

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## ***Kowalski, Cellino v. Barnes: Real-Life Drama and Comedy***

David Sheward · Monday, February 17th, 2025

The potential is there for a gripping and informative play in Gregg Ostrin's *Kowalski*, but sadly all we get is forced conflict and sitcom-level humor. The premise is promising. Ostrin's subject is the real-life, first meeting of two legendary artists—Tennessee Williams and Marlon Brando. On the insistence of director Elia Kazan, Brando hitchhiked from NYC to the gay mecca of Provincetown, Mass. to audition for Williams for his new play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. After fixing the plumbing and electricity, Brando delivered a socko reading of Stanley Kowalski, Williams' animalistic anti-hero and nemesis of Blanche DuBois and made theater history. You've got plenty of possibilities for an explosive encounter. Williams was openly gay and the young Brando aggressively macho and hetero. Both Brando and Williams represented a new style of theater, challenging the old guard of presentational melodrama. Both were teetering on the edge of major breakthroughs in their careers, with a lot riding on the outcome of the audition. Ostrin could have mined any of these veins for dramatic gold, but comes up with dross.



Robin Lord Taylor and Brandon Flynn in *Kowalski*.

Credit: Russ Rowland

We begin with Williams in the 1970s addressing an unseen TV interviewer reluctantly describing that first meeting with Brando in 1947. The lights shift and we are in Williams' Provincetown cottage (excellently detailed set by David Gallo). The playwright and his friend, the director Margo Jones with whom he collaborated on his first success *The Glass Menagerie*, deliver exposition.

Williams' abusive boyfriend Pancho staggers in to deliver threats and tension. Margo and Pancho exit separately—Ostrin's obvious device to leave the stage clear for the core of this 90-minute piece: the confrontation between Williams and Brando, which Ostrin embellishes with *Odd Couple*-style gags. Brando's crude vulgarities contrast with Williams' Southern-belle extravagances. They play Edward Albee-ish head games and exchange intimate feelings—hardly believable for two who have just met—and keep delaying the audition, the whole purpose of Brando's lengthy sojourn.

When Ostrin runs out of ideas, he introduces Jo, Brando's semi-girlfriend and wanna-be actress who has accompanied him from Gotham. The power plays are expanded to three with each trying to out-manipulate the other two. Ostrin also slips in meta-references to *Streetcar* with Brando calling after Jo, "JOEEEEY!" echoing the famous cry of "STELLLA!" Finally, Margo and Pancho return, Brando is about to deliver his big reading of Stanley...and Williams is snapped back to 1977, admitting some of what we have just witnessed may be true or it may not, but it made for a good story, right? Wrong. Blackout and curtain calls.

Colin Hanlon's direction emphasizes the comic aspects of the script and fails to add shadings to the relationships. Brandon Flynn has the muscular physique and good looks of Brando and does a creditable vocal approximation. He also captures the legendary actor's charisma and arrogance. Robin Lord Taylor's Williams is all effete mannerisms and rushed delivery. I did not get a sense of Williams' complex vulnerability and sensitivity. Alison Cimmiet and Sebastian Trevino as Margo and Pancho were not on stage long, but they did strongly establish their characters' needs and desires. Ellie Ricker is most impressive as Jo. She skillfully and credibly plays an intelligent young woman who is able to gauge her own lack of acting ability and judge Brando's colossal talent, but equally huge character flaws.



Noah Weisberg and Eric William Morris in *Cellino v. Barnes*.

Credit: Marc J. Franklin

*Kowlaski* is a mish-mash of anecdote, speculation, and imitation of *Streetcar* and Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Meanwhile, another Off-Broadway production based on a real-life story, Mike B. Breen and David Rafaieldes' *Cellino v. Barnes*, is nothing more than an extended comedy sketch, has been running since August, and succeeds on its own terms. Breen and Rafaieldes take the history of the law partners known for their famous TV jingle and create a wildly funny satire of the commercialization of the legal profession and our shallow society as a whole. Cavorting around the tiny stage at Asylum NYC, Eric William Morris and Noah Weisberg throw their whole bodies and expressive features into creating exaggerated versions of a slick slacker Cellino and an attention-starved Barnes. Wesley Taylor and Alex Wyse's staging is just madcap enough, but doesn't go too over the top for an uproarious 80 minutes.

