymour Hoffman was excellent in Doubt

also; hardly recognizable from the 1990's roles where I saw him previously in the movies Twister and Leap of Faith. It's easy to see how Viola Davis received her Oscar nomination for Doubt as well – she had lines in just one scene in the entire movie, but her performance was excellent, however short on screen time. You win some and you lose some, which explains how those 3 actors walked away without their Academy Awards. Inexplicable, however, is how Meryl Streep did not win an Oscar for Doubt. True, I haven't seen The Reader with Kate Winslet, the actress who won the Leading Actress Oscar instead of Meryl Streep. I did see Changeling with Angelina Jolie who was also nominated, and judging by the phenomenal performances of Streep and Jolie and the fact that Winslet was the winner, I might just have to see The Reader. I loved Angelina Jolie in Changeling, and I'm not usually a fan of hers, so that says something. I loved Meryl Streep in The Devil Wears Prada, but honestly, I used to think Hollywood had a strange habit of sucking up to Meryl Streep. How can she be THAT good, I would wonder... until I saw Doubt. She IS "that good".

I can see where this movie would make an excellent stage play. But after seeing 4 of the most talented actors out there portraying the lead roles on the big screen, who would even want to be compared to that by staging a live theatrical production of Doubt?

Changeling

Wow. What a great film... and I don't think I've been able to say that since I saw The Orphanage months ago. We ventured over to the Toledo suburbs yesterday for date night to see [Changeling](#) at the nice theater since we still had a free pass leftover from a movie where they had technical issues. It was

a long drive (saw 3 overturned semis in the ditches of the Ohio turnpike just in the almost 40 miles we use it, what's up with that? Has it really been that windy the past few days?), but well worth the long drive since our local theaters didn't have anything good playing. There's also great food in the Toledo area, and we went out to dinner at Ruby Tuesday's... that is good food for us – you should try moving to Bufu; it really makes you appreciate places like Ruby Tuesday's, Olive Garden, etc. in a whole new light when you don't get to have them very often. We wanted to try a place that has Mediterranean food which was recommended by justj, a fellow tangents.org blogger, but we figured we'd wait until a time when he could join us.

Changeling is a “period thriller”; the period being 1928-1935. The movie is based on the true story of Christine Collins, a single working mom whose 9-year-old son goes missing. What follows is the tale of one woman's plight as she seeks justice in an unjust world where women don't even really have a voice. I'm going to have to stop giving the plot synopsis there, however, because it was so great for me to watch the film only knowing about it what I've shared with you – I recommend you don't research the story until after you see the movie. I didn't know the course the events would take, even though it's really easy to find out since it's based on a true story – it probably stays closer to the actual events than do most movies based upon true stories. After you watch the movie, you can look up the real story and see how close they were, and if you're like me, you'll wonder why they changed and left out the things they did in the movie.

The acting is great, the cinematography is breathtaking, and the direction ([Clint Eastwood](#)) is incredible. The movie really gives you a vision of what everyday life might have been like in 1928. [Angelina Jolie](#) is a really good actress – I can't stand all of the publicity stunts she pulls over in her personal life, but as an actress, she's proven

herself with this film alone. [Amy Ryan](#) (you might recognize her as Holly from The Office – need her back in the Office though!) is also amazing in this movie, and I'll say the same for [John Malkovich](#) and [Jeffrey Donovan](#), who played the villian you loved to hate. The movie is lengthy at 2 hours and 20 minutes, but the time flies by as the plot unravels. I was never bored, never lost, and thoroughly entertained the entire time. Changeling has a story to tell, and its story is riveting, as is the movie. I highly recommend this movie!!!