



First Friday News & Views

Monthly Newsletter of the *First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.*



September 2021

Volume 26

Issue 9

Next Meeting

September 3

7:00 a.m.



Meeting Location

**Hoyt Sherman Place
15th & Woodland
Des Moines**



September Speaker

**Edith
Crawford**



FFBC Website

ffbciaowa.org



My Journey to Retirement

by Byron Huff, Board President

I retired from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) on July 2, 2021, after 18+ years; this was the culmination of my journey of working in financial services. My banking career started in Des Moines working for United Central Bank which became Firststar Bank, then US Bank, then Cedar Falls Trust and Savings Bank, and Merchants National Bank, both of which are now US Bank. Jim and I moved to New Orleans in 1997 to work for Hibernia National Bank which is now Capital One, then we moved to Chicago where I worked for Household International which is now HSBC. Our last stop was coming back to Des Moines where I worked for the FHLB in 2003.

Jim and I met in Des Moines at the Blazing Saddle in 1995 when I was working for Firststar Bank; I was notified in 1996 that the operations center I worked in would be closed with jobs going (no transfers) to Wisconsin where Firststar was based. My subsequent job search to stay in Des Moines was fruitless because banking jobs were moving out of Iowa following the passage of branch banking law changes. In the meantime, Jim was notified that he was losing his job as a branch manager which allowed me to begin searching nationwide. That is the short story of how we ended up in New Orleans.

Retirement can be a journey in many ways, just as the coming-out process and life itself. There are so many factors and decisions that can impact the timing and how happy you will be after you transition to full retirement. I cannot begin to cover all the options and variables, but I hope explaining my journey will assist those contemplating retirement.

First of all, I would highly recommend getting a financial advisor; while this may not make sense if you are young and just starting your savings (i.e. 401K), an advisor can set out a realistic timeline based on how much you are making, how much you can save, and your expectations for retirement timing. All of this changes as the years progress, but without a road map, you will be traveling along having no idea if you will reach your destination (a retirement date with sufficient savings). Jim and I have always been very good about putting away money in retirement accounts which gave us a good base once we connected with a financial advisor. **[continued on page 2]**



**September's In-Person
Meeting Guidelines on Page 4**

If you have your financial house in order, there are still so many things that factor into your decision of when to leave the workforce or simply leave your current job and find something that makes you happier.

It is easy to say I don't want to work anymore and another to find what you really want to do that will fill your time when you no longer have a list of things you HAVE to do. Retirement gives you freedom to make decisions on how to spend your time, be it volunteer work, reading, traveling or whatever. Thinking about what you want to do ahead of time also has a financial impact so that is part of the planning process discussed previously.



We purchased a motorhome last year and ended up trading it for another model four months later; that is another story I will cover. We have another couple that we enjoy spending time with and that became more important as we limited our exposure to other people during the lockdown. They have a motorhome and were camping near Des Moines where we would join them, but driving home was something we hated because we wanted to enjoy cocktails without worrying if we were impaired; thus the motorhome came to be. We enjoy the getaway to another "home," but setting up camp is a lot of work so it would be wise to understand what you are getting into.

The idea for a future where both Jim and I are retired would involve some travel in the motorhome to see more of our beautiful country. As a child, my parents had campers, trailers, and even a motorhome which we took on family vacations. Having that experience has brought back some memories that I hope to relive with my husband.



We are also in the process of purchasing a second home in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. My hope is that we will eventually spend part of the year (i.e. cold months) there. While Jim continues to work a few more years, we will travel there for vacation, and I can stay a little longer if I wish to work on remodeling and decorating.

Whatever your journey to retirement, I hope you plan and save to allow you to enjoy life; there is so much more to life if you stop and smell the roses.



Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **David Cotton** for introducing **Ian Lawrence-Tourinho**, our August speaker. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website and to **Nicholas Williams** for managing all of our Microsoft IT infrastructure. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter editor. *Thank you to all our contributors to the newsletter!*

The **deadline** for the **October newsletter** will be **September 20**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the copy deadline.

A special thank-you to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.



