

# RAYMOND HITCHCOCK



**Born:** October 22, 1865, Auburn, NY

**Died:** November 24, 1929, Beverly Hills, CA

**Cemetery Location:** Section 10 Lot 133

Raymond Hitchcock was a silent film actor, stage actor, and stage producer, who appeared in, or produced 30 plays on Broadway from 1898 to 1928 (his most famous being "Hitchy-Koo"), and who appeared in the silent films of the 1920s.

Let's take a journey into the life of Raymond "Hitchy" Hitchcock. Raymond was born on October 22, 1865 in Auburn, NY. At age 17, after graduating from Auburn Academic High School, Raymond worked selling shoes. Strangely enough, Hitchy was discovered locally by a member of the Auburn Philharmonic Opera Club. Raymond was first cast locally as Ko-Ko in "The Mikado", and other local amateur theatricals followed. When a chorus part opened in a touring professional show, Raymond auditioned and was in show business for good. However, when the show closed in Philadelphia, he reverted back to selling shoes. Raymond quickly returned to the stage playing the part of Sir Joseph in "H.M.S. Pinafore." While playing "Pinafore" in New York, critic Alan Dale characterized him as "America's foremost operatic comedian."

Oddly enough, the stage play "H.M.S Pinafore" is where actress Josephine Marcus met Wyatt Earp while playing the show in Tombstone, AZ. The tale of Josephine and Wyatt is a fascinating story of its own. However, it's uncertain if Raymond and Josephine ever shared the stage together.

Hitchcock was married to Freda Bowen from 1891 to 1903, and then was married to actress Flora Zabelle from 1905 until his death in 1929. In one of her few movie roles, Zabelle appeared in the silent film "The Red Widow" (1916) opposite male lead John Barrymore. Barrymore's role had been played by Hitchcock in the 1911 Broadway production of "The Red Widow". Hitchcock and Zabelle had no children.

He appeared as a star in the character of Abijah Booze in "The Yankee Consul", and sang "It Was Not Like This in the Olden Time". In his stage career, Hitchcock went back and forth between dramatic roles and ones in comic opera. In 1905 he appeared on Broadway with John Bunny in "Easy Dawson", the two apparently playing firemen. Hitchcock also made several phonograph recordings.

In 1907, Hitchcock was charged with the sexual abuse of two adolescent girls together with New York magnate William A. Chanler. As Hitchcock's trial progressed, it was revealed that the charges of sexual abuse were fabricated as part of a blackmail scheme. Hitchcock was acquitted by a jury on June 11, 1908, after spending almost nine months in prison.

Raymond also headlined the 1921 "Ziegfeld Follies" with Fanny Brice and W.C. Fields. Hitchy's trademark tag line with the Follies was "Sufferin' sassafrass!" Hmmmmm, I wonder where Warner Bros. got the idea for Daffy Duck's and Sylvester's tagline "sufferin succatash"?

Moving to California to work in silent films, he co-starred with John Barrymore, Mabel Normand, Mack Sennett and Fatty Arbuckle. At one point earning a weekly salary of \$2,500!

In 1925, Hitchcock appeared in a test sound-on-film (Phonofilm) process, in which Hitchcock performed a sketch from his revue "Hitchy-Koo", which was originally produced on Broadway in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920. Raymond Hitchcock also figured prominently in John Ford's "Upstream" (1927).

In 1929, just as "talkies" were coming in, Hitchy suddenly passed away in Beverly Hills. Shortly before passing, he had declared motion pictures "an eternal monstrosity!"

He was interred, alongside his parents, in a family lot in Woodlawn. His headstone simply reads, "Actor."

