

Welcome to the Mishigas

Notes and Meditations (Bourgeois Code for Ranting and Raving) on the *Coup des Scoobies* and *le fin de Buffy*

by Basil Joe Rocker
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Clem makes his Rock 'n' Roll exit in Ep 7.19

STAY TUNED FOR: Reality Sucks Like a Rabid Bumpy Old Vampire, Give Me Good Books and Great TV!; OR Forgive Me If I Go All Marshall McLuhan on You

Thank you Rocky and Bullwinkle. How tenuous seems one's grip on reality when the home fires are burned so brightly within the womb of one's own abode. How safe one's little world seems, the outside and "reality" so far away until cruelly spat out the front door - that big scary Vagina that swallows the little semen that we are, makes us whole, then spits us out again - on a Monday morn, back to face the world and its prosaic demands, its syllogistic insistence upon linear being, dried logic, and prefab thought. The shock of it all upon that first crack of the door as the buzz of helicopters and the roar of the traffic, the constant 60 hertz hum that jacks with your music and your poetry, that shatters the peace and well-being you built up with precious soul-searching throughout another blissful weekend of ignoring the fetid concerns of a world bent upon feeding on itself, eating its own arm to aggrandize its twisted, misbegotten sense of intellectual prowess. The head that conquers all. It is soulless, it is ugly, it is chaotic despite its dry demands- somewhat like your soul (only whose demands are quite moist), only uncontainable, far from anyone's control despite your insistence upon some great right wing, or multi-wing conspiracy theory where a small cabal of demonic *ubervolks* is bent on flushing the planet and we very humans right down some giant galactic toilet in the name of corporate power, money, and god. Let's not forget god in this equation, the monolithic dude with a beard, separate and mightier than us, urging us on in our march to the bottom, all in the name of being on top. Man, who was it that first subverted the true abstract god? I wanna kick his ass.

But the weekend womb is where the imagination and the inner life play out their dramas, the dragons faced, slain, resurrected, lost to, then slain again. The sneers of the people on the street turn into the smiles of the people in your neighborhood. The computer, the internet, it is your umbilical cord to let in the outside world, feed you what you construe as the necessary information to get through your life. Yet, for the most part, it is just lies and fear. One side says the terrorists will get us if we do not give up our freedoms, the other says we are heading into a fascist state of being, inverted Orwellianism if we do so. I believe the latter and stay home, imagining storm troopers on the streets ready to arrest,

torture, and obliterate anyone who dares possess a fecund soul, who not only questions who has power, but the necessity of power whatsoever. "Anarchist!" they yell. Yes, no arch, one very flat, yet exciting line of equality. They still don't get it. Who are they? Who is this "they" I fear? ¹

I escape even deeper within my womb, into the womb within a womb, the home and hearth of electronic media, feeding me stories, mostly useless, as its variegated pixels glow like cold embers, mostly blue, instead of red and orange. But the cool light, once you escape deeply, is as warm as any fire, as deep as any undying passion, if, indeed, you are watching the right serial.²

***Buffy*- The Greatest Story Ever Told with Images and Sound and Transmitted to the Masses via the Ubiquitous Cathode Ray Tube?**

One such serial, perhaps one of the best in the medium's history (come back and see me in 2025 if I'm still around) burns warmest and brightest in our day. Yet the hot glow of cold light will soon flicker its last, and go cold at all levels, only to be revived in syndication and DVD. The story will have come to its end, no longer a living, breathing fire, but the image. It will be, via the miracle of television, the image within an image of an image of a fire.

That bright burning fire is the genius of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Ah, the poor wretched souls so off-put by the name, oh, what they have missed. But not to look past a title, to judge the book by the cover so to speak is a dire mistake in terms of finding genius. Those with such tendencies tend to neither find genius nor deserve it, nor would understand it if it sat upon their very face in full moon's shining glory. You can lead a horticulture, but you can't make her think. Thank you Dorothy Parker.