United Way

Thanks also to all those **Amazon shoppers** who designate FFBC as the beneficiary when shopping **smile.amazon.com**. Your shopping with smile.amazon.com means that a small contribution to FFBC will be made with every purchase. Proverbial, found money.



Our fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have raised over **\$450,000** for scholarships that are awarded to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution online** or by sending a check.

Please consider a **tax-exempt testamentary gift**. Our first legacy gift to the FFBC scholarship program came from **Cliff Paulsen** to the tune of over **\$67,000!** Contact **Byron Huff** for details or with questions.





A Stain on Borlaug's Legacy

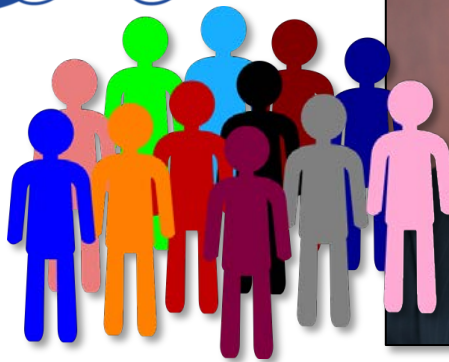
by Jonathan Wilson

In a recent article in the *Bloomfield Democrat* (August 4, 2021), Randy Evans fittingly celebrated the legacy of **Norman Borlaug** in feeding the world with improved crop productivity and educating people on better agricultural production practices. Evans reported that in the decades after World War II, Borlaug was instrumental in developing new, high-yield, disease-resistant varieties of wheat, maize, and rice. He credited Borlaug with saving upwards of one BILLION people from starvation. Impressive indeed.

Borlaug's work and legacy inspired the establishment of the **World Food Prize Foundation** that gives out an annual award of \$250,000 to people who have distinguished themselves in carrying on Borlaug's work. This year the award will be made on World Food Day (October 16, 2021).

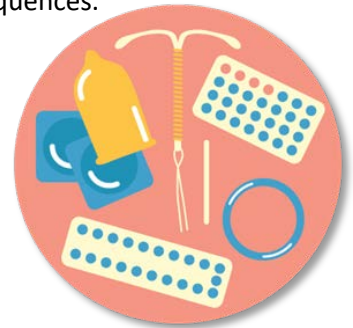
But there's a problem. The current population of the world is 7,887,289,280 and growing. It took two million years of human history for the world population to reach one billion people in 1804. It took just 200 years for the world population to reach seven billion people. The world population is growing at over 90,000 **per day**, day in and day out. At the current rate of population growth, it is forecast that there will be another two billion people in less than 30 years. The current rate of population increase is simply not sustainable.

I've been on multiple photographic safaris in Africa. In addition to bringing home some remarkable pictures, I brought home some insights on this issue. In the wild of Africa, when it rains, vegetation explodes. When that happens, the herbivore population explodes thanks to plenty of readily available food. When that happens, the carnivore population likewise explodes. Those animal populations continue to grow until their food supply is exhausted. Pure and simple, and inevitable *for animals*.



To his credit, Borlaug saved a billion people from starvation, but they, in turn, in a single generation, added two to three times that number to the world population. No amount of "new, high-yield, disease-resistant wheat, maize, and rice" will be able to keep up. No amount of improved agricultural production practices will be able to keep up either. The success of Borlaug, and those following in his footsteps, has actually been making the challenge of stamping out starvation all the more daunting. Their success on the food production side of things violates the law against unintended consequences.

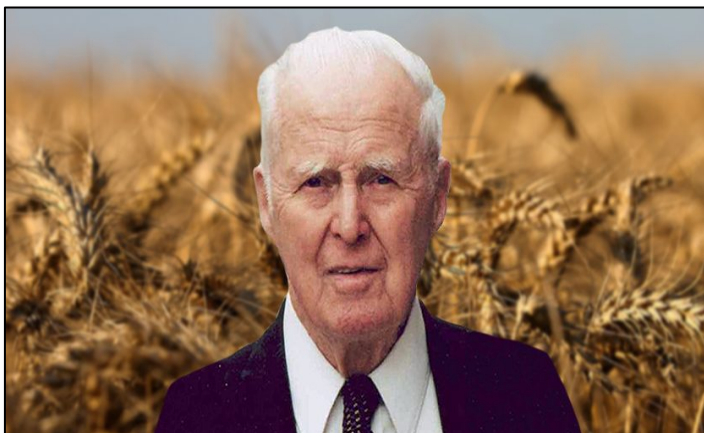
The solution is *not* to surrender to the inevitability of eventual mass starvation, as is ever-present in the animal kingdom. The solution for the human race is **birth control**, a solution that is not available in the animal kingdom.