***Kowalski*: Jan. 27—Feb. 23. Duke at 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St., NYC. Running time: 85 mins. with no intermission. [cur8.com](http://cur8.com).**

***Cellino v. Barnes*: Aug. 1—March 30. Asylum NYC, 123 E. 24th St., NYC. Running time: 80 mins. with no intermission. [asylumtix.com](http://asylumtix.com).**

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## Slot It into Your Style: How to Choose the Right Online Casino to Meet Your Needs

Our Friends · Monday, February 17th, 2025

In the evolving realm of online gaming, selecting a credible platform requires meticulous evaluation of several essential factors. Players desiring a favorable online gambling experience must ascertain that the chosen casino prioritizes their requirements, including security, reliability, a varied and captivating game assortment, and compliance with industry best practices.

This detailed analysis will explore the essential elements of a successful online casino platform, including licensing and regulation, game diversity and quality, user experience and interface design, security, and fairness protocols, adaptable payment and withdrawal methods, the significance of responsive customer support, and most importantly, how to know what type of player you are. Ultimately, players may adeptly traverse online gaming and make educated choices by comprehending the fundamental variables we're about to discuss.

### Understand Yourself Before Understanding the Casino

Before you even consider signing up for a casino, take a moment to understand your playstyle. There's no one-size-fits-all solution in online gaming. Some are drawn to the bright lights and [variety of online slots Canada](#), while others prefer the strategic pace of blackjack. Or perhaps you're enticed by the thrill of roulette, where a single spin can change everything. Understanding your playstyle is the first step to a rewarding online casino experience.

Subsequently, time and dedication arise. Do you tend to engage intermittently, playing for brief periods occasionally? Are you seeking something more substantial, akin to the digital equivalent of reclining in an armchair with your favorite book? The appropriate casino will align with your tempo, whether it involves a brief wager or an extended strategy and high-stakes session.

## Discovering Your Playstyle: The Most Popular Casino Games

Online casino games can be broadly categorized into three groups, each with its unique characteristics and attractions. While these categories don't cover all casino games, they provide a great starting point for newcomers to discover their preferred playstyle. The sheer variety of games available is sure to pique your interest and keep you entertained:

### H3: Slots

Slot machines are fundamental to casinos, and any comprehensive list of premier casino games must include them. Slots are defined by their entirely unpredictable results, which rely on a [random number generator \(RNG\)](#). This defining characteristic of sheer chance is what attracts several casino enthusiasts to slot machines to challenge themselves.

Within the slots category, players may discover an extensive array of themed slot games. Spanning from vintage slot machines to vibrant spectacles, including intricate storylines and captivating images. Each has distinct characteristics, success rates, and allure.

### Table Games

The following major category is table games. This category includes engaging games like roulette, blackjack, poker, and keno, each with distinct aspects and variants. Table games include a spectrum of skills, from the intricate strategy of poker to the simple technique of optimizing roulette.

Table games accommodate players of all skill levels and budgets, as premier online casinos have dedicated table rooms to meet these needs. Players who choose table games want to depend on their talents rather than relinquishing control to chance.

### Live Casinos

Live casino games represent a novel development in the online casino sector, enabling players to fully immerse themselves in the casino experience. They include actual dealers conducting the games, which are video-streamed to players in real time. Typically, these are tabletop games such as poker or blackjack, but they may also include a range of unconventional alternatives, including themes like Wheel of Fortune.

These provide the most captivating and immersive casino experiences among all game selections, and gamers seeking engagement and social interaction will find live casino games most appropriate for their preferences.

### Deciding what you want from a casino game

When determining your desires for a casino game, it is essential to reflect on the factors that compel millions of gamers globally to return consistently. It is an enticement intricately woven into

the historical fabric of civilization, ranging from rudimentary gambling games to the huge establishments of casino towns. Online casinos represent the latest development in this history, effectively closing the remaining gap between players and the games.

Online casinos provide unparalleled flexibility and convenience to the sector. Players may access their preferred games anytime, particularly with mobile support providing casino games at their fingertips. Online casinos are devoid of currency transactions and provide effortless gameplay. Innovative technology enhances casino games' entertainment value with advanced visuals and intricate regulations that cannot be duplicated in a physical casino.

Online casinos may also provide one of the most popular features of online gaming – bonuses. These convenient bankroll enhancers allow gamers to maximize their gaming experience more than before.

## Top Tips for Finding the Best and Trustworthy Online Casinos

### Stay Secure

**Seek licensed and regulated casinos:** Choosing an online casino authorized and overseen by a credible gaming authority is essential. This guarantees the casino's adherence to rules, ensuring equitable and secure gaming experiences for its patrons.

