
SpeakEasy

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Winter, 2005

Four Days of Independence

By Fawn Cay



Just as the sun was coming up on Columbus the morning of January 26, 2005, I kissed my two-year-old daughter good-bye. I had to catch an early flight to Park City, Utah to see a movie; well, not just a movie, 15 movies. Accompanied by two classmates turned filmmaking colleagues, David Conrad and Michael Carroll, I took off to the Grand Poo-Bah of American film festivals. Unlike many Sundance attendees, we weren't hoping to mingle with the stars on the slopes (we don't know how to ski), or party with



Park City, Utah

Hollywood's teen elite (fear of confined places with steel bars); we were going to see movies, as many movies allowable in our four-day trip. With 16 pre-purchased tickets each, we could not wait to soak up this year's big independent films. We eased into the experience with two evening shows, the last one letting out at 2am. Two wrong shuttles and an hour and a half later, we ended up walking almost a mile, in what any Ohioan would consider a snow storm, to find the parking lot where our car was now buried. Thursday was our first full-day movie fest, but the lack of sleep was already taking its toll. Although we were amazed by 5 great films including *Thumbsucker* and *Forty Shades of Blue*, we ended up selling our midnight

feature tickets in order to get at least 4 hours of sleep to last us the rest of our trip. I got an early call letting me know that my sister-in-law had gone into labor 2 weeks early, and that I had missed the birth of my first nephew. So, I ran to a gift store and bought a Park City Christmas ornament with his name on it to allay my feelings of guilt. Just like a traditional three act screenplay, the climax of our trip occurred in the middle of our stay. Friday morning, we woke up to watch Steve Buscemi's *Lonesome Jim*, an homage to depressed writers everywhere, and undoubtedly my favorite of the festival. (I made that decision before, not after, I changed my screensaver to the picture I had taken with him after the Q&A). We continued to be awed by one great movie after another including *Me, You and Everyone Else We Know* and *Junebug*, both rein-



Fawn with actor, Steve Buscemi

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Columbus or Bust!

By Fawn Cay

With a BA in Communication and a little theatre experience I headed out to LA with a pack of other recent graduates hoping to get paid big for doing what we love. Our unified thought being, if you wanted to act, write and make movies, Columbus, Ohio was not the place to be. Ohio is the home to football fans, farmers, and the lead character's cousin in one out of every ten movies. Seven people in a three bedroom house, selling comfort shoes to the financially comfortable, and zero scripts later, and Ohio didn't sound so bad. Enter Columbus State Community College.



On the set of *Invisible Bridges*

Spring quarter 2004, I enrolled at CSCC to take some undergraduate film courses with the hopes of strengthening my applications to graduate film schools. Although the Introduction to Film course provided me with a stronger understanding of the principles of filmmaking, it was the network of peers I met while taking the class that fueled my determination to continue with my original aspirations. David Conrad, a fellow screenwriter, and I decided to write a short script which we could shoot digitally with the help of a couple other students who were enrolled in Comm 150, Columbus State's video production course. Gradually, we developed our script into a full length feature and we had to acquire additional cast and crew members to assist us in completing the project. With the assistance of Christiana Hopkins and Libby McGlone, our video production instructors at Columbus State, we were able to network with many of their past and present students including: Sam Javor, our cinematographer/co-producer; Tyler Barnes and Stephanie DeAnna, two of our lead actors; and Michael Carroll, a dedicated crew member, allowing us to continue the production of our first feature. The idea for our screenplay originated from a

discussion during our film class with Ms. Hopkins regarding the phrase "It's all Relative" which we originally titled our project. We have taken our script into a new direction and have since titled it *Invisible Bridges*. We are now in our second week of production and are so fortunate to have gathered an entire cast and crew to work with us with only experience, a copy of the final DVD, and a few inexpensive meals as their motivation and pay. Therefore, we will be shooting over four months to avoid conflicting with any of our actor's work and school schedules. So now, I laugh as I ponder how just three years ago I was selling shoes in LA, and now I'm home in Columbus making a movie.

For more information regarding *Invisible Bridges*, please visit our website at www.invisible-bridges.com.

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forcing the axiom that visual comedy is the secret ingredient to a great independent movie (too bad more mainstream films don't follow suit). However, we couldn't help but get discouraged as our chances of being amongst the dramatic features at the Sundance 2006 Film Festival began to look grim. The credits alone were intimidating. Not only were there top billing actors in many of the features, but you know you are in a different league of filmmaking when the wardrobe assistant's assistant has an assistant. Saturday was highlighted by the wonderful film *3-Iron*. With very little dialogue, it displays the purely visual storytelling offered through cinema. The Award's Night Party wasn't much more than a big line: to get in, to check your coat, to get a drink and to use the restroom. Still, I couldn't help, but feed my curiosity.