A few years ago, I contacted Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, who was at that time the president of the World Food Prize Foundation, asking him, in addition to working to increase food supply, was the Foundation also working to educate about, and provide resources for, birth control. He said no, because that would be too politically controversial. Wrong answer.

I know the Bible reports that God told mankind to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 9:7). Fair enough. That was an appropriate directive when communicated to people struggling to survive in a hostile world. Population growth was a good thing -- then. Things have changed dramatically since then, but we have some people clinging to that divine directive, making birth control "controversial." Lyrics in one of my favorite old hymns, penned by poet William Russell Lowell, say it best, "Time makes ancient good uncouth."

Now, for humankind to survive and avoid the pattern of feast and famine that exists in the animal kingdom, there needs to be a world-wide effort to educate about, and make resources readily available for, birth control. Our failure to do that creates a stain on the laudable legacy of Norman Borlaug.





Edith Crawford is a volunteer with the West Des Moines Chapter of the **Alzheimer's Association**, also serving on its Committee for Diversity and Inclusion. She is a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

She is also a support group facilitator, community educator, and team lead to Unity Walkers for the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Edith was caregiver to her mother, who suffered and passed with Alzheimer's; to her sister, diagnosed with dementia; and now to her brother, who is also suffering with dementia.

Edith is a retired Department of Defense employee. She served as secretary, accounting technician, and auditor. Edith also served as an EEO Counselor and Mediator (emphasizing Alternative Dispute Resolution).

FFBC September In-Person Meeting Guidelines

The Board of Directors for the First Friday Breakfast Club has decided that we will meet in person for our September 3rd meeting at Hoyt Sherman.

We strongly recommend that members or guests who decide to attend in person should be vaccinated for the safety of all. Board member Gary Moore stated it best, "Individual choices have community consequences. In regards to our community, state, and country's Delta variant pandemic spread, we encourage all who attend to have had their Covid vaccinations and wear their masks as appropriate during our meetings."

We also will require that all participants wear a mask when not eating. We will reduce the number of chairs at various tables to provide for some social distancing. Wearing a mask will also be required as you move through the food line (we will work to distance members while in line). If any member goes through the food line a second time, we ask that a clean plate is used.

This procedure is not just for the safety of our members, but out of respect for the safety of our speaker and food providers. We were contacted by our speaker that she would be masked during her presentation and requested that our FFBC members also be masked except when they are eating.



From Our 2021 Scholars

"I spent a lot of time trying to figure out who I wanted to become, but now I know. I want to be an attorney because I want to help people. Thank you all for everything you are helping me with. I am now ready to be the voice that other people may not have. I would not have been able to do this without your help." -- **Allissa Cox**



Busting the Bisexuality Narrative

by Gary Moore

Friday morning, August 6th, for the first time in a year and a half, the First Friday Breakfast Club gathered in person at Hoyt-Sherman Place. Thirty-five gay, bisexual, and trans men were welcomed by Byron Huff, FFBC's new president, to hear **Ian Lawrence-Tourinho**, the *New York Times*' face of bisexuality. Ian is California born and raised and was addressing the FFBC via Zoom from his home in Los Angeles.

Ian is the Director of **The Bi Foundation** and founder of the **amBi** network, a growing, international collaborative of socially-focused bi communities. As an activist, he is particularly interested in the role that positive and affirming support networks can serve as a health and human rights intervention for bi people. In 2013, Ian created bi.org which has grown to become the largest online resource about bisexuality in the world. Its mission is to connect bi people around the world and provide accurate, accessible, scientifically-sound information about (bi)sexuality.

