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There are no days in life so memorable as those which vibrated to some stroke of the imagination.  
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**THIS ISSUE OF *e/*** is for Bruce Gillespie, the Melbourne Science Fiction Group, and all the people who ran the Bring Bruce Bayside fundraising program. It was a great effort on the part of many to bring a popular Australian fan to two science fiction conventions in San Francisco on two consecutive weekends.

In the world of science fiction, it is also in memory of my old friend from the 1950s, Frank Kelly Freas. When I produced *Who Killed Science Fiction?* in 1960, Kelly drew two pieces of original artwork for the project. One of those featured a group of Freas aliens mourning the death of science fiction. It is only fitting that they return now to mourn Kelly instead. A great man, a great science fiction fan, and one hell of an artist.

It is also in memory of Will Eisner, Stieg Larsson, Sven Christer Swahn, and Anna Vargo.

#

As always, everything in this issue of *e/* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *e/* whatever it is.

Dave Locke gave all of us quite a scare for Christmas in the form of a heart attack. We are delighted to report that Dave, being a bit obstinate, is recovering at home and continues as *e/* Grand Quote Master. You will find his assembled words of wisdom separating the articles throughout this issue of *e/*.

Other than Bill Burns and Dave Locke, these are the people who made this issue of *e/* possible: Robert Bloch, Ron Blum, Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, Tom Brinkman, rich brown (Dr. Gafia), Richard Coad, Brittany A. Daley, L. Truman Douglas, Bruce Gillespie, Steve Harris, Elaine Kemp Harris, Tony Jacobs, Robert Lichtman, Lynn Munroe, Alexei Panshin, Doug Pinney, Edith Kemp Pinney, William Rotsler, Gary Sohler, Robert Spray, Shelby Vick, and Joshua Wachtel.



**ARTWORK:** This issue of *e/* features original and recycled artwork by William Rotsler and recycled artwork by Frank Kelly Freas and Shelby Vick.

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Skill without imagination is craftsmanship and gives us many useful objects such as wickerwork picnic baskets. Imagination without skill gives us modern art.

--Tom Stoppard

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## ...Return to sender, address unknown.... 10

### The Official *e/* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *e/*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *e/*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *e/* so you can look for them when they appear here.

### **Thursday December 9 2004 Launch Day Correction to *e/17***

Never met Milton Luros, never dealt with him, was never published by Brandon House. Olympia Press you bet, Midwood Books, absolutely. But no Essex or Brandon House.

--Barry N. Malzberg

*Barry, thanks for making this correction. --Earl Kemp*

### **Friday December 10 2004**

Many thanks for the latest issue of *e/*. Did you recall, by any chance, that the title of the letter column in *Xero* was also "EI" -- ? Back in those days the letters stood for "Epistolary Intercourse." Oh, we were such innersint kidlets!

New issue of your *e/* is full of wonders, and I do hope that you will eventually compile your memoirs &c. and publish them as a "real book." By which I mean, ink on paper widda cuvva anna spyne. I know, I know, e-publishing is just as "real" in its own way as paper publishing is in its. But I'm afraid I'm just a hopeless paper junkie, and to me electronic publication just isn't quite real. Not in the same sense that a book or magazine is, that you can pick up in your hand, carry around with you, shelve, take back down, sit with in bed, etc.

Of course you can sit in bed with an e-book or a laptop, so even that line is getting blurred. But if my attachment to paper brands me as some kind of luddite I'll just have to live with that.

Great to see Agberg in the lettercol of a fmz again. Hey, Bobbie, I still have my Gestetner in the basement. Any time you want to drop by and pub an ish. . . .

But I must say that it was the Luros covers that got me choked up. Look at the names that we took for granted when they're listed as "in this issue." And Luros was working for the bottom-feeder pulps, at that! Those images (and the type too!) were most evocative. I wonder what was so special about those magazines and that era.



Sometimes I think it was that we believed in science fiction as some kind of societal movement or maybe even a religion. The wonders of technology were going to lead humankind into a brave new world. We fans were the saved and the vanguard of the glorious future, and the magazines were our ongoing scripture.

Other times I think we were just a bunch of goofy kids lacking in interpersonal skills and living in a shared dream dimension of distant planets, spacefleets, alien creatures, and of course gorgeous women.

Whatever it was, it was wonderful.

Do youngsters today have any equivalent? Maybe it's their own dream dimension, which they reach via their PlayStations and X-Boxes instead of by way of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Weird Tales*.

But then, I've already said that I'm a hopeless paper junkie, haven't I?

-- Dick Lupoff

#

What a blockbuster! Wow, and your tribute to Milt was a stunner. I had no idea that you knew him that well.

This one is terrific. Thanks, and I'm proud to be included.

--Gary Sohler

#

I've just looked at *e/17* and I am totally blown away. It's one of the greatest compliments I've had, partly for being so generously treated as regards my efforts at creating graphics, but mainly for showing those images off so well. I suspect that if I was as enthusiastic in this email as I feel, right now, it'd sound more than maudlin because I doubt if I could find the proper words. So - maybe just a simple Thank You is what I should be saying right now...

As before, there is SO much in *e/17* to read that it will take me a few days to absorb. I will, I hope, have comments to make, even if they are mainly words of jealousy at the plethora of socially-unredeeming literature discussed in the 'zine - works which we, in the then-tyrannical Land of Aus were prohibited from reading.

But - once again - Thank You !

--Dick Jensen (aka Martin, Ditmar)

#

Earl, *e/17* was more than just slightly the good side of spectacular, it was fabulous, and reading all that good

stuff about Milt (and thank you for putting in a kind word for Bea, too, she was a mess but I liked her) made me Wax Nostalgic; and, frankly, Nostalgic just hates to be waxed. In the interest of historical accuracy, however, since *e/* seems to have become THE historical archive for matters pulp-y, let me add one little correction. The first count of the indictment that led to Suck City was a conspiracy count naming all the defendants. Subsequent counts charged the others with various crimes against nature, but I was only named in the first (conspiracy) count. Our first morning back in court after the Christmas break, the judge (whom Sam called Judge Please Rise) dismissed the conspiracy count as unproven, thus in effect dismissing me as well, and I was gone in a thrice. The other charges and the fates of the other defendants then went to the jury for deliberation; my point being, the jury did not in fact vote guilty on all the charges and all the defendants, since they never got to consider the first count. Minor point, but worth clearing up, I think. However, let me add, that my memory never was as good as it used to be, so if one of the other happy participants (Dick Geis?) remembers otherwise, I will be glad to eat my words. Considering some of the other stuff I've had to swallow over the last 60 years...well, never mind, that's another story.

I tell you, by the way, that all Stanley Fleishman's papers are at UCLA; they can be researched by a qualified researcher, but there's rather a lot of it, so it would not be worthwhile without specific information and dates in mind, and even then I think it's a task; when last I checked, it was all just in boxes without a sort of table of contents for each box.

--Victor Banis

#

You're to blame, you know, for my going to bed late and actually missing a meeting of Ted White's "Second Friday's" -- I was too involved plowing through *ei17* to notice the passage of time so that I had to do the former rather than the latter. Not **\*quite\*** enough to indict you as part of the on-going and long-standing Conspiracy Against **\*\*Me\*\***, but I want you to know I'll be keeping an eye on you.

The several personal essays at the beginning revolving around memories of Milton and Bea Luros were fascinating, if a bit repetitious; I hasten to add that I'm not sure how you could cure that, or even that you should, given that it's perfectly natural that it would be, since it's about the same people in the same time frame. On balance, I find I actually like the fact that it has all been presented together. I'm afraid, though, that the only comment it sparks in me is a tilt, if not rather far off, topic. It was the mention of a WWII Fokker airplane as a prop in one of the shoots that prompted me to point out that the Fokker was a WWI aircraft. But I've had enough experience in putting my foot in my mouth not to do so without first checking it out, and of course it turns out Fokker made aircraft, albeit of course different aircraft, for both world wars. A pity, in a way, because it raises suspicions that something I heard sometime ago might be just an urban legend. It was an amusing enough story that it stuck in my mind. A WWII fighter Ace was the subject of the television program *This Is Your Life*, which in those days was broadcast live, and at host Ralph Edwards' instigation he was regaling the audience, in his broad Swedish accent, about one of his exploits: "...jah, and den I look op, and suddenly der vas **\*three\*** of these Fokkers coming at me--" Edwards interrupted to say, "Ah, excuse me, Sven, but I always thought Fokkers were World War I aircraft?" The WWII Ace smiled and nodded, "Jah, dey vas. But **\*dese\*** Fokkers vas Messerschmitts!"

I'm more personally involved in the history of sf fandom, as I'm sure you know, so I was even more fascinated once the focus changed in that direction. I do have to quibble with Race Mathews' otherwise excellent essay; he mentions various chapters of the Science Fiction League that Fred Pohl belonged to in the US, but posits that, had Kingsley Amis wanted to join a pre-WWII sf club in the UK, one of his choices might have been among "various chapters of Hugo Gernsback's Science Fiction Association." Nope, it was chapters of the SF **\*League\*** (being chartered by Gernsback's *Wonder Stories*) in the UK as well as the US, not "Association."

The early SFL chapters available to Amis could have been in Leeds (Chapter 17), Belfast, North Ireland (Chapter 20), Nuneaton/Leicesterchire (Chapter 22) or Glasgow, Scotland (Chapter 34). Many chapters continued meeting and substituted "Association" and/or "Society" for "League" in their names after

Gernsback stopped chartering them, of course, but by then they could no longer be called Gernsback's. Picky, picky, picky, that's me. The first **\*real\*** sf convention was sponsored by the Leeds chapter, so Amis might have even toddled into that. (One commonly credited as the first convention was actually just an outing involving members of the New York and Pittsburgh SFLs that, having heard the announcement of the Leeds chapter's intentions to hold a convention, declared themselves to be one. It's since been pointed out that they could have declared themselves to be a cheese sandwich, but the declaration wouldn't make people believe they actually were one.) But then, too, Race appears to be saying that this sort of thing was not available in Australia in the '40s and '50s; I have to suppose, then, that Chapter 27 of the SFL, formed in Sydney in 1935, was no longer around by that time.

I do want to say, though, that I semi-share an experience with Race -- I must've read *The Lord of the Rings* just a bit behind him, because I only had to cool my heels and wait a couple of months for the final volume, *The Return of the King*, to be published and reach my local public library. My friend Paul Stanbery was third on the list to get it and we cheated because after he checked it out and read it, he let me borrow and breeze through it before returning it; we then promptly shelved our plans to make various sf novels into movies and started on plans to make *LotR* a nine-hour epic; in our pipe dreams, we assumed we would show them in special dinner theaters, with a break at the 4½ hour mark for a meal. People laughed at us, of course, pointing out (among other things) that it was foolish to believe that we might get an actor of Alec Guinness' stature to "demean" himself by taking on the role of Gandalf. That's been a source of great amusement to me in the years since; not only is Sir Ian McKellan of equal stature, Guinness actually played Gandalf's archetypal sfnal equivalent, Obi-Wan Kenobi. (We were also laughed at, of course, because no one would commit the \$50 million we thought it would take to make the movie, but Paul's brother Jim was drawing up plans for us to rob the First National Bank of Bolivia. Or maybe El Salvador. Or maybe both.)



There are numerous lines of convergence (as Alexei Panshin once called them) in the rest of the piece, other semi-shared experiences (e.g., discovering a significant volume of old sf magazines in a shed, in Race's case a relative's, in mine a friend's [who didn't want them and let me take them home in stacks as high as I could carry for several weeks]), but nothing much I might remark upon at any length until he mentions one of the Australian fanzines, *Etherline*.

I had been aware for a number of years that there were amateur magazines called fanzines being published, having stumbled across reviews of them in the old sf pulps I was buying second hand at five cents apiece around the time I first read *LotR*. A part of me wanted to send off for them, but a couple of factors stayed my hand. I mean, for one, since most of those pulps were no longer being published, it seemed probable that the amateur magazines described therein may have suffered a similar fate. And, for two, even at subscription prices as low as 12/50-cents, they were **\*almost\*** as expensive as my second-hand pulps. But then I sent off my name for listing in a new feature in the then-current *Amazing Stories*, "The Space Club," for people seeking sf pen pals. When I bought the issue off the stands, I noticed it had a fanzine review column, in which three fanzines were reviewed – *Yandro*, *Cry of the Nameless*, and *Etherline*. I was a bit plush in the pocket, having just finished collecting on my paper route, so I sent off \$1 for all three.

My parents thought it was a scam, but with admonitions advising that "a fool and his money are soon parted," they let me do so (I suppose thinking that, having given me proper warning, it was best to let me Learn A Lesson). But both *Cry* and *Yandro* showed up, and the rest (as they say) is history; *Etherline* was the only one I never received.

Now, before anyone thinks I'm accusing Oz fans of scamming me, let me add that I've long since figured out

that any fault must have surely been mine. The first factor among those leading to that conclusion being that what I popped into that envelope was a U.S. \$1 bill; among the probably quite profuse number of gaps in my teenaged education at that point was the fact that people in different countries used different currencies. Well, no, I guess it really wasn't quite that bad, because I "got" the joke when people said, "The price of rice in China depends upon the value of the yen," but it was just so "obvious" to me that everyone in an English-speaking country (Australia, the U.S., Canada and the U.K.) would use the same currency that it didn't even occur to me to check my basic premises. On top of this, while I'd enclosed a typed note with that \$1, asking for a subscription to *Etherline* and listing my address, I had such an unshakeable belief in the U.S. Post Office -- they'd battle rain, snow, sleet, meteor shower and attacks by wild wolverine to Get My Letter Through, don'tcha know -- that I didn't put a return address on the envelope. Compounding this error, since I'd never written to anyone outside the continental U.S., I didn't realize that it cost more to mail a missive to Australia than it did to send a letter of comment to a U.S. prozine. So in all likelihood it never arrived, and if it did it was with "funny money" they couldn't use without going to a bit of trouble to have exchanged. Besides, over the intervening years John Bangsund and Bruce Gillespie, individually or alone, sent me such a large number of fanzines at a postage cost of \$1 or more each, with so little in return, that I've long since been more than repaid for my loss, and indeed am beginning to amble along under the weight of the shame of my own shortcomings in responding to them.

--rich brown (DrGafia)

#

I've just spent a pleasant two hours or so reading through *e/17*. Excellent issue. Wonderful stuff. Congratulations to you both.

--Pat Kearney

*Pat: Glad you liked it! It's a lot of work on my part (and I can't even imagine how much more for Earl), but it's worth it to preserve this great historical material. And it's fun!*

*Who would have thought, all those years ago when I used to stay in your spare room/erotica library, that it would one day come full circle to this?*

--Bill Burns

#

This issue of the *e/* is a special historical document. Great info, not brought together previously in a single source and not likely to be. Congratulations. I have created a link to it on my website. You can see it be scrolling own to the section on Adult Book Stores

<http://home.earthlink.net/~jgertzma/BkshopsOfTimesSq/index.html>

--Jay A. Gertzman

#

**Saturday December 11, 2004**

I just took a quick glance at *e/17* and saw Stephen Gertz's article "Everybody Loves Milton." I was drawn immediately to it (for some strange reason, eh?) and scanned it, and found some of my old quotes there. I guess he ended up using some of my recollections after all.

I have to go back and read more (and more comprehensively), but it was interesting to finally see some of the history of the Luros enterprise before I went to work there. I really identified with the early-on comment about the rivalry between the Luros and Hamling organizations. If you remember, I once told you that Jack Abey was furious with me, and ostracized me in my final days at Greenleaf, when he learned that I was leaving to go to work for American Art Enterprises (never talk to co-workers!). Doug Saito hated me for that one too and never talked to me again, as he had such high hopes for me at Greenleaf. Rivalry indeed! I

didn't think I merited that strong of a response, being a mere peon staffer that I felt I was (or at least paid like one).

By the way, I never felt "dirty" and ashamed of my work while at Greenleaf; I only felt that way at American Art. There was a totally different atmosphere and feeling there.

--Dave Gardner

### **Sunday December 12, 2004**

I am telling as many people as I can think of to check out *e/17* - not for my stuff (of course not !!!) but for Race's and Bruce's.

Also - though I won't admit to this to many of my acquaintances - for the articles and reminiscences regarding socially-unredeeming literature. Which I have appreciated (articles and literature) in my time.

Thirty years ago, at the time when almost every film was cut, and many were banned, Race Mathews was a politician and secretary to a future Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam. Race and Gough belonged to the Labour Party, then out of power, while the censorship was due to the ruling Liberal Party. (A misnomer if ever there was one !). Race informed me that in the Parliamentary Library in Canberra the books which were banned were freely available for the polities to read. Since the Liberal attitude was that these books would corrupt any who read them, it follows that either (a) politicians were corrupt, or (b) the Liberals lied, or (c) both.

Things are slightly better nowadays, but with the Liberals back in government - and with control of BOTH houses of parliament, and with Prime Minister Howard's mouth firmly glued to Bush's fundamental orifice, enjoying every dropped morsel - I have fears that censorship will become more restrictive again. (And forgive me if I have transgressed with that minor tirade...).

I 'phoned Race yesterday to persuade him to read your latest, but found he had already done so. He seemed very pleased with it - especially his article ! So even politicians can cope with reading a computer screen. But that may be because he has a MacIntosh...

--Dick Jenssen (aka Martin, Ditmar)

#

I told you that I let friends know of *e/17* - and just after my last email to you, I received one from Bill Wright (on whose Anzapa 'zine, *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* my covers have been appearing, with only one break, for the past 8 years).

He said, in part: "Thanks for your email covering the interesting link to Earl Kemp's website. It was gracious of Lord Kemp to open his cyber-castle to the likes of you and Bruce, not to mention Race. I have spent the last two and a half hours reading material from the three of you in *e/17*. It is nice to have other peoples' perspective on my involvement in things, as well as details of how the social frameworks that supported my youth came into being."

--Dick Jenssen (aka Martin, Ditmar)

### **Tuesday December 14, 2004**

I must say you have done a tremendous job of writing and editing. I am so happy to have been able to contribute. This issue (as is the case with the others I have read) is a fascinating and critically important document on an important part of the 20th century's popular culture landscape -- but as enormous as it was, it is yet unspoken of -- much like the joke about the elephant in the living room.



--Tony Jacobs

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Face it. If the pols want a war, they're gonna start a war ... and if the pols decide to start a war, the whores in the media are gonna spread their buttcheeks for ratings and grease up their brownies.  
--Al Curry, 3/26/03

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**EDITORIAL:**

## We Are Four

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

Here we are again, Bill Burns and me. Would you believe we're into our Fourth Incredible Year of publishing *e/*? Say it isn't so....

This is our Fourth Anniversary Issue and we're rolling right along at a nice pace, gathering visitors and contributors wherever they fall. Trying our very best to assemble some really exciting and informative visuals to torment your imaginations with for every issue.

Something else four related makes this issue of *e/* special...the drafting of Robert Lichtman as our fourth slave estaffer.

We are four, us *e/*ers:

Publisher/Editor . . . . . Earl Kemp

Producer/Distributor . . . . . Bill Burns

Grand Quote Master . . . . . Dave Locke

Chief Executive eGraphics Consultant. . . Robert Lichtman

Hear us roar...!

Jolson sings...! Garbo speaks...!

It is all true, all those rumors you've heard, about us trying to break new ground in ezine publishing. We're laying some preliminary attempts on you with this issue of *e/*, by incorporating linked sound and live-action digital video. As far as we know, neither has yet been tried in fanzines. I can hardly wait to see what Robert Lichtman's printout looks like.

Those links all concern my 75th birthday party and are found inside "Roastin' Tunes" and "Beating the Burro." They are both located elsewhere in this issue of *e/*.

Please LoC [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) with your reactions to these efforts to move further into cyberspace, and your suggestions as to what you would like to see done in this direction.



## Resleazed



I would be really negligent in my duties [to say nothing about missing an opportunity to give my tiny ego a stroke or two] was I not to say some nice things about *Sin-A-Rama*.

Coming from Feral House, *Sin-A-Rama*, sporting a fantastic Robert Bonfils cover, has just been released on a ravenously hungry market, the sleazemongers of the world. It is a big, heavy book and it lists at \$24.95, so try the usual discount booksellers first.

I am in *Sin-A-Rama*. I am in it a lot. I am in it a really, really lot. And when I am not in it, things of me are. Anyone familiar with *el* and the ongoing Perils of Pauline I'm tiptoeing through will see *el* all throughout the whole book. There are nine bylined pieces of mine, one article that is an interview with me, and numerous mentions in the rest of the book.