We have reached *le fin de Buffy*³ after 7 years of what I've once called, and call again here, unprecedented prime-time boundary expansion.⁴ Creator Joss Whedon, and his crew of merry writers have constantly outdone themselves, constantly raising the bar, and happily leaping over it each time. They have now reached the stratosphere, while the most popular programs on the big networks think they are big-time at seven feet. Oh ney the little wretches and their little worlds. Announcement: If you disagree with my pronouncements regarding the greatness that is the *Buffyverse*, please be informed that the short bus is now leaving for *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Friends*. Ciao. Maybe Roberto Benigni will be driving. Lucky you!⁵

Buffy Goes All Colin Powell on Us; Scoobies in Security Council Vetoland; Holy Shit! Is Giles French?

Only three episodes to go before Buffy's final buh-hye, and we have not one, but two big bads.⁶ Number one is "The First"⁷, yes, that is what it is called, as in the biggest baddest, the OE, the Original Evil- the one the only - the purest evil alive- the first evildoer, the uber-Bin Laden. Accept no substitutes. Number two, in cahoots with The First, is Caleb,

the hyper-patriarchal preacher man of the collar and a pair of black jeans, drawling hither and yon, and raising the Hollywood value of actor Nathan Fillion⁸ with every sly little grin that conceals a physical power many times beyond that of the Slayer and her friends. Hmmm, the First as Bin Laden and Caleb as Saddam? Caleb has now kicked the Slayer's ass twice (yes, something Saddam could never do to the forces of Powell), and funny thing, the Slayer wants to go after his lair a second time, sure to get her cute butt kicked A THIRD TIME! The second time Caleb waylaid her was at the school- yes, that "godless public institution" as he referred to it.

Screeeeech! On go the brakes. None of the Scoobs or the Potentials (the dozen or so up and coming Slayers hanging about 1630 Revello Drive⁹ and Xander's uptown digs-- they are also called Slayers in Training - "SITs") know that the Slayer is under the spell of the First.¹⁰ They only see a very weak (if it could get any weaker) Colin Powell shell game with Weapons of Mass Destruction act.¹¹ They are still reeling from the last visit to Caleb's vineyard where they lost two SITs and Xander lost an eye. Buffy's argument is not only weak, it is unfounded, only a hunch. "He's hiding something" is all she can say. Sound familiar? Buffy is now outnumbered. There's muttering about chasing windmills.¹² The SITs and her longtime friends, the Scoobies -Willow, Xander, little sister Dawnie, watcher Giles- say no way, your judgment sucks, and she's voted off the island¹³(thank you MR. RM for that artful term- you are a phallus of wisdom spewing your seed into the sock of enlightenment, you are). To further mix and mismatch metaphors, the UN resoundingly says, "Let the inspections work!"

And thus, *the Coup des Scoobies*. Faith, the reformed rogue slayer who went bad in season three¹⁴, woke from a coma in four¹⁵ to try to kill dearest Buffy, then switched bodies with her, then back again, then went to LA, then to prison to clean up her act (yeah, LA and Prison, not exactly fonts of the pious, huh. Let's hear it for fiction, eh.) is put in charge. Is she Hans Blix?¹⁶ The SITs like her, and she sure as hell doesn't want to go into the lair of Caleb again looking for the red herring/weapons of mass destruction or whatever it is that Buffy is so sure is there. No proof, no invasion. How's that for logic? Joss Whedon for President, anyone?

These episodes, probably written more than six months ago, before the full boiling of the Iraq imbroglio, are so in line with the US push for war in the Middle East that you just want to scream that his Whedonness is a friggin profit, er Prophet. Too bad the UN didn't vote Georgie Dubya off the island, or the planet. Launch that boy and his oil-drenched Tejano cronies into space, and we'll be living it up in dandelion and dancing Schnauzer land.¹⁷ Yee-ha.

