

HOLLAND LAND: More On The Sheds In The Back

Written by Tom Holland
Wednesday, 08 February 2012 10:31



It's like a treasure hunt, finding out what is in three tin sheds in the back of my house. I put 'em up so long ago, I don't want to talk about it. Put all my movie stuff in there, followed over time by things from the house that we wanted to hold on to—were sure we'd use again, but never did.

You know, the spare hook rug, the chairs your mother gave you, the skis, and exercise-cycle. All that stuff mixed in with the movie and TV files and mementos. No wonder every time I thought about clearing the junk out, I gave up. Mixed in with all this were the things I kept when my parents passed.

So not only did the sheds contain things that were emotionally loaded, it also represented all my failures and successes, a visual trajectory of my life, so to speak. If I wanted to be melodramatic (hell, why not), there were like a lot of voices whispering to me in those sheds.

Also, nothing was labeled. Not that I hadn't tried, but the boxes were plastic, and the paper labels fell off over time. They littered the floors in the sheds. I'd also used a black marker on the cardboard boxes, but they faded with time. So the sheds were a complete jumble and totally daunting. In some aisles, you didn't have room to turn around. Corners were just piles of things.

That's why I got Earl Roesel to help me (actually, he's doing it and I poke my head in when he finds something interesting). The last time I was out there, was when he found Chris Sarandon's gray shirt from the seduction scene in *FRIGHT NIGHT*. You know, the one he's wearing, unbuttoned to show his naked chest, when he sits by her side before the fireplace, and lovingly fastens his teeth to the side of her neck.

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Earl also uncovered the blue neon bicycle from the wall in the toy store that opens CHILD'S PLAY. I'd given it to my son, Josh, and he had decorated his bedroom wall with it. At some point, it had passed to me and I kept it in the den, but that soft electronic buzz from the transformer drove me nuts, and I moved it to the sheds. I don't know how, but I'd had the forethought to wrap it up before I stored it, so it somehow survived.

I found some things that really excited me: a full set of the blueprints for the sets of FRIGHT NIGHT. They're gorgeous. I had no idea they were out there in the sheds. They were in a long cardboard tube, sized like the architectural blueprints for houses, one after the other, easily covering a good size rectangular table. The detail work is terrific.

Thank you, John DeCuir Sr., and his son, John Jr. The two John's were the production designers on Fright Night, and responsible for creating its "look." They did it with great talent and almost no money to work with. Even the drawings are beautiful. If I can figure out how to shrink them down a bit, I could put them on a wall.

Earl also found a four-inch thick binder of all the production stills from CHILD'S PLAY. That's every still taken, in front of and behind the camera. My wife picked "selects" from these proof sheets and had a leather book made up of the best. Of course, we can't find it anymore. Or it just hasn't turned up yet (fingers crossed on that one).

I found the naked "My Buddy" doll that I bought, and used to show Kevin Yaeger what I wanted in Chucky, the size and the mobility. It was like finding a corpse of a baby; just as white and awful. Maybe it's the plastic, skin-like sheath that covers it. It was too human for Chucky, but the dimensions were right. If memory serves me, the script was originally called "My Blood Buddy," but I couldn't use the name because of the Buddy Doll.

Earl also found a Xerox copy (remember Xerox copies? No? Forget it, I hate you) of Hilton Green's original script of PSYCHO. Hilton Green, a gentleman of much probity and film knowledge, was the 1st AD on PSYCHO. He also produced PSYCHO 2. He had been Universal's liaison with Mister Hitchcock. That's how Hilton always referred to him. Everybody on the Universal lot did. Mister Hitchcock had his own bungalow, complete with private screening room and dining room.

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I'm gearing up for TWISTED TALES and expect to begin casting next week, and start shooting within two. It isn't real for me yet, cause I'm sitting here jawing with you about the past.

At the same time, the future is speeding at me. It leaves me in a state of low level excitement, like an engine that is just beginning to warm up. A little anxiety, too. All the things that can go wrong always linger in a corner of my mind.

The sheds have been a good diversion. Hopefully when I'm through shooting, I can go back to rummaging through them. Hope you've enjoyed the treasure hunt as much as I have. Now, on to the future, and hopefully more stuff to put in the sheds (grin).