Just bragging, just making sure everyone knows where it comes from...the good stuff.

Adam Parfrey, proprietor of Feral House and rabblouser, asked me to both participate in the book and to be interviewed for it.

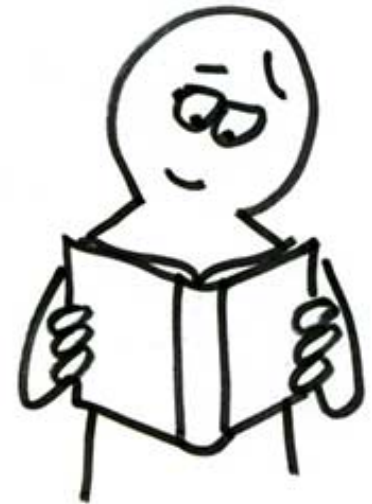
I served as one of the editors of the book, along with Brittany A. Daley, Hedi El Kholti [who was responsible for the book's kick-ass design], Miriam Linna, and Adam Parfrey. We were in constant contact the last few weeks of production on the book, rapid-firing emails back and forth, trying to verify last-minute details and remove glitches. Makes for comradeship, sharing sleaze with colleagues. There should be a lot more to come.

In fact, two pieces that are direct results of our work on *Sin-A-Rama* can be found elsewhere in this issue of *el*. They are Brittany A. Dailey's "Finding Chet Collom," and L. Truman Douglas' "Finding Bill Edwards."

*Sin-A-Rama* is filled with hundreds of thought-tweaking sleazy illustrations in glorious color that span the entire sleazebook era. Cover scan after cover scan. Fact after fact. Little known or totally unknown details about stars and writers and personalities and world-class icons.

I enjoyed the book very much. I do each time I pick it up again. I hope I continue to do so for a long time to come.

Go ahead, try it. You might like it....



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It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.

--Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

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## Bad Timing 2

By Earl Kemp

A few things have surfaced a bit late that should have been included in material already covered in *e/1*. Because these are so significant, I am including them here and now with reference to where they should have appeared but didn't.

Clear? Not by me.

The first one of these inserts should appear as a sidebar inside "The King of Somewhere Hot" that appeared in *e/2*. It follows the paragraph ending "because of Don's connections." and is inserted before the paragraph beginning "The Gilmores lived in...."

Note also that this sidebar (below) should also appear in this issue of *e/1* inside "Beating the Burro.":

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At a point in time when things like this were completely impossible, a huge Mexican moving van and crew appeared at the Gilmore residence in Guadalajara. They carefully packed everything in the house, loaded it up into the van, and drove that van straight across the international border—under diplomatic seal--without pausing and to San Diego to where the Gilmores had acquired a new residence (big, elaborate, and pretentious). They unloaded that van, positioned every stick of furniture inside the house to order, thanked the Gilmores very much, got back in their truck, and returned to Guadalajara. The end of a mysterious era that had begun abruptly in 1966 and lasted well into the '70s.

Even the CIA couldn't pull off a stunt like that. I tried my best to find out why and how it had happened, but Don wouldn't tell me. Instead, he said, "I had to return to San Diego so I could give you the biggest damned going-to-prison party there ever was. I mean it literally; invite everyone you know."

And he did, and I did. For the first time ever, I crossed all lines with all of my friends and gathered them up together into the Gilmore's impressive mansion near downtown San Diego. There were writers, editors, artists, photographers, and models. There were auto mechanics and delivery persons and professors and most of the office staff and their partners and lovers. There were lawyers and hookers and—surely not?—an undercover cop or two.

I wish that someone had filmed that party, the drunks all over the place, the house filled with well wishers and some of that gorgeous Mexican furniture that got trashed along the way.

And then Time Out, Lock Up, and Mind Fade Away.

--Earl Kemp, "Donald A. Gilmore," *Sin-A-Rama*

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The second of these inserts should appear as a sidebar inside "A Stranger, and Afraid...." that appeared in *e/9*. It follows the paragraph ending "a brochure advertising *Illustrated*." and the time break #. It is inserted before the paragraph beginning "In February 1972...."

This is that sidebar:

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We spent several weeks together when we tried the federal case involving the *Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. Earl was a wonderful client. It was not easy to keep him from cursing out the prosecutor (and judge) out loud, in open court in front of the jury. To avoid his outbursts he wrote me notes, which I quickly had to hide in my brief case to avoid both of us being held in contempt. During those several weeks I learned to appreciate Earl's sense of humor, and his dedication to free speech. Even though we lost the case, and Earl was punished unfairly by a custody imposition, he never lost his sense of humor and love of mankind. My representation of Earl in this case was one of my career highlights.

--Louis Katz, email, October 2004

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If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other.

--Carl Schurz (1829 - 1906)

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[The following article was written in Australian (mostly British) English. Every effort has been made to retain this language intact and to not translate it into US English. --Earl Kemp]

## Cordwainer Smith: Five Introductions\*

By Bruce R. Gillespie

Last weekend I realized I had so much to say about Cordwainer Smith and his work that I couldn't say a thing. Other people have said it better. Besides, I would prefer to do almost anything rather than give a talk such as this.

Part of the trouble is that I have at least five different talks I could give about Cordwainer Smith. If I were a clever chap, I could tie all five into one talk. Not being clever, I offer five talks, each with its own introduction.

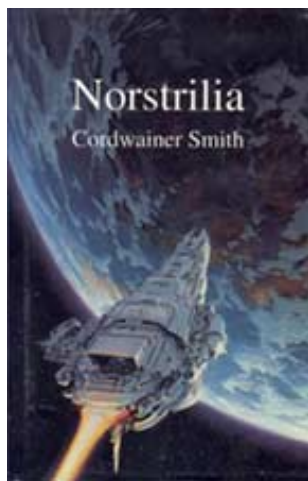
### Introduction I

It was a quiet week in Lake Wobegon.

No?--I'll save that for a future Nova Mob talk.



Bruce Gillespie



Try this. It was a quiet year in science fiction when Victor Gollancz Ltd of Britain, in the person of Malcolm Edwards, decided to re-release all of Cordwainer Smith's published work in four volumes. Those volumes, appearing during 1987 and 1988, are *Norstrilia*, a novel, *The Instrumentality of Mankind* and *The Rediscovery of Man*, which are collections of short stories, and *Quest of the Three Worlds*, which is a collection of four linked novellas. Each has appeared in both hardback and paperback editions, except *Quest of the Three Worlds*, which so far has been published in a paperback edition. Since this is probably the first time all of Smith's work has been available at the one time, do yourself a favour and buy these books.

### Introduction II

Once upon a time I was a smaller chap, aged fourteen, living in the Melbourne suburb of Syndal, when I decided to buy my first copy of *Galaxy* magazine. A

whole 5 shillings, out of a weekly allowance of 11 shillings! This magazine had better be good.

In that magazine was a story that convinced me, if I still needed convincing, that science fiction was unique, wonderful--my greatest discovery since reading itself. I had read nothing like this story before. Until I read it again a week ago, I had read nothing like it since. It was 'A Planet Named Shayol' by Cordwainer Smith.



Two images remain from my original reading of that story. One was my impression that Mercer, the prisoner, was unable to remember his crime, although he was about to be punished in some indescribable way. Elaine tells me that his crime *is* mentioned in the story, but it's the impressions you remember from a story that change your life, not the things that are actually there. When I was fourteen, the idea of being punished for a terrible unspecified crime seemed original to me. In those days I hadn't read Kafka's *The Trial*.

My other image was of the fate that met Mercer. He was condemned to sit on a sullen plain, as extra limbs and organs grew from him and all the other prisoners. From time to time the limbs and organs were clipped, and sent off-planet for medical purposes. To obliterate the pain, and to extend the prisoners' lives endlessly, they were given condamine, a drug that offered them endless pleasure in the midst of endless horror.

This image was reinforced by the Virgil Finlay illustrations, which I remember as his greatest work of magazine illustration. This was powerful stuff for a fourteen-year-old: the extremes of pleasure and pain contrasted yet attuned; hopelessly condemned prisoners offering hope to people who needed parts of their bodies.

In 1961 I was already struck by another aspect of Smith's originality: that he assumed you already lived in his universe. There was little background as such: only the bits of the story needed for the moment.

The next Cordwainer Smith story I read in *Galaxy* [October 1962] magazine was 'The Ballad of Lost C'Mell'. In the new Gollancz edition, it appears in *The Rediscovery of Man*. This was the strangest story I had read. It left out the middle of the story. You meet Lord Jestecost--and those marvellously euphonious characters' names were as irresistible as the stories themselves--and the cat girl C'Mell--not actually a cat, but an underperson, appearing human but constructed from cat genes. You are introduced to Earthport, the twenty-mile-high city and spaceport that is the headquarters of the Lords of the Instrumentality. Smith tells you that C'Mell and Jestecost met, that they fell in love, and that C'Mell eventually died without telling Jestecost of her love. They plan the revolution of the underpeople, who throughout history had never been more than tools of the humans. Somewhere in the gap between two parts of the story, the revolution happens. All that remains of their romance in this far-future society is 'The Ballad of Lost C'Mell', which people and underpeople still sing. Jestecost himself, alive long after C'Mell's death, only realizes that she loved him when he is told the meaning of the rhyme.



As Smith's stories appeared in *Galaxy* and *Amazing* during the 1960s, I found it hard to define the original qualities there, but I didn't worry too much about the definitions. Most of all I was drawn to the wonderful names in the stories, the unexpectedness of the ideas and plots, and the sense of immense periods of time elapsing. The Lords of the Instrumentality and people from Norstrilia had thousand-year lifespans; other inhabitants of this future universe were allowed to live 400 years. We, the audience of 'The Ballad of Lost C'Mell', are not twentieth-century people being told about the future. Instead, we are people from far in the

future being told about our own distant legendary past. The story-teller's voice is that of a slightly garrulous old nanny gathering children around her feet to hear these legends.

### Introduction III

In August 1966 I bought, very tentatively, my first copy of *Australian Science Fiction Review*. It was the second issue, and the only place to find it was the counter at McGill's Bookstore, which seemed to stock far more science fiction than any other shop in Melbourne. The man who sold it to me was, as I found out later, Merv Binns, who was then the manager of McGill's. Discovering *ASFR*--the *first* series--was as much of a revelation as discovering science fiction itself. It showed me that there were intelligent people who read and commented on sf, fiercely critical and funny writers such as John Foyster and Lee Harding, who demanded that sf should be subjected to same searching standards as other literature.



Merv Binns and Bruce Gillespie.

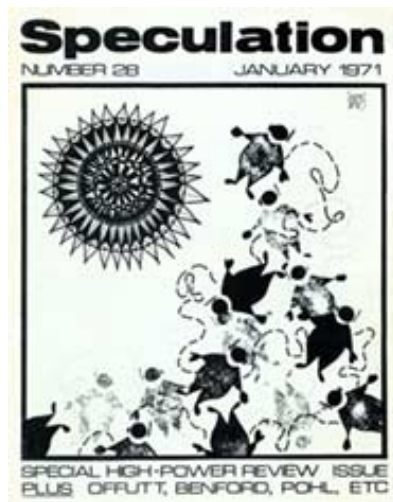
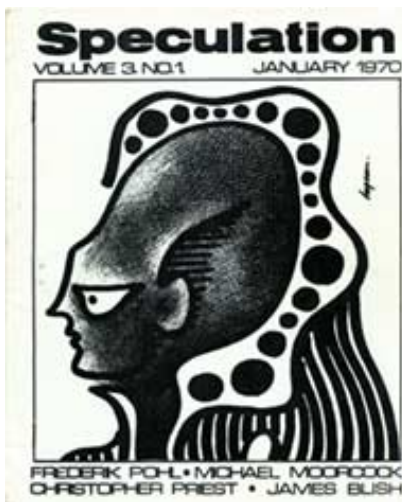
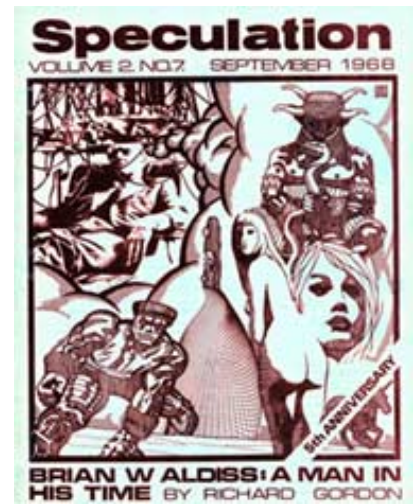
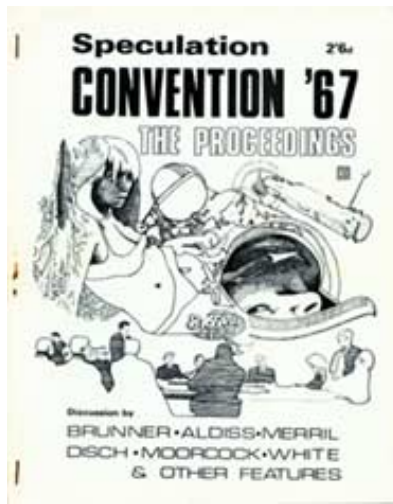
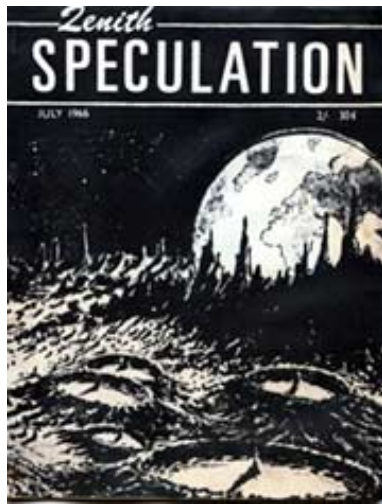
The August 1967 issue of *ASFR*, No. 11 of the old series, was even better than those I had already bought. It contained three articles about Cordwainer Smith and a bibliography. The articles, together less than 20 pages in length, had a great impact on me. By then I knew that Cordwainer Smith had some importance in the sf community, but had read nothing about him except a pioneering article by Robert Silverberg in an *Amazing* of the mid 1960s. In that article Silverberg wrote:

I think that Cordwainer Smith is a visitor from some remote period of the future, living among us perhaps as an exile from his own era or perhaps just as a tourist, and amusing himself by casting some of his knowledge of historical events into the form of science fiction.

The implication was nobody in the sf community the identity of Cordwainer Smith. *ASFR* 11 revealed that identity. John Foyster had detected the name of the man who was Cordwainer Smith, without realizing that a very small number of sf writers in America had met him. One who regrets not meeting him is Roger Zelazny, who lived less than a mile away from 'Cordwainer Smith' for some years.

Just as he was preparing to publish the results of his investigations, Foyster heard that his quarry had died, on 5 August 1966. Cordwainer Smith was actually Dr Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger, Professor of Asiatic Studies at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA.

To find out the truth about Cordwainer Smith John Foyster had only three clues. They are contained in Cordwainer Smith's own prologue to the original paperback edition of *Space Lords*, a 1966 collection of stories. He knew that 'Cordwainer Smith' was an Anglican, that he had a stockbroker named Mr Greenish, and that in 1965, while writing the *Space Lords* prologue, he was connected in some way with the Australian National University. I don't know how Foyster found Dr Arthur Burns, who was then a member of the Department of Modern History at ANU. Burns was Linebarger's host, both in 1957, when he was at ANU for a year, and in 1965. Burns's comments about his friend were published in *ASFR*, then reprinted in a booklet called *Exploring Cordwainer Smith*, published by Andy Porter. The whole of the *ASFR* 11 material was republished in *ASFR*, Second Series, and in the last edition of Peter Weston's famous British fanzine *Speculation*.



*Speculation* cover scans courtesy Robert Lichtman Collection.

In 1967 Burns wrote:

[Linebarger] once said that Cordwainer Smith was a 'pre-Cervantean' -- the stories are like cycles of medieval legends, without the Aristotelian beginning-middle-and-end of classic tragedy, and certainly without the same structure as transposed into the modern novel, which Cervantes began. They are legendary cycles of the future, rather than future history, and were meant to be connected with and consistent with each other on the legendary and not the historiographic model.

Burns also says that:

Cordwainer Smith's stories were a kind of important 'playing' (Paul was greatly impressed by Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*): through them are dotted irrelevant cryptograms, geographic allusions, and names transliterated from foreign languages.

Which is another way of saying, I think, that Linebarger wrote the Cordwainer Smith stories for fun.

What was Paul Linebarger like? No biography of him has yet appeared, but the details that emerge from various sources make fascinating and confusing reading. Among other things, as Burns says:

He was above medium height, terribly gaunt, bald, high-nosed, narrowing in the chin; he wore severe excellently cut suits; his favourite hat was a soft black velour like an Italian film producer's. He was constantly ill, usually with digestive or metabolic troubles, and had to put up with repeated surgery, so that in middle age he always lived close to the vital margin. He took time off from a dinner party in Melbourne for a long drink of hydrochloric acid, at which a guest, quite awed, remarked that Linebarger probably was a man from Mars . . . I do not hold with spiritualism but if a typewriter were to start now reeling off a Cordwainer Smith story, my disbelief would not be nearly strong enough to surprise me.

Elsewhere in the same magazine, Burns says:

He was confined to bed a great deal and he'd often write these stories when he couldn't get up and lecture -- that kind of thing. He and his wife were writing a great political history of South East Asia and when he wasn't well he had to put that and his lecturing and his army work aside, so he wrote more and more sf.

His interviewer, John Foyster, comments that 'This might help to explain the sick sheep of Norstrilia. The sheep were permanently sick . . . They had to be sick to produce this drug.'

There is no necessity, of course, for details of a writer's life to end up in his stories. Yet while rereading Foyster's comments and the Cordwainer Smith stories recently after more than 20 years away from them, I found that illness, medical intervention, and benign torture make up much of Smith's best work:

a Smith gives several different accounts of space travel: via scanners; via photonic space-sailing ships; through planofforming and pinlighting; and through space 3. One method is supposed to supersede the other; but they read to me like alternative solutions to the same problem.

b Each of these forms of space travel depends on inflicting intense suffering on the spacecraft pilots. In 'Scanners Live in Vain' the scanners are rebuilt into cyborgs in order to endure the pain of space. In 'The Lady Who Sailed the *Soul*' and 'Think Blue, Count Two', the pilots are changed by surgery so they can control the photonic craft during the immense times taken for journeys. In 'The Game of Rat and Dragon', at great personal expense the pinlighters link with cat minds to fight subspace forces that attack ships. In 'The Burning of the Brain', a planofforming captain becomes unexpectedly lost in space 2 offers his own brain as a sacrificial instrument to steer the ship home. And in 'Drunkboat', when Magno Taliano emerges from space 3 he can barely be described as alive or human.



c The anatomical details of these sufferings--and of the horse in 'On the Gem Planet', Madigan in 'On the Storm Planet', and the sick sheep in *Norstrilia*--are described in more intense detail than almost anything else in the Smith stories.

- d I surmise that this detail is drawn from Linebarger's own experience of numerous operations and near-misses with death. In fact, as Foyster hints, the suffering of scanners, go-captains, and others might have represented to Linebarger both life itself and the suffering associated with writing his stories.

In an excellent essay in *Twentieth-Century American Science Fiction Writers*, Gary K. Wolfe and Carol T. Williams give a few details, not covered elsewhere, about Linebarger's life. Although born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin:

Linebarger as a child spent little time in his native country. In addition to Honolulu and Washington, he lived in Monte Carlo, Baden Baden, Shanghai, and Nanking. His father was a former US District Judge in the Philippines who later became a legal advisor to Sun Yat Sen, and at the age of seventeen young Linebarger not only became his father's secretary but also negotiated a silver loan to China. A multi-cultural background was guaranteed by his early schooling [in Honolulu, Shanghai and Baden Baden]. He attended the University of Nanking and the North China Union Language School in 1930 before taking a BA at George Washington University in 1933.

He took his PhD at Johns Hopkins University at the age of twenty-three. He was married twice, to Margaret Snow in 1936, and to Genevieve Collins in 1950. He published his first story in his teens, and published poetry and novels during the 1940s as Carmichael Smith and Felix C. Forrest. His first sf story published under the Cordwainer Smith pseudonym was 'Scanners Live in Vain' (1950). As well as becoming Professor of Asiatic Studies, he was a colonel in the US Army, advising armies in Malaya and Korea. The result, as Arthur Burns points out, was a man who could move easily in traditional societies and had 'a sharp perception of racial and cultural differences'.

