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Masters Of Disguise

By Stephen Schochet

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Gene Hackman once lamented that the worst thing about becoming a famous actor is that you lose the ability to observe people without being noticed yourself. But some performers are so good at disguises that notoriety is no obstacle. A case in point was John Barrymore trying to buy his first house in Beverly Hills in 1926. Frustrated by rising real estate prices due to stars like Tom Mix and Charlie Chaplin moving into the neighborhood, Barrymore went to look at a lot dressed as his most famous movie role, Mr. Hyde. The realtor was taken aback by the long haired, wild eyed, fiendish looking man who got out of the limo. Every time the broker would suggest a price he was met by an intimidating growl. Finally he made the sale by lopping twenty thousand dollars off the initial number.

Barrymore's penchant for disguises did not end with his home purchase. The actor was often arrested and locked up for vagrancy, specifically being drunk and going through his rich neighbor's trash cans to find scraps for his pet buzzard. His experiences were put to good use when he showed up to a costume party put on by Marion Davies dressed as a bum. Unfortunately, his outfit was so authentic he was turned away.

Sometimes an actor will believe that they are turning into the character that they play. The disguise will give them a confidence they don't have in their own lives. Before Dustin Hoffman was famous he used to follow movie producers into bathrooms, wait till they got into the stalls, slide his head shots underneath the door and run away. He almost blew his audition for *The Graduate* (1967) by getting nervous and grabbing Katherine Ross' breasts during his screen test. The insecure actor became more comfortable as he got outside his own skin, especially when he played Dorothy Michaels in *Tootsie* (1982). Dustin was so convincing as a flirty southern belle that he actually fooled his uncomfortable *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) co-star Jon Voight in New York's Russian Tea Room. Their real life encounter was later turned into one of the film's funniest scenes. After the experience was over he didn't want to be Dustin again. "Maybe there can be a sequel where I give birth."

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Another uncertain star, Gregory Peck had his decision making powers rise up several notches when he played the title role in *MacArthur* (1977). Peck's wife Veronique wished to buy a new lot in Holmby Hills and wanted Greg's approval. Local residents were amazed to see what looked like Douglas MacArthur chauffeured around in an open convertible, wearing his full General's Uniform, complete with the pipe and dark glasses that he was famous for. When he arrived, Veronique began telling him about the property. After two minutes he interrupted her, "Buy it!" He saluted, got back in the car, folded his arms and ordered the driver to move on. Later the former Berkley student said, "How refreshing to have the General's decision making ability, Greg Peck would have dithered around for days."

Method actress Kim Hunter was shocked when she saw her chimp make-up in the mirror for the first time while playing Dr. Zira in *Planet Of The Apes* (1968). She actually started crying. "Oh my God. I'm not Kim anymore. I'm an ape." After she calmed down she turned in a great performance. The star of the film Charlton Heston attended the *Planet Of The Apes* premiere with his wife Lydia. Rare for a Hollywood leading man, Heston's marriage has lasted over fifty years without a hint of an extramarital

affair. A strange woman came running up to him. "Chuck, how are you? Nice to see you." She began hugging him and kissing him. "Hey, get off me lady," said Heston giving Lydia a bewildered look. Of course, it was Kim Hunter who Charlton had never seen outside her ape costume.

Heston and Hunter's Apes co-star Roddy McDowall kept his humor throughout the make-up ordeal. He loved driving down the 405 freeway in his full ape costume waving at the other cars while stuck in traffic. Roddy also had fun at the expense of his old friend and Camelot co-star Julie Andrews. Miss Andrews was working on the Twentieth Century Fox lot, near where workmen were building the Ape City. One day she was in her dressing room, agitatedly smoking a cigarette talking to her analyst on the phone. "My God these people here. I don't know who to trust. They're all trying to backstab me. Don't tell me I'm paranoid! My God there's a giant ape coming through my window!"

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

In Disguise – "One Woman's Story"

By Dymnpece

In Disguise – "One Woman's Story" by Dymnpece

In Disguise – "One Woman's Story"

It depicts a White woman growing up in a predominately black neighborhood for almost 20 years, never knowing her true identity until the age of 30 was revealed by her ancestors, that she was black.

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Her identity was hidden for years. How could she not know you might ask? She was adopted at birth, blind & mute. How come noone told her for so long is the question (plot maybe).

Being treated with disrespect, no dignity, no pride, it was not until her heritage was revealed did she begin to understand why.....

At the age of 36 an amazing surgical procedure enabled her to recover her eyesight and later began retracing her roots...

All the years she experienced first hand of what it was like to be treated unfair, with cruelty, racialism and prejudice and above all what it was like to be BLACK and LIVING a lie.

****I CAN BE FOUND ANYWHERE ON GOOGLE SEARCH ENGINE UNDER DYMNPECE OR MSDYMNPECE**** As a Native of Lake Charles, LA, this talented young woman has had many accomplishments, from being a Versatile Songwriter/Lyricist/Spoken Word Artist to an Outstanding Professional Poet/Aspiring Actress and well on her way to becoming an Upcoming Author. The name "Dymnpece" manifestly justifies for itself. <http://www.dymnpece.bravehost.com>

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