



Featured post from August 13, 2012

# Utah Pantages Theater

A movie palace waiting for a new life...

— RECENTLY *from the* WEBLOG —

December 29, 2012

*life*

No Comments

## The Life & Times of Bish Davis

My grandpa passed away tonight. He went quietly, peacefully and without pain. I'm sad, and I will miss him.

I'd love to tell you all about him but, thankfully, I can let him tell the story. Trust me when I say he could spin a yarn like nobody else on earth. I'm happy to have heard so many.

A few years ago, I told him I wanted to record some of his stories. He assured me that he just wouldn't know what to say. I got him into the booth, tested the mic a bit, then started rolling. Without a single prompting from me, he told story after story for a little over two hours. It was magical for me.

— *from* TWITTER —



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Here's what came of it.

## LaMar Eugene "Bish" Davis - March 28, 1922 – December 29, 2012

-  The Beginning
-  Going Overseas
-  BARman
-  Kennecot
-  Bessie Davis

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**September 21,  
2012**

*life*

No Comments

## Just Breathe

I was watching a TED talk by [Ze Frank](#) about his various projects full of wonderfulness. He told the story of his [Chillout](#) song.

I knew all about this project long ago, and I've heard it before... but this time it sounded different. I can't say exactly how, but I have new ears. It's all much more powerful. Much more meaningful.

Ze told the story of how this project came about, and how he put all the pieces together. He closed by letting the song play in it's entirety.

It started and my heart warmed. It rolled a bit more and my emotions started welling up... and at the 31 second mark I just totally lost it.

Standing alone in my kitchen, half a cheese sandwich in hand, I balled my big baby brown eyes out. A big sloppy cry that would make Oprah blush. I could feel every emotion and moment of my life weighing on me, and it just came out.

There has been so much loss, so much hurt, and so much worry. It's just so heavy.

*Hey.*

That little flicker of a heart beat went out. Why?

I'm devastated that our little peanut didn't get to join us in life, but more so that my poor Janey has been so smothered by the loss. If only I could do the hurting instead of her. There's already enough for her to worry about. Why this?

My efforts are feeble. Just shots in the dark hoping something will help. What kind of a man can't bring comfort to his wife?

It's just so heavy.

*You're OK.*

My sister Jackie is gone. Just gone, and I miss her so much. I wish there was some way for her to know how much I love her. For me to tell her again. To just make absolutely sure she knows.

I want to scoop up her kids and make sure they know how much their mom loved them. To make sure they feel the warmth and love I know she would want them to feel. But somehow I can't keep my own life together enough to offer help.

It's all just so heavy.

*You'll be fine.*

Everybody likes to say that “each day it will get easier”. Well, what the hell man? When does that start? I’m dealing with it. I’m doing my best to make it work, but it sure as hell hasn’t gotten any easier. I’m tired. I’m just so tired of trying to make it work.

It’s all just so damned heavy.

*Just breathe.*

To cap it off, I’m ashamed to have all these feelings. Sure, this stuff is hard to deal with, but it isn’t the hardest thing a person has handled. It seems silly for me to have such a hard time making things work when people, the world over, make better decisions in much worse situations.

A few years ago it wasn’t hard to get me to spout my mantra “**Life’s just not that serious**”. Somewhere deep down, maybe deeper than I’d like to admit, I know that’s still true. But even so, life sure does feel heavy sometimes.

So, here it is. I’m breathing, Ze, I’m breathing. I’ve had a good reality check tonight, and a big sloppy embarrassing cry right there in the middle of the kitchen. And after the cry.... just breathing. Quiet contemplative breathing.

A moment to myself to readjust. To simplify. To make sure I have my feet under me.

Tomorrow will be better.

*Hey, you’re OK. You’ll be fine. Just breathe.*



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August 13, 2012

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*cinema, film, theater, utah*

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1 Comment

# Utah Pantages Theater

I'd be willing to bet that most people in Utah have no idea that we have our very own, honest-to-goodness genuine Pantages Theater sitting in ruins here in Salt Lake City. If that name means nothing to you, I'd encourage you to go read up a bit on the master impresario, exhibitor, vaudeville and film producer [Alexander Pantages](#). Crazy, right? Why is this place not a cultural anchor for the downtown area?

It's not like information about the theater is hard to come by. There's a solid rundown of it's timeline over on [UtahTheaters.info](#). Even though this gem has been decaying under our noses since 1920, people pass by it every day having no idea it even exists.