In short, P.M.A. Linebarger was much more than Cordwainer Smith. The Cordwainer Smith stories were merely one part of Paul Linebarger's varied life. He wrote much else, especially about politics, but also used quite a different style in his novel *Ria*, published under the Felix C. Forrest pseudonym. Linebarger did not depend on his fiction for his income. He certainly valued his audience, but he did not need to compromise his work to get it published. Indeed, if Frederik Pohl at *Galaxy* and Cele Goldsmith at *Amazing* had not been ardent fans of his, most of the Smith stories might never have been published.

For some of us, Linebarger was also something less than Cordwainer Smith. In 1967 I was upset and disappointed to read in *ASFR* 11 that Linebarger was very right-wing. He was closely tied to the pre-Chiang Kai Shek Kuomintang in China, and maintained his opposition to all Communist regimes, especially after the Communists came to power in China. As well, he became an expert in psychological warfare, and published *Psychological Warfare*, which is referred to as the classic text on the subject. I would very much like to have read it before preparing this talk. When in Australia, Linebarger went to some pains to annoy orthodox left-wing academics. Burns reports that such confrontations were often very funny.

Cordwainer Smith, on the other hand, always seemed politically ambivalent. The Lords of the Instrumentality rule the universe, and are called Lords and Ladies, but they also provide everybody's needs. During the Rediscovery of Man, humanity returns to some of the terrors of what we consider ordinary life, but the whole exercise is stage-managed by the Instrumentality. In other words, it's not even clear whether the Instrumentality is meant to be a left-wing or right-wing dictatorship. Their great crime is constructing the underpeople to be merely chattels of the humans, then ignoring their needs for centuries - but it is only the intervention of some members of the Instrumentality that enables the revolution of the underpeople to succeed.

The total impression I get of Linebarger is of a crusty gent, probably rather difficult in social situations, who would always come up with the least expected idea about any subject under discussion. He wasn't, as

Burns admits, a 'systematic thinker', but he was probably the last person alive who knew almost everything, including the next few thousand years of our history.

## Introduction IV

During a very recent holiday at Lorne, I subjected myself to one of the more embarrassing episodes in my life. Lorne is a seaside resort, but the main delight of staying there is exploring the walking trails that stretch back into the hills behind the town. One day, Elaine and I rounded a bend in the path to be faced by what was supposed to be a bridge over a fast-flowing stream. The 'bridge' was merely a log. The top of the log had been cut flat, but the log had later tipped about 20 degrees to the side. An iron handrail had been placed in the log, but it now lurched out at an angle from the log, which looked slippery. Elaine went out on the log, going slowly, short step by short step. She reached the other side. I went three steps and found that under no circumstances could I continue. My fear of heights plus my fear of slipping stopped me dead in my tracks. Elaine wasn't coming back. I wasn't going forward. So I had to retrace my steps, and walk up the road to our agreed rendezvous, while Elaine finished the planned walk. On the way she had to cross two more equally difficult bridges.

Cordwainer Smith's fiction presents nearly as many difficulties for readers as crossing that bridge did for me--but Cordwainer Smith's stories don't offer a handrail. In some stories, such as 'Under Old Earth' and 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town', you creep through the stories from one sentence to the next, one paragraph to the other, hoping some recognizable pattern will emerge. For me, a pattern emerged only on second reading, 25 years after my first reading of those stories.



Johns Bangsund, Baxter, and Foyster.

It's not merely that Smith's universe is difficult to understand, although that's a problem. Smith often puts in references to people or places that have already been explained in some other stories, or will be the subject of some future story. A fascinating way of doing things, and refreshing when compared with all those writers who explain every dead detail of their future histories, but difficult nevertheless. One of Smith's readers, John J. Pierce, has constructed a diagram, based on his reading of the stories, which fits all of them on a time-line from now to 17,000 AD. That diagram, about which we could disagree all night, appears in the introduction to *The Instrumentality of Mankind* and *The Rediscovery of Man*.

Let me return to *ASFR* 11. The beauty of *ASFR* to me, isolated in a Victorian country town in 1967, was knowing that somewhere out there were legendary figures like Bangsund, Harding, and Foyster, who saw the same sorts of things in science fiction as I did, and also cared about literature. Indeed, I was a bit startled to read Foyster saying in *ASFR* 11 that 'Cordwainer Smith was the first writer to write science fiction which could possibly be accepted as 'Literature'.' I'm not sure I agreed then, or do now, but Foyster's case is persuasive. He says:

Robert Silverberg writes of Smith's world as being 'so tiresomely familiar to him that he does not see the need to spell out the details'. This is not quite true. The details of Smith's future are only made clear as this becomes necessary . . . Smith has achieved something that no other sf writer has; the ability to make his fiction read as truth, through the careful use of facts and explanations, or rather revelations.

Foyster then examines the extraordinary effectiveness of both the beginnings and endings of Smith's stories. The two most moving story beginnings I know of--that is, the two beginnings that promise most of the fiction to come--are from Ford Maddox Ford ('This is the saddest story I have ever heard' from *The Good Soldier*) and from Cordwainer Smith. At the beginning of 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town' he writes: 'You

already know the end--the immense drama of the Lord Jestecost, seventh of his line, and how the cat-girl C'Mell initiated the vast conspiracy.' To me that's a master stroke, to begin an sf story with 'You already know the end', which makes the story to come even more mysterious than it would have been otherwise. Here we are again, at the end of time, sitting at the storyteller's feet, waiting for her to return to a story that has thrilled us many times before. Either we as twentieth-century readers make that imaginative leap with Smith, or we don't. If we don't, we won't even begin to cross the difficult bridge that is 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town'.

As Foyster writes:

Smith's technique could easily fail; in writing thus he walks on one side of the narrow gap between beauty and fatuity. But his foot is sure. As an indication of his masterly control - indeed, to use the two sentences by which I would be prepared to let his reputation stand or fall, I will quote the ending of a story sometimes forgotten: 'The Burning of the Brain':

Magno Taliano had risen from his chair and was being led from the room by his wife and consort, Dolores Oh. He had the amiable smile of an idiot, and his face for the first time in more than a hundred years trembled with shy and silly love.

Assuming that any other sf writer had written the story, it would have ended with the word 'idiot'. Go further; try to find any writer who would have finished the sentence more or less in that way. It would not be the same. For the words 'and silly' are unique with Smith. In these words, these two words, he transcends the petty world of science fiction and reaches out into the world of reality . . . The agony of space, introduced in 'Scanners Live in Vain', comes down to Earth.

This is one of the finest pieces of literary criticism I've read, all the more so because Foyster is so far the only Cordwainer Smith commentator to talk about the way he uses words. The real difficulty--and the greatest delight--of Smith's writing is his style.

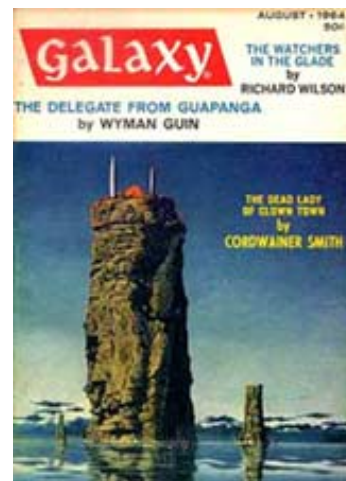
I can find plenty of individual examples of 'style'--individual fine sentences--in Smith. In 'Mother Hitton's Littul Kittons' we read of Mother Hitton: 'One of her weapons snored. She turned it over.' In context, this is funny and horrifying. The 'weapon' is a psychopathic mink, called a 'kitton', who, when woken, telepathically projects its feelings of absolute hatred and loathing at any enemy trying to steal stroon from Norstrilia. At the beginning of 'Alpha Ralpa Boulevard' we are told: 'Everywhere, men and women worked with a wild will to build a more imperfect world'. Elaine found a wonderful piece of Smithiana in 'Drunkboat'. When Artyr Rambo is placed in hospital after returning from space 3, he uses all his force in attempt to break out of the hospital room. After he is restrained:

The robot was out in the corridor, gently patting the steel floor back into shape. He was a tidy robot, probably animated by an amplified chicken-brain, and when he got tidy he became obstinate.

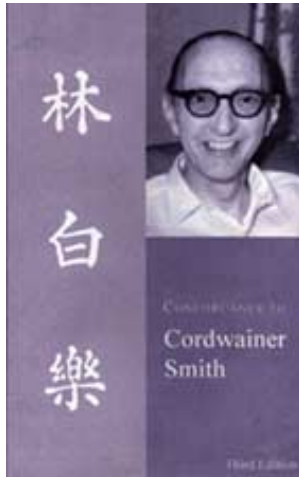
Bits of style are easier to show you than real style. In fact, Smith's work is nothing *but* style, in the way explicated by Ursula Le Guin in her collection of essays, *The Language of the Night*.

After my recent complete rereading of Cordwainer Smith's stories I rediscovered 'The Lady Who Sailed the *Soul*'. Like so many of the other stories, this is a future legend, a story that purports to give the true account of the romance between Helen America and Mr Grey-no-more. The author writes:

Their names were welded to the glittering timeless jewellery of romance . . . two things stood



forth--their love and the image of the great sails, tissue-metal wings with which the bodies of people finally fluttered out among the stars.



Then there is a lot of background, about the histories of Helen America and Mr Grey-no-more, how they became captains of interstellar lightships. Smith slowly moves into close focus--firstly on the profession itself, describing how lightship captains age 40 years in one voyage; then on the brief but passionate romance between the two; then closer, onto Helen America's preparation for her voyage. All this seems mere explanation, circling around a story that hasn't happened yet. In fact, it is all part of the actual story, for the characters are circling around each other, and Helen America is drawing in towards her great voyage.

Before they part, Mr Grey-no-more says to Helen: 'All these people have said that they wanted to be sailors too, even when they looked at me. They could not know what it means, but they said it anyhow. . . . Perhaps you will sail among the stars, but I hope that you will not.' The doctors and the technicians try to warn her against her chosen profession. She says: 'And if the sails fail, I wait as long as I live.' The technician ticks her off: 'There is no call for you to get tragic

about it. Tragedy is easy enough to contrive . . . Tragedy is not the hard part.

The hard part is when you don't quite succeed and you have to keep on fighting. When you must keep going on and on and on in the face of really hopeless odds, of real temptations to despair.'

Here is Linebarger telling us about himself, but also telling us as much as we need to know to understand the significance of Helen America's voyage. This turns out to be greatest short account of space travel in sf literature, so I won't spoil it by quoting from it. At the end of the perilous voyage, however, Helen America is barely alive. Mr Grey-no-more has travelled as cargo in her ship; as a result they are now both the same age-- - their real age plus forty years. Now they can marry; now their romance means something. He says to her 'But you have sailed *The Soul* in here and you wanted me.' All very romantic; but the romance has been authenticated by the intensity of the experience that the characters and the reader have been through.

## Introduction V

Now I've reached the point at which I might have started this talk. So--my fifth, and last Introduction.

One morning last week I woke up remembering the tail end of a dream. I dreamt that I had travelled the length of five Cordwainer Smith stories. I couldn't remember what they were, but I knew that in my dream I had gone the distance. Now I wanted to start the sixth story, but it wasn't there. I would have to make it up for myself. I was sitting in a forest glade, on a park bench, waiting to begin the new journey.

When I woke, I realized that I could not possibly start a Cordwainer Smith story from there. There are no forest glades in Cordwainer Smith stories. There is barely a tree or a blade of grass. There are no original animals left in this universe, except the sick sheep on Norstrilia and the horse in 'On the Gem Planet'-- - there are only highly modified Earth animals or the underpeople, which look like humans but have been manufactured from animal stock. Smith's manufactured universe is Asimov's Trantor gone mad--a completely built environment spread like cancer from planet to planet. A title for this talk could have been 'More Stories about Cities and Spaceships'. There are virtually no landscapes in Smith's stories, except those of barren planets (Norstrilia, or Henriada of 'On the Storm Planet') or totally sterile planets like Pontopiddan of 'On the Gem Planet'.

In short, and at last, this brings me to what Cordwainer Smith's stories are *about*. I've left this matter to last



because I don't care much about it. All I really care about is what it is an author's work that, line to line, interests the reader. I leave the big picture to others, but here offer a brief summary of what I discovered.

I suspect that Linebarger's work on psychological warfare is essential to understanding this aspect of his work, which makes it all the more annoying that *Psychological Warfare* is unavailable. What is a human being if she or he can be ruthlessly manipulated and reconstructed against the free will? In *Norstrilia*, for example, Rod McBan's computer tells him: 'You are Rod McBan the hundred and fifty-first. Specifically, you are a spinal column with a small bone box at one end, the head, and with reproductive equipment at the other end. Inside the bone box you have a small portion of material which resembles stiff, bloody lard. With that you think . . . You are a wonderful object, Rod McBan. I can understand what you are made of. I cannot share your human, animal side of life.' Later in the novel, McBan is reduced in size by surgery in order to travel through space without being kidnapped, yet seems to be the same person when he is reconstructed at the other end.

Again I recommend the essay by Wolfe and Williams to which I referred earlier. They show brilliantly how Smith is constantly torn between his love for authority and controlled environments--in other words, the Instrumentality's future, a future built by humans for the greater good of humanity - and his total mistrust of manipulative, unfeeling inhumanity.

Of 'Scanners Live in Vain' they say:

Part men and part machines, the Scanners are the first of Cordwainer Smith's dialectical images, for they cannot be both at once; once Scanners, they must endure a hazardous process in order, temporarily, to feel human sensations . . . the Instrumentality's triumph over pain proves paradoxically dystopian, for the author of *Psychological Warfare* knew that the diminution of sensory stimuli brings one closer to the state of No Feeling that is Hell. To eliminate pain is to eliminate life, and in 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town' (1964) the author defines the 'Rediscovery of Man', some thirteen thousand years hence, as the rediscovery of 'variety, flexibility, danger and the seasoning of a little hate' . . .

But again, what is life? Even our minds are merely chemical, since they can be horridly influenced by propaganda and drugs. We see this at its most Gothic in 'A Planet Named Shayol'. Yet Smith always asserts that people are much greater than their physical selves. So are the underpeople; so are the robots.

Wolfe and Williams point to the way in which Smith will often pit a simple human gesture or offering of love against the might of the Instrumentality or of the great physical forces that rule this universe.

In 'Alpha Ralpha Boulevard' it is a simple, unconscious gesture by Paul that leads C'mell to rescue him and Virginia as they speed along the boulevard in the sky.

In 'On the Gem Planet' Casher O'Neill meets the only happy person he has ever met, an underperson serving woman who shows him the way to give comfort to the immortal horse rescued from the cliffside. She tells him 'You will remain miserable as long as you seek justice, but when you give up, righteousness will come to you and you will be happy.'

In short, Smith's quest was the same as that of any other great writer: how best shall we live and die?

From the introduction to *Space Lords*:

This is science fiction, yes. But it comes from your own time, from your own world, even from your own mind . . .

All I can do is to work the symbols.

The magic and beauty will come of our own past, your present, your hopes and your

experience. This may look alien but it is really as close to you as your own fingers. Some people will like this very much. Many will not understand it, and push it aside. That is their loss, reader, not yours, not mine . . .

We two, we have this story between us . . .

Read a bit and see how it goes.

At this instant, you are yourself the prologue. All I have done is to supply the makings.

If these stories come from our own time, and if Smith is merely moving the symbols, then these stories are as much about the twentieth century, about the 1950s and 1960s, as about 15,000 AD. I've already said that Paul Linebarger, forever ill, transmuted his day-to-day experience into that of the go-captains and scanners. On the wider front, he was trying to account for the new forces that changed his beloved China. We know that he was a deeply conservative and religious man, and we would expect great changes in America and throughout the world to dismay him. He admires the power of the Instrumentality, but also condemns them for their banning of the 'Old Strong Religion', his own beloved Christianity. Why then does he not come across as a more lyrical version of Robert Heinlein or Poul Anderson?

Paul Linebarger knew too much about the world of the 1950s and 1960s to have a simple view of it. In his fiction he could move the symbols to dramatize the contradictions he found in that world. He was deeply interested in the new spirit sweeping America during the early 1960s. On the one hand, he reacted against that change by embracing a rather simple idea of an old-fashioned Australia and setting it on the planet of Old North Australia. On the other hand, he developed both the Rediscovery of Man and the revolt of the underpeople surely reflect the civil rights movement among blacks and other minority groups.

In science fiction he found an ideal way to paint the contradictions of those great questions on a colourful canvas. Somehow his romantic future legends gave him a way of looking at the ordinary world we make up for ourselves. Hence the idea of a far-future in which all *our* future is already one vast legend. The power of legend is to give meaning to human events. The result, as Gary K. Wolfe writes in an article about Cordwainer Smith's short stories is:

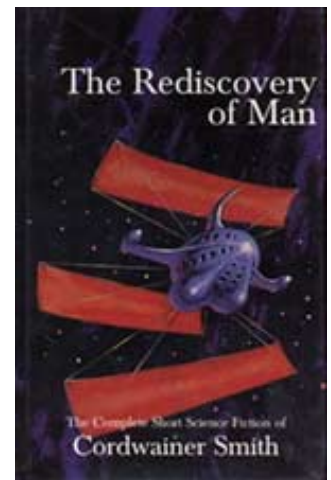
A symbolic world through which he could explore the issues that most mattered to him: romance, nationalism, psychology, bigotry, morality, and the ways in which these issues are interconnected. Ironically, one result of this technique is that the author's future universe appears so radically removed from anything we could rationally extrapolate from the present that it becomes almost believable.

Delete that word 'almost'.

#

#### Notes 2004:

- Thanks to James Allen, I did read Linebarger's *Psychological Warfare* some months after writing the above essay. An energetic and often funny book, it amplifies the proposition that the essence of waging psychological warfare is for one nation to persuade its enemy to surrender without fighting a war.
- The Gollancz editions of the late eighties have not only disappeared, but they have been superseded by the two volumes of the NESFA Press editions, which stay in print. See below.



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\*Dated 30 July 1989 and delivered as a talk to the Nova Mob, 2 August 1989.

*Speculation* cover scans courtesy Robert Lichtman Collection. *Galaxy* cover scans courtesy [http://www.noosfere.com/showcase/pulps\\_magazines\\_americains.htm](http://www.noosfere.com/showcase/pulps_magazines_americains.htm)

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Because you are in control of your life. Don't ever forget that. You are what you are because of the conscious and subconscious choices you have made.

--Barbara Hall, *A Summons to New Orleans*, 2000

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## My Walk To Work\*

By Richard Coad

Some time ago, in another forum [Wegenheim], Ian Williams described his morning walk to work. It was a good piece but not the type to provoke a lot of comment; however, I enjoyed it enough to try my own hand at it.

I live in just about the exact geographic center of San Francisco just a few blocks from the start of Golden Gate Park. The Bay-to-Breakers race, in which about 75,000 people run from San Francisco Bay downtown to the Pacific Ocean at the outskirts of town, goes by our place – when they reach us they have covered about three and a half miles and have about the same distance still to go. I work downtown but it's a large enough downtown that it's only about two miles from home to work – a good walk when the weather is fine.



Rich Coad at the HPL Memorial.

Starting out I head east, usually stopping briefly to chat with a neighbor who is generally standing in front of his garage smoking his morning cigar. After 15 years, you'd think I would know his name but it's an urban neighborhood where people tend to keep to themselves except for a nod or a brief exchange of pleasantries. When we first moved here, after the Loma Prieta earthquake, the neighborhood was about 50% black; after years of gentrification, my cigar-smoking neighbor is, I believe, the only African-American remaining on the block. Some folks died; others made huge profits re-selling homes they had purchased when the area was a true slum and moved away to spend their retirement years in a less expensive locale.

At the end of the block is Divisadero Street. As its name implies, this was once the westernmost border of San Francisco - hey, I actually live in the suburbs! There's a Popeye's Chicken on the corner which replaced Norris' Golden Fry - closed down back in the '80s for selling heroin along with fried chicken. Next to it, on Hayes Street, is the long-abandoned, now being remodeled, Horseshoe Club which features an arch over the doorway in the form of a horseshoe. Back in the '50s and '60s, when the Western Addition was to San Francisco what Harlem was to NYC or Watts to LA, the club was open and featured performers like Sam Cooke, B.B. King, James Brown, etc. Must have been quite a place in its day.

