



## Local actors in 'Machine Gun Preacher' -- an interview with Steve Blackwood

By [Patty Nolan](#), Detroit Theater Examiner

Steve Blackwood plays the banker who has to tell Gerard Butler "No."

### Credits:

Courtesy of Steve Blackwood.

It's always good to see our favorite local stage actors appear on TV and in film. With the flurry of film business lured to Michigan by tax incentives, we know of many people who picked up work in front of or behind the camera. Steve Blackwood and Rich Goteri are two who come immediately to mind – and we've asked them to share their unique inside perspective.

Both actors have great scenes in what is perhaps one of the most anticipated films to be shot partially in the Detroit area – '[Machine Gun Preacher](#)' – which screens at the Toronto International Film Festival on 9/11 and opens nationwide on 9/23.

Today's interview is with [Steve Blackwood](#).

Steve Blackwood, a Michigan native who is well known for his TV, stage and film work, not only has a key appearance in the film, but is actually featured in the trailer. Mr. Blackwood may be best known nationally for his portrayal of the bumbling [Bart Biederbicke](#) in the long-running NBC soap opera *Days Of Our Lives*, but his return to Michigan includes a number of welcome stage appearances – most recently at Meadow Brook Theatre in *Ding Dong* ... a sequel to the Wilde Award Winning Comedy *Boeing-Boeing*, in which Blackwood also starred.

**E:** *You have an awesome scene with Gerald Butler in Machine Gun Preacher that is featured in the trailer – you play the bad guy banker. How did you hear about the part and win the role?*

**S.B.:** Thank you for the kind words on the scene. The casting people called me in on MACHINE GUN PREACHER because they heard I was one of the better known actors in Detroit. (I was surprised, I'd only come back from LA for a year!)

**E:** *How would you have approached the same scene if*

***you'd been on stage instead of on camera?***

**S.B.:** GREAT question. Honestly, not a whole lot different, maybe a little more voice so people in the back of the theatre could hear me... although my old NY acting teacher Uta Hagen said if your intent is true, you could whisper and the people in the back row will hear you!

***E: Any anecdotes about filming MGP?***

**S.B.:** I was on the set only on shooting day, but the passionate Gerry Butler and Director Marc Forster called me in the day before to REHEARSE the scene without cameras... like a stage play... how cool.

We came up with new bits, like adding a co-worker (Kristine Kelly) to come in to interrupt and me shooing her away, and the overlapping semi-improvised dialogue. Speaking of stage vs. film... I kept wanting to react more to Gerry when I say 'you need to calm down' and Marc kept coming up and saying 'less Steve, less.' After 4 times I said 'but I won't be doing anything... I won't be acting' and he said 'YOU GOT IT.' Meaning. if you have a character and he's 'full' the camera will pick it up. Great lesson for me to BEHAVE, not 'ACT.'

***E: How important is training/instruction for aspiring actors? Words of advice?***

**S.B.:** Training is essential – Constant training. I work with many actors who study with me once and think they 'got it'.... I studied for YEARS with Uta Hagen and Milton Katselas, once a week, and so did fellow class mates like Matthew Broderick, Burt Reynolds, etc. Ray Liotta says when he's not on a set he's in an acting class. You have to keep up your chops.

***E. Any "next gigs" you can share at this time?***

**S.B.:** Next stage gig is Mamet's RACE at [JET Theatre](#) with John Manfredi. I play the James Spader (Broadway) role; it opens 2/12.

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Mr. Blackwood is enthusiastic about ongoing training and offers workshops to actors looking to hone specific aspects of their craft. The next workshop, on 9/22 at the Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills, offers techniques for mastering 'Cold Readings' – when a part you've never seen is suddenly thrown at you by a casting director during an audition.

For more information, visit his [website](#) and click on the [sign up link](#) on the home page.

Don't forget to see Steve in action in 'Machine Gun Preacher'... and be sure to come back for Rich Goteri's unique perspective on MGP and two other soon-to-be-released films in which he appears.