## See for yourself...

Here's a quick set of photos showing construction of the facade in 1919, then the finished entrance in 1920 and finally, what it looks like today.



I learned of the Utah, formerly the Orpheum, formerly the Pantages Theater about 4 years ago. I truly don't remember how I found out about it... I think I was trolling the historical society website and saw a blurb about it. I did some searching and found a bunch of great old photos the Utah Historical Society makes available on their website. I became, as I do, totally enthralled and mildly obsessed about the story, the history and the

possibilities around this beautiful movie palace. I spoke to some folks who knew about the current state of things, and I dug a bit for the rest of the story on it. I even spoke to the (then) owner who informed me he was looking for offers on it. He didn't want to destroy it, but it was just not commercially feasible for him to take on the restoration estimated at \$45 Million.

So I daydreamed about this place between real life, business and everything else. Slowly it drifted to the back of my consciousness. That is until last year or so when I saw a news report of a few groups rallying, and trying to make this the site of the new [Utah Performing Arts Center](#). That didn't work out, for a lot of reasons, but my fire was lit once again on the subject. Life took me a totally different direction though, so I had to let it go. Thankfully, the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake bought the building and saved it from the wrecking ball. It's now just sitting until someone comes along that can make something good happen with it.

Fast forward to last week. I ran across a little note on the Utah Historical Society website that tours of the Utah Theater would be offered. As luck would have it, the last one was happening on Saturday! My little family trucked down to SLC to give the old girl a look.

## A diamond in the rough

Here's a quick then and now comparison of the main auditorium. You can see where the floor was put in at the balcony level splitting the auditorium in two (piggybacking).

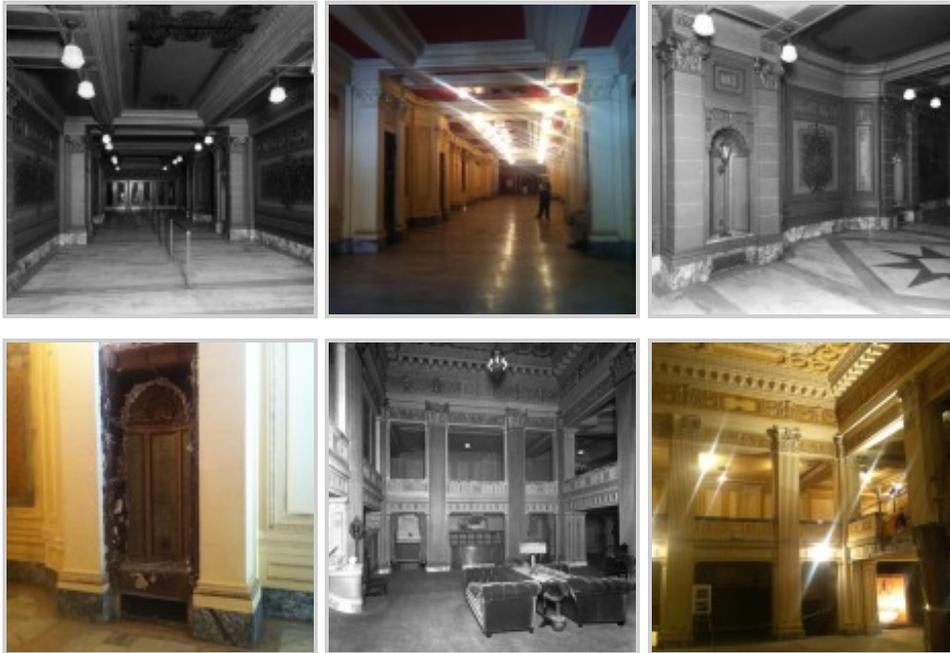
She's in really rough shape... but her beauty shines through.