A block further on is the entrance to Alamo Square Park - four square blocks of running dogs and tennis courts and gardens with planters made from discarded shoes. The terrain turns steep here. This is the other side of the famous "Hayes Street hill" which slows down many in the annual Bay to Breakers race. From this side it's a steep climb over a block to the crest; for the racers it's a long steady climb over 5 blocks, which is extremely tiring.



The Horseshoe Club



Shoe Planter

At the crest of the hill there is one of the most photographed views in San Francisco. A row of seven lovingly restored Queen Anne houses lines the street across from the park. On a foggy morning everything behind them disappears in a haze but on a clear day the Transamerica Pyramid and other downtown high-rises are visible and, beyond them the Bay and East Bay hills.



Famous View



Formerly Dangerous Bar

It's a nice downhill or flat walk from here on. Crossing Fillmore Street - once San Francisco's version of Central Avenue or 125 th Street but redeveloped into nothingness (although the city keeps trying to promote a historic jazz and blues corridor seemingly missing the irony that they ripped it out in the first place) - I pass Walden House where it says on a sign in front that "Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life" which is pretty trite but may help the drug addicts trying to kick the habit that stay there. Past the apartment building where longtime San Francisco fan, publisher of *Starfire*, and beneficiary of the Waft William Westward fan fund to bring him from Tucson back to SF for Corflu, William Breiding used to live and get frequently mugged by the unsavory characters from the Hayes Valley Projects just down the block (the main reason why I don't walk home at night is to avoid the loitering gangs from the Death Valley Posse - they're not up in the morning).

Past the projects the extensively gentrified Hayes Valley shopping district begins. Boutiques full of expensive *objets d'art* and designer or vintage clothing and very fancy furnishings line both sides of the

street. There is no longer a freeway overpass bisecting the neighborhood - it came down shortly after the earthquake - and as soon as it was gone gentrification, already somewhat underway, began in earnest. One of the biggest changes is the bar that was once known as the Valley Club. This was a very tough place; the kind of place where people would get shot dead and everyone continued drinking and nobody saw anything. Now it's called Marlena's and is one of SF's premier gay transvestite bars.

A couple of blocks further on and I'm passing Davies Symphony Hall on one side and the former headquarters of the SF School District on the other. The latter is a lovely art deco building which has been abandoned since the earthquake and is gradually falling into disrepair. The only thing that has been done to it recently is adding some iron gates to prevent homeless people from sleeping in the entrance alcoves.



Abandoned School Board Building



School Board Building Detail

Crossing Van Ness Avenue, formerly San Francisco's Auto Row but now a mix of businesses with only a few car dealers remaining, I see the apartment building where Detroit and San Francisco fan Kent Johnson (an artist par excellence and aficionado of Asian pop culture) lived and died. Kent committed suicide in the spring of 2003 in despair over his inability to find work and the impossibility of living cheaply in the Bay Area. I miss him. A block further down Hayes is the monstrously ugly Fox Plaza Apartments, a high rise building that causes severe wind turbulence in its immediate vicinity. I've lost hats here.

Finally, Hayes Street runs into Market Street, San Francisco's main street at 8th Street. The Ramada Plaza, home to Potlatch 14, is here. Just down 8th is the Holiday Inn where Corflu 22 will be held. The new (well, not so new, now) Main Library is just up the block and the restored Orpheum Theater puts on Broadway musicals at the opposite corner. Most days I stop walking here and pick up one of the best features of San Francisco's public transportation system (MUNI). Along Market Street the city runs a fleet of historic streetcars from cities around the world. These include old Red Line cars from LA, a Desire streetcar from New Orleans, wooden-benched cars from Milan, an open air car from Melbourne, and several others. I enjoy riding these and will gladly let a few busses go by while waiting for one to approach.

On occasion, I have walked the remaining 5 blocks to work but Market Street, between 8th and 5th streets, has become a depressing place. Over half of the storefronts are boarded up. The sheer number of homeless people is rather overwhelming; the smells left by their various bodily functions can be very overwhelming. Aside from the homeless, the majority of the people in these blocks seem to be either severe addicts or people who supply them or prey upon them. It's illustrative, I think, that when I first visited NYC in the mid-'90s I was struck by how clean and bum-free it seemed. Ever since the Reagan era homelessness has been the number one topic on the SF political agenda and 20 years on nobody seems to have any solution – meanwhile formerly residential hotels continue to transform themselves into tourist hotels further decreasing the available low cost housing (if \$125 a week can really be considered low cost).



Old Streetcar



Anti-homeless Gates

It's not all gloom and misery on Market, though. On Wednesday mornings a huge farmers market is set up at United Nations Plaza (the site where the UN was formally brought into being and, unfortunately, now a case study in failed civic spaces). This is really good for Asian vegetables - get your opo fresh and cheap (50 cents!). At 6th Street, the heart of the SF skid row, there is the amazing Tulan - what looks like a typical greasy spoon serving some of the best Vietnamese food in the city for about \$6 for a good meal. There are also a number of trendy night clubs opening on 6th - probably one of the last places where a group of cash-strapped kids can get a place they can afford to put on the entertainment they like.

At 5th Street, Market turns more upscale. The Cable Car turnaround is on one side and the Nordstrom-anchored SF Center on the other. A mall with valet parking was considered risky when this opened but the street people just moved down the block.

Finally, at 3rd Street, I reach work and wipe the sweat off my brow. It's all going to change, of course. I start a new job in downtown Oakland next week (3 jobs in one year - that's not too many!) and next month Stacy and I will be moving across the Bay to Point Richmond. I'll miss the walk.

- - -

\*Revised from an original posting on InTheBar dated October 26, 2004. Special thanks to Rich Coad for his photos of the walk.



Another Old Streetcar

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Freedom is just Chaos, with better lighting.  
--Alan Dean Foster, "To the Vanishing Point"

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# Using Google As An Oracle

By Alexei Panshin

I've got this website, see -- Alexei Panshin's *The Abyss of Wonder*. It has the lyrics of fifty songs Josh Wachtel and I wrote for the band Radio Free Earth. It has a series of considerations of Robert Heinlein, whom I've found endlessly fascinating for his special combination of authority and deceit. There's an essay about my father's miraculous escape from Russia, and another on the first telling of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. There are Old Space Ranger stories, an art gallery with pictures by Boris Artzybasheff, and a cross-cultural evocation of the dimension of myth.

I see all this as a dynamic inquiry into the roots of story, and picture the site as an evolving artistic whole in which all of the apparently different aspects reflect the overallness. The place of the site on the Neb is not on the "up today and down tomorrow" end of things, but among the sites that aim to be here longer and to work more slowly.

But then, as my son Adam tells me: "You know, everybody who has a website wants users to come in by the front door, follow their site through just the way they have it laid out, look at it all, and treat it as a whole. But that isn't the way things actually happen. In fact, most people go surfing around, come into a site sideways, look at one thing or maybe two, and then pass on again."

He's been right about that. Very few of the hits on my page come from people who enter by the front door looking for me and what I've been up to lately. Most of the hits I get come from people entering a word or a phrase in a search engine, the search engine offering my page as a possibility, even a top possibility, and the page getting checked out.

I don't get the hits that Matt Drudge gets. On the other hand, I'll bet the Drudge Report doesn't get people who are looking for:

slushypipp

or

meccan revelations

or

John Carter of Mars

After the John Carter of Mars movie comes out, there may be more of these.

Some of the inquiries I get are immediately recognizable to me, such as

his eyes were red and his teeth were green



Alexei Panshin at 2 a.m. by available light.

That's a line from one of our songs -- a clean match.

Or:

separation - initiation - return journey of a hero

That's Joseph Campbell's monomyth.

But other intentions are more obscure to me, like the inquirers -- and there've been a pretty fair number of them -- who are looking for

pictures of people falling down

I'm not sure what the person wanted who typed

all the songs have been written

into his search engine and then found his way to me.

And what did the person think he was going to find when he hit on my site with the hope

help me invent a game on paper of the ugly duckling

People make pilgrimages to my site from distant places -- Nepal, Brunei and the fabled Cocos (Keeling) Islands -- seeking enlightenment. More than 90 countries in all so far.

A person from India looked in wishing to know about

points of developing personality of a simple man

If he'd asked me about a complex man, I'd have been stumped. But a simple man is one who works hard at sloughing off the excess. You can tell the points of development by the chips.

And an inquirer from Gambia wants to know

what makes monkeys crazy

Because story, and story about story, is the secret heart of my site, many of the people who pass through are in pursuit of story:

What underlies the human need to tell stories

and

to what extent is it true that we all have stories to tell

Some people are looking for story on a grand scale:

does the myth of excursion still exist among you

Some have more specific tales in mind:

stories of people who find sexual pleasure with monkeys

Perhaps what is most interesting to me is that so much of what comes my way isn't a topic, but rather a question, sometimes with a question mark, but more often without. It might be a specific question like

How does the atomic bomb work?

It might be something like

how and why I became a Sufi

This connected with our song "Sufi Girl," written to rib a friend who was finding a fellow devotee of his a hottie. Many of the hits on this song come from Islamic countries, apparently seeking to re-establish contact with lost traditions.

Some of the questions are more open-ended and philosophical:

must our informants mean what they say

and

how does cultural change happen

and

are human beings active creators of their lives

You could break your teeth on questions like those.

I'm not sure I can answer them -- at least not today. What I can say is that I'd like to continue working on a website that can draw questions like these its way. People may not know how they got there, and they may not know where they've been when they've passed through, but my hope is that they've had their heads bent a little for having visited.

And remember, if you want to connect with my site and you can't think how else to do it, just feed the search engine the magic words

doo wop horse harmony

and you're sure to find me like others before you.

- - -

In case doo wop horse harmony fails, try for Alexei's website *The Abyss of Wonder* at <http://www.enter.net/~torve/contents.htm>. --Earl Kemp

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People who defend pornography now do so on the basis of civil liberties or freedom of speech, which takes all the fun out of it.

--Tom Lehrer

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# Beating the Burro\*

or

“Let them eat cake....”

By Earl Kemp

I was the worst father in the world. I know that to be an absolute fact written in huge letters of eternal fire. If I should somehow forget this fact for any reason, one of my children will momentarily remind me of it in quite vivid tones. Included, of course, would also be that list of all the ways I personally screwed up their lives forever, and that even longer list of all the things I never gave them that they always wanted.

#

Back in the 1970s, when I was waiting to find out if I was going to prison or not, treading water in a way, enduring mindfreeze, going nowhere and getting nothing done, I spent lots of delightful time in my house in Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico, *La casa de mi Corazon*...the house of my heart.

One day, very much like each other one, I was kicking back on my patio beside my *ecapali* table and doing a righteous doobie. The latest issue of the international edition of *Time Magazine* had just arrived and I idly skimmed the pages as I held that delectable Indica and pressed it as hard as I could. Absolute heaven...!

And there it was, staring me right in the face, the article about the U.S. Supreme Court upholding my conviction. I *would* be their guest for a while...it was decided...only the starting date would be announced later.

So many things to do and so little time...and one of them definitely involved closing down that personal pleasure retreat, returning the lease to the Ajijic house to the *dueña de la casa*, and going home to face the First Amendment violation music.

For a good number of years that house had been the total let-down retreat for my family as well as for myself. In different ways, each of my children grew up there enjoying the very best of a very real nonexistent world. They spent time alone there just being themselves, much as I did, receiving in exchange healing from inside and outside. For some reason I wanted my family all together with me in Ajijic at the same time to say farewell to the pleasure dome as a group. I started trying to make it happen.

I spent a lot of time on the phone and writing letters and trying to bring two adults, five children, and some temporary incidental significant others all together at the same time from two countries and three states. And to guarantee it all, stand behind it, and finance most of it. The usual. And all my efforts to bring about my desire were paying off.

Until the evening before we were all scheduled to arrive in Ajijic the following morning, all converging around the same time in three separate vehicles from three different directions. The eagerly anticipated family gathering was abruptly blown out of the water in the most problem-causing and stressful manner possible.

And my attempt at having my family, my children, all together with me at the same time once again never happened...in the 1970s.

Nor did minimal efforts to make a replacement reunion happen in the following years as the '80s and '90s crept past prove fruitful to any extent. Finally I wrote it off as a bad dream on my part. I had to get over the absurd notion that I was somehow entitled to a little capricious obedience now and then. And I gave up on the thought of having my children together again ever happening.

#

Back in the 1970s, after I knew I was going to prison, still treading water, enduring mindfreeze, going nowhere and getting nothing done, I spent lots of really down time in my house in El Cajon, California. This was at least three more degrees below mindfreeze.

I needed a significant diversion in the worst way possible. My old friends Don and Betty Gilmore moved back mysteriously from Guadalajara to San Diego to provide one for me. It was all somehow deliberately fuzzy and federally suspicious, but that didn't matter at all.

When I asked, Don said he had returned to give me the "biggest damned going-to-prison party there ever was."

And he did, literally inviting everyone I knew at the time. It was a wonderful party and, up until my 75th birthday, the greatest single event ever staged just in my honor.

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At a point in time when things like this were completely impossible, a huge Mexican moving van and crew appeared at the Gilmore residence in Guadalajara. They carefully packed everything in the house, loaded it up into the van, and drove that van straight across the international border—under diplomatic seal--without pausing and to San Diego to where the Gilmores had acquired a new residence (big, elaborate, and pretentious). They unloaded that van, positioned every stick of furniture inside the house to order, thanked the Gilmores very much, got back in their truck, and returned to Guadalajara. The end of a mysterious era that had begun abruptly in 1966 and lasted well into the '70s.

Even the CIA couldn't pull off a stunt like that. I tried my best to find out why and how it had happened, but Don wouldn't tell me. Instead, he said, "I had to return to San Diego so I could give you the biggest damned going-to-prison party there ever was. I mean it literally; invite everyone you know."

And he did, and I did. For the first time ever, I crossed all lines with all of my friends and gathered them up together into the Gilmore's impressive mansion near downtown San Diego. There were writers, editors, artists, photographers, and models. There were auto mechanics and delivery persons and professors and most of the office staff and their partners and lovers. There were lawyers and hookers and—surely not?—an undercover cop or two.

I wish that someone had filmed that party, the drunks all over the place, the house filled with well wishers and some of that gorgeous Mexican furniture that got trashed along the way.

And then Time Out, Lock Up, and Mind Fade Away.

--Earl Kemp, "Donald A. Gilmore," *Sin-A-Rama*

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#

I was having a conversation with my daughter Eydie one day when similar thoughts of failure began creeping into the dialogue. I told her that I had given up on ever having my children all together at the same place and time and that I had concluded that I could not make it happen.

"I can," Eydie said. "I'll make it happen for you. Just you wait and see."

And then and there she began planning my 75th birthday party that would take place almost two years later.

And that was just the front to get my children together with me, only Eydie, being afflicted by the Kemp Curse, went for the splash and the maximum impact.



She began by inviting everyone I ever knew or loved who was still alive and locatable. She asked those people to send her photos of me that were as embarrassing as possible. Some of those pictures I have never seen before or have forgotten them if I ever did. At least two of them were right-on, flattering, and almost suitable for repeating here for old time's sake if nothing more.

One of those old pictures (unfortunately it is not dated but would have to have been taken in the early to mid 1950s) shows me posing dramatically with two recognizable cover paintings. One of them one of my prized McCauleys from *Imagination*.

The other photograph shows me almost at my very best. I really like this one. I think I'll adopt it as one of my favorites. In this photo, Indiana Kemp the famous archaeologist is photographing his latest discovery at the opening of some mythical tomb, praying that Angelina Jolie will jump on it at any minute. My best guess as to the date would be sometime in 1969. The thing that I really like about this photo—besides wearing pants at the time--is that it shows my hair as I wore it in those days, flaunting convention. It grew a few more inches before I finally decided to cut it back. These days, being almost complete bald, there is no such foolishness possible for me.

#



One of the most special gifts for that 75th birthday celebration came from Doug Pinney. Doug is Eydie's husband and, among other things, he just happens to be a pilot.

Doug came to Kingman in a shiny little four-seater airplane to pick me and my son Terry up. He flew us to San Diego for the party. Then, after breakfast on Sunday, Doug flew both of us back to Kingman.

Terry, an ex-U.S. Air Force pilot, seemed to enjoy the trip much more than I did. We were flying much lower than commercial aircraft flies. I was enjoying the flight in an entirely different way. Just sitting there inside that plane, listening to the endless radio chatter and watching a vast wasteland pass quickly beneath me, gave freedom to my memory to recall some of the best of the best.

It had been a very long time since I had taken a trip in a private plane and I was enjoying remembering what luxury it really represents. Going in style. If it was a Lear jet, the fantasy would have been complete.

As it was, I was back there in the 1960s when going in style had a different meaning. It was limousines in those days. I grew accustomed to people just sending them for me. I stopped being surprised when someone would meet me at foreign airports in one and I didn't even know they knew I was coming there...

much less when.

I loved it then. I loved it inside that airplane crossing southern California for my birthday party. A magnificent gift from Doug that I will remember for quite a while.

#



Here I am, glass in hand, enjoying a fine Cuervo margarita and listening to one of Tijuana's best mariachi groups serenading me.

Eydie tried to read my mind...*ha!*...and do the things she felt I most wanted done. She knew that I loved most things Mexican, so she did her best to make the party as Mexican as she could. Almost everything for the party was imported from Mexico...all the decorations, incidentals, piñata, candies, munchies, salsas, Cuervo, limes. All the food...a caterer was hired in Tijuana to prepare most of the food there and deliver it to the party. Her staff of helpers arranged and helped serve all the buffet spread of taste thrillers while the caterer herself conducted an ongoing show-and-tell demonstration.

There was a superior group of Mariachis brought in from Tijuana to entertain the party guests as well. They sang and entertained for over an hour during margarita time while the caterer was getting ready to open the serving line.

To see and listen to an mpg of the mariachis performing at the party (462KB), click [HERE](#).

While this was going on, Josh Wachtel and his great group Radio Free Earth were setting up, getting ready to perform after the buffet was suitably consumed. Josh is an inherited pleasure passed along by Alexei Panshin who happens to be a wonderful entertainer. [Not Alexei, Josh....]

Josh and Radio Free Earth performed a number of songs selected just for the occasion involving balking at criminal Federal actions, going to jail, etc. Everything he felt would please me. However, unknown to him, he did just that when they sang a superior cover version of "White Bird" by *It's a Beautiful Day*. A song that rests solidly within my all-time top ten list.

Josh has written of the party himself in "Roastin' Tunes," elsewhere in this issue of *e/*.

#

I was delighted with the turnout for my party. Everywhere I looked I saw old friends, familiar faces somehow a bit more mature than I keep thinking they should be...like me....

My bareass beach buddy, Baja Allan (Al Niebrugge) was up to his nonexistent tan line conspiring to help



Kim and Josh Wachtel take time to pose with the birthday boy.

Eydie bring the party off successfully, running sorties back and forth from Tijuana, making sure everything would come off on schedule. He and I go way back over the decades and over many things neither of us would ever want photos of to resurface again. A real forever man of my heart, “the best son I never had.”



Jerry and Suzanne Murray were there. Jerry, somewhat better known as “Ray Majors,” was one of the best-producing sleazebook writers in those Camelot days. He was also my best friend, a neighbor in El Cajon and San Diego, and a fellow resident of Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico. If that isn’t love, nothing is.

My dear friend Jack Haberstroh and his bride Teresa were there. Dr. Haberstroh, a vocal First Amendment freedom fighter, was professor of journalism at San Diego State University when I was indicted for producing *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. Jack, along with Dr. Tom Gitchoff of the department of law, packed my courtroom daily. They assigned the trial as classwork. They had papers written on it, gave lectures on it, and contributed to textbooks about it. They did their damndest to keep me out of prison...all to no avail.



Mike Weasuer and R-Lorraine Tutihasi were there from Los Angeles. She’s my science fiction discussion group member, fellow FAPAn, and well-known fanzine fan.

My old buddy Robert Bonfils, who moved to San Diego along with me in 1965, was there. He was William Hamling’s art director and I was his editor at Greenleaf Classics.

The crowd that has done the most for me, for my ego, the last several years all came from various points to be at the party with me. I think of them as being The Sleazebook Boys, and they are making me whatever it is that I am today.

Many, many more. Children and grandchildren and friends of friends, and all there just for me and for a good time phone Earl almost always works or at least it used to.

