

Penny Wise and Million-dollar Foolish

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 11 November 2012 16:50 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 November 2012 18:06

Consider the plight of aging garments separated into heaps: this one for fixes, this one for donation, this one for auction in Beverly Hills...

The signature dress worn by Judy Garland in the film, *The Wizard of Oz*, has been auctioned, bringing \$480,000. If that raises an eyebrow, consider this: A similar dress, worn only in tests, last year brought almost twice that -- \$910,000.

How are your eyebrows now? Still holding up OK? Think they might un-arch and relax by New Year's? The explanation raised for the price difference is that only a couple test dresses were made, while there were at least seven made for use in the film.

One need be mindful we're likely talking bidders here who have exceptionally high requirements in the first place, to shell out that kind of loot on a 73-year-old dress -- and even higher, to differentiate between a *test* and a *real* dress. In any event, the name of the buyer has not been revealed.

For those of us not able to afford the high-ticket items, some of us could have bid on a piece of Prince William's and Kate Middleton's long-stale, 2011 wedding cake -- a real bargain, at only \$1,375. Not quite *Let them eat wedding cake*, but pretty close, as exclusivity goes. Also featured was an even older royal wedding slice, from 1981, from Prince Charles and Princess Diana, bringing the same amount.

If you had your eye on clothing from the two-day Hollywood Icons sale, though, here's a brief rundown of toppers:

- \$38,400 for a dress worn by Julie Andrews in "The Sound of Music"
- \$50,000 for a Steve McQueen racing jacket
- \$50,000 for a purple wool skirt worn by Marilyn Monroe while making "*River of No Return*"

But, if you're looking for jaw-droppers, you need go back in time. Try these on for size:

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- \$4.6 million for Marilyn Monroe's white "subway dress," from *The Seven Year Itch*
- \$3.7 million for Audrey Hepburn's Ascot dress from *My Fair Lady*

However, you'll need to go forward in time to 2015 for the next episode of *Star Wars*, which will introduce a new generation of heroes -- and another round of action figures on which fans may lavish their attention and money. It's an interesting move, as the script will be done by the man who wrote the screenplays for

Little Miss Sunshine

and

Toy Story 3.

However, fans of the resoundingly stunning films in the *The Lord of the Rings* franchise won't have much longer to wait for

The Hobbit

, a new series of three films by Peter Jackson, with the first -- subtitled

An Unexpected Journey

-- opening soon.

Expected even sooner? The first wave of *Hobbit*-y toys on the shelf -- mega-businesses onto themselves for many decades, hoping they'll all

Hobbit

-y right off the shelf again into consumers' hands and shopping baskets.

* * * * *

Deeeeeeep breath. Here's where we pivot and wonder about real life once again. Transitioning from the fairy tales of MovieLand to ReaityVille, let's see now... The income gap is getting wider all the time in the U.S. and in the world. The fissures and splits have gotten miles wider each day, separating the Have-Everythings and the Have-Nothings...

And all while millions of dollars are spent on old dresses. Meanwhile, sourpuss, bad-loser billionaires want to fire all their staff because their employees failed to follow their orders and vote straight -- which is to say, fully crooked -- Republican.

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The *Romneysiacs* didn't win, thank high and low and everything in between. Romney, of course, couldn't wait to take apart NPR and PBS, power cord by equipment cord, then run to personally garrote Big Bird with his bare hands.

However, across an ocean, another similar, but bigger, threat is still vital, active, and underway: One of the *sourest-pusses* of them all, Rupert Murdoch, can't wait to push over and crash the BBC so he can get his foul fingerprints, media footprint, and plain-old *stinkfoot* planted in the British Isles even deeper...

See any patterns emerging, or is it just your paranoid, foil-beanied tour guide's wild imagination?

A world without the BBC and PBS is as close as you can come to sacrilege and blasphemy in my waffling, shuffling, imperfect, and unsure agnostic-to-atheistic world. The loss of NPR would be a touch less so, from their easy following of the country's jerking hard right turn a dozen years ago, and their continuing to follow that course, as it was once said by *a shrubby letter of the alphabet* that shall go unspoken.

What to do with -- and about -- such killjoy, vampiric, *vulturistic* spoilsports? Why, ensure they are installed into positions of power in Congress, of course.

House Speaker Boehner, for example, recently stated, "I've never seen a lame duck Congress do big things. And as speaker I feel pretty strongly that a lame duck Congress shouldn't do big things."

Translation: *We're not going to do a goddamned thing differently the next two years than we've done the last four years. ☐ We plan on being the Grand Obstructionist Party until the end of time, if need be, until we get back in power. ☐ Until then, the country and its people can go hang, for all we care -- and you can count on that. ☐ Hell, we'll even help with a one-time, low-interest loan of this here rope!*

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To which we will likely say: *Well, John, thanks for the heads-up that we've all got the country's best interests in mind, and that we'll have so much bargaining room, in good faith, as we continue these fiscal cliff budget talks that 8 years of your toy President's policies foisted on us all.*

In an alternate reality, Mr. President, you would see you have nothing to lose, sir, and no worries about any future campaigns of your own. Thus inspired, sir, you might round up members of your party and set marching orders on how it is *now going to be*.

A good start? How about a new jobs-and-stimulus bill, brought to the floor of Congress, once a week, every week, for an up-or-down, and-by-name-vote, until some bills start getting approved and idiot, traitorous GOP logjams bust?

Let Republicans explain themselves to their own muddle-minded constituents, the dolts who slipped them into the roles as so-called leaders, just why it is their Reps would rather see the country collapse and fail than succeed -- and why they'd rather say "no" than give their own folks back home some jobs, too.

If Republicans can take two weeks and \$50 million, grandstanding for cameras back home, voting 33 separate times to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Mr. President, I dare say you can safely bring a love-of-country Jobs and Stimulus Bill up for a vote once a week at the very least.

We're not going to "austere" ourselves out of the traumas caused by eight years of reckless Republican rule -- ask almost any economist with respectable credentials who's not still off in the La-La Land of voodoo economics and trick-or-treat trickle down.

Mega-wealthy businesses and individuals are sitting on trillions, waiting to swoop in and snatch up the nation's bargains at fire sale prices when things go sour, rather than free up that liquidity now in patriotic support -- and for a healthy return on investment -- of building the nation back up.

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Instead, from their vantage point, there is too much to be gained from sitting and waiting. *When you want absolutely everything, getting 99% just doesn't seem like quite enough.*

Mr. President: The problem with hyenas and jackals is they will slowly gather around the perimeter and, once confidence is gained from them seeing enough of their own kind present, they will slowly and steadily push and push in, snapping and howling, until they finally drive out all competition and get their own way.

You can't negotiate with hyenas and jackals. It's been tried for four years. It's gotten nowhere. It's time to remind the hyenas and jackals who won the election, who has the mandate, and to whom all the spoils will now go.

The Law of the Jungle. Republicans grabbed it with both hands and ran with it for eight years, sir, even when their so-called mandate was vaporous at best. Mr. President -- it's time we do the same, at least for the next *four*.

Reaching across the aisle is all fine and good when you are dealing with similarly-minded people trying to do what's best for the country and its people.

But hyenas don't speak English, and jackals will only bite any hand that is offered.

Mr. President: Please check your hand -- see all those old scars? Some of those are coming up on four years old. *Happy Birthday to them.* However, when one is out of *Wh*
at's Up Doc

-Brand Carrots, sir, might we humbly submit it's long past time for The Really Big Stick.

Of course, we could always make believe it's MovieWood or HollyLand, and have another long-running fantasy where good triumphs over evil, just because some of us still thinks it should.

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We can hope these tickets -- whatever show it is we're going to see -- cost less than the stale wedding cake slices.

See -- some of us are still wanting to eat again next week, sir.

The Oz Dress: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20286496>

And again, with other high-fetching garments: <http://tvnz.co.nz/entertainment-news/judy-garland-s-wizard-oz-dress-fetches-590-000-auction-5209369>

Toy Wars? Star Story? Little Miss War Toys Story? <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-20288810>

The Hobbit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_\(film_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit_(film_series))

Hobbit and other movie goods:

<http://tvnz.co.nz/entertainment-news/hobbit-merchandise-hitting-shelves-video-5209287>

More trial balloons to topple the BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20286198>

and: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/11/entertainment-us-britain-bbc-idUSBRE8A90HJ20121111>

Sourpuss billionaires with an itch to fire everybody:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/after-obama-re-election-ceo-reads-prayer-to-staff-announces-layoffs/2012/11/09/e9bca204-2a63-11e2-bab2-eda299503684_story.html?h

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AND: <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2012/11/09/1173181/applebees-ceo-obamacare/>

AND: <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-11-07/david-siegel-hasnt-fired-anyone-yet>

Boehner strikes a new round of Diehard-Do-Nothing:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2012/11/08/boehner-outlines-session/1691661/>

Sunday's *Laughter's Bonus* for reading down this far:

Best of the Disney / Star Wars art mash-ups:

<http://io9.com/5958972/the-very-best-of-the-disneystar-wars-mash+up-art>