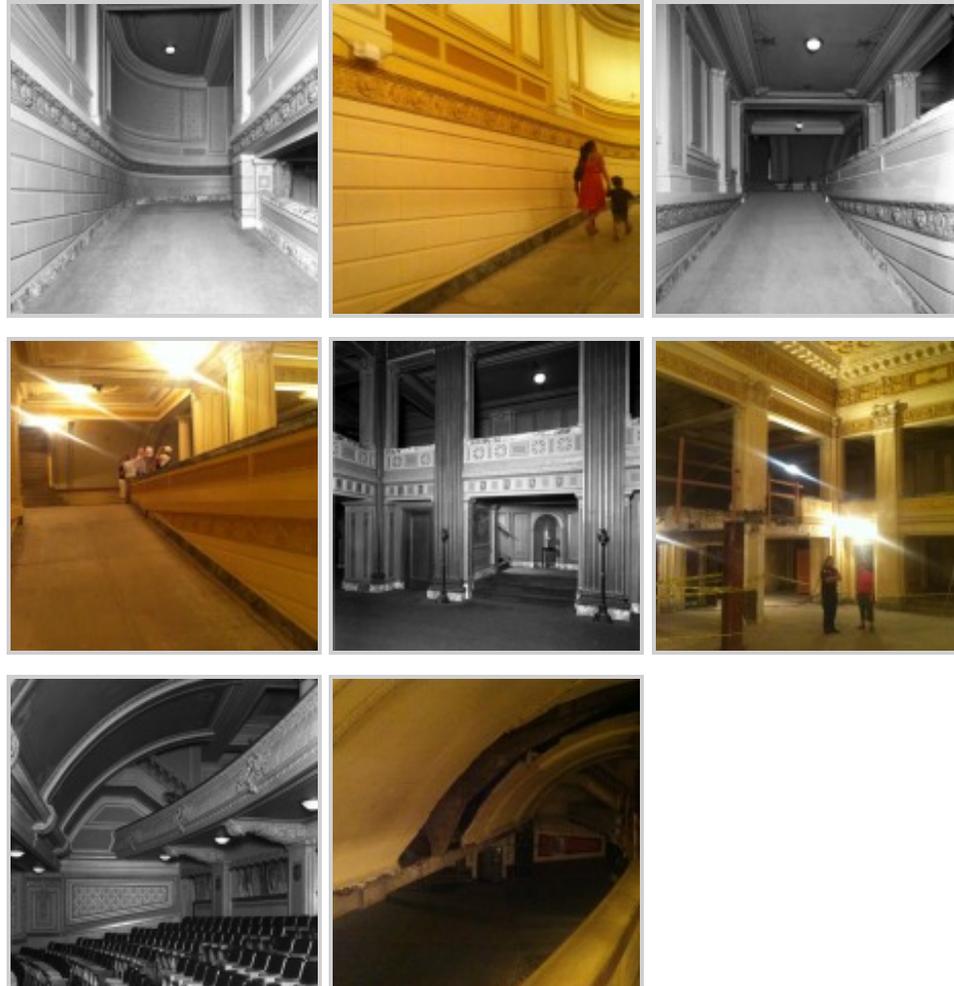


They sure don't make them like the used to.

## A bunch more eye candy

I've tried to set these together in before/after style. Sorry for the bad modern photos, I only took my phone with me on the tour.





So... I'm scheming on how I can contribute to bringing this beautiful theater back to life for a modern audience. Who's with me?

*Historic photos courtesy of [Utah State Historical Society](#)*

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**October 4, 2011**

*politics*

**2 Comments**

## Politics

My parents have strong, and wildly differing, political opinions. Mom is a democrat like Grandpa, and Dad a staunch republican. By the time I was old enough to understand words, the battle lines had long-since been drawn and everybody knew it was an area of topics to avoid. On the rare

occasions someone did light the fuse of political conversation, the resulting powder keg would explode in a wonderfully terrible exchange that usually ended in my parents being in a foul mood and getting quickly annoyed with the kids. We eventually had a dinnertime rule that no politics were allowed at the table. No way, no how. So, I avoided politics as a young'un.

Fast forward a bit to my late teens. I was full of opinions on every subject under the sun, and I would spout them off to anyone who dared to challenge me. Still though, politics didn't hold my interest. I'm sure, given the chance, I would have loved to berate someone for not agreeing with my un-informed but passionate opinion, but the circles I ran with weren't into politics either... so it didn't come up. With the "no politics" rule still in effect at home, it was simply left off my radar.

Fast forward again to my mid twenties. I was slightly more mature and able to keep a lid on my vast collection of moderately informed opinions. I was extremely interested and opinionated about social & political issues, but had no knowledge or interest in the actual process by which they are addressed. I rarely, if ever, approached a conversation about such things though, because I was living and working in a state and an industry where the vast majority of people strongly disagreed with my leanings. So I kept things bottled up for the most part and life went on.