The crowd of well wishers had in some way touched my life in positive fashions. They had been houseguests at my various Mexican residences, and elsewhere. Endless times of joy and celebration to be cherished forever.



**The Sleazebok Boys:** Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, Earl Kemp, Robert Speray, and Lynn Munroe

Old party buddies and almost lovers and some of the real thing, all reawakening great memories from the past.

#

After Josh Wachtel and group had finished entertaining, there were a number of attempts to embarrass me from some of the best partners of my past. Fortunately they turned into kisses instead of being the revelations of things past I had so dreaded might resurface yet again to haunt me anew.

The chief butcher for the evening was supposed to have been Gary Sohler, who unfortunately discovered he had a previous engagement with a ferocious bug at the wrong time. Gary and Randy Sohler flew in from Hawaii just for the party. They sent ahead of them a wonderful and much-needed super gift, a brand new Compaq PC; the single

thing I needed most. They arrived in San Diego ready to name names and show the pictures to go with them, and collapsed immediately into sick beds.

They missed the entire party, returning to Hawaii a couple of days later still too sick to think straight. But, to make sure the insults Gary had prepared for me wouldn't be wasted, he wrote them out and they appear as "Earl's Birthday Roast" elsewhere in this issue of *e/*.

There was a slideshow of people, some clothed, all related to me and my past and my travels, arranged by my old asshole buddy and former son-in-law Michael Buckner. Slides and unbelievably tasty memories of tangled clusters writhing in delight from all over Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and South America.

There was champagne and toasts and cakes aplenty...one with the usual 75 candles on it that were a bitch to blow away...and presents galore.

#

I had it all again. Everything I ever wanted, my children together at my side, surprising me because they were actually nice. I love to see them interacting rather than balking, smiling and laughing and having a good time.



And then the crowning event of the event, of the evening...the traditional beating the burro.

Throughout the whole party, a large blue burro piñata was hanging conspicuously where everyone had to bump into it, move around it, and otherwise examine its overstuffed perfection. The children at the party had been anticipating this moment for hours, it seemed, and now they were going to have a chance to get at all those goodies stuffed inside that papier-mâché beast of burden.

I had the first whack at it of course, and failed miserably in my attempt at rupturing the miniature ass. Fortunately others were better adapted for such heartless brutality and the burro eventually erupted, bursting into a shower of candy and other goodies. There was a mad scramble to pick out the favorites before they were all gone. There were literally pounds of candy leftover; I still have bags of it these months later.

It was a great party and I loved all of it. Even though it was exhausting, I was still sorry to see it end and the old friends slowly drift away once again.

Perhaps in another 75 years, who knows....

#

Like I said up there at the start of all this self-serving rambling, "I was the worst father in the world." I'm so glad my children got together and proved me wrong again.

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\*This is for Eydie, who made it all happen for me when I couldn't. Thank you, my dear, for a wonderful, unforgettable evening, and I love you. Party photography by Steve and Elaine Kemp Harris and Doug and Edith Kemp Pinney.



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There is no reason why good cannot triumph as often as evil. The triumph of anything is a matter of organization. If there are such things as angels, I hope that they are organized along the lines of the Mafia.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan*

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[I really like Josh Wachtel's music and suspect you might also. CDs are available at <http://www.radiofreeearth.com/crossover.html> using PayPal or else at CD Baby which is <http://www.cdbaby.com/radiofreeearth>. They're \$15, shipping included, from Radio Free Earth, and \$14 + shipping from CD Baby.

People can also mail \$15 to Handknit Records, P.O. Box 620087, San Diego, CA 92162. There is an mp3 of "Times Right Now" on the Radio Free Earth site -- the direct link to the mp3 is <http://www.radiofreeearth.com/MP3s/TimesRightNow022104.mp3> --Earl Kemp]

## Roastin' Tunes

By Joshua Wachtel

The world of science fiction fandom opened to me mysteriously about 10 years ago, a few months after I'd moved to Seattle for 18 months following college. I found myself at the home of John Berry and Eileen Gunn, and then driving with them and William Gibson to the revolving monthly "Vanguard" party there. What a trip that was for me! The conversation roamed from one wild idea to the next -- computers, robots, evolution, science fiction stories, you name it.



Josh Wachtel

Someone sat me down to have a look at the Internet for the first time and I was amazed when within a few clicks of the mouse I found myself ogling newly discovered cave paintings in France. Another person asked me how I'd found my way to the party. When I mentioned I was a friend and student of Alexei Panshin's, he said, "Oh, the Old Boy Network!" I was a little embarrassed at the time, but now I realize that's the way the thing works. And very well, I think. It sure felt nice to make those friends in that city far away from home.

So, when I was traveling out west to move from Pennsylvania to San Diego in the summer of 2001, the old boy network kicked in again. Four years earlier, Alexei began collaborating with me to help conjure into being my dream of a band called Radio Free Earth -- with the stated goal being to play all kinds of music and to keep it going. With a name like Radio Free Earth, you can get away with

a lot, and we try to.

Coincidentally, at about the same time, Alexei had been writing about Robert Heinlein (actually, he still is) and this led him to getting back in touch with Earl Kemp after many years. Two very special pieces resulted from that reunion, "Heinlein Happens," by Earl, and "Oh, Them Crazy Monkeys," by Alexei, and both appear on Alexei's website *The Abyss of Wonder* at <http://www.enter.net/~torve/contents.htm>. Another was Earl's exposure to the music of Radio Free Earth. He was open enough, after only hearing my voice on tape and CD, to let me stop by and see him out in the desert for a pit stop on my way west on Route 66. Again, that world of sf fandom opened its arms to me, and I appreciated it.

I don't know just what I did to deserve it, but Earl adopted me as the grandson-he-never-had after that visit, and he's been keeping tabs on my progress ever since. He's been supportive of my band, too. In fact, he invited Radio Free Earth (which now includes my wife Kim Wachtel on vocals and, until recently, Joe Hutchinson on standup bass) to play at his 75th Birthday Party, hosted by his daughter Eydie in Encinitas, California back in October. Since that's just a stone's throw from South Park, San Diego, where Kim and I live, and since we normally play at coffee houses, restaurants, festivals, parties, book stores, and bars all over San Diego County (with an occasional stop back to Musikfest in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania) we said,



Josh and Kim Wachtel.

"Hell, yeah!" packed our gear in the car, and went.

That was a righteous party! Great food from Mexico, including carne asada burritos and homemade chile rellenos. Great people, including Earl's family, sf fans, porn writers and illustrators, and various other odd and interesting characters. A piñata full of good Mexican candy, like tamarindo and sweet and spicy chilli paste. Mariachis. A slide show of the old days in Mexico and other points south. Most of all we got to have a little fun seeing Earl and goosing him a bit.

The featured event of the evening, I believed, was to be a roast of Earl. Consequently, I picked out a few numbers suitable to the occasion and dedicated them to *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. The first was called "Hard

Time Blues." It's a rewrite by Alexei Panshin and me of an ancient song we picked up from Cannon's Jug Stompers called "Viola Lee Blues" -- which was covered by the Grateful Dead at one point, as well as Geoff Muldaur in Jim Kweskin's Jug Band. It's about a guy who lands in the can with a mandatory sentence for doin' just about nothin', and cursing the corporation that owns the prison. Prisons for profit! The nerve!

The other song was called "Cats on the Rooftops" and probably has over 500 verses which you can find online. It's an old parody (British military, I think, horny men away from home) to the tune of a song called "John Peel." Ever heard it? I learned it from one of Oscar Brand's albums of Bawdy Ballads published during the folk movement. Now that's one *doity* song. Earl, how do you think *he* avoided prison?

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To see and listen to an mpg of us performing at Earl's party [and a surprise clip of Lorraine, Earl, and Jack listening to us], click [HERE](#) (1.6MB).

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(The third song we did was the old Monty Python tune, "The Galaxy Song," but it's under copyright and I don't know if we can print it here. You can find the lyrics online, though. Or listen for it on a future Radio Free Earth CD.)

One complaint about the party, though, Earl. The only thing I learned about you during the roast is that your family thinks you're a bad driver. Hey, when you drove *me* around for a \$2 steak in Laughlin and to check out the swap meet in Kingman, I didn't have any problems. What gives? Did you threaten them not to spill the beans? I wanted to learn some good juice. Maybe you should throw open the ezine to a little belated birthday roasting. Somebody must have the goods on ya!

### Hard Time Blues

Well, I've been busted / convicted three times  
Convicted three times / three times of nothin'  
I've been busted / convicted three times, Lord  
A weed is just a plant / so what you bust me for?

The judge he pleaded / the clerk he wrote it

The clerk he wrote it / down in detail  
The judge he pleaded / the clerk he wrote it down  
"No three time losers here / you must be prison bound"

Some got six months / some got one solid  
Some got one solid / guaranteed, Lord  
Some got six months / some got one solid year  
Me and my buddy / both got a lifetime here

The corporation / it runs the prison  
It runs the prison / prison for profit  
The corporation / it runs the prison tight  
Nothin' but hard time here / and you know that just ain't right

Some got six months / some got one solid  
Some got one solid / guaranteed, Lord, Lord  
Some got six months / some got one solid year  
Me and my buddy / we got a lifetime here

### **Cats on the Rooftops**

Cats on the rooftops, cats on the tiles  
Cats with the clap and the crabs and the piles  
Cats with their butts all wreathed in smiles  
As they revel in the throws of fornication

The crocodile is a funny anamile  
He takes his mate only once in a while  
When he does he floods the Nile  
As he revels in the throws of fornication

The hippo's rump is big and round  
The small ones weigh a thousand pound  
Two together quake the ground  
As they revel in the throws of fornication

Cats on the rooftops, cats on the tiles...

The baboon's rear is an eerie sight  
There's a glow below like a neon light  
And he waves like a flag in the jungle night  
As he revels in the throws of fornication

Now the queen bee flits among the trees  
And there consorts with whom she please  
She fills the land with sons of bees  
When she revels in the throws of fornication

Cats on the rooftops, cats on the tiles...

The clam is a model of chastity  
And you can't tell the he from the she  
But he can tell and so can she

So they revel in the throws of fornication

Five hundred verses all in rhyme  
To sit and sing them seems such a crime  
When we could better spend our time  
Reveling in the throws of fornication

Cats on the rooftops, cats on the tiles....

- - -

Party photography by Steve and Elaine Kemp Harris and Doug and Edith Kemp Pinney.

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If I am going to spend eternity visiting this moment and that, I'm grateful that so many of those moments are nice.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*

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## Earl's Birthday Roast (As it might have happened...)

By Gary Sohler

Gary takes his position next to Earl, who is seated facing the audience. Gary is more than half drunk, but that doesn't stop him from taking the microphone and opening his monologue thus:

Gary: (exhorting the crowd in a loud voice) My name is Gary, I'm from Hawaii and I'M HERE TO ROAST THIS OLD BASTARD! ARE YOU WITH ME?

Audience: (wildly cheering and hooting) YEAHHHHHHH!!

Gary: All right, then. No roast would be complete without commenting on how ugly Earl was as a baby. Now I wasn't around when he was born because, as you can plainly see, he's vastly older than I am, but Eydie gave me some of his baby pictures, and folks, I want you to know that Earl Kemp was ONE UGLY BABY!

Randy: (Gary's brother, who is a "plant" in the audience)  
HOW UGLY WAS HE?

Gary: How ugly was he? Folks, Earl Kemp was such an ugly baby that when he was born the doctor took one look at him and slapped his mother.

No, seriously, he was so ugly, when he was born they shot the stork.

No, really, he was so ugly his mother had morning sickness AFTER he was born.



Terry and Earl Kemp, Gary Sohler, and Diane Murray (in foreground) in a water taxi on Laguna Chapala circa 1967.

No, it was worse than that. When he was born his birth certificate had paw prints on it.

And folks, it didn't get any better as Earl grew up. He went from being an ugly baby to being an ugly child. Whenever he played in the sandbox, the cat kept trying to cover him up.

Folks, when Earl was 10 years old he sued his parents for malpractice...and won.

And when his parents got divorced there was a custody battle over him. Nobody showed up.

And as you can see, in 75 years he hasn't gotten any more attractive. The other night Earl went into Kingman to get himself a hooker. She took one look at him and said, "Sorry, not on the first date."



The E's: Earl Kemp and his children.

But seriously folks, Earl somehow managed to raise some beautiful children. In fact, I think they're here tonight. Would all of Earl's children please stand up so we can see how beautiful you are?

(All of Earl's kids reluctantly stands up)

Gary: (looking toward the back of the room) Wait a minute. How did these people get in here? Hey, I think you're the Frankfurt bastards! (Then looking toward the opposite side of the room) And HEY, you bunch are the Mexico bastards! Sit down. I only want Earl's AMERICAN kids!

All right then, let's give Earl a big hand for raising some beautiful AMERICAN children!

Audience: Applauds politely.

Gary: (sotto voce under the applause) Thank God Nancy cheated on him.

Gary: Now folks, I've talked with Eydie about what it was like living with Earl during the family's early days in Chicago. It wasn't pretty. In fact, the truth is, Earl was a lousy provider, and the family was very poor. I SAY, THE FAMILY WAS VERY POOR....

Entire audience, shouting now: HOW POOR WERE THEY?

Gary: Thank you. I thought you'd never ask. Folks, they were so poor that when they ran out of food Earl would go to orgies just to steal the grapes.

No, seriously, they were so poor that when Earl needed money he melted down the kids' goldfish.

No, really, they were so poor that at Christmas they couldn't even afford tinsel for the Christmas tree. They had to wait for Earl to sneeze.

Some of you know that Jerry Murray and I worked for Earl in the 1960s when Earl was the boss editor at Greenleaf Classics. Jerry was a talented and prolific paperback writer, and I was a mediocre porno photographer. Earl introduced Jerry and me, and together we produced some very successful illustrated filthy paperback books for him. In fact, I credit Earl for getting Jerry and me off food stamps for the first time.

(Looking sidelong at Jerry) Well all right, he got ME off food stamps.

But seriously folks, despite my gratitude to Earl for this opportunity, I have to tell you that even though our paperbacks sold like hotcakes, Earl didn't pay us shit for them. And you know why? It's because he's SUCH A CHEAP BASTARD!

Audience: (Now totally into the schtick): HOW CHEAP WAS HE?

Gary: Oh, was he cheap. Folks, Earl is so cheap that when his kids got measles, he only let them have one at a time.

No, really, he's so cheap he takes off his glasses when he's not looking at anything.

No, seriously, he's so cheap he had "MOM" tattooed on his stomach instead of his chest so that he wouldn't have to pay for the "O."

Okay folks, maybe some of you know that Earl, in his retirement, has become white trailer trash. No, it's true. He lives in a trailer in the middle of nowhere near Kingman, Arizona. In fact, Jerry Murray and I went there to visit him a couple of years ago, and folks, this place is really isolated, I say, THIS PLACE IS REALLY ISOLATED.

Audience: HOW ISOLATED IS IT?

Gary: O, it's isolated. It took Jerry and me one day to drive from San Diego to Kingman, and two more days to find Earl's trailer.

No, I'm serious. This place is so far out in the middle of nowhere it makes *Little House on the Prairie* look like Times Square.

But I have to tell you, in all honesty, Earl has a lot of acreage out there and it really is a working ranch. I talked to his ranch foreman, and he gave me the stock list for the place.

(Referring to his notes) Okay, here it is. Earl is running 8,000 head of kangaroo rat, 5,000 head of rattlesnake, 4,000 head of lizard, one head of dog and one head of cat. No, I'm serious, we walked the spread with him, and I've got to tell you folks, Earl is a potentially very wealthy man. If modern science ever finds a use for jackrabbit turds, this guy will be a billionaire.

Now folks, I know it's not polite to talk about the size of another man's penis in front of his friends, but I've got to tell you: I've known Earl a long time, I've seen him naked, and folks, THIS GUY IS REALLY SMALL.

Audience: HOW SMALL IS HE?

Gary: How small is he? Oh, he's small all right. One time Earl starred in a porno movie. It got a "G" rating.

No, he's so small, one month he was the centerfold for *Playgirl Magazine*. The staples covered everything.

Now I told you that Jerry Murray and I went out to visit Earl on his ranch a few years ago, and I have to say, he was very hospitable. He even cooked dinner for us, but Jesus Christ, this guy IS A LOUSY COOK!



Jerry Murray, Earl Kemp, and Gary Sohler  
in Kingman, Arizona.

Photo by Erik Kemp dated January 2002.

Audience: HOW LOUSY IS HE.

Gary: Oh God, he's a lousy cook. He's such a lousy cook the flies chipped in to fix a hole in the screen. Speaking of food, by the way, I have to tell you that food is replacing sex as Earl's main passion these days. This is what happens when you get old. Last week Earl installed a mirror on the ceiling over his kitchen table.

And you know, folks, I couldn't end this roast without reminding you of just HOW OLD THIS GUY IS.

Audience: (now in thundering unison) HOW OLD IS HE?

Gary: Folks, this bastard is so old, he knew Doris Day before she was a virgin.

No, he's so old, he went to an antique auction and four people bid on him.

He's so old, the birthday candles cost more than the cake.

He's so old, he was the original editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

He's so old, he was in the lobby buying popcorn when Lincoln was shot.

He's so old, he can't even have sex any more. He's too tired to hold up the magazine.

He's so old, his doctor has to check his pulse with a fucking sundial.

Now folks, in conclusion I have to say that, as I have mentioned, Earl has been an editor most of his life. First with the Dead Sea Scrolls, then with Greenleaf, and now with his own internet e-fanzine *eI*. And I believe that every editor should have a brother who is a pimp so he'll have somebody to look up to. Don't you agree?

And now folks, let's give it up for the birthday boy himself, Earl Kemp.

Audience: (Thunderous applause and hysterical cheering for Earl.)

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Live out of your imagination, not your history.  
--Stephen Covey

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# Pay No Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain

By rich brown (Dr. Gafia)

As someone who's been involved in the fanzine community since 1956, I've never had a great deal of respect for the fan Hugos, particularly not the fanzine Hugos, and particularly not in more recent years. The larger microcosm doesn't know that much about fanzines, so despite the fact that a few -- at a guess, I'd say maybe 10 -- truly excellent efforts have been so honored, more often than not the award has gone to pedestrian, mediocre and, yes, even downright quasi-literate fanzines. But this year, in my opinion, when Cheryl Morgan's *Emerald City* won the best fanzine Hugo at the Worldcon, the award hit a new low.

In her fanzine, Cheryl poses as a straightforward, knowledgeable, fearless, honest critic. Nothing could be further from the truth. In my own direct experience, I have found her to be an arrogant, backstabbing, ignorant, cowardly purveyor of untruth, unwilling or unable to admit error or engage in fair and open debate. Not to put too fine a point on it.

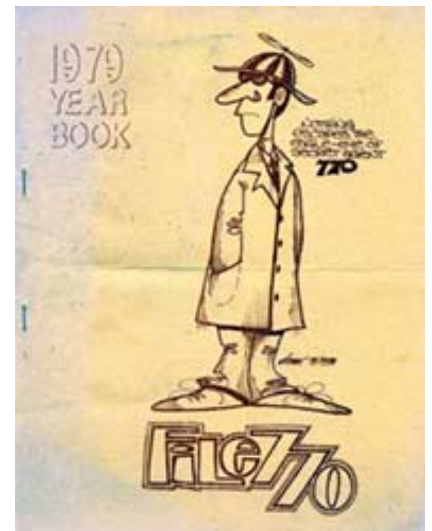
My story goes back a bit. When Cheryl savaged me in *Emerald City* #45 over something I'd written in a British fanzine, I didn't find out about it from her -- I had to read about it in another fanzine. As you might well imagine, I sent her an email about this, which she had neither the integrity nor the courage to answer, much less put before her readers in whole or in part.

Now, I'm afraid I've never been one to turn the other cheek; if someone hits me, I try to hit back *twice* -- first to say, "This is what it feels like," and next to say, "Don't try it again." But I suppose it didn't help that I elected to chide Cheryl about what she'd done. I told her that, even though we probably didn't have many friends in common, we coexisted in more-or-less the same microcosm, where it really wasn't possible for her to "say things behind peoples' backs ... and get away with it." It was not, I said, her good opinion I cared about so much as the fact that she was "telling malicious lies about me to people who know me even less well than you do" and while I don't normally care what people I didn't know think about me, I pointed out that "at some point they might get more involved in the part of the microcosm that's important to me -- and I'll have the prejudices your lies have instilled in them working against me and won't even know it."