But where do we go from here in the last three episodes of the Slayer Saga? Will Spike be Buffy's Tony Blair? His Bitch? Will Clem drive his red VW Bug back into Sunnydale to form a triumvirate "Coalition of the Willing"? As Clem shot to Buffy in a rhetorical question as frightened residents fled Sunnydale (hmm, Baghdad?), "How about this mishigas?"¹⁸ Yes, how about it, and how about the eerie feeling I'm getting that Josh Whedon is omniscient.

I'm Not Gay, but Some of My Favorite TV Characters Are

We have most likely seen the last of Clem, and many a sniffles on that point. Quite possibly the show's only ambiguously gay male character next to Andrew, natch, (Willow amped-off the ambiguous back in Season 4 when she chose Tara over Oz¹⁹, tossing aside about a third of a season of Wiccanisms coded as Lesbianisms. Come on, you knew they were gonna be a pair when they repelled the Gentlemen with a hand clutching magic spell in November '99's *Hush*. Mr. Whedon could not have written it any larger with yellow crayon "Willow's Lesbian Lover to be!" Grip be gotten people.), Clem was total sweet schlep, the more effeminate version of Xander. Who wouldn't want him to become a full-fledged Scoob? Also, is there some sort of Gay thing about *Knight Rider*?²⁰ Inquiring minds wanna know.

But when you get right down to it, Clem was basically *Buffy's* grunge version of *Angel's* super suave torch bearing, Patti LaBelle loving, the Host. You can't help but wanna go clubbing and/or bowling with them both. Shopping anyone? Contempo Casual is having a sale. Plus, how can one not love the beauty, in the case of Clem, of a gay demon being played by an actor who escaped the bible thumping hell of the Dallas Suburbs? If this isn't a REAL LIFE version of the Host's story,²¹ then tell me what the fuck is?

And while we are prancing through West Hollywood/Castro/Chelsea Piers (pick your favorite gay neighborhood) territory, how about Willow and Kennedy? How 'bout 'em, huh? Looks like they'll finally get past that first awkward kiss in 7.13 - awkward in that it turned Willow into the man she killed in Season 6, yes how friggin' awkward is that- and finally hit the *hey hay* if the previews of 7.20 are any indication of things to come (oh stop me!).

Yes, things to cum is more apropos. Per the previews, which always take a salacious angle, in no small part due to the fine marketing minds at Viacom, 7.20 is gonna *be Sexcapades 2003*. Anya bounces one-eyed ex-fiancé Xander, Faith and Principal Wood who made some sparkies in their first encounter last week in 7.19, appear to be getting all woodie for and with one another, as do, as mentioned above, Willow and Kennedy. Can Lesbians get woodie for one another? Spike and the Buffster take a kinder gentler, more Euroflick approach to coupling by cuddling up in a warm crypt, discussing the end of the world, the nature of love, and all that philosophical jazz. Indeed, "It's Showtime!"²²

The Story of Jailbait and the Effeminate Man?

So where will Andrew and Dawnie be at this time?²³ Will they make with the smoochies, the wishy washy ambiguously gay man and the strong younger and dominant female. She certainly led Clem around by the metaphorical huevos at the end of S6²⁴, perhaps she could get literal with Andrew, end of the world coming (there's that word again) and all, and who wouldn't want to be led around by the genitalia by the hand of this nubile little toastlet. Am I a thought criminal now? Take me to the Ministry of Love, please!²⁵

Oh my fantasies- dead wrong predictions, no, but dead wrong desires. How funny it is that a fictional TV program should take on resonance in our everyday lives, our everyday and every night dreams. How many times have I said, check out that Willow in reference to a tallish read-headed woman, or I'm such a Xander, after doing something totally goofy? Or "Kick-ass like Buffy." Don't tell me there aren't thousands of the hardcore *Buffyists* out there doing it everyday in one form or another. How many times have the *Buffy* characters shown up in your dreams? Don't deny it. The show means something. It means something very, very deep, something that will be studied and picked at for decades to come. How many academic volumes have been written about *Buffy* already? No less than three, with more on the way. How many studious articles about our Slayer have appeared in various mags and on numerous web sites? Countless. How many academic conferences about the Slayer have there been? At least two, with more sure to come.

