

TV Feature: HollywoodChicago.com on Three Parts of Adam West

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 15, 2017 - 2:38pm

- [Adam West](#) [2]
- [Batman](#) [3]
- [Burt Ward](#) [4]
- [Conan O'Brien](#) [5]
- [Family Guy](#) [6]
- [Film News](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Joker](#) [9]
- [Jon Lennon Espino](#) [10]
- [Life Magazine](#) [11]
- [Lookwell](#) [12]
- [Mayor Adam West](#) [13]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [14]
- [Robin](#) [15]
- [Seth McFarlane](#) [16]
- [Spike Walters](#) [17]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [18]

CHICAGO – As they say about Adam West’s interpretation of Batman, “he hit so hard, that words describing the impact appeared out of thin air.” But there was more to him than just the superhero tights, as Patrick McDonald, Spike Walters and Jon Espino of HollywoodChicago.com remember the three main characters in the career of Adam West, who passed away last week.



West, Adam West: Early Publicity Shot of the Man Who Would be Batman

Photo credit: File Photo

His career had three acts; first as a movie/TV contract performer, then as the title character on “Batman” in 1966, and then – after a struggle to go beyond that hero role – he embraced the comic side as “Lookwell,” which led into his work as a notable voice actor... most famous as Mayor Adam West on the animated series “Family Guy.” As his career blossomed again, and The Batman took off in movies, he also re-engaged with his superhero self, and is acknowledged as one of the greatest portrayers of the Caped Crusader. Read the rest of Adam West’s HollywoodChicago.com obituary by [clicking here](#). [19]

Patrick McDonald, Spike Walters and Jon Lennon Espino of HollywoodChicago.com wrote mini-essays on the three famous lives of Adam West... superhero, clown and mayor.



BATMAN by Patrick McDonald



The LIFE of Adam West as Batman in 1966

Photo credit: Time Warner

It's almost impossible to describe the anticipation of a five year-old waiting for the "Batman" TV series to begin in January of 1966. I was that boy. I can picture the scene now, over 50 years ago (Jeebus, Gramps!), the whole neighborhood gathered around the ONLY color TV set in the hood, at the Baldwin's residence on Willow Court in Michigan City, Indiana. (not Alec). I can also picture the weirdness of the episode, and I know that memory is sound because I've since watched it ("Hi Diddle Riddle"). The series was two-times-a-week-consecutive-days appointment television – they broke the format mold – and was incredibly exciting as a mid-1960s zeitgeist. I have never not loved the show, and I have never not loved the great Adam West as a concept. He lived and breathed the bizarre nature of both the hero and the jester in that series, and never broke the seriousness of his portrayal of the Caped Crusader. He was, and ever will be as the Bat, "All Pure West."

Oddly enough as I grew up, I always wondered what Adam West was up to, from his scarce appearances on 1970s television ("Look, Batman is on 'Fantasy Island'") to his weird attempts later to join with the Skinemax genre ("Young Lady Chatterley 2," anyone?). When he re-upped as both the Mayor and a nostalgist for the Dark Knight – I still think Tim Burton made a mistake not casting him as Thomas Wayne, Batman's father – he became forever the hero inside of himself, for that five year old boy in me, and all of us.

ALL PURE WEST: My fave is when he would interrupt a crime investigation as Batman to remind Robin of some good-citizen activity, like feeding the parking meters.



LOOKWELL by Spike Walters



Adam West as Ty Lookwell in 1991

Photo credit: Broadway Video

The now legendary failed pilot “Lookwell” represents the genesis of Adam West’s latter-day turn playing essentially “Adam West.” He spent decades running from his role as Batman, but by 1990 he had found a kindred spirit in the role of Ty Lookwell, another actor strongly associated with a role from decades before. Lookwell was part of the pack of 1970’s TV detectives on a show named Bannigan, and he uses that TV role experience to bumble around real life cases while annoying the police department. Written by Conan O’Brien and Robert Smigel, “Lookwell” knew exactly what Adam West’s particular set of skills were and it used them to its own great advantage. West himself said this pilot was the one he was particularly sad didn’t go forward because he had such fun. Thankfully this brilliant-but-canceled gem continues to live on long after shows that were picked up in its place have faded from memory.

ALL PURE WEST: One of the strongest running gags is how people keep getting him mixed up with the other washed-up 70’s detectives who also started with the letter “B.”



MAYOR ADAM WEST by Jon Lennon Espino



Lucky to Be Mayor Adam West in 'Family Guy'
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

Separating camp from Adam West would be an impossible and fruitless feat. To many people he was their entrance into the comic book universe, with his iconic portrayal of Batman. The portrayal was so ridiculous and over-the-top, it leaped off the pages of the comic books of that time. West, despite several rough patches, never lost his comical charm, and then he finally and fully embraced it on “Family Guy” as Mayor Adam West. As the Mayor, he was able to marry his comedic camp with a political office as he played a stereotypical, unqualified small town public servant. His commitment to his characters has always been his greatest strength, delivering a self-aware serious performance and embracing the ridiculousness of every situation he was put in. West found a perfect home on “Family Guy” and as a regularly recurring character, and his wacky levity will be missed.

ALL PURE WEST: Trisha Takinawa: Here comes Mayor Adam West himself. Mr. West, do you have any words for our viewers? Mayor Adam West: Box, toaster, aluminum, maple syrup... no I take that one back. I’m gonna hold onto that one.

Adam West, 1928-2017



[20]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [21]
Writer, Editorial Coordinator
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [20]

© 2017 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Mar 28 2024 - 8:33am):
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/27626/film-feature-hollywoodchicagocom-on-three-parts-of-adam-west>

- Links:**
- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
 - [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/adam-west>
 - [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/batman>
 - [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/burt-ward>
 - [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/conan-o-brien>
 - [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/family-guy>
 - [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/film-news>
 - [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
 - [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/joker>
 - [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jon-lennon-espino>
 - [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/life-magazine>
 - [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lookwell>
 - [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mayor-adam-west>
 - [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
 - [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/robin>



- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/seth-mcfarlane>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/spike-walters>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/27613/film-news-adam-west-who-portrayed-1960s-tv-batman-dies-at-88>
- [20] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>