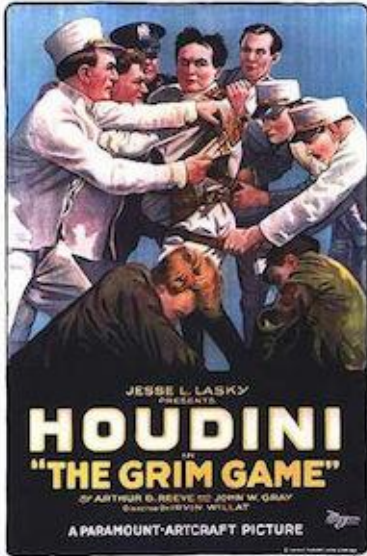


Turner Classic Movies to Host World Premiere Screening of Long Lost Harry Houdini Classic *The Grim Game* at 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival



Turner Classic Movies (TCM) is bringing the long-lost Harry Houdini classic *The Grim Game* (1919) back to the public eye in a world premiere screening during **2015 TCM Classic Film Festival** held **March 26-29** in **Hollywood**. This much-sought-after film – a complete print of which was only recently rediscovered and brought to TCM for restoration – features the escape artist and legendary illusionist in one of his few starring roles. The film was discovered and the restoration was produced and restored by award-winning film preservationist and silent-film scholar **Rick Schmidlin**, whose credits include such landmark restorations as *The Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894/95), *Greed* (1924), *London After Midnight* (1927), *Touch of Evil* (1958) and *Elvis: That's the Way It Is – Special Edition* (1970).

"The discovery, restoration and screening of *The Grim Game* is the perfect embodiment of the TCM mission to celebrate our cinematic heritage and share it with new audiences," said **Charles Tabesh, senior vice president of programming for TCM**. "We are thrilled to be collaborating with some of the most important figures in film preservation in order to bring this timeless classic back to the screen for the first time in decades."

In *The Grim Game*, Houdini plays Harvey Hanford, a young man who is framed for murder. As Hanford escapes from the police and goes after the gang of men who framed him, the movie offers numerous opportunities for Houdini to display his own skills as an escape artist, illusionist and stunt man. Among the most remarkable sequences is a mid-air collision between two airplanes that was actually a real accident caught on film and used in the story.

During the world premiere screening at the festival, composer **Brane Živković** will be on hand to conduct a live performance of his new score for the film. Additionally, *The Grim Game* will make its world television debut on TCM later in the year.

Below is the complete story behind the rediscovery and preservation of *The Grim Game*, including restoration credits. Information about the other films added to the 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival can be found online at www.tcm.com/festival.

A Classic Rediscovered: How *The Grim Game* Came to TCM

In April of 2014, noted film scholar and preservationist **Rick Schmidlin** met with friends **Dorothy Dietrich** and **Dick Brookz**, who own **The Houdini Museum** in Scranton, PA, where they discussed having a lead on the long lost 1919 feature starring **Harry Houdini**, *The Grim Game*. The only known copy of the complete film was held by **Larry Weeks**, a 95-year-old retired juggler who lived in Brooklyn. Weeks had obtained the film from the Houdini estate in 1947, had only shown it a few times and had never been willing to sell it. Schmidlin decided to give it a try, knowing that his friend **Charles Tabesh**, senior vice president of programming for TCM, would be interested in obtaining the film for the network. Schmidlin eventually got in touch with Weeks and made arrangements to visit him to assess the condition of the film.

When Schmidlin arrived, Weeks showed him the two-film cans that he thought contained *The Grim Game*. After examining the film by hand, he let him know that TCM was willing to make an offer, and two hours of discussion, Weeks finally agreed.

Schmidlin had become friends with **Brane Živković**, who teaches film and music composition at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where Schmidlin regularly lectures. After the two discussed *The Grim Game*, Zivkovic expressed his interest in composing and conducting the score for the film. Zivkovic also introduced Schmidlin to **Paula De Stefano**, the Barbara Goldsmith Curator for Preservation at NYU's Preservation and Conservation Department. Through De Stefano, Schmidlin arranged to bring Weeks to New York in June to screen the entire film and arranged to have NYU provide storage for the film in their on-site vault.

Leading up to this day was tense for Schmidlin, as he wondered if he had really found the complete version of *The Grim Game*. "If so this would be the first major project I've produced in 12 years. I felt as if this was the greatest adventure in my career and well worth the wait to find a long lost film desperate to be restored," said Schmidlin.

When they arrived at NYU, they examined the film and found that the total movie was five-and-a-half reels, not the five reels that had always been reported. They also had two reels of negative film. "Nothing was missing," said Schmidlin, "The film was a complete joy to see. *The Grim Game* is not just a long lost film from the silent era, but a really great and fun film that will surprise and entertain all."