Buffy is about being human, and the contradictions in us all- the fallibility of flesh and blood in this mortal coil in all its messy glory. It is about a life not bound by logic, but of love and devotion where most relationships are gray, but nonetheless fulfilling. This fantastical world of demons, vampires, superstrong slayers, powerful Wiccans, fastidious librarians with large collections of occult books, and men with big hearts will be the closest television or any visual medium will ever get to depicting the real, living, breathing world we mere mortals struggle in every day.²⁶

Predictions for *le Fin de Buffy*

And yes, I'm livin' Spoiler-Free nowadays...

Buffy and Faith turn into supercharged celestial energy, merge, and close the hellmouth forever. Dawnie, losing her beloved sister (again!) breaks down, loses corporeal form herself, reverting back to "the key." She invades Andrew's body, finally giving the boy some spine. The two in one person goes off to form its own demon fighting spin-off where of course we will get to see many, many holographic images of the shapely Ms. Trachtenberg when she gets pissed at Andrew and pulls out of him for awhile. (How's that for sexual inversion?) Ah, such a Jonesable little JAP. Sigh.

Working Title: *The Dawn of Andrew*

Anya dies along with numerous SITs. Grief stricken, Xander, Willow, and Kennedy spin-off to San Francisco to do a noir demon fighting version of *Three's Company*. Whedon will pitch it to Fox as *Three's Company* meets the *Mod Squad* meets the *Nightstalker*, meets *Queer as Folk*, with all the requisite *Buffy* humor and SF techno-chic. It will last one Season on Fox, but get picked up by UPN for five more seasons. Showtime will then take over for two more until the cast gets too old to go on. In terms of audience numbers, it will be more successful than *Angel*.

Working Title: *Sunnydale by the Bay*

Spike goes down to LA to work with Angel for about half a season before he tires of the prancing shallow twats of Tinseltown and goes off to Manchester to form a new series with co-stars Robbie Coltrane and Samantha Morton for BBC, and eventually Showtime in the U.S. They fight normal crime during the day, and demons like Julie Burchill and the National Front at night. Guest Stars will include Kylie Minogue, Morrissey, Emily Watson, Jack Straw, as well as aging members of Oasis, Blur, New Order, and the Buzzcocks. Andy Coles will guest star as a skinhead eating demon. Four years of negotiations for a one-episode stint by David Beckham will come to naught. James Marsters will be dubbed more English than the English by the *Daily Mail*. A new fear of Yank takeover of the UK media will sweep Merry Olde.

Working Title: *Stoppage Time* (this will be what the characters call their night work. If you don't know the original meaning of Stoppage Time, I suggest you watch more soccer.)

My Favorite Quotes/Scenes of Season 7, or, Basically My Excuse to Rewatch every Ep this Weekend²⁷

1. The conversation between Spike and Andrew on the motorcycle in 7.19 about the genius of Onion Blossoms.
2. In 7.13 when Kennedy tells Willow that there's a much better term for one's ability to feel who's gay and who's not than Lesbidar.
3. The Law and Order-esque scene in 7.9 (Never Leave Me) where Anya and Xander give Andrew the good cop bad cop treatment.
4. Dawnie's great slapstick falls in 7.3 and 7.6.
5. From 7.6 - Jacket Guy to Dawn after she is grilled in the principal's office about the backup QB's fall down the stairs, which she caused, but got away with: "Sorry you had to go through the whole Inquisition thing."
Dawn: "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition." Aghast at the dorkiness of the Python quote, she squeals, "God, it's like I have a disease or something."
6. From Ep 7.10 Spike is tied-up on the ground after being bloodied and beaten by the Ubervamp.
The First in the Form of Drusilla to Spike: Do you know why you are here?
Spike: I never figured you for an existentialist love. I mean, you hated Paris.
7. All of 7.5, *Selfless* - the Bergman-esque scenes and the Musical flashback were genius, as was the rest of the Ep. Fave quote; Anya and Hally in St. Petersburg, 1905 - Anya's speech about what's to come for Russia and the rest of the world-- "The workers will overthrow absolutism. The proletariat will achieve a victorious communist revolution resulting in socio-economic paradise on earth. It's common sense, really."