So looking back on the last 10-15 years of my life, I can count the number of "political" conversations I engaged in on one hand.

## So, what's all this then?

About two weeks ago I was running some errands and stewing about some work stress. I decided to flip on the radio to give my brain something new to process. After some seeking and fumbling, I landed on a political talk program. I don't remember who was talking, or the specifics of what was said, but I returned home absolutely incensed by the ridiculous ramblings I heard. The main theme was basically "the other team is stupid, and they only want to ruin America". Now, I know this is no different than what is said

every day on every political program in the universe, and I should just expect it... but something just switched inside my head on this particular day. The childish bickering over who was more right between two parties who basically act the same no matter what their talking points are just sent me over the edge. I became irate.

I pulled into my driveway muttering obscenities and ready to spit nails. I stomped into my office preparing to have a big debate, or write a very strongly worded letter or just... just scream at my computer screen. Then I stopped, looked around a bit, and realized I had absolutely nowhere to direct this new-found political energy. Needing some kind of outlet, I decided I'd stop sticking my head in the sand and learn about what was annoying me.

I started reading, and watching, and asking. Anything and anyone who would help. I'm diving into current policies and historical causes. I'm researching the people who represent me, and the people who make up the party they serve (yeah, you read that right). I even got annoyed enough to show up to the state capitol one early morning for a Senate Committee Meeting on the current redistricting happening here in Utah.

So here we are friends. I'm a 30 year old man who is suddenly, but whole heartedly interested and ready to get personally involved in the political process. I don't know how long it will last, or just how involved I will get. But I think things are broken, and I'm not about to whine about it if I'm not willing to step up and be a force to fix it.

I'm sure there will be more to come on the subject, so stay tuned.

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**September 21,  
2011**

## A deep path

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*quotes*

I need to document this quote, and since it's more than 140 characters...  
I'm doing it here.

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No Comments

It just struck me.

*As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.*

*Henry David Thoreau*

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**September 5, 2011**

## Instaparks

*disney, instagram,  
twitter*

Last week I followed a conversation between two of my friends on twitter. It went something like this...

1 Comment

**Greg:** Hey, I like those Instaparks twitter feeds you made. Is there any way to look at the photos without all the annoying clicking?

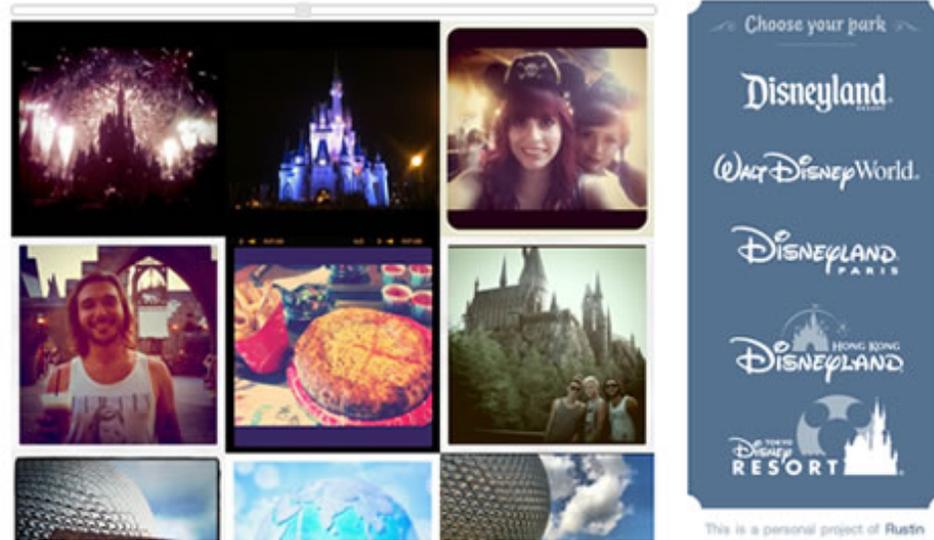
**Henry:** Nope. Want to help me make one?

**Greg:** eh... You should see if Rustin can make one.

**Henry:** Will do.

*(So I changed it a bit... but the idea is the same. The actual tweets are [here](#).)*

I chatted with Henry a few days later and it sounded fun, so that night I made this: [Instaparks.com](http://Instaparks.com)



The whole thing took about an hour to make. I actually spent more time setting up a server to deploy it than I did building the app itself. That speedy turn around is completely thanks to the great work Henry did setting up the feeds. He's doing all the hard work pulling the pics that get posted to Instagram from inside the Disney parks. I just made a little app that finds the image links out of those tweets and arranges them on a page that you can zooomify.