Ian reviewed with the group a brief history that included five significant men who, he believes, helped move the recognition of LGBTQ rights, as we know them today, beginning as far back as the early and middle 1800s. He noted one "villain" and that was Sigmund Freud. Freud's interpretation that same-sex attraction resulted from a smothering mother and absent father took the understanding of LGBTQ on a detour that took psychology and psychiatry decades to correct.

Ian talked of bisexual **erasure**. Bisexual erasure may include the assertion that all bisexual individuals are in a phase and will soon choose a side, either heterosexual or homosexual. Too often the gay community's understanding has reinforced this misconception. "Each individual is a unique combination of behavior, self-identifying, and each person experiences various degrees of attraction to both sexes." Too often we, as well as the media, want to classify as either-or. Reality is not that simple.

Bisexuality is a "broad and inclusive term that describes physical attraction, romantic attraction, or sexual behavior that is not limited to one sex...that means not limited by sex or gender." That includes a broad umbrella of behavior and arousal/attraction. Studies have shown that bisexuality makes up a good 50 percent of the LGBTQ community with younger persons increasingly identifying as bisexual. Less than 1% of LGBTQ research funding goes to understanding bisexuality issues, causes, or programming.



August Speaker:

Ian Lawrence-Tourinho



August Speaker Introduced by
David Cotton

"There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it's now okay to express ourselves publicly. We make that day by doing things publicly until it's simply the way things are."

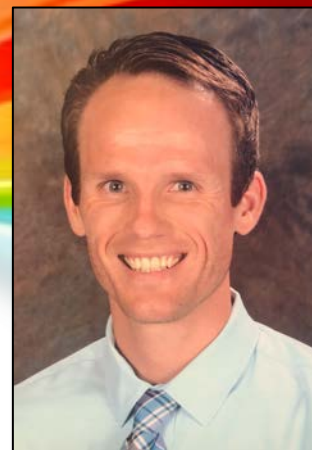
(Tammy Baldwin)

August Meeting Photo Gallery



Photos
by Gary
Moore

Feature Article



What I Learned Abroad

by Tyler McCubbin

June 20, 2021, is when I returned to Iowa to begin the next chapter of my life and my career. As the plane landed on the tarmac at Des Moines International Airport from Dallas-Fort Worth, I began reminiscing on all that I had learned throughout the last five years living in Mexico. Thinking back to that moment when I left my family on a hot August day in 2016, I recall crying for at least half of the flight to Dallas (from Des Moines) thinking of all that I was leaving. I took a leap of faith and an opportunity to find myself again after a tumultuous couple of years. Coming back to Iowa, a new canvas of opportunity lies ahead and serves as a moment to reflect on what I learned living abroad. Here are just some of the lessons I learned in the last five years.



Lesson #1

Mexico is not only about beaches and tequila. Case in point: Disney/Pixar's *Coco*. For those who have not seen the film, and without spoiling the movie too much, it is the story of a small boy named Miguel who loves music despite his family's disgust for it. The movie is focused around the celebration of the *Día de Los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead"), the day that brings life to those who have passed on but who have not been forgotten. The lifeline of our being comes from those who surround us and those who have come before us. For some LGBTQ+ people, the word family brings forth trauma and immense sadness; for others, it is something to be celebrated. Family is something that we will always have, whether immediate, nuclear, or adopted, and I have Mexico to thank for helping me remember that at the end of the day, it is the family unit that keeps us going. I was fortunate to have a couple of experiences that reminded me how time with family matters the most.