### Look beyond the glitz and glamor

**Consult reviews:** Before registering with an online casino, examine evaluations from other players to ascertain their experiences with the establishment. This will provide essential information about the casino's reputation, gaming offerings, and quality of service.

### Keep your money in check!

**Verify payment options:** Ensure the casino provides a variety of safe and dependable payment methods, including credit cards, e-wallets, and bank transfers.

### Everyone loves a bonus

**Incentives and promotions:** Seek online casinos that provide attractive incentives and promotions. These may include welcome incentives, free spins, and [loyalty programs](#), enhancing the worth of your expenditure.

### Variety is a must

**Game selection:** Opt for an online casino that provides many games to maintain an engaging and varied gaming experience. Verify if the casino provides live dealer games for an enhanced experience.

### Functionality first

**Mobile compatibility:** Given the proliferation of mobile gaming, ensure that the online casino you choose is compatible with desktop and mobile devices. This guarantees access to your preferred games regardless of your location.



## Your needs should be a priority

**Customer assistance:** Effective customer support is essential for every online casino. Before registration, please verify the availability of many support channels, including live chat, email, and telephone help, as well as their 24/7 accessibility.

## A Game That's Good for Everyone

Identifying the appropriate online casino is not a matter of chance; it involves alignment—selecting a platform that corresponds with your style, tastes, and expectations. Although it may require considerable time, it is ultimately worthwhile. This pertains to your leisure activities.

Upon discovering a equitable, entertaining, and pleasurable casino, you will see that it transcends mere gaming. It pertains to the experience, the sensation of being at the appropriate location, at the opportune moment, with favorable circumstances in your favor.

*Photo at top: Micha? Parzuchowski via Unsplash*

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## Gary Grossman: Two Poems

Gary Grossman · Sunday, February 16th, 2025

### Benediction

I'm sitting in the dark,  
as first rays coerce light  
through the small gap between  
blind and window—it is  
the gloaming's unnamed  
identical twin. But why  
nameless, surely it's  
deserving? Don't all Castors  
need a Pollux, Romulus  
a Remus, Mary-Kate  
an Ashley? Neither night  
nor morning, perhaps  
the *unwrapping* or  
*reopening*, although

both lack élan. My back  
 braced against two bed pillows,  
 dark roast lapping the rim  
 of the Spanish azul-glazed  
 mug in my right hand.  
 Coffee, slow and bitter  
 as that night eight years ago  
 when you said *We need a break*,  
 but here you are, still, asleep  
 alongside me, inhaling  
 and exhaling like a mockingbird  
 calling at 2AM, a complete  
 night's sleep a rare treat  
 in your seventh decade,  
 and this harmonic traces a smile  
 over my top and bottom lips,  
 while time mimes the decades  
 we've lain alongside each other,  
 the way banks hug a stream,  
 twisting and turning, yet forever  
 entwined, and how lovely it is  
 just to sit—my left leg grazing  
 your right, sheets still slightly  
 piney from the wash, drinking  
 French Roast, in the everyday  
 air of an unwrapping morning.

\*

## MRI

Modern medicine says hello, not with a smile or twinkling eyes, but with a bang loud enough to wrench my head ninety degrees to the left, as if Rowdy Roddy Piper had me in a headlock, while the referee slaps the mat, the count now at eight. But no, my head is hugged by two expensive plastic braces—penny-level expensive compared to this bedroom-sized multi-million dollar machine, that is making every kind of bang, clang, and soft-tissue image possible. Then there's the high pitched shriek that I myself would issue, if any utterance was permitted, however, my imperative is to remain motionless as a bullfrog within reach of a hungry great blue heron, and so I just repeat my mantra and loosely clutch the blue squeezezy that activates the escape protocol. Wedding ring and Maori jade amulet removed and I'd better ask about the titanium staples that have merged the sections of my lower colon for the last 35 years, because metal is metal, regardless of where it sleeps, and this machine hugs tight to metal as if it were the only lover in the Imaging Center. Loose, comfortable clothing they say, so it's tee and running shorts—medicine is always cold in both affect and effect, so it's a long-sleeved tee rather than a shorty. Surprisingly, the tech says *after a while your back may grow hot* because my back is what I'm here for, well, spine specifically. And I won't bore you with terms like L4 subluxation and collapsing spinal canal, because I can still walk, even while my nerves fire hot shots through weakened legs to my toes, and it may be that pins and needle soles will be my new story for decade eight, even though a

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scalpel waits to write the opening paragraph.

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*(Featured image from [Pexels](#))*

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