That was punch number one. With my second blow, I accused her of intellectual dishonesty and said she lacked the simple courage needed to admit error: "Yeah, yeah, yeah -- you have your 'excuses' for not allowing any contrary voice to be heard in *Emerald City*. It goes against precedent, if you let one other person express an opinion you'd be obliged to do the same with others, you don't want the unpleasantness (you can dish it out but obviously can't take it), you're not interested in the exchange of ideas but only in expressing yourself, yadda-yadda-yadda, *etc.*, &c., and *et bloody cetera*. Well, pardon me for saying so, lady, but your excuses are pure *\*bullshit\**. The truth is, *you* like playing with a stacked deck; that's why you don't have a letters column, and also why, when



I first met rich brown at Solacon. He, I, and some others produced a fanzine there inside the Alexandria Hotel during that convention. Los Angeles, September 1958. —Earl Kemp



you did have one, it wasn't part of the zine but something that had to be subscribed to separately -- so you could be the only voice to be heard in the cocoon that is your e-zine *Emerald City*. In that venue, you can *pretend* to be someone expressing strong, frank but honest opinions, when in actual fact you're just a weak, ignorant, spineless wimp."



I did at least step back far enough at that point to ask her how she felt about me doing to her what she'd done to me -- you know, pretending to be able to jump into her mind like some sort of slant (and from such a great distance, too). And I asked how she'd feel if, instead of confronting her directly, I circulated these opinions to other people without bothering to inform her what I was doing.

But enough -- I really need to explain, before I lose you all, how I reached the point where I had to pause to wipe the froth from my lips. To do that and maybe whomp up a shred of empathy, I need to see if we can play a game that will put you in my shoes, if only for a bit.

Let's suppose you receive a fanzine that contains -- among a lot of well-written, fascinating and provocative material -- what you regard as a ktf review of a friend's fanzine. Further, you believe this review is based

on a misunderstanding. We don't have to suppose they're 100% wrong or you're 100% right, only that you feel strongly enough to sit down and write a LoC which focuses on that review. Maybe you go on a bit too long about it (the old one-two punch again), I really couldn't say, but you don't limit yourself to that single point; you try to explain what the misunderstood remark really meant and maybe -- if you're someone like me -- you express amusement over people who project their own bugaboos onto others and then beat the stuffing out of the straw men they've created.

When, a few months further down the road, you receive the subsequent issue of that fanzine, you see the editors have not published your LoC in full, but you're satisfied that they've at least printed your salient points. There may even be a few LoCs in the issue that make points similar to your own, indicating you're not alone in what you think. You don't mind in the least that their reviewer has been allowed to respond to your remarks in the same issue. You may in fact have further disagreements with that response, but for a couple of reasons you elect not to follow up on them. Briefly, you're satisfied that nearly everyone who read that ktf review is now aware of the substance of another point of view, and if they're interested in fairness they'll check it out for themselves -- and if not, further discussion isn't likely to change their minds. Next, in a fanzine full of lively interesting new material, it could get really tedious discussing a review that appeared two issues back. Time to move on and, like all sensible adults, agree to disagree.



Which you do. But a few months later, you stumble across another fanzine which is burbling on about how there's this on-line ezine that really rakes old [insert your name here] over the coals. Curious, you ask around and eventually find out how to access the zine, where you read what the editor wrote about you. And by the time you get to it, you've learned one important point about the zine and inferred with a 99.99999% degree of accuracy something else about its editor. The latter is that the editor expressing these opinions *has never seen the fanzine that was the subject of the ktf review*. The former is that the editor will never, ever, allow you to respond to what she's said about you to the -- what, 500? 1000? 2000? -- people who've read her remarks.

Well, as in all personal essays, sooner or later the personal pronoun has to switch back to first person, and now that I've put you in my shoes for a while I think it's time to do that. But the game's not over, since I'm going to be quoting verbatim what Cheryl wrote about me, and I'm going to ask those of you who're playing along with me to substitute your name for mine in what follows. Though I realize you're unlikely to feel any empathy for, say, the affectation of using lower case letters in your name, nonetheless let's see what you can work up:

*What particularly caught my eye in the latest issue [of Banana Wings (#13)] was a bizarre little spat between Paul {Kincaid} and one rich brown (and that's not a typo, he insists on having his name un-capitalised). Now Paul, as I have probably said before, is not one to shy away from letting people know what he thinks is right and proper for a fanzine. Claire and Mark would not have him writing a fanzine review column otherwise. He is not, however, devoid of common sense.*

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e.e. cummings was perhaps the most prominent practitioner of this stylized affectation. damon francis knight followed along with the deed as a young science fiction fan in the 1940s. charles nuetzel (followed very closely by rich brown) did it in the '50s. A fine, fanzine fannish sort of thing to do.

—Earl Kemp

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*On discovering, in his previous set of reviews, a zine called crifanac (more of this pretentious lack of capitals) declaiming that neither Ansible nor File 770 was part of fanzine fandom, Paul decided to take the editors to task for being exclusionary. As a result he found himself being laid into at great length by the aforementioned mr. brown.*

*It wasn't the length or tedium of brown's response that caught my eye, but the sheer, breathtaking arrogance of the nonsense he was spouting. Remember here that we are dealing with two fanzines which are not only Hugo winners in their own right, but whose editors are winners of the Best Fanwriter Hugo. And yet here we have crifanac denying them a place in the fanzine community and brown bringing every ounce of sophistry he has to bear on proving that this is the case.*

*It isn't a complicated argument, though brown manages to spend four pages, primarily casting aspersions on Paul's intelligence, in making it. The substance is thus: both Ansible and File 770 contain material which is not proper to a fanzine. (In the former case, news of professional writers, in the latter, news of conventions.) As a result, brown claims, both editors have voluntarily excluded themselves from fanzine fandom, and thus cannot claim to have been excluded by crifanac.*



*Well dear oh my, now we know. The Holy Commandments detailing what is Right and Proper for fanzines have been inscribed in letters of fire by a couple of divinely inspired faneds from Las Vegas. And if any shall doubt these Immutable Laws the Archangel rich brown shall descend upon them with venom smothered pen and Smite them Mightily.*

*I'd be annoyed if this sort of thing wasn't so pathetic or, indeed, so common. The same issue of Banana Wings contains a lengthy rant by one Sandra Bond which, whilst making some valid points about the paucity of some of the Ansible clones handed out each month at the Tun, contains further prescriptions about the nature of a True and therefore Good and Valuable fanzine. What is it about these people that makes them so terrified of diversity and desperate to impose their own vision on the rest of the world? I suspect it is that at heart they are afraid that what they are doing does indeed have no intrinsic value and that they must*

therefore invent some imposing taxonomy with which to give their scribblings an air of profundity.

Whatever, I find myself once again in the position of having to say, 'I am not a fanzine fan, and I'm proud of it.'



<http://www.emcit.com/>

While I admit my first urge is to jump right in with a paragraph-by-paragraph deconstruction of Cheryl's arguments, I first have to say I played this game in the hopes that it would help you determine how you would have dealt with this sort of thing in my situation. If the above were said about you, and you knew in advance that the editor would not allow you to defend yourself, would you perhaps want to sit down and write her a nice, polite little note? If so, how would you expect someone who could write the above to respond to you? Likely to respond well to sweet reason, do you think?

Not that I can do anything about it at this late date, but I wrote an email letter in which I freely admit I vented my anger. I was pissed. But, after all, as I said back when I was detailing that letter, I *did* step back to indicate that that was what it was. In addition to asking her how she felt about me behaving like a slant who could jump into her mind to ferret out her hidden agenda and innermost thoughts, I asked her how she'd like it if I circulated it as an open letter to a lot of people in fandom she didn't know and couldn't respond to.



While I entered this knowing she wouldn't acknowledge (much less reply to) what I said, I gave her three months anyway (and a few more issues of *Emerald City*) to provide her a chance to prove me wrong before I circulated an open letter about it on rec.arts.sf.fandom. As hard as I tried to shake off the urge, I sent her yet another email to let her know that was what I was doing. I mean, even though I wanted to give her a taste of her own back, I couldn't let myself sink to her level and conduct my argument behind her back.

This all took place, oh, five or so years back. I vented my anger, Cheryl continued to play ostrich, some people agreed with me and others told me I shouldn't have lost my cool or that I should've written her a short, polite note instead. In any event, I moved on.

But here we are, a lustrum further down the road -- and the vehicle she used to run me over while ignoring any fannish sense of decency or fairness has up and won itself a Hugo as the best fanzine of the year, no doubt further validating her feelings of worth for publishing stuff like the above and steadfastly refusing to accept any responsibility for it. Me, I've come full circle.

But what were our initial points of disagreement? Hey, I'm glad you asked.

I never figured out what had Cheryl saying with admiration that Paul was not one to shy away from letting people know what he thought was right and proper for a fanzine while excoriating me and, a bit later, Sandra

Bond for our audacity in not shying away from letting people know what we thought was right and proper for a fanzine. Did Cheryl perhaps think Paul's opinions had more weight because he'd been picked to *review fanzines* for *Banana Wings*? Well, it's been a while since I wrote a fanzine review column, I must admit, but after all I was, unless I missed something, the last person to review fanzines in an sf magazine -- I wrote the final installments of "The Club House" in *Amazing Stories*. Not, frankly, that I think this adds any weight to my opinions or makes them *ipso facto* better than Paul's or Cheryl's -- but I include mention of it because there's still some question as to how Cheryl's mind works on this topic.

But it is where both Paul and Cheryl slagged *crifanac* for maintaining that neither *Ansible* nor *File 770* were part of fanzine fandom that I feel they were, shall we say, off their asses. Yet I would make it clear that I initially had far more respect for Paul than I did for Cheryl, in part because Paul was the one who actually had a copy of *crifanac* to misread and at that point had the integrity to express his opinions in a forum where other points of view could be expressed; Cheryl tossed her lightning bolts from on high, apparently believing that once she'd spoken, the matter should end, but in any event knowing herself to be safely ensconced in an Olympian venue where opposition would never be allowed. Paul at least was knowledgeable enough about fanzines to perhaps realize that *crifanac's* "pretentious lack of capitals" was in fact used to distinguish it from *CRIFANAC*, a fanzine published by the late Tom Reamy. (Paul subsequently fell from my good graces after pretending to my face that we still disagreed amicably and then attacking me behind my back on his blog; I now use his name whenever I need a synonym for "two-faced, back-stabbing hypocrite," but as that's not the subject of this article, I won't go into it further here.)

But, okay now -- precisely *why* were they off their collective asses?

Well, *crifanac's* aim was to be the newszine of mainstream fanzine fandom. In the course of making this known, editor Arnie Katz explained that *crifanac* would not be in competition with either *Ansible* or *File 770*. That fanzine fans read both was implicit in making the remark without further explanation, and I believe Arnie felt safe in the assumption that no one who's read either would make the ridiculous assertion that *their* focus was the news of mainstream fanzine fandom, since the vast majority of fans who read *Ansible* and *File 770* know little and care less about our small corner of the microcosm. But Paul and Cheryl put two and two together -- Paul promptly and Cheryl falling into line sometime thereafter -- and in their collective paranoia came up with a sum of nine, claiming that (despite what was actually said) what was "meant" was that *Ansible* and *File 770* are not part of fanzine fandom or not "real" fanzines.



In a word, nonsense. There's nothing at work here but anxious minds, seeing insularity, snobbishness, plots and conspiracies where none in fact exists. The actual quote from *crifanac* that got Paul and Cheryl's entrails in a collective bind was this: "Our audiences being necessarily different, we are not the same kind of newszine as either *Ansible* or *File 770*."

Cheryl demonstrates a truly precious mindset when she speaks about the "arrogance" I displayed in defending *crifanac* by daring to say things about Hugo-winners. Oh, goodness, now, the \* H \* U \* G \* O \* did she say? We're talking, then, about fanzines that are right up there with *Yandro* and *Amra* and *Fantasy Times* and *Science Fiction Times* and *ERBdom* and *Lan's Lantern* (and now *Emerald City* too) -- all those well-written, witty, intelligent, truly great, immortal, high-quality fanzines, eh? I should really be trembling in my boots at my sheer audacity in expressing such an outrageous opinion, then, shouldn't I?!

Actually, it's in statements like this that Cheryl most clearly reveals her own butt ignorance. As a matter of long-standing observable fact, "best fanzine" Hugos have gone most frequently to the best fanzine *known to the largest number of Worldcon attendees*. Numerous high-quality fanzines which are *not* attempting to be prozines, *not* vying with other fanzines for subscribers and -- being published as a hobby at the editor's expense -- *not* trying to expand their circulations, are effectively left out of Hugo contention. The winners are

not representative of the whole and range in actual quality from brilliant to sheer unmitigated crap -- mostly because the membership of any given Worldcon is not qualified to judge fanzines. The vast majority of Worldcon attendees these days are Cheryl's contemporaries, who would not recognize a fanzine if one came up and peed on their leg.

This, I admit, is a rather heavy assertion of opinion on my part, so let me back it up by pointing out that I've made a standing offer -- first in 1971 but repeated several times in the intervening years -- to trade Hugo-winning fanzines of my choice (mostly those listed two paragraphs above, as it happens) for fanzines of my choice from the same period which were never even *nominated* for a Hugo. I've even offered to trade two pages of Hugo-winning fanzine for every page of not-even-Hugo-nominated fanzine. And in all this time, I have not received one single taker. *\*Not one.\** I admit I'm disappointed, but from this you may safely infer the reason I'm not inclined to substitute the awarding of a Hugo for my own judgment or the judgment of others who've been involved in fanzine fandom long enough to have some appreciation of their real quality and value.



The venerable Dr. Gafia

Now, just because it is often the case that the fanzine Hugo goes to fanzines that are in the range of crappy to pedestrian, it does not follow that *all* fanzine Hugos have gone to such fanzines. It's nice when the Hugo goes to an excellent and worthy fanzine like *Ansible* and not worth complaining about if it goes to a more pedestrian but still worthy fanzine like *File 770* (particularly since fanzines that are a lot worse have won, *Emerald City* now coming in at the top of that list). There have been a handful of instances in which one could make a case that the best fanzine of the year may have actually won the Hugo, but they tend to be the exception rather than the rule and for the most part it's sheer chance and/or good luck, not the collective wisdom of the Worldcon membership, that has generally been responsible.



For the longest time, being one of the people partially to blame for instituting the damned things, I used to show up at Worldcon Business Meetings to argue that, because the WSFS membership was too large and no longer qualified to judge, the fan Hugos should be abolished. However, over the past couple of decades, I've stopped trying. Sure, the Worldcon membership collectively is just too fucking ignorant to realize how embarrassed they should be at some of the crap they've rewarded by calling it the "best" that fandom has to offer -- but what's that to me, really? The people who read, admire, take part in fanzines aren't going to be fooled by it. It won't make a crappy fanzine any better than it is or more valuable to the fans who collect and/or really know what fanzines are all about. It's just a popular vote among largely uninformed people. Given the relative unimportance of fanzine fandom to the Worldcon, I should perhaps really honor them a little more for the attempt and try a little harder not to throw up my hands in despair and/or fall over laughing at them when they screw up as often as they do.

But Cheryl's point was not just that *Ansible* and *File 770* had won best fanzine Hugos but that their editors had won best fanwriter Hugos, too. Well, I know Dave Langford has a shelf full of them -- and I would just say, again, that it's nice to see them go to someone truly worthy (if, perhaps, no longer quite so deserving). I would expect to see Dave in the top 10 of virtually any poll of fan writers conducted in fanzine fandom today -- even if *crifanac* was still a going concern and conducting that poll. I would vote to put him there myself. But I *wouldn't* expect him to top them all: There are other excellent and deserving fan writers, equal to and in some cases more brilliant than Langford. But I know it's unlikely they'll ever receive a Hugo -- they don't

appear in on-line fanzines or zines with circulations in the thousands -- so I'm not advocating that Dave step aside. Greg Pickersgill or D. West or any of a host of other fans whom fanzine fandom might consider truly worthy probably would not win the Hugo in his place -- it's far more likely that it would go to someone who writes mediocre book reviews or convention reports for some highly popular internet e-zine that's only seen by a handful of people in mainstream fanzine fandom. Mike Glycer doesn't fall into that category, but if there are perhaps a dozen fans who are equally deserving of receiving a fanwriter Hugo with Langford, then there are at least a *hundred* who deserved to receive one before Glycer. Not that Mike's a *terrible* writer, because he's not, and not that he isn't a perfectly Nice Person because (like most of us, I think) sometimes he is, sometimes he's not, but that's neither here nor there and has nothing to do with what I'm talking about.

Still, there's something in me that at times feels the desire to support Andy Porter's notion that perhaps the Hugos should be made of plutonium of *slightly less than critical mass*. I guess I just can't help myself.

Let me say it one more time. *No one* denies that *Ansible* and *File 770* are fanzines, nor is anyone trying to say that Dave Langford or Mike Glycer are not fanzine fans. This was initially just Paul's fevered imagination, but Cheryl contracted the same illness and in her case it became particularly virulent. Cheryl, like Paul before her, demonstrates she doesn't understand the written word when she ventures forth to provide what she calls the "substance" of my argument; she puts words in my mouth (and implicitly in the mouths of the editors of *crifanac*) when she says I made the absurd claim that *Ansible* and *File 770* contain material that is "not proper" (her phrase) for a fanzine. Good Lord.

Let's go back to the beginning. *crifanac* aspired to be the newszine of the community of fanzine fandom (and probably largely just the U.S. segment of the community at that) by being circulated to fanzine fans and focusing on news about fanzines, fanzine fans and other items of direct interest to the fanzine community (Corflu, TAFF, that sort of thing). For those of you who've not read them -- or, like Cheryl, may not have understood what she read -- *Ansible* and *File 770* do *not* aspire to be the newszines of the fanzine community (although they are certainly newszines *in* the fanzine community), since their focus is on news about [mostly U.K.] pros and cons in the case of *Ansible* or conventions and clubs in general in the case of *File 770*. There is, further, nothing intrinsically *wrong* with the choices they have made; they just serve different needs and enthusiasm.



But read my lips: They. Are. Not. *Focused*. On. Fanzine. Fandom. What they *do* focus on is of interest to fanzine fans -- as a group we have a fairly catholic range of interests -- and from time to time they may have items about us, but we are not really the main bug under their lens. Both editors, further, made *conscious choices* about what the focus of their fanzines would be, and while many fanzine fans read them, there are -- Cheryl to the contrary notwithstanding -- a far greater number who read *Ansible* and/or *File 770* who don't know diddly squat about fanzines or fanzine fandom. And wouldn't *learn* very much at all about what's going on in fanzines or fanzine fandom by reading either one of them.

This was the *only* distinction being made by *crifanac*; it is entirely Paul's and Cheryl's doing that this was hyperventilated into meaning that *Ansible* and *File 770* are not real fanzines or not part of the community of fanzine fandom, and thus that *crifanac* was being "exclusionary." It's a product of their imaginations, pure claptrap totally unrelated to anything *crifanac* actually said. And Cheryl, as I say, doesn't have the guts to admit it.

It does seem to me that there's only a few possible explanations for what has transpired. If Paul and Cheryl have projected their own paranoia about, perhaps, feeling personally excluded in some way from the company of fanzine fandom onto what was said, at most they may need professional psychological help. If not that, then at least a course in remedial reading, since theirs is a rather extreme interpretation of the text if not a severe failure to comprehend the English language as it is written.

I hate *ad hominem* argument -- casting aspersions on people's intelligence has the distinct disadvantage of making the person doing so look like a dunce when their opponent has demonstrated at least a modicum of smarts anywhere nearby -- but if the distortion here is not just a dumb misunderstanding (or, in Cheryl's case, a dumb acceptance and dumb reiteration of someone else's dumb misunderstanding), then the alternative is that it's deliberate. Deliberate distortion, the last I heard, is a lie, which would make Paul and Cheryl a couple of liars. While I'm perfectly willing to let them have their choice in the matter, I hope most of you can understand why I prefer to view it as misplaced projection, ignorance, carelessness or even outright stupidity, rather than malice. I could, of course, be wrong.