México

Another element of Mexico that will stay with me is the blessing of good food. Before I moved south of the border, I thought I knew what Mexican food was; I was, admittedly, completely wrong. When I arrived and tasted my first gordita, dish of mole, and eventually pozole and tacos al pastor, I thought I had fallen into a food coma (it wouldn't have been the first time). Keep in mind that when you go, hard shell tacos do not exist and your two options of tortillas for tacos include flour (*harina*, pronounced "ah-ree-na"; the "h" is silent) and corn (*maíz*, pronounced "my-iz"). If and when you visit Mexico, take a moment to get inside the country, away from the coasts and into the interior to appreciate more of its culture, the language, the FOOD! Witness its beautiful colors, colonial cities, and history. Check out the cities of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, León, and San Luis Potosi, or the coffee farms of Oaxaca and Chiapas. Take a tour of agave farms in the state of Jalisco, check out the thermal waters of Cuatrocienegas, hike in Parque Ecológico Chipinque (Chipinque Ecological Park) in the city of Monterrey/San Pedro, or watch tortillas being made at a tortillería. Take a day to learn about the history of the Mexican-American War from the side of Mexico while visiting Castillo Chapultepec (Chapultepec Castle) and then walk around Bosque de Chapultepec (Cha-pull-te-peck). There is much more to be celebrated beyond the booze and the beaches; it is beautiful and it smells delicious.

Lesson #2

What you dream can become your reality. Case in point: five marathons and two conferences. Before I moved to Mexico, I had told myself I would never run a marathon. The year 2017 proved that sometimes, "never" can turn into "yes." From that point, I realized that what we think is unlikely to happen might, just MIGHT, be something that changes us for the better. That opportunity presents us with something to learn and it is up to us to take what we can from the experience in order to know how and what to do when something similar happens. In contrast to times when we say "never" and it happens, we also have moments when we say "I want to do..." and we do what we can to make it so. I had a dream of being a presenter at a conference, made for teachers, led by teachers, and that happened. Secondly, I had a dream of living abroad while sharing my passions for learning and educating with others in far-away places. Although Mexico is not as far as some other places, what I dreamt of is now a part of my story. If you can dream it, you can do it.



[continued on page 8]

Lesson #3

Know who you are and what you believe in and be willing to stand up for yourself and others when you see injustice and unethical actions being taken. When I was extended an offer to continue teaching at my previous school, I was told I was going to be moved out of the department I had been with for 4.5 years and moved into a new one, and to teach a subject I am not licensed to teach. You can imagine the ethical dilemma that arose with that offer. But what bothered me was that two of my colleagues at the time, both who were certified and licensed to teach the subject, and were currently serving in such capacities, had been told that their contract would not be renewed. Knowing what injustice is, I could not stand for what had been proposed, that in order for me to continue working at the place I had called home for the past few years, two of my dearest colleagues would face the chopping block while I, a white male, would be kept around. In the long run, a slew of female teachers was cut while several white, straight males were kept around. As a future administrator myself, I could not, in good conscience, accept this position and continue inside an environment where toxic masculinity and white male privilege exist when there were better, highly qualified professionals available. What I learned from this last year is that you should not drink the Kool-Aid at your workplace, especially when you see wrongs being made and done to those who are highly qualified, more so actually licensed, for a position. Diversity and inclusion in the workplace matter because representation matters. Speak up and out for wrongdoings in the workplace when you recognize it. White male privilege is real, and it must be stopped (and I say that speaking as someone who has privilege because I am a white male, albeit being gay). We know what injustice is because of how our community has been treated and discriminated against throughout the years, and it is because of that that I believe we must stand up against it.



One of the threads that sews the lessons above together is becoming vulnerable when we venture into the unknown, and when we stand up for things that we know are not right. I had to embrace the fact that some things I was used to could and would be different living in a new place. I also had to open up and let go of what pre-existing beliefs and notions I had about certain things like running for hour after hour, mile after mile, all for an experience that I will never forget. Finally, I learned that vulnerability can guide you in new directions and to new places that, in the end, will strengthen the person you are because you stood up against something you know needs to be changed.

Rise up against injustice and wrongdoing when you see it happening. Use your voice to express discontent and take action when you see nothing being done to change the environment around you. Never doubt the power of your voice and the impact that it has on creating the necessary change that our society needs.

From the FFBC Archives



5 Years Ago: September 2016

- * Jonathan wrote an article called "Trump 'Theology'" in which he describes Trump's need to shore up the evangelical base. Trump did this by naming Pence as his running mate.
- * Bruce Carr's summary of the August speaker, Shadley Grei, describes him as an actor, director, producer, screenwriter, singer, and songwriter...who just happens to have grown up in Ankeny.
- * Jonathan Wilson wrote a tribute to Jeffrey Campbell, who had suffered from years of dialysis. He lived life to the fullest and was a confidant and mentor to a lot of closeted gay men.
- * Matt McCoy wrote about how vigilance is needed with private Medicaid. A bipartisan Senate bill would have stopped the transition to privatize, but the Republican-controlled House refused to consider the bill.

10 Years Ago: September 2011

- * In his article "Sticking to the Facts," Jonathan wrote about how California passed legislation that would require schools to include curriculum about gay people. He addressed what the real "gay agenda" means to him.
- * Suku Radia was the August speaker, and Bruce Carr's article summarized this President and CEO of Banker's Trust as a longtime family friend and supporter of our community.
- * A new FFBC dues structure was explained, caused by increased rent and catering expenses.
- * Steve Person crafted a humorous article "My Cat and Peach à la Mode." As a favor for watching his cat, Steve took a neighbor to Lou's Diner in Woodward, Iowa, and found the best peach pie in the world, even better than his mom's!

15 Years Ago: September 2006

- * Jonathan described how heterosexuals in Provincetown are offended by the term "bigot" and their opposition to gay marriage.
- * Bruce Carr wrote about August speaker, Terry Rich, CEO of the Blank Park Zoo.
- * Brad Holland gave a preview of the 2006-07 season at Stage West.
- * Steve Person recounted the tale of a crippled old woman who had kept a round print she had purchased from a Cedar Rapids department store in the 1920s. She was not educated in art, but the painting spoke to her. The value of art is not its monetary price but how it affects the individual.

Want to Join the Chorus?

You've heard us, you've seen us, and you've thought that maybe you would love to join our family! Our new season begins with rehearsals on Monday, September 13. Contact Wade Petersen, Operations Manager, at info@dmgmc.org for more information.

We welcome anyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, who can sing in the tenor and bass ranges. There is no audition, but you must be vaccinated to join the Chorus this year!



DES MOINES GAY MEN'S CHORUS



Future Speaker Announced

October 1
Jeff Byrd

Artist and Professor
at UNI who founded
its first LGBTQ
studies course.

One Iowa Friendly Caller Pilot Program

by Maddie Rocha Smith



One Iowa understands that many LGBTQ older adults want to build connections with others in the LGBTQ community. We are launching a new **Friendly Caller Pilot Program** this fall to increase social connectedness and support for LGBTQ older adults. The program matches participants with volunteer callers who check in by phone and engage in conversation at least once a week. The volunteer caller is not

PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Maddie Rocha Smith

a counselor but a friend who can provide interest, caring, encouragement and support. We are looking for LGBTQ older Iowans who would like to receive phone calls during the pilot program, which begins this fall. If you are an LGBTQ older Iowan who would like to be more connected with another member of the LGBTQ community, please contact Maddie Rocha Smith at Madeline@oneiowa.org.

oneiowa

The Party of Local Control No More

by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 5th District



As I draft this news column, the Delta variant is currently 98% of all COVID-19 infections in the state of Iowa. This rapidly spreading variant has impacted the health of thousands of Iowans who have tested positive for COVID-19 over the past month. Currently, the hospitals within Polk County are at capacity and have no beds available for these patients, which includes the use of other critical beds like those in the ICU and ER. Right now, hospitals are not scheduling elective procedures in light of the shortage of hospital facilities. It's ironic that as children head back to school, those under the age of twelve will be both unvaccinated and unmasked. This is a result of the GOP who, as their last thumb in the eye to local government, passed a law which prohibits the use of facial masks as a mandate by any local government or school board, as well as banned the use of vaccine registries. The GOP has purported to support local control as it relates to governing people. The Iowa Legislature believes they are the board of supervisors, the city council, and the school board for all communities in the state. This failure in leadership is a result of the anti-science, anti-evidenced based practices and anti-health agenda that is certainly costing lives and vulnerable residents who deserve much, much more than what they've gotten from their Republican-dominated state government.