Park City, Utah

Despite the crowds, expensive food and memorabilia, and the recognition of the rising budgets of independent films, I can honestly say, that I saw more great movies in my four days at Sundance than I'd seen all year in the theatre.



Just Teach the Facts

By Bruce Ardinger

Increasingly, it seems, what many members of the public and some politicians want schools to teach are “the facts, Mam, just the facts” and not “theories.” Facts have been el-

evated to this status largely because of a misinterpretation of what facts tell us about the world in which we live. The value of knowledge in the common mind is that only facts have value because only facts can be “known.” Everything else is opinion or confusion or unknowable. Unfortunately, while facts are important, they don’t deserve the high status they have been accorded.

We can’t deny the facts, of course; facts “are.” We can trust facts. Theories, on the other hand, in the common misunderstanding, are malleable and untrustworthy because they haven’t been “proven.” While this is true, it is a circular and reductionist argument that leads to no understanding. Consider the following examples: (a) When an apple falls from the tree, it always falls; it never rises; it never sails off in a horizontal direction; it never just sits in the air halfway to the ground. That is a fact. The theory of gravity explains why. (2) The price one has to pay for a given good or service is a fact. Economic theory explains why and how that price was determined. (3) Tsunamis destroy cities and populations. Tectonic plate theory explains how, and how the damage can be avoided or reduced. (4) Birds and animals in isolated areas are different from similar species elsewhere; the theory of evolution explains why that is. While facts are true by themselves, they are often confusing and meaningless. Theories remove the confusion and provide the meaning.

We live our lives based on theories as much as facts because theories tell us what the facts are about; they tell us what the facts mean. Facts tell us what happened; theories tell us why it happened and why (or why not) it will happen again. Theories incorporate multiple facts and explain their relationships. Facts require mere perception. Theories require a higher order of perception, an imaginative projection of that perception, and a reasoning about

that perception.

Education is, whether some like it or not, less about teaching the facts than about teaching the theories. All of us would learn the facts by ourselves sooner or later by trial and error if we lived long enough and had enough experiences, but even if we all eventually learned all the facts, none of those facts would make sense without theories to explain what the facts mean and how they relate to other facts. For animals and plants, facts rule; for humans who think, theories rule!



Understanding Motivation, Courtesy of Warner Brothers

By Steve Kaczmarek

“You remind me of Paul.”

“Paul?”

“My . . . pet tarantula!”

Bugs Bunny cartoons taught me vital things. Who is the world’s greatest orchestra conductor. What kind of people wear hats with earflaps. When it is Duck and not Rabbit Season and vice versa. Where penguins, which are practically chickens, call home. Why monsters are such interesting people. How airbrakes work.

Perhaps the most important lesson was understanding motivation. The exchange described above involved Bugs—tied up and about to become a split hare—and a witch, who in the last moment spares him the ax. Why? Because while looking into his big, hopeful eyes, she finds her otherwise leathery heart softens. His resemblance to the family spider motivates mercy.

Motivation plays a part in public speaking, too. Speakers trying to persuade audiences must under-
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The Promise of Spring

By Lisa Schneider

Poet T. S. Elliot writes, “April is the cruelest month,” but he obviously never lived through an Ohio winter

that includes February. Winter in Ohio is torture. Ohioans are stuck inside their homes by the icy fingered weather. The combination of the dry heat of forced air furnaces and chapping winds leaves our itchy skin patched, raw, and flaking. Venturing out-



side forces us to clothe ourselves in so many layers we all look fat, and in fact, fat may help

keep the chill out. Unless an Ohioan indulges in the expense of the extensive equipment necessary for figure skating or downhill skiing, we have no escape from our self-imposed hibernation. To find the best slopes, a skier has to travel to a different state anyway.

