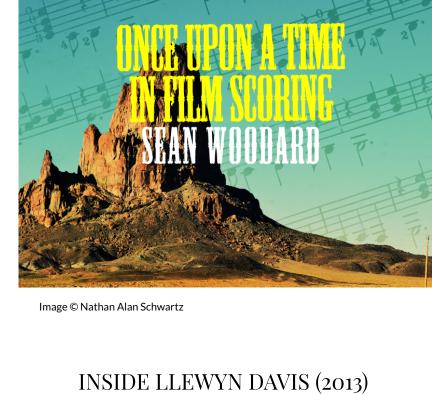
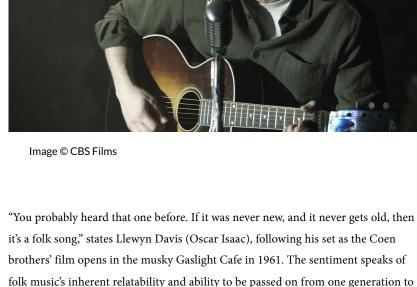
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hinders his own musical ambitions and prevents him from seeing how the Greenwich Village folk scene will further boom. From the first frame, Llewyn is seen leaning into the microphone, singing the traditional song, "Hang Me, Oh Hang Me." The song's lyrics—"Hang me, oh hang me / I'll be dead and gone / Hang me, oh hang me / I'll be dead and gone / Wouldn't mind the hanging / But the laying in the grave so long, poor boy / I've been all around this world"—and desaturated, nearly sepia-toned, color timing set the tone for the rest of film. As Llewyn aimlessly goes about the week—dealing with many issues including an $\,$

ailing father, losing the Gorfeins' cat, and the question of whether he impregnated his friend's wife, Jean—the folk music heard in the film mirror his circumstances

In his quest to bum money for an abortion for his lover Jean (Carey Mulligan),

and daily depression.

Me Hold You (Little) Man."

the next. However, the line is also naive coming from Davis, whose depression and disenchantment with the folk scene following the death of his musical partner

Llewyn takes a session gig with Jean's husband, Jim (Justin Timberlake), and a musician named Al Cody (Adam Driver). The song they record is absurd—a satirical protest song that features over-the-top vocal acrobatics (including stuttering) and cultural references to the space race and science fiction. "Please Mr. Kennedy" stands as one of film's most humorous musical moments in recent history, alongside Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story's politically incorrect protest song, "Let

The funny thing is that "Please Mr. Kennedy" is an actual song; a popular version

was recorded by the Goldcoast Singers in 1962, but the film's makeshift trio make it their own, by changing the Cold War references to outer space. In a complementary scene that rounds out the black comedy the Coen's representation of the folk scene is a performance by Jim and Jean (modeled after real life Jim and Jean Glover) and their friend Troy Nelson. Nelson looks like he was was cut out of a Kingston Trio LP

Aside from the black comedy vein that permeates the film, the traditional song "Fare Thee Well (Dink's Song)," which develops different meanings throughout the film, perhaps reflects Davis's melancholy the best. (See Ryan Hollinger's video essay

cover, complete with the vertical striped button-up shirt.

station signs that pass by in a blur than he is in Llewyn.

"Folk songs. Thought you said you were a musician."

(https://www.youtube.com/watch? $v = Bnbv67k_BVk\&feature = youtu.be\&fbclid = IwAR14RTMcWDQgmQJMTD7dpUY$ $PVOTXJFkkjpVJGZdnnDyfhLO7m7YbQWZ9w6U)\ on\ how\ the\ film\ helped\ him$ cope with depression.) The first time we hear it, Llewyn plays the duet version from his LP with his deceased musical partner, Mike Timlin. He leaves the turntable running as he leaves the Gorfeins' apartment. The song plays over the rest of the sequence, as he takes the subway. While the song's lyrics speak of a lost lover, the song in this context instead emcompasses Llewyn's isolation. He is alone in a sea of strangers in the subway car,

the metallic screech of the speeding train drowning out thought as it hurtles through a vacuum of space. Even the cat on his shoulder is more interested in the subway

The next time the song is heard is when the Gorfeins ask Llewyn to perform at a

Grossman, he performs an English ballad. But Grossman states, "I don't see much money here," and suggests that Llewyn reforms his duo. These scenes seem to confirm how Llewyn cannot separate his musical identity from that of his partner. Even though he searches for an authentic sound in his music, it doesn't connect with people. After some more misadventures, the film circles back to the opening scene of

Llewyn playing the Gaslight. We hear once again "Hang Me, Oh Hang Me," but he closes with "Fare Thee Well." This time it seems as if the song represents his departure from the New York music scene, partially a good riddance but also a melancholic acceptance that this chapter in his life is over, but his troubles still remain. In a hilarious turn of events, a young Bob Dylan appears onstage after Llewyn. He sings "Farewell" (a song allegedly recorded two years later in 1963, $\,$ which is anachronistic to Inside Llewyn Davis's 1961 timeline, but who cares?), but Llewyn doesn't hear it—he's too busy getting beat up in the alley by the husband of a

In addition, when Llewyn reveals his musical partner, Mike Timlin, committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge, Turner can't help but belittle

Timlin's bridge of choice. When Llewyn reaches Chicago to audition for Bud

performer Llewyn heckled the night before to witness the moment in which the folk music torch was handed to the next generation of songwriters and changed the scene forever. As his attacker walks away, Llewyn says, "Au Revoir." This not only cues the musical aspirations, as well as the antecedents of folk music at that point in history.



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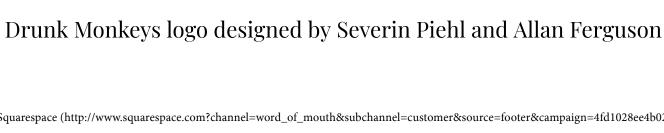
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dinner party. He begins, but when he reaches the chorus, Mrs. Gorfein joins in with the harmony, which was Mike's part. The intrusion visibly upsets Llewyn and he lashes out at everyone in attendance. In addition, the song references the narrator wanting to fly away; but for Llewyn, his wings are clipped. He then heads out on the road with Roland Turner, a pedantic jazz musician played by John Goodman, and his beatnik valet, Johnny Five (Garrett Hedlund, channeling elements from his portrayal of Dean Moriarty in Walter Salles' 2012 adaptation of On the Road). Roland constantly berates Llewyn's genre of choice. He responds,

end of the story for the audience, but also represents Llewyn's dismissal of his As for Llewyn, he best take Dylan's advice: "Let me forget about today until tomorrow."

Sean Woodard is a graduate of Point Loma Nazarene University and Chapman University. Focusing on a wide variety of interests, Sean's fiction, film criticism, and other writing have been featured in Los Angeles Review of Books, Found Polaroids, and Los Angeles Magazine, among other publications. He serves on the Film Department for Drunk Monkeys. A native of Visalia, CA, he now resides in Orange County.

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