



## CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

# The Directors

Garry J Walter

Generally, a hospital has one Director, but during the filming of several scenes of this year's blockbuster *Superman returns* at Thomas Walker Hospital ("Rivendell") in Sydney, there were two! Equipped with a medical background and psychiatric qualifications, I continued to be responsible for the smooth running of the psychiatric hospital, while Bryan Singer, of *X-Men* fame, took charge of the movie.

In the main, there was no confusion about our identities and roles among hospital staff, patients, actors and film crew, but there were a couple of exceptions. Early in the piece, when entering the hospital gates, I was accosted by one of the film's security guards.



"I'm the Director", I explained. "And I'm Superman", replied the disbelieving, portly guard. Another time, my wife visited the hospital to watch a scene being shot and announced on arrival that she was "the Director's wife", which floored a second security guard, as Bryan Singer is openly gay.

There are differences, of course, between a hospital director and a movie director. In this case, Mr Singer boasted an artistic temperament, an entourage of dotting attendants, a wonderfully appointed caravan in which to unwind, and reportedly a \$30 million salary for making the film. I offered a milder manner, loyal but not fawning secretarial staff, my office as my sole retreat, and a considerably smaller salary.

Although happy with my lot, subconsciously, along with other staff, I craved a part — hero, villain or mere extra — in the movie, but Brandon Routh, Kevin Spacey and co. had these sewn up. Undeterred, I wore a hired Superman outfit under my suit for the duration of the filming and was ever ready to strut my stuff. "I'm the Director *and* Superman" would surely be hard to top, in one's medical career and in life.

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(Received 15 Aug 2006, accepted 12 Sep 2006)

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