However, Cheryl's refusal to acknowledge my letter or respond in any way to comments I sent her which indicated the nature of her mistake may be seen as maliciously upholding a lie. So even if the original lie was made in honest error, her refusal to acknowledge it -- confront it openly if she still disagrees, apologize for her error if not -- is implicitly a *deliberate* lie based in inherent dishonesty and her inability to support her original argument in the face of the facts. And you know what that clearly makes Cheryl. If there's another possibility that I've overlooked here, please, by all means, point it out to me -- I agreed to disagree with Paul and had no ax to grind with him, and I would, if at all possible, like to believe better of Cheryl than I presently do.

\*sigh\* Now I have to deal with those "Holy Commandments" detailing what is Right and Proper for fanzines "inscribed in letters of fire" by *crifanac* which, being the Archangel I am, requires me to descend upon and smight mightily with my venom-smothered pen any who doubt those "Immutable Laws."

Uh-oh. Got me. Yes, frankly, while I admit it *is* always possible that you poor pitiful ignorant fools may ultimately learn the error of your ways and turn from them, I do indeed wonder if you'll ever do so?

But what's seriously funny about Cheryl's argument is that it's so obvious that *she* believes it's audacious for anyone other than the divinely approved Paul to detail what is Right and Proper for fanzines. Wouldn't you say? And isn't it precious? Would it be unfair to conclude that any who doubt *those* Immutable Laws shall be smitten by the venom-smothered pen of some other Archangel, perhaps with the unlikely but decidedly unpretentious (or at least properly capitalized) name of Cheryl? And do you think there would be any point, really, in asking Cheryl to consult a dictionary on the meaning of the word "hypocrite"?

It's just so pitifully simple to turn Cheryl's words of condemnation back on her. What, for example, do you think makes *Cheryl* so terrified of simple distinctions that she must project wholly imagined slights onto them from the safe cocoon of her fanzine? I suspect at heart she must realize that it's *her own* innate dishonesty which deprives her scribblings of intrinsic value and inspires her need to attack what she clearly does not understand and lacks the courage to confront in open debate, since this is the best she can do to impress her largely uninformed readership of her own profundity. I think it's obvious that Cheryl believes those with whom she does not agree should *not* be permitted to say so, or indeed have *any* opinions with which she disagrees, or she would never in the world so heatedly dispute with the straw man she's created here. But I'm willing to listen to other possible interpretations if anyone cares to offer one they think more plausible.

I'm sure Cheryl's not interested, but perhaps the rest of you are: The word "fanzine" was coined by Russell Chauvenet in 1940 when most



people who attended conventions also published or contributed to fanzines. The term has been co-opted by other fandoms, some of which started in sf fandom before branching off and others of which have considered themselves separate from our community since their inception. Some have had virtually no connection with our microcosm at all. The point is, the term can be applied to any number of rubbishy things that may or may not have intrinsic merit or might or might not be aimed at fans of sf fandom.

But it's our word and a good number of us choose to use it as precisely as we can, which means providing it with whatever adjective modifiers we think needed to explain what kind of fanzine we're talking about. There are fannish fanzines, sercon fanzines, genzines, perzines, apazines, letter substitutes and e-zines of various types, to name just a few, and in fanzine fandom it's possible to express a preference for one type of fanzine over another, without that preference being inferred to equate with "the only thing that is good." I prefer fannish fanzines, myself, but there are good fannish fanzines, mediocre fannish fanzines and poor fannish fanzines. There are also good sercon fanzines, mediocre sercon fanzines and poor sercon fanzines, irrespective of the fact that I "prefer" a different kind of fanzine. I'd rather read a good sercon fanzine than a mediocre or poor fannish fanzine.

We *do* judge fanzines, but we try hard not to compare apples with oranges, since different criteria apply. We who have been involved in the community of fanzine fandom for a while can become so jaded in our tastes that we prefer good fanzines to mediocre fanzines and mediocre fanzines to crappy fanzines (or what we in the microcosm also call "crudzines"), but of course that's like saying we prefer "good" sf to mediocre sf and mediocre sf to crappy sf. Everyone has their own ideas of what makes a "good" fanzine, just as everyone has their own ideas of what makes "good" sf. And it's *not* a Crime Against Humanity to express opinions about the quality of either.



That said, I for one am getting sick and tired of the fucking morons like Cheryl who are demonstrably proud of their ignorance and can't see someone make a simple statement of fact ("Our audiences being necessarily different, we are not the same kind of newszine as either *Ansible* or *File 770*") without putting it through their twisted psyches and having it come out the other side as a Plot Against Them, or proof that the microcosm is snobbishly exclusionist or -- for the truly desperate -- "terrified of diversity," for God's sake. And *\*fuck\** 'em if they can't take a joke, know what I mean?

Just remember, now, it was *Cheryl* who said she wasn't a fanzine fan, not me -- I'm just happy, in this instance, to be in full agreement with her choices by adding, "Boy, will I ever drink to that!" And, while I'm at it, "Thank goodness for small favors!"

...Um, though, since she's proud of declaring herself not to be a fanzine fan, then doesn't it follow that she doesn't regard *Emerald City* as a fanzine? If that's the case, is there even the remotest possibility that she'll give the Hugo back?

Not fucking likely. She still hasn't, as far as I know, looked up the meaning of the word "hypocrite."

I know I've gone on at a length greater than a fugghead of Cheryl's stripe deserves -- but I'm compelled to add more. You see, I'd intended to invite you, after playing the game I set up and implicitly asking you to read what followed, to give us your views. I was going to offer my email address -- [drgafia@comcast.net](mailto:drgafia@comcast.net) -- and her email address -- [cheryl@emcit.com](mailto:cheryl@emcit.com) -- and urge you to communicate your feelings to either of us or both of us. I was mindful that I would probably receive my fair share of negative feedback: Even friends who tend to agree with me on the issues have told me (and I'm sure they were right) that over the years my impolitic way of going about these things, and burying even my valid points under half a ton of verbiage, is not the way to win arguments -- or friends.



But now I can't do that. When the awards were announced, I posted many of these sentiments at places -- including the Worldcon Hugo "discussion" board that was up and running during the convention -- where I thought people might be interested in seeing them. And as I still can't force myself to descend to Cheryl's level, knowing her to be "on line" while at the Worldcon, I sent her a copy of what I'd written and told her what I was doing.

And at long last, she has responded. Well, kind of. With a few lines, at least. She said she wouldn't dignify it by actually *reading* it, you understand, but observed that it hadn't taken long for fanzine fandom to express their disapproval of *Emerald City's* win. She's even said that you can ask anyone in fanzine fandom who the Antichrist is and fanzine fandom will respond with her name.

Well, golly. I'm afraid I really hadn't realized the power and influence of my opinion even in the smaller microcosm -- and that, perhaps, explains why I have "settled" for the sobriquet of "Doctor Gafia." No more, though. I *am* fanzine fandom. You, reading this, a fanzine, are fanzine fandom too. But since I am the personification of fanzine fandom, you are me and have no will of your own. I'm decidedly sorry to have to inform you of this, but it's true. Henceforth, you will all call me "Mr. Fanzine Fandom." No, wait -- make that "Sir Fanzine Fandom." And, since you're not capable of independent thought, you will follow me blindly in this crusade. Watch me, now, as I set off, sword in one hand, shield in the other, waving my spear aloft....

...aw, *come on*, now. Don't hang back. Get in lock-step behind me. Wouldn't any of us want to be accused of having the audacity to dispute what's been said by a *Hugo-winner*, now -- would we?

--rich "fanzine fandom" brown, 2004.

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\*Portions of this article in somewhat different forms have appeared on <http://trufen.net/>.



Sir Fanzine Fandom, the verbalist formerly known as Dr. Gafia.

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Have you ever looked at the results of the Hugo Awards and said to yourself, "Why on Earth did *that* get a Hugo?"

--Cheryl Morgan, "The Hugo Award Voter's Guide," *Interaction*

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[Shelby Vick has been a big name fan (or BNF in fanspeak) in science fiction fandom for more than half a century, as well as one of relatively few "one-name fans" -- so highly regarded they can be referred to by a single name without raising any doubt about who's actually meant, e.g., Walt, LeeH, ShelVy. He set the groundwork for one of fandom's most enduring institutions (the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund), devised a clever means to get multi-color work from a single mimeo stencil (ViColor), created one of its most easily recognized icons (the Puffin) and helped lead by example with his fanzine *Confusion* a quiet revolution which valued humor over pomposity and emphasized a perspective that recognized that Sturgeon's Law ("90% of everything is crap") even applied to sf.

--rich brown (Dr. Gafia)]

## Me & My Paltry, Pilfering Porn

By Shelby Vick

To tell the truth, I actually didn't have porn in mind. And a good thing, because hard core it wasn't.

In fact, the *first* book I sold was one of several detective novels that I had been working on for *years* -- writing, revising, polishing, then re-writing again. During that time, I met and married Suzanne, who, when she read that book, said she thought it ought to sell. Well, I had tried a few of the top markets, and when that didn't work, I slid down a couple of notches -- and it *still* didn't sell.

During this time, I also developed ulcers. For no apparent reason. I tried doctors, and when they couldn't figure out why, I tried a psychologist. When I happened to mention the book to the psychologist, he said he'd like to read it.

What author could resist such a request?

It wasn't until much later that Suzanne told me the psychologist -- based on the way I wrote the book -- wondered if I might be an incipient homosexual! Y'see, my book used the Classic Pulp Hero, written tongue-in-cheek, and in one place one of the Bad Guys was gassing up his car. I described him as big and strong and had Our Hero say something to the effect of, "I halfway expected him to twist the entire pipe off." Any of you who remembers Richard S. Prather's Shell Scott paperback series will know what sort of thing I was aiming for, but apparently the psychologist had never read any and thought I was expressing admiration of a masculine villain.

Marriage to Suzanne, however, took care of my ulcer -- much better than Novel Books took care of my writing career, even though I don't think they interpreted it the same way.

Sometime in 1963, Suzanne, while going through a relatively recent edition of *The Writers Market*, came up with a paperback house -- yeah, Novel Books -- which neither of us had ever heard of before. Which is really saying something, considering that Suzanne and I could put away six to eight books a week between us. But, at her urging, I sent the manuscript off to them -- and got a letter back saying they'd consider buying it ... if I'd agree to some changes.

For a while I worked with an editor named Tony Lacata who sounded very Mafioso.



Shelby Vick



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Novel Books was the same company as Merit Books; Camerarts on Pulaski Road in Chicago. They published a number of magazines including *Men's Digest*, etc. Bonfils did paperback covers for them. Under their Merit imprint, they also did some science fiction. The publishers were the Sorren Brothers of Chicago, and according to Robert Tralins, who was in a position to know, they were Mafia.

--Lynn Munroe

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The Novel Book line was published by the same creative publishers of *Men's Digest* -- sharing similar authors and artists in both ventures. Authors associated with this group were Con Sellers, Bob Tralins, Tokey Wedge, Glenn Low, Shelby Vick, and some others. Artists such as Jack Davis and Bill Ward contributed to the designs of the books and magazines.

--Tony Jacobs

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They made it clear, for example, that they wanted strictly Bad and Good in their books -- no Gray, no Good Hearted Prostitutes, or anything like that. The bad guy would step on puppies and kick a guy when he was down because he was mean, not because he had a rotten childhood. They also wanted more frequent sex scenes.

Although I was then part owner of a print shop that could frequently eat deeply into my time all by itself, Suzanne and I managed to squeeze in enough free hours over the next two days to complete the requested re-write and get it back into the mails. (Who, after all, considers sleep that important?)

Then my first 'proof' copy showed up.

My own proof!

Of my *own* first book! Long, long sheets of paper, paperback width, with *My Book* printed on it!



Bea Mahaffey and Shelby Vick. Detention, Detroit, September 1959.

Talk about excited!

. . . There was, however, something of a problem: It began with the title: *3 Thrill-Hungry Bodies* by Shelby Vick.

Not my title. Not a title I would have chosen for it myself. Further, when the book finally came out in 1963, the cover was not exactly the illo I would have picked for it, either -- three sexy, scantily-clad young ladies.

I slaved for years for – *this*???

. . . But, still, I told myself, they *were* publishing my book and they *were* paying me for it. That was, kindof, what I *had* slaved for years for. The real problem was that my print shop had several churches that were good customers. This sort of thing, if it got out, *could* upset them. I hastily wrote Novel Books and asked them if they wouldn't put a penname on the cover. Too late! However, they *could* limit copies sent to my area, and on the *next* book they would use the penname.



Novel 6074 *3 Thrill-Hungry Bodies*, by Shelby Vick, 1963.



Novel 6N231 *All Men Excite Me!* by Richard Logan, 1963.

I was sent a check for somewhere around \$250. Not much for the work involved, but still more than everything else I had sold! And a letter from the editor saying he not only liked my writing but thought he'd be interested in more; I was invited to send a sample chapter along with a 10,000-word synopsis for another book and we would see what developed.

Yeah! *That* was more like it.

Told my friend, fellow science fiction fan Joseph L. Green, about Novel Books. He was a budding author as well and he managed to sell Novel several books -- penname to start with! (Sorry, I don't remember the penname he used.) Anyway, he sold to them as well, so each of us Got Our Start (so to speak) through Novel Books.

. . . Joe went places, however -- under his own name, he then sold several books and short stories, even to *Astounding*. Did more convention fanning than fanzine fanning, starting with Chicon II and down to MagiCon and smaller area cons around Orlando and Miami

Way beyond Novel Books!

*All* the books were "teasers," of course. That is, their cover and title explicitly *promised* sex – but the stories themselves were tame. Oh, sex would be clearly *implied* -- you would be led right up to it, and then the door would be closed. After that, it was up to the reader's imagination to fill in the blanks. These people were *not* cutting edge; they were not sticking *their* necks out. Even kids' shows, today, are more explicit than our 'porn novels' turned out to be.

But I was prepared to grind them out. Suzanne and I worked out a track to run on – detail, action, sex; detail, action, sex. Roughed out an outline, sample chapter, sent it off. Back came a letter making some suggestions for changes, and we were at it again.

Remember, this was in 'typewriter' days. Electric typewriter, but still typewriter. No saving things on a word processor to make minor changes later. I bought the old canary second-sheets by the ream, and did my first drafts on them. Then, after I received the okay from Novel Books on my chapter and outline, I would get bond paper, carbon paper and second-sheets, make a sandwich, insert it into the typer, and I was off, doing

the whole thing over from start to finish! But it was the writer's life for me.

Three more books were accepted -- and written -- in rapid-fire succession. And one was actually reprinted -- but for that I got a check for under \$30! In fact, my expectations of making more money with each book did not come to pass; instead, I received a slightly *lower* amount every time a new book was accepted. And when my editor quit the publishing business and went into politics, the new editor and I didn't hit it off. In fact, Novel Books took a nosedive shortly thereafter.

It was great fun while it lasted, but maybe it was for the best. At least I got out before they started charging instead of paying me by the book!

- - -

\*An enormous special thanks to rich brown who not only suggested this piece in the first place, but followed through with it under less than perfect conditions (with the help of Dr. Gafia). Special thanks to Ron Blum and Robert Lichtman for help with this piece. *Confusion* cover scans courtesy Robert Lichtman Collection.



Novel 60102 *Shores' Women*, by Richard Logan, 1963.

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Imagination is the highest kite one can fly.  
--Lauren Bacall

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## Finding Chet Collom

By Brittany A. Daley



Brittany A. Daley (in the top left photo) scanned these covers, all painted by Chet Collom, from her collection. In the center is *H\_ is for HELL!*, by Lloyd Royce (IE720, 1963) and to the left is *Killer in Drag*, by the ever-popular Edward D. Wood, Jr. (IB739, 1965).

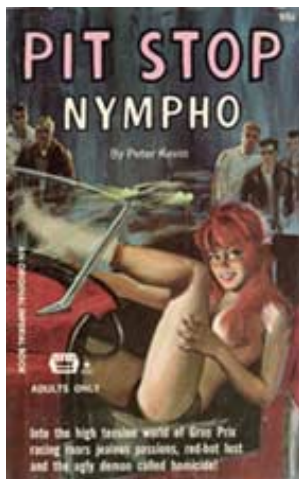
As a collector of 1960's sleaze paperbacks, I am constantly trying to discover the identities of unknown artists who painted sleaze covers. But since so few artists signed their covers, this is always challenging.

A few months ago I received a large lot of sleaze books in the mail that I had won on eBay. I started looking through the books and came across *de Maupassant today! Vol. 1* by Matt Bradley (Nite Time Books #89, Dated 1964). I opened it up and noticed that one of the front pages printed the following: "Cover art and all illustrations are by CHET COLLOM."

Naturally, I was excited by this find, even though at the time I didn't recognize the cover art or interior illustrations as being by an artist who painted for any other imprints. Still, I wanted to follow up on the lead, so I went to Yahoo! Search and typed in "Chet Collom". I came across only a handful of links. One of the links took me to the real estate web page of Chet and Sally Collom out of California. The couple was pictured, and I was pleased to see that this Chet Collom was old enough to be the artist I was looking for. The webpage had an email address so I wrote to it, hoping that I had found the artist and that the email address was valid. Within a day or two, Chet Collom wrote back, and he confirmed that yes he was *that* Chet Collom.

Here are Chet's initial comments over email: "What a surprise! 1960 was a long time ago and my memory of 44 years ago is a little dim; however "de Maupassant today" was definitely one of my illustrations." Chet also informed me that he was young at the time he illustrated these covers and that he did not request his original art back. He also mentioned that he had cover sheets of about 30 other covers he did. He noted that he rarely signed his covers per the publishers' requests. He said that he had not painted any more paperback art since the 1960's and that, since then, he had been teaching and painting fine art along with being a realtor.

Chet agreed to let me send him cover scans to identify as his art or not. I sent him a bunch of cover scans and learned that he painted covers for, at least, the following publishers: Bee-Line, Imperial Books, Pad Library, Boudoir Books, Intimate Editions, Pillow Books, Holloway House, All Star Books, Paraiso Books, Nite Time Books, Dominion Fact Books, Ram Classics, and Venice Books.



*Pit Stop Nympho*, by  
Peter Kevin (IB743,  
1965)



*Innocence and Passion*,  
by Ben Anderton  
(IB778, 1966)



*Strip Artist Broad*, by  
Ken Kane (IB768, 1966)

Finding out some of the covers Chet painted, I was shocked to learn that he was the long unknown artist who painted so many distinctive looking covers for Imperial Books, Pad Library, and Bee-Line. Chet painted for many different imprints but, to me, his covers for those aforementioned publishers have the most in common stylistically. These covers usually feature women with comparable faces and often have little background. Covers like *Gay Gay A Go-Go* (Imperial Book 775, Dated 1966), *Strip Artist Broad* (Imperial Book 768, Dated 1966), *The \$1,000,000.00 Broad* (Pad Library 569, Dated 1966), and *The Huntress* (Bee-Line 156, Dated 1966) come to mind specifically. I think *e!* readers will be able to see the stylistic similarities

in the Chet Collom artwork featured in this article.

Chet had a long career in the sleaze paperback industry. He did sleaze paintings for approximately 10 years and painted over 50 covers at least (in the future, I hope to determine more accurately how many covers he painted).

Chet was also an art director at a magazine published by Bernie Bloom, where he met cult favorite Ed Wood. In fact, Chet even illustrated the covers of two of Wood's paperbacks *Watts the Difference* (Pad Library 564, Dated 1967) and *Killer in Drag* (Imperial Books 739, Dated 1965).

I have had a great time conversing with Chet over email. He is an extremely personable man and, unlike some who worked in the sleaze world, he is not ashamed or embarrassed of his work. He was very forthcoming with information and was happy to assist me. I would like to thank him for his affability, generosity, and willingness to be interviewed.

For more information on Chet Collom, see the following interview.

## **CHET COLLOM INTERVIEW**

Conducted by Brittany A. Daley via email on September 29, 2004

Brittany A. Daley: Can you give me some quick biographical information about yourself? (Birthdate, where you are from, etc.)

Chet Collom: I was born in Glendale, California, August 6, 1927. Glendale is in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. Youngest of 4, 2 brothers and 1 sister.

BD: Can you tell me about your art schooling if any and artistic influences?

CC: After high school where I majored in art, and the Navy Reserves at the end of WWII, I enrolled in the School of Allied Art in Glendale to study with a New York illustrator, Stan Parkhouse. Later I studied with Ben Kutcher and Sergei Bongart. In art studios where I worked for 7 years I was influenced by Fritz Willis, a calendar girly illustrator like Petty and Vargas.

BD: How did you get involved in painting for the risqué publishers of this period? Did you go through an art agency/service? Did you have direct contact with publishers?