The Grim Game Restoration Credits

The Grim Game restoration was produced and supervised by **Rick Schmidlin**, in association with **The Barbara Goldsmith Preservation and Conservation Department, New York University Libraries, Kimberly Tarr**, head of the media preservation unit, and **Benjamin Moskowitz**, lab supervisor who helped prepare the restoration. The digital restoration was carried out by **Thomas Eberschweiler at Metropolis Post** in New York City, with **John Rizzo** as project manager and **Brian Boyd** as colorist for the black-and-white timing.

Brane Živković – who teaches music composition for film and television at the **Kanbar Institute of Film and Television, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU** – composed and conducted the score for *The Grim Game*. The music was recorded under the supervision of music contractor **Dave Eggar at Subway Studios, New York**, with recording engineer **Mike Judeh**. It was mixed by **Matt Rocker at Underground Audio, New York**.

Consultants for the restoration of *The Grim Game* are **Dorothy Dietrich** and **Dick Brookz**, owners and operators of **The Houdini Museum in Scranton, Penn.**

About the 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival

For the sixth consecutive year, thousands of movie lovers from around the globe will descend upon Hollywood for the **TCM Classic Film Festival**. The 2015 festival is set to take place **Thursday, March 26 – Sunday, March 29, 2015**. Over four packed days and nights, attendees will be treated to an extensive lineup of great movies, appearances by legendary stars and filmmakers, fascinating presentations and panel discussions, special events and more.

The theme for the 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival will be ***History According to Hollywood***:

The Old West. Medieval England. Ancient Rome. Hollywood has found endless inspiration in re-creating historical moments and bringing to life the heroes and villains of the past, creating a form of time travel for audiences through the ages and around the world. These films, however, are not always true to the historical record. Filmmakers have often created works about the past that are a reflection of the period in which they were made, or change facts to suit a particular storyline. The 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival will explore how cinema has shaped how we view – and remember – history.

TCM host and film historian **Robert Osborne** will once again serve as official host of the TCM Classic Film Festival, with TCM's **Ben Mankiewicz** introducing various events. The festival's official hotel and central gathering point for the sixth consecutive year will be **The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel**, which has a longstanding role in movie history and was the site of the first Academy Awards® ceremony. The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel will also offer special rates for festival attendees. Screenings and events during the festival will be held at the **TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX**, the **TCL Chinese 6 Theatres** and the **Egyptian Theatre**, as well as other Hollywood venues.

Festival Passes

Passes for the 2015 TCM Classic Film Festival are on sale now and can be purchased exclusively through the official festival website: www.tcm.com/festival. The number of passes available, especially top-level "Spotlight" passes, is limited.

The "Spotlight" Festival Pass: \$1,649 – Includes all privileges available to "Classic" and "Essential" passholders, priority entry to all screening events; plus entry to the exclusive Opening Night Gala Party following the Red Carpet Gala screening at TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX; meet-and-greet events with TCM friends, including Robert Osborne and Ben Mankiewicz; and a limited edition TCM Classic Film Festival poster.

The "Essential" Festival Pass: \$749 – Includes all privileges available to "Classic" passholders, plus entry to the Red Carpet Gala screening at TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX and official TCM Classic Film Festival collectibles.

The "Classic" Festival Pass: \$599 – Includes access to all film programs at festival venues Thursday, March 26 – Sunday, March 29 (does not include admittance to the Opening Night Red Carpet Gala screening at TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX or the Opening Night Gala Party); access to all Club TCM events, panels and poolside screenings at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel; an Opening Night welcome reception at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel; and the Closing Night event.

The "Palace" Festival Pass: \$299 – Includes access to all screenings and events at the TCL Chinese Theatre (excluding the Opening Night Red Carpet Gala) and the Egyptian Theatre Friday, March 27 – Sunday, March 29, as well as poolside screenings at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

About Turner Classic Movies (TCM)

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) is a two-time Peabody Award-winning network that presents great films, uncut and commercial-free, from the largest film libraries in the world. TCM, which is available in more than 85 million homes, features the insights of hosts Robert Osborne and Ben Mankiewicz, plus interviews with a wide range of special guests. Currently in its 21st year as a leading authority in classic film, TCM offers critically acclaimed original documentaries and specials; film series like *The Essentials*, and *Friday Night Spotlight*; and annual programming events like *31 Days of Oscar®* in February, *Summer Under the Stars* in August and *TCM Essentials Jr.* during the summer. TCM also connects with movie fans through such events as the annual TCM Classic Film Festival in Hollywood and the TCM Classic Cruise, as well as through the TCM Classic Film Tour in New York City and Los Angeles. In addition, TCM produces a wide range of media about classic film, including books and DVDs, and hosts a wealth of material online at tcm.com and through the Watch TCM mobile app.

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