All of winter is pretty bad. December brings the first blast of the impenetrable cold that makes bones ache. But the worst part of December is the short days and the long nights that seem to start at 3 pm. No wonder the so-called Pagans celebrated the winter solstice once the days started getting longer. January is often the snowiest month with sleet or sometimes icy rain that erupts from slate gray clouds that never part for the sun. We waded through the slippery white stuff to chip out our ice-covered cars

so we can slide through neighborhood intersections over tire-gouging potholes. When there is a thaw, the snowy rain prickles down our necks because the Arctic blasts have blown out our umbrellas to



useless globs of cloth on ribs. The once beautiful vanilla icing turns to a stew of dirty piles and dog-used glop. The only relief from winter’s chill comes in February because if the groundhog doesn’t see his shadow, winter

will soon be over. As it turns out, the burrowing rodent did see his shadow this year, promising 6 more weeks of winter.

However, spring was in the air this week. The sun was bright Tuesday as Heidi, my German Shepherd, and I took our morning walk. There in our path was a clump of crocus, not just the leaves and stems but actual little, exquisite white buds. I excitedly pointed the flowers out to the dog, but, of course, she was more interested in the squirrels who had dared to awaken from their hibernation and skitter in front of us. The air didn’t smell of far-off snow but of sun-warmed earth. And the wrens that make their home in our front bushes rather than the towering maples all around were twittering a racket.

Robins were trilling. In fact, come to think of it, I’d been seeing robins puffing their scarlet breasts all winter



long. Looking closely at our Northern magnolia, I could see the dormant brown-wrapped blossoms, which I guess had also been there all along. The promise of spring had been with us all winter. February, I guess, isn’t that bad; after all, it is the shortest month.



The Power of One By Gilberto Serrano

The media have been bombarding us with sensational news about all kinds of current events. The most recent tragedies that have occurred remind

us that life is fragile. This extends beyond human life.

Speculations about global warming as the result of natural disasters of cataclysmic proportions are becoming more and more believable. The tsunami that killed almost a quarter of a million people seems to be, by many scientists' estimations, caused by this.

There are many people who believe that saving the world begins by performing one kind act at a time. Many are the names to be mentioned. One name in particular is that of an Ohioan Catholic nun who recently succumbed to the enemies of the planet. Sister Dorothy Stang died defending the jungle that became her home many years ago.

Her example is one to be admired and imitated. She learned Portuguese so she could communicate with the people of the area. She helped them to achieve better living standards and to love the environment that surrounded them. More than just a nun, she was also a teacher. She was, indeed, a brave teacher whose classroom was a vast green natural space which provided her with the essentials needed to accomplish her goals.

Like most teachers, she always had a "lesson" plan to follow. This lesson plan was inspired by her genuine desire to help and to teach us how to be better human beings and to protect the only home we have.

We, just like Sister Stang, can do the same thing. It takes one lesson plan at a time, along with dedication and bravery. Now that we face budget cuts, this is the time to continue doing what we do best. It takes only a few ingredients to be as courageous as Sister Stang: imagination and a genuine desire to teach.



Sister Dorothy Stang

WARNER, cont.

stand what motivates them. Audiences, in turn, often wonder what motivates speakers. These are important issues, and Bugs Bunny and his employers, the Brothers Warner, never dodge them.



For instance, another excellent illustration of motivation occurs when Yosemite Sam decides to take the word of a southern belle (Bugs, cleverly in drag). Here, he accepts "her" word that a skullduggerous Yankee (in a remarkable twist, also Bugs) is not hiding behind a door, as ignoring "her" similar assertion earlier had resulted in a cannon blast to the face.

Sam's embarrassing but surprisingly nonfatal encounter motivates him to accept the credibility of the speaker and the plausibility of "her" second warning. Of this eloquently didactical moment, Aristotle would be proud.

Such scenes show that motivation is often fueled by emotion. After all, what better explains why Daffy Duck, a craven little coward, nonetheless would challenge the powerful Genie of the Lamp for his treasure? Greed, of course. Why would Foghorn Leghorn paddle the backside of the farm dog as a prelude to the more elaborate humiliation of a swinging harness and oversized paintbrush? Boredom. And would Bugs have gone to all the trouble of bringing down an entire opera house upon a smug tenor if not for sweet revenge for his beloved banjo?

Pedagogical jewels they are, the cartoons sometimes cross the line into simple entertainment, but we can forgive such indiscretions. Like Aristotle's strolls through the Lyceum, the pleasantries of occasional aesthetic distraction often enhance, not detract, from learning.

So, let's salute the Warners and their inestimable contributions to our understanding of rhetoric and continue to mine them for knowledge and inspiration. As for myself, as soon as that poseur Woody Woodpecker gets off my television, I intend to enjoy another advanced tutorial.

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SpeakEasy Online is available at <http://www.csc.edu/docs/comm/speakez.htm>



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