CC: I worked directly with the publishers, some of which were introduced to me from magazine publishers and adult movie producers. Sorry that I don't recall the names of the paperback publishers. The magazines were *Adam Magazine* and *Teen Magazine*.

BD: Do you remember how much you were paid for each painting from this era?

CC: The first black and white illustrations I did for *Teen Magazine* "boy and girl", not risqué. I believe I got \$75 or so. The paperbacks I think started at \$100 - \$150 and eventually the figure of \$300 was the last of them in about 1970. Please don't quote me on these as I did not keep any records of this after 1980 or so.

BD: How long did it take you to paint an average cover painting from this era?

CC: I usually spent an hour or so with pencil sketches that were colored for the client to okay. Then would shoot some model shots using my wife or teenage daughter for models; some times would hire a professional model for more complicated covers. The original painting would take 8 - 12 hours to finish.



CC: Other commercial artwork during that time were *Adam Magazine*, cartoons and story illustrations, motion pictures, mostly B movies and XXX movie posters and pressbooks.

BD: Is there anything else that you can tell me about this era of your career?

CC: Although this era in my career was not exactly what I had in mind as a noted illustrator, I worked conscientiously toward quality illustrations and did receive an "Oscar" from the Adult Film Industry for one of my illustrations for a movie poster. I was able to support my family without my wife having to work. My goals, set when I was 11 years old, were to be a commercial artist until I had enough money to just paint fine art, not worrying about selling art for a living. With my wife and me working in real estate, I can teach out of my home studio and paint when and what I want! My goal is reached and I'm loving it!

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I got a letter from a sappy woman a while back--she knew I was sappy too, which is to say a lifelong Democrat.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Syracuse University commencement address, 1994

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## Finding Bill Edwards

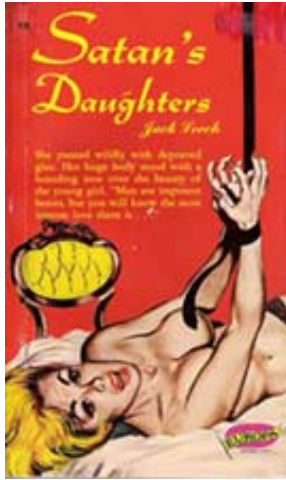
By L. Truman Douglas



L. Truman Douglas is shown in the photo to the left. All the cover scans are from his collection and they were all painted by the actor/artist Bill Edwards, who is shown in the photo to the right. The center scan, cover painted by Edwards, is of the unique fold-out cover for *Berlin Bed*, by Fritz Jantzen (EB1101, 1963).

The mystery of who did hundreds of paperback covers for Sanford Aday's publishing outfits of Saber, Saber Tropic, Fabian, and Vega has been solved. "B.E." are the initials of "Bill Edwards."

Born in New Jersey on September 14, 1918, Bill Edwards spent summers during his youth on a ranch in Wyoming, working as a cowboy and rodeo rider. There he developed a respect for Western life that would influence his work from his earliest efforts and throughout his life.



*Satan's Daughters*, by Jack Leech (EB1104)



*The Left Hand of Satan*, by Mark Lucas (SB88, 1965)



*Devil's Harvest*, by Rob E. Smith (SB161, 1969)

Edwards first received his formal art education at the Art Students League in New York. He paid for his schooling modeling for the Conover Agency, where he posed for catalogs and magazines. He first began his commercial artwork painting for pulp magazines and men's adventure magazines. He did many covers and a tide of interior illustrations for such varied publications as *Stag*, *Housewives*, *Weird Tales*, *Charlie Chan's Mystery Magazine*, and *Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine* throughout the 1950's and going all the way to the late 1970's. These ranged from western to mystery to soft-core sleaze scenes.



*The Naked Archer*, by Stella Gray (VB49, 1966)



*The Naked and Depraved*, by Bill Newton (VB63, 1969)



*Star Trail*, by Thomas W. Crumley (VSFL14, 1966)

His career as a full-time artist was interrupted for about ten years when he received a motion picture contract and moved to California. Under contract to a major Hollywood studio, he played many featured roles, including many in western pictures. During the 1940s, the lanky, 6'5" tall, Edwards appeared not only in westerns like *The Virginian*, *Border Outlaws*, and *Trail of the Yukon* but also in such films as *Hail the Conquering Hero*, with Eddie Bracken as a fake war hero, and *Miss Susie Slagle's*, a movie about a turn-of-the-century boarding house that starred Veronica Lake and Lillian Gish. Edwards also had a major role in the 1944 *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, starring Gale Russell and Diana Lynn. His acting has been

described as "low-key" and as being from a "non-actor." He married his wife Hazel Allen Edwards in 1946 and was married to her all his life.

Resuming his art career in the early 1950s, he became a commercial illustrator, creating hundreds of paperback book covers as one of at least two artists for Sanford Aday's Fresno, California, publishing group of Saber, Fabian, and Vega. He had a distinct style within the paperback cover world and characteristically painted moles on women's faces and, strangely, often painted band-aids on butts. He also did the cover art for the *Many Loves of Casanova* 2-book set put out by Holloway House in 1961, which he signed the cover art, and all of the fold-out covers for Europa Books, a short-lived publishing company also out of California. He rarely signed his covers or interior artwork and when he did, it was through his initials only. Luckily, his style was very distinct and his covers can easily be identified from this distinct style.

In addition to his paperback and magazine commercial art, Edwards also designed a series of paper dolls of movie stars. Using the medium of oil and acrylic, Edwards also painted fine art scenes of the American West for which he was best known for in the art world. Edwards participated in the U.S. Air Force Art Program for many years painting various air force subjects from the spiritual side of air force life with an assignment to document air force chaplains (1968's "Father Krieger - Chaplain to") to painting many aircrafts and air force life scenes. His air force related work took him to Thailand which he used for inspiration for many of his air force artworks. His paintings are in the permanent Air Force fine arts collection and are on exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington DC, the Pentagon, and throughout the United States. Throughout the 1950's and as late as 1980, Mr. Edwards guest starred in several television shows ranging from *Dragnet* to *Bonanza* to *Hawaii Five-O* and *Magnum P.I.*



*The Many Loves of Casanova Vol. 1*, by Jacques Casanova (HH103, 1961)



*Passion's Greatest Trap*, by Jack Vast (STB933, 1966)



*The Swap Set*, by Frank G. Harris (SB146, 1969)

During his long career as a western artist, he participated in art shows throughout the western states and won numerous awards in juried competitions. In California, he had exhibits in the Los Angeles Society of Illustrators Exhibit, Western Women Artists of America, Los Angeles Museum, San Bernardino Art Association Inland Exhibition, the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce Art Exhibit, Orange County Fair, the Fireside Gallery in Carmel and the Mary Livingstone Gallery 2 in Santa Anna.

Bill Edwards died on December 21, 1999 in Newport Beach, California of pneumonia.

Though he was previously unknown as a paperback cover artist, Bill Edwards will be remembered in the paperback world for his distinct depictions of sexy scenes and gorgeous women. In the sleaze paperback

world he will be best remembered for such classic covers as *Devil's Harvest* that continue to be sought after by collectors.

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We would be a lot safer if the Government would take its money out of science and put it into astrology and the reading of palms. Only in superstition is there hope. If you want to become a friend of civilization, then become an enemy of the truth and a fanatic for harmless balderdash.

-- Kurt Vonnegut

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# **William**

# **ROTSLER**



William Rotsler in the Sea of Cortez. Detail from a contact sheet of photos by Earl Kemp at San Felipe, Baja California, Mexico taken circa 1966.

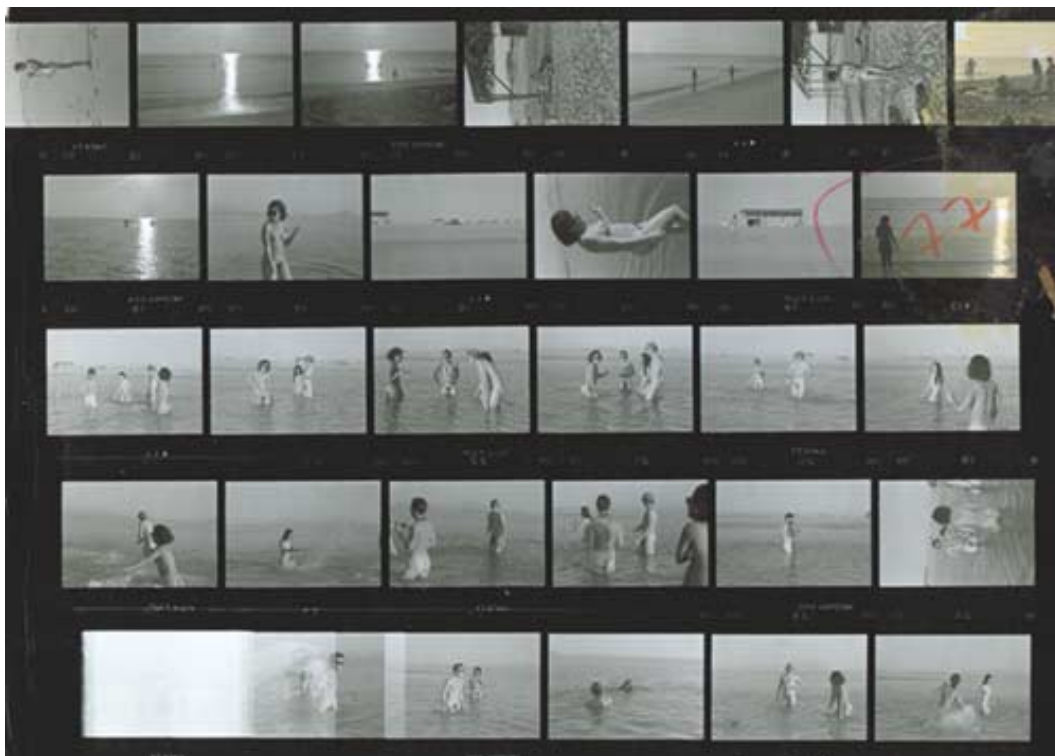
## **the lost portfolio**

NOTICE: This William Rotsler Section/Lost Portfolio is an integral part of --e\*1\*18- (Vol. 4 No. 1) February 2005, and is published and © 2005 by Earl Kemp. All rights reserved. It is produced and distributed through <http://efanzines.com> by Bill Burns in an e-edition only.

# The *Masque* of *The Tattooed Dragon*.\*

## The Lost Portfolio

By Earl Kemp



This is a contact sheet of photos by Earl Kemp. It is one of a set showing William Rotsler and a cast of models on a photo shoot in the Sea of Cortez, San Felipe, Baja California, Mexico circa 1966.

I thought it would be simple to sit down at the keyboard and whip out a quick-and-easy “Who William Rotsler Is” piece for the benefit of the uninitiated. Only, after numerous false starts, it became clear that I couldn’t make it work that way. There’s too much to say.

William Rotsler was probably the most purely human person I ever knew, acting on and advocating the use of basic animal instincts. In my view, he became almost more than human because of the time and energy he exerted only for the benefit of persons surrounding him.

Sadly it is not possible for me to look him straight in the face and say, “William Rotsler, I love you.”

Yet it is a true statement.

#

I decided to take the easy way out, to cop out, to pass the buck...right back to William Rotsler.

Following are two pieces in which Rotsler tries to explain Rotsler to Rotser. Both of them first appeared in issues of Rosler’s posthumous *Masque*. The first of these, “A Life Synopsis,” is in Rotsler’s words, written “in

headline form.” It chronicles the first 50 years of Rotsler’s reign.

The second piece, “I Am, I Said,” consists of a number of excerpts from “A Diary For Michele,” which is a long love letter composed over a period of months in 1964-65.

More than that, both of these pieces perfectly portray the very broad sweep of Rotsler’s mind and thoughts, of the almost uncontrollable run-on of words spilling out of his vast experiences for anyone to share. They are Rotsler at his very best, stream of consciousness, intensely introspectively focused on just his thoughts and attempting to convey them—typing with one finger—to his eager audience. William Rotsler writing exclusively to an audience of one...Rotsler himself.

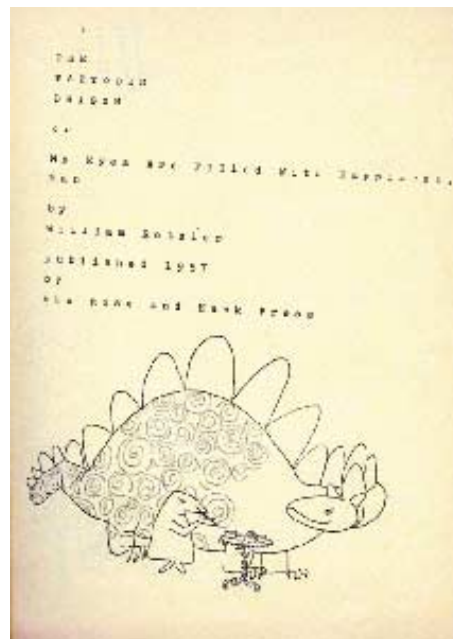
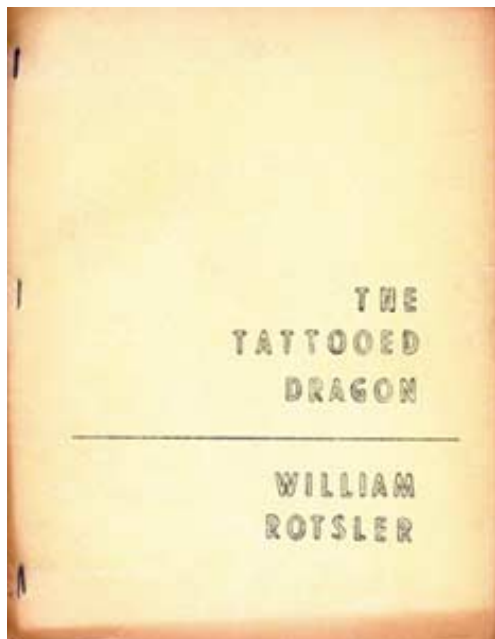
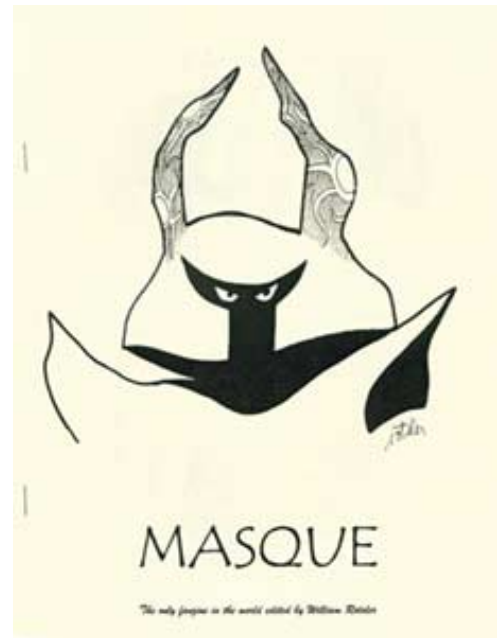
I couldn’t have introduced the man nearly half as well as he does himself.

#

After Rotsler explains himself two times, we move on to the Grand Master Robert Bloch who expounds on “The Art of William Rotsler” and focuses a big bright light on some more subtle aspects of the man/genius.

#

And all of this is by way of an introduction to the portfolio that follows.



*Tattooed Dragon* scans courtesy Robert Lichtman Collection.

In 1970, William Rotsler prepared a special erotic portfolio of his characteristic artwork for a special project Greenleaf Classics was undertaking. It consisted of thirteen 8-1/2”X11” single frame drawings that were all

very Rotsler and very erotic.

For reasons long forgotten, that project was junked at the very last minute. Then, when I resigned in 1971, I wound up with that package in my possession. Now, many years later, imagine my surprise and delight....

I had been unpacking a number of moving boxes that had not been touched in decades. In doing so, I unearthed a number of special goodies. There, in the very bottom of a shipping crate, in a file folder with no label, were the original Rotsler drawings.

## The Lost Portfolio

Buried out of existence for 34 years and now brought forth in all their original, unpublished spectacularness.

From William Rotsler with love....

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We all want to be loved for ourselves, and we so seldom are. We are loved for the person others think we are. Needless to say (but I shall), we do the same.

--William Rotsler, *Masque*

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## A Life Synopsis\*

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By William Rotsler

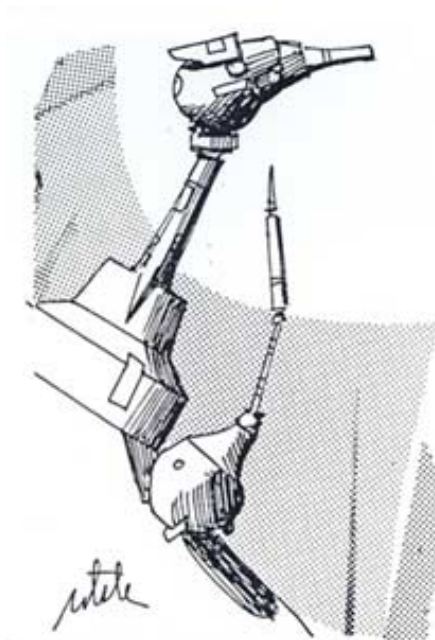
You don't catch up on fifty years quickly or easily, so here's what I've been doing--in headline form.

I've walked up the Arch of Triumph and down the Eiffel Tower. I've been shot off in catapult planes, stood in front of charging Ben-Hur chariots, and cartooned with Sergio Aragones. I filmed the first man to hang-glide into the Grand Canyon, which made global headlines, but was prohibited being mentioned here.

I've photographed auto races, rodeos, Ben-Hur chariot traces, and bullfights. I've photographed nudes six inches from a hundred-foot drop at the Grand Canyon, in the forecourt of the Chinese Theater, on the roof of Griffith Observatory, atop the L.A. City Hall, in Gulf of Mexico and Gulf of California, and in Carlsbad Caverns. I shot nudes of a young woman in my walnut orchard who shortly after became part of a very famous singing group.

I've almost killed the executive officer of an atomic submarine climbing the conning tower--more properly called a sail. I've seen over 8,000 women naked--once fifteen at the same time--and photographed hundreds, made movies and bookshelves. I've won Hugo awards and lost women. I've been arrested, praised, and cursed. I've been a soldier, a rancher, an editor, a friend, a sucker, and a lover. I've been on television, horses, an island, a small

continent and two big ones, and atop the Temple of the Magicians at Uxmal.



I've been to art school, had sculpture in exhibits, traveling shows, and a one-man show. I've been in the Coliseum, the Louvre, the White House, the Pentagon, Versailles, and Rodin's home. I've been in movie studios, Norman Lindsay's studio, Rudolph Valentino's aerie, Robert Heinlein's home, and trouble. I've photographed Jacques Cousteau and made Stan Freberg laugh.

I shoot for French television (with Bill Warren as the on-camera talent) and I know the secret of the Venus Butterfly. I don't swim very well and dance like they're firing pistols at my feet.



My work has been in *Playboy*, *Surfer*, *Reader's Digest*, *Analog*, some "Best of the Year" collections, and a collection of the "world's best photographs." Something Weird Video has some of the 27 movies I've made, one of which is considered by some a "cult" film. I've shaken hands with Buzz Aldrin and Superman, and movie stars and a lot of famous writers are my friends.

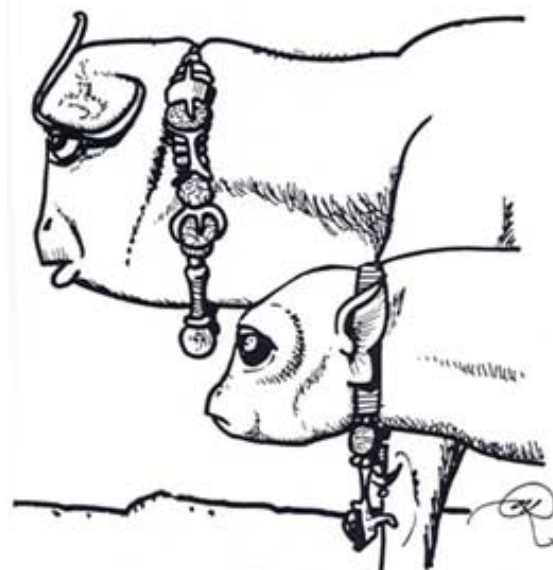
I've caressed Henry Moore sculpture and world famