

“The Front Page” And “His Girl Friday”

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The Front Page and the Transformation into His Girl Friday

The Front Page was a comedy hit about sensationalist news reporters on the police beat. The play was written by ex-Chicago reporters Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht; it was first produced in the year 1928. On the other hand, His Girl Friday is an American screwball comedy movie directed by Howard Hawks in 1940. This film was intended to become an adaptation of the play The Front Play produced by MacArthur and Hecht. In this paper, we shall compare and contrast these two plays, “*The Front Page*” and “*His Girl Friday*.” (Internet Broadway Database, n.d.)

In comparing these two films, first, we can note that both of the films are love tales entrenched in a hard comedy about the newspaper occupation. Nonetheless, the change of the ace reporter Hildy Johnson from a man in “*The Front Page*” to a female in the play “*His Girl Friday*”, and not just any female, but the divorced wife of his employer, editor Burns Walter. By doing so, Howard Hawks, the director, can add dimension to the Burns and Johnson association while preserving the sceptical quality of the original story. The change that comes as a result of the change in Hildy’s gender from male to female may be discussed as follows; in the original film, “*The Front Page*” Walters’s main focus was on his business concerns. The relationship that existed between him and Hildy was strictly a professional friendship. Nevertheless, what is really confusing is the situation in the original film, where one man attempts to stop another male partner from quitting his job and getting married and does not carry the equal weight of an ex-husband trying to do the same thing with his wife. In the play “*His Girl Friday*”, we are able to see that Walter not only wants Hildy to retain writing for the paper, but he also desires to reconcile their broken relationship. This is because he has lost her twice.

One similarity in both of the films is that after the break, Bruce, Walter and Hildy move into a criminal court building. In both films, Hildy is enclosed by a gibing pack of personality artists performing as quipping journalists. Equally, another similarity between these two films is the fact that both of the movies, The Front Page and His Girl Friday, have both been adapted for cinema. The main reason why these two films were adapted for the screen was the fact that they were produced in an amazing way, and this made His Girl Friday appear in the cinema twice. The Front Page has been adapted several times.

Also, if you focus keenly on both of these films, you will come to realize that the plot is all the same. In both plays, Hildy remains the best journalist in the town. Hildy is looking to get married and leave since he is fed up with the slave operational schemes of his/her bad boss Walter Burns. Similarly, Walter’s role is the same in both films.

Journalism, Urban Comedy, and the World of Sensational News

Focusing on the play *"The Front Page"*, by Chicago journalists Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht, the play takes place in a toddling town, a town of big shoulders, and a windy town, which on the advice of the lawyers of the studio is not entitled. As the incidents transpired, these reporters were in the press room of the Criminal Courts Building on the night before the killing. Where a police officer, Williams' Earl, who was a killer, was to be hung in the morning. There exists numerous evidence that the named police officer had a mental disorder. Nonetheless, due to the impending elections that were to be done, the Mayor and the Sheriff were determined and willing to execute Earl so that they could win the vote of law and order. The press office is full of journalists who are representatives of all the newspaper institutions within the town.

The movie *"His Girl Friday"*, on the other hand, starts with a big gathering. Back in the news office of The Morning Post was Hildy Johnson, after her long holiday that included her separation from the Morning Post's editor, Burns Walter. Greetings fill the air in the room. Hildy is truly a professional and has an easy companionship with her fellow workmates. Hildy, who wore a mannish hat and a tailored suit, was from the last meeting with his ex-husband Walter. Little did Walter know that Hildy had another surprise for him that would blow his mind. Hildy got engaged during her holiday to an insurance salesman named Bruce Baldwin, and she quit the newspaper. For once in the whole film, the talkative editor stood speechless. After that shocking revelation, Walter pulls himself together and goes ahead to insist on a get-together with Bruce. (Library of Congress, n.d.)

In *"The Front Page"* we first comprehend Hildy (Pat O'Brien), as soon as he enters the press office, informing Walter (Adolphe Menjou) through a telephone call that he is quitting the paper to go into advertising in New York, and also to get married. Consequently, the funniest thing is that the relationship between O'Brien and Menjou appears to be more romantic than that between Grant and Russell. Menjou uses phrases like, "I love you, you crazy mug" and "So you are leaving me for marriage." This strong relationship and love are also proved by Peggy, Hildy's fiancé's speech when she says, "You adore each other!" Contrary to that, the film *"His Girl Friday"* is in the custom of the Howard Hawks movies, which were free from any form of practicality and were all the spoken terms of flattery. Similarly, attraction and affection may be revealed more visually, and in Howard's films, dialogue that had anything to do with adoration, in the end, comprehends somewhat very much to do with affection. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.)

Romance, Manipulation, and the Competition Between Career and Marriage

Correspondingly, with the promise of a nice commission presented to Bruce, Walter accepts the

purchase of an insurance policy, and therefore, Hildy approves covering the story of William. As a result, Hildy bribed one of the guards at the prison so that she could have a face-to-face meeting with Williams. The most astonishing bit is that we realize two things in this case; one is that Hildy is a carjacker and a reporter, while on the other hand, William is simply plain crazy.

In the 1931 film *"The Front Page"*, the movie director, Lewis Milestone, changes his camera at every opportunity he gets. Hence, the circular stage scene, which only involves a conversation between Walter and Hildy, makes the audience dizzy. In the second film *"His Girl Friday"*, the way Hawks directs this movie is completely the opposite of how Milestone directed his movie. Hawk's film never drew attention to itself; this is because he focuses more on directing the cast instead of the camera. In *"His Girl Friday"*, the cast undertakes the heavy lifting, as well as the overlapping of negotiation that plays nearly it is unplanned.

In conclusion, from the analysis done above, it is clear to say that these two plays have more differences than similarities. In my personal opinion, I prefer *"His Girl Friday"* over *"The Front Page"* because Hawks' films are expert and smooth Hollywood making with the best scenes. The other reason why I love Hawks films is that every character is involved. These two points make me believe that *"His Girl Friday"* is better and more entertaining than *"The Front Page"*.

References

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