8. Spike's "Hark the Lark" poetry as William the Bloody (awful poet) in 7.17.
9. Spike's, I've gotta soul speech to Buffy in 7.2, and subsequent searing on the cross is one of the most emotionally evocative scenes of the entire series. It ranks right up there with the end of "The Body," "The Gift's" Swan Dive, and Buffy's stabbing of Angel at the end of Season two, just as she realizes that Willow's spell has restored his soul.
10. All of *Same Time, Same Place*. Genius use of the same scene from different perspectives. Marsters was especially shiny in this ep, though smelly.
11. *Conversations with Dead People*, 7.7- Beautiful intro by Angie Hart. Gotta love a Vaclav Havel reference.
12. 7.8, when Buffy apologizes to the old woman of the house for staking her vampired self-- "Sorry, ma'am, it's my job."
13. The faux sexual tension between Willow and Anya during the magic spell of 7.3, and Anya's dogged insistence of just how sexy it was, not to mention their accusing each other of flaying people. Their "Was it you?" in unison was Spot-on.
14. Also from 7.3, Anya- "I just got back from Brazil. They love their Soccer."
15. The Principal office window fight between Spike and Buffy in 7.6, as they wrestle over a bazooka. The principal, elevator music cranked, is oblivious to his near-death.
16. Dawnie to Buffy in 7.6- "But you're older and hotter, and have sex that's rough."
17. Dawnie tarted-up in 7.6.. Arrest me now!
18. The suicide MacGuffin of 7.4, as well as Azura Sky's pitch-perfect performance. Loved the White Stripes T-shirt!
19. 7.17- Andrew's face after saying, "Willow, call from LA from someone named Fred. Sounds kind of effeminate."
20. 7.18- Caleb's speech about ordering the white at the Last Supper.
21. 7.19 - The Clem scene, as he bids adieu. Sniff Sniff..
22. 7.19 - The fact that the mysterious mission is in Gilroy, CA. Funny that Jossy Baby would send Vampire Spike to the Garlic capitol of the world. Plus, the reference to Nerf Herder at the Bronze as one of the signs of the apocalypse. Spot-on.

¹ I wrote this Meditation, so to speak, under the heavy influence of Thomas Pynchon's 5/4/03 article on Orwell in *The Guardian*. See www.guardian.co.uk

² Refer to the Various writings of Marshall McLuhan for his theory of television as the "Cool Medium" in opposition to film as "Warm." I urge you not to refer to *Annie Hall* or the film, *Medium Cool*, at least not at first, until you've read the source material. Tread lightly *mes amis*.

³ This is a play on the term, le fin de siecle, or the end of the century, and all the bugaboos, hoo ha haws, and fear and loathing it traditional spreads about humanity. If you weren't aware of this already, you probably shouldn't be reading this article, but heading back to school for some hardcore liberal arts rigors.

⁴ In a Camille Paglia-esque turn, I am referring to my own article, *Buffy is Dead, Long Live Buffy*, written after the season five finale in which Buffy sacrificed her life to save the world. It is posted at www.basiljoe.0catch.com

⁵ This refers to the hilarious 1991 Film, *Johnny Stecchino (Johnny Toothpick)* in which Benigni played the driver of a bus specifically for mentally challenged children. If you have not seen this film, do so. For more info consult <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0102164>

⁶ Okay, if you don't know what I mean by the "Big Bad," what are you doing here. You are in dire need of education. See www.slayage.com and www.slayage.tv and www.chosentwo.com , among other sites for enlightenment.

⁷ This is not the first appearance of The First. It is dealt with in some degree in Season 3.

⁸ Fillion played the lead protagonist on Whedon's short-lived series on Fox, *Firefly*. I saw maybe two minutes of this series and said, "Bored now."