I hope you dig it.

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July 18, 2011

*facebook, google+,  
social, twitter*

1 Comment

## My Social Media 'Problem'

I only have one stream of consciousness. I don't separate my outgoing posts into business, personal, family etc.. I feel like all the people who know me, or work with me, should have a real picture of my personality. It contributes to the success of any kind of relationship.

That being the case, I use this site, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and now [Google+](#) for the same stream. I cross post, which I know drives a lot of people nuts. The

only reason I do, though, is because all my friends aren't in one place. I'm not curating a specific kind of content for each channel... just presenting myself to that crowd.

Now, I'm finding that I just don't have desire to present myself in so many places. With the addition of Google+, I've hit some internal tipping point that makes me feel too spread out. I'm not sure why having a blog, twitter & facebook feels fine, but I add just one more and it feels odd.

The opposing factor in all this is my love for new-ness and fun new things to experiment with. I jump on the bandwagon for every new service that comes along, but it fizzles quickly if I don't come up with a plan to work it into my routine. If it's not in my routine, it feels like an extra load trying to 'create' content for the new channel... and that turns into the odd feeling I mentioned before.

Conclusion: I'll probably fall away from the new kid (Google+) even though I really quite like it. I'll end up hanging where my friends are. If I can get them all to move I'd sure love to ditch Facebook.

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**May 16, 2011**

**30**

*birthday*

I turned 30 yesterday.

**6 Comments**

Yesterday was the actual day I closed out my 30th year on the planet. It didn't feel so bad to me. You see, last year (on the eve of my 29th birthday) I had to actually do the math to make sure I knew my own age. I had it in my head I was turning 30 last year, so I went through my "oh crap, I'm old now and haven't done anything of any value in the world" hysteria a year early. I finally did the math the night before my birthday, and exclaimed to my wife that I was still young! I have another year before 30! She laughed at me, and we moved on. Fast forward one year and I was able to turn 30 in peace.

But now that I am truly old, I took advantage of the new-found depth of character that only comes with old age. I've taken the liberty of reflecting on life while I sit in my rocking chair, smoke my pipe, and yell at the damn long-haired teenagers next door.

In my 30 years I've had some wonderful adventures, too many to mention. I've had some spectacular failures, too many to count. ...and despite my very best efforts to derail it, life's been good to me so far.

I have a family I love dearly and I have a job that excites me every day. I have a home that's safe, warm and filled with great memories, and I'm surrounded every day by people who make me happy. There are a million adventures still we have yet to experience, and I'm giddy every time we talk about what's coming next.

If you're still reading this, you're probably my wife or a close friend, so I'd like to take the opportunity to say thank you and I love you. I wouldn't be worth a hill of beans without you.

To be continued...

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**February 7, 2011**

*interview, radio, superbowl*

2 Comments

## I'm, like, radio famous

Well, maybe not famous. ...but I was invited to be on a local radio station to wax on about my experience working on the Super Bowl shows this year.

About 1:00 this afternoon, I got an email from [Ethan Millard](#), who hosts a show called [The Nightside Project](#) on the grand daddy of [talk radio stations](#) in Utah. He wanted to know if I was interested in talking about what I do.

It seems in a conversation on Twitter, a [friend](#) let him know that a local guy had been involved in producing the halftime show for Super Bowl XLV.

After a quick email exchange, I was booked to be on the show the show later that night.

Here's how it went down...



## The Nightside Project

*(click arrow to play)*

I was a little worried listening to their first segment as I waited to go on. They didn't dig the halftime show, so I was afraid they had me in studio to grill me about it. But I had a great time with Ethan and Alex, and thought they were cool guys to talk to.

It's funny. You work hard to do cool things, but rarely get a chance to talk about it. I really appreciate the invitation to be on the show, and I hope to cross paths with these guys again sometime.

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**February 7, 2011**

*freelance,  
superbowl, work*

**2 Comments**

## Super Bowl XLV Halftime Show

I don't have a lot of time to post details, but here's a quick look at what I've been up to the last few months.

I did the Pre-game show too... but I don't have vid of that for now.

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