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**Drunks On The Set**

**By Stephen Schochet**

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As long as actors stay sober on the set, movie studios will generally put up with their off screen behavior. Colin Farrell often showed up at six in the morning to work on Swat (2003) so hung over from an all night bender that his bodyguards would carry the nearly unconscious Irishman into his trailer. His co-star Sam Jackson was constantly amazed that the young actor was on time, knew all his lines and was totally professional.

In earlier days before drug testing made it difficult for studios to insure actors like Robert Downey Jr. (known to be just as professional on movie sets as Farrel) the film industry had more tolerance for drunkards. During the making of Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948), Director Charles Barton put up with Costello's antics which included starting a pie fight with Dracula (Bela Lugosi), putting a leash around the Werewolf (Lon Chaney Jr.) and walking him around Universal Studios, and pelting ad-libs at Frankenstein's Monster (Glenn Strange) so the creature kept laughing and ruining takes. A bigger concern was Bud Abbott who would get so sloshed by 2pm that he was incapable of shooting for the rest of the day. Abbott later explained that when he was young, a doctor told him that if he didn't stop drinking he'd be dead by the age of thirty. The straight man was so worried about the diagnosis he stayed drunk for the next forty years.

Another classic alcoholic was the British actor Robert Newton (1905-1956) who once got so inebriated he showed up to the wrong movie set. The happy producer put the big star in four scenes until people from the movie he was really supposed to be in came to haul him off. His reputation eventually made it difficult for him to find work. Producer Mike Todd interviewed Newton for the film Around The World In Eighty Days (1956). "Your friend David Niven says you are a big drunk." "My friend Niven is a master of understatement." Newton agreed to stay sober during filming and kept his promise.

If you give up drinking you can get something in return. When Lucille Ball was negotiating with CBS to turn her radio show into I Love Lucy (1951-1957) she was surprised to get a call from a character actor she knew named William Frawley. "I hear you need someone to play your landlord." Lucy was in a

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quandary. She was from the old school where you help your fellow actors out if they are down on their luck. But Frawley was a well known drunk. She suggested he talk to her husband Desi Arnaz. Frawley promised Desi he'd never miss time due to drinking. But could Frawley who was an avid baseball fan have time off if the Yankees made it to the World Series? Desi later regretted giving in to Frawley's wishes, in the fifties the Yankees made it to the Series almost every year.

Sometimes a director could turn an actor's drunken behavior against him. When John Huston was ready to shoot the first scene in *Heaven Knows Mr. Allison* (1957), on location in the South Seas island of Tobago, he sent an assistant director to get star Robert Mitchum out of his tent. Mitchum showed up four hours later explaining that he and the AD had got started drinking scotch and the poor man was unconscious back in the tent. Huston smiled, "That's ok Bob. Now let's shoot the scene where your character, the marine floats into the island unconscious on the raft." Mitchum spent the next four hours suffering in the blazing tropical sun as Huston sitting comfortably in the shade ordered retake after retake. The actor was on time from then on.

But who was the most notorious drinker of all? *The Swarm* (1978), a disaster film about killer bees, featured Michael Caine, Henry Fonda, Ben Johnson, Slim Pickens and Fred MacMurray, definitely some guys who knew something about putting them down. One day they were joined for lunch at the Warner Brothers commissary by the quiet Olivia de Havilland. There were complaints that no booze was being served. "That's because of Errol Flynn (1909–1959)", said de Havilland. "He used to get so drunk he couldn't work so Mister Warner said no more booze." The men wanted to hear more about the famous swashbuckler. "Oh my God, Errol was something. Do you know he once got so drunk he wagered a film crew \$500 that he'd have his way with me." The men could see she was a lady and the incident must have been embarrassing for her. Olivia grinned mischievously "Oh it was, it was. And you see that table over there. That's where he won his bet!"

Stephen Schochet is the author and narrator of the audiobooks *Fascinating Walt Disney* and *Tales Of Hollywood*. The *Saint Louis Post Dispatch* says, "these two elaborate productions are exceptionally entertaining." Hear realaudio samples of these great, unique gifts at

### **The First Five Crucial Poker Minutes!!**

**By Jake B. Eyes**

First things first, determine exactly what everyone's trying to accomplish. Is the individual there to learn, have fun or play for a living? Most of your profit in no limit holdem games is going to come from picking a target and going after him. A lesson taken from the movie *Rounders*: "If you can't spot the sucker within the first half hour, then you are sucker."

Figure out who is winning and who is losing. People usually don't play as well when they are losing, therefore a losing player may be an easier target. In no limit, you have to learn and understand people you play against. The strategy you used yesterday could be worthless today. You need to know what

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kind of game plan you are going to use and know the game plan you will be using will be the right one.

Another individual you should target are player's who are excessively drinking. Pick on the drunk guy who's just there to have a good time and gamble. You may get a few bad beats from time to time with drunks because of there willingness to take chances more often, but in the long run they'll pay you off nicely.

In the first five minutes, try to establish a dominating presence at the table. You don't want to be someone else's mark. If no one are the table knows you, they might mark you as a fish and try to bully you around. No limit's no fun when you have people targeting you. Reek of confidence; sit up straight and let them know how comfortable you are. Be intimidating - let them know you're a well-rounded no limit holdem player and you're ready for any play they throw at you.

Last, but not least important point, is to pay attention. If you pay attention constantly after you fold, you will pick up on certain tells and player's betting patterns. Players will show information you can use against them.

This Article is been published by

and written by a poker lover that doesn't

like the attention like most poker "GURU'S". He likes to call himself Jake Blue Eyes, anyway the reason we say that is because Jake has asked us to distribute his wonderful poker experiences online as well offline at

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