As we enter a new wave of the pandemic, local governments stand ready to fight with hard facts, leading by science and caring for people. We continue to invest in vaccination efforts. We continue to actively provide information to coordinate with our hospitals and schools to better manage this pandemic, and we know that the spike that we will see following the return to school will be challenging and unpredictable. I urge you, whether you are vaccinated or not, to wear a mask in public where distancing is not possible. The booster shot will become available this fall and will be another campaign to get folks on board. As this virus becomes smarter, stronger, and lasts longer, we need to keep up the fight through these mitigation measures. While I believe that Kim Reynolds and her administration has been an utter failure, I think it is important to focus on what we can all do personally. Now is the time to be cautious and conscientious of how your actions impact yourself and others. I'm proud to see that 92% of LGBTQ+ individuals recently polled by HRC say they're fully vaccinated. We need to continue to be leaders in the community in caring for others. The LGBTQ+ community knows a lot about what a virus can do to a community and how it can take lives so quickly.



**“Love him. Love him
and let him love you.
Do you think anything
else under heaven
really matters?”**

(James Baldwin | *Giovanni's Room*)

GoldenEye

A Retro Movie Review by Mark Turnage

What do Tina Turner, Minnie Driver, and a Lienz Cossack have in common? Director Martin Campbell's 1995 James Bond film *GoldenEye*, of course! Before Marvel or Disney universes, there was 007: spanning 24 films and \$14 billion in box office revenue, the 25th Bond feature, *No Time To Die*, is due to release theatrically in early October 2021. What makes *GoldenEye* unique is not only its role in reinventing the 007 franchise; it's also the first to psychologically deconstruct the superspy and his sordid history.

GoldenEye opens with James Bond (Pierce Brosnan) on an ill-fated mission in 1986, bungee-jumping from a high-rise dam to rendezvous with fellow 00-agent Alec Trevelyan (Sean Bean) and demolish a Soviet nerve gas facility. The two share a friendship that borders on rivalry—when Trevelyan is captured and executed by Russian military general Ourumov, James is visibly shaken, and nine years later, privately admits to his “new boss” M (Judi Dench) that he blames himself for his friend’s death. It’s interesting because 007 is a character rarely afforded sentiment, let alone many long-term friendships. In 1995, James shadows vampy Janus Syndicate assassin Xenia Onatopp (a fully committed Famke Janssen) in Monaco, but fails to stop her from stealing a high-tech helicopter. When the same chopper is used in the heist of a Soviet-era electromagnetic space weapon codenamed “GoldenEye,” Bond connects the dots from Xenia back to Ourumov, and eventually to the man behind the Janus Syndicate: Alec Trevelyan, back from the dead.

It’s through the character of Trevelyan that we are provided a dark mirror of James Bond himself. Like Bond, he matches his skills, his gadgets, and even shares his wit. He has a twisted and formidable “Bond girl,” Xenia. At one point he forces himself on Natalya (Isabella Scorupco), Bond’s computer programmer ally, in a thoroughly creepy perversion of Bond’s sex appeal. Like James, the two are orphans, but Trevelyan’s parents were Lienz Cossacks—anti-communist Russians who collaborated with the Nazi military campaign against Soviet Russia during World War II. Following the defeat of the Axis, the Cossacks offered military service to the British, but were instead sent back to Stalin to be executed. It’s a heavy history lesson in collusion that’s only given a few throwaway lines of dialogue, yet somehow remains a driving force that shapes Trevelyan’s motivations. So why is it relevant?

While a Bond villain couldn’t be such without an element of caricature, Alec Trevelyan is closest to 007’s shadow self: a disillusioned, sociopathic, and bitter spy without code or country—a mercenary in it for the money, no matter how ugly or inhumane the mission may be. Trevelyan accuses Bond of “being loyal to the mission, never to his friends,” yet Alec has no loyalties to anyone but himself. He’s Bond, minus his humanity. We see Bond mourn his lost friendship with Trevelyan late in the movie; it’s one of the rare moments of Bond’s vulnerability we get in the entire film series.