⁹ You should be aware that this is the address of Buffy's house, aka, the Summer's home. Again, if you did not know this before, there are other prerequisites you should study first.

¹⁰ We know this from the an exchange between Caleb and the First (in the guise of Buffy, no less) in 7.19, *Empty Places*, as Caleb tells the First that he has her where he wants her.

¹¹ In case you've been under a rock the last few months, this refers to US. Secretary of State's ridiculous speech where he claimed that the Iraqis were moving WMD's before the inspectors from the UN arrived. Snicker. Snicker. Did he really think we'd buy that crap?

¹² Again, if you don't understand the significance of the Don Quixote reference here, I refer you to Mr. Cervantes: http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0142437239/qid=1052116035/sr=2-2/ref=sr_2_2/002-3826479-1861664

¹³ This is in reference to the Reality Series, *Survivor*, on CBS. I don't mind referring to such garbage, but I must shower now just thinking about it. If you don't know that the whole Reality Series thing was in response to an impending Actors' Strike, again, you are in dire need of education. Damn, I'm sounding high and mighty right now. Please knock me off my perch before I hurt someone, like myself.

¹⁴ I refer you to the Eps, *Bad Girls* and *Enemies* from Season 3.

¹⁵ I refer you to Season 4 Eps, *Who are You?* and *This Year's Girl*. By far, the two best eps of that season.

¹⁶ Again, for you subterranean types, Hans Blix was the Chief UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq. Poor guy didn't find a hint of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Think Bush, et al, made it up?? Hmm...

¹⁷ This refers to what Andrew claims Warren/The First promised him for killing the other member of the Trio, Jonathon. See the Andrewcentric episode, *Storyteller*, 7.16.

¹⁸ Mishigas is Yiddish slang. It roughly translates into "chaos."

¹⁹ See Season 4 ep, *Full Moon Rising* where Oz returns hoping to reclaim Willow's love after getting his Werewolf side under control. Upon finding out about Willow and Tara, Oz loses control, tries to kill Tara, but is captured by the Initiative before he can get to her. Quite fun, huh?

²⁰ In Ep 6.18, *Seeing Red*, Clem shows up at Spikes crypt with a bucket of hot chicken wings and a strong desire to kick back with Spike and watch a *Knight Rider* marathon. Unfortunately, Spike, having just tried to rape Buffy, is in no mood for couch-bound camaraderie.

²¹ That Character escaped the horrifically prosaic transdimensional world of Pylea - where there is no music, and all men are expected to be uber het macho types (uh, is that an oxymoron in our day and time thanks to the Village People and all of those who created and followed them?) Poor flaming Host. So glad he got *out* (Okay, I'm having way too much fun here).

²² Indeed, this is a reference to the Bob Fosse Musical, *All That Jazz!* You got that right. 2 points for you.

²³ Prognostications about these two hooking-up started recently at www.slayage.com. Personally, I kind of like the idea.

²⁴ In *Two to Go*, Dawnie coaxes Clem into leading her to the other-dimensional crack house where Willow juices up on the Magicks, despite Buffy's insistence that he keep Dawn safe, and out of harm's way.

²⁵ I hope you know that these are references to Orwell's *1984*. If not, please go back to square one, or Go to Jail, or school, or something. If you're in California and not wealthy, your best bet now is education while in Jail. Good Luck. Thank the CCPOA. That's a union of prison guards. Apparently they've got Gray Davis by the huevos, and the state's going down the hellmouth, pronto.

²⁶ Recommended reading:

Fighting the Forces, What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer by David Lavery and Rhonda Wilcox, editors

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0742516814/qid=1052118044/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/002-3826479-1861664

Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale, James B. South, editor

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0812695313/qid=1052118134/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/002-3826479-1861664?v=glance&s=books

²⁷ For a full listing of *Buffy* Episodes and Summaries for all 7 seasons, see <http://www.chostwo.com/buffy/main.php?x=episodes/episodes.html>