It’s also refreshing to see *GoldenEye*’s female characters humble Bond’s ego with their own agency. Natalya has badass moments throughout the film and rescues James in the finale. The most consistent threat to Bond’s mission is Xenia. Moneypenny warns James about sexual harassment territory when he tries hitting on her. M (Judi Dench) is more pointed: “I think you’re a sexist, misogynist dinosaur. A relic of the Cold War.” Savage. Even Bond doesn’t have a pithy comeback for that one, and Brosnan plays his Bond with enough depth that you don’t doubt his cool, but you might think he’s a little unsure of what place he has in a post-Cold War world.

And yes, it wouldn’t quite be a Bond film without some spy camp: James’s upside-down air vent introduction, Bollinger champagne chiller in the Aston Martin, Xenia’s preferred method of execution being death by thighs...it’s all so extra, and yet so much part of Bond film territory. It wields an unnecessarily complex plot by Bond standards—some reductions in the sluggish third act in St. Petersburg would have improved its pacing issues, but reduced some campy opportunities. *GoldenEye* is full of offbeat dry comedy bits, including Minnie Driver singing a badly off-key, Russian-accented “Stand By Your Man.” It’s like the Kristin Wiig of Bond films.

While the rest of Brosnan’s turns as 007 wouldn’t be as critically acclaimed, the thematic branches for Daniel Craig’s run can be seen in *GoldenEye*’s ambition in exploring both the humanity and dark side of its secret agents.



Board of Directors

David Cotton	Gary Moore
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One Good Deed

by David Baldacci

A Book Review by Steve Person

In 2019, thriller writer David Baldacci introduced to his readers a new main character, Aloysius Archer, a newly paroled convict. Unlike most of Baldacci's stories, *One Good Deed* is set in 1949 rather than the contemporary setting in nearly all of his novels.

Upon his release from prison, Archer received the clothes he came in with, a bus ticket to a town called Poca City, and next to no money. Poca City is a town enjoying a growth spurt after World War II mainly because of a local businessman, Hank Pittleman. Pittleman has his hand in almost all the growing business concerns from a hotel to the town's bank.

Baldacci succeeds well in catching the flavor of mid-twentieth century America. Everybody smokes cigarettes—from Lucky Strikes to Chesterfields—except Pittleman who has his cigars shipped in from Cuba on a monthly basis. Restaurants serve mostly greasy, fried foods, and men wear fedoras along with their pinstriped suits.

Pittleman, upon his first encounter with Archer, likes his no-nonsense manner and obvious manly qualities, and hires him to collect a Cadillac on which Pittleman holds a note as collateral (a word that gathers more meaning as the story gathers steam) for \$5,000.00 from a man named Lucas Tuttle. Pittleman advances Archer \$100.00 as a down payment on the collection of the car with a promise of another \$100.00 upon receipt of the automobile. Pittleman and Tuttle—both Poca City bigwigs—hate each other. Why? Pittleman keeps Tuttle's daughter as his mistress, and Tuttle wants his beautiful daughter to come back home and live on the ranch where she grew up.

Of course, murder and mayhem ensue as the plot thickens. Archer's parole officer is an enigmatic woman by the name of Ernestine J. Crabtree. Her office is in the municipal building in Poca City. Initially, Crabtree, not one to mix business with pleasure, treats Archer in a professional manner. Her character, however, is more complicated than first assumed.

Enter Detective Lieutenant Irving Shaw of the state police. Shaw suspects Archer of committing a murder that took place in the hotel where Archer is staying—his room being just across the hall from the crime scene. With nothing but circumstantial evidence against Archer, Shaw is forced to follow other leads in this case. Shaw is a stickler for getting truths out and is expert at seeing through phony alibis.

More murders and near murders complicate the original investigation, and Archer manages to glean information to help clear himself by using techniques he learned from being an army scout in World War II in Italy. Being an accomplished soldier who killed many Germans, Archer's skills serve him well in helping to solve Poca City's most unusual crimes.

Further complications in Archer's life make the second book in the Archer series, *A Gambling Man*, just released in 2021, result in another must-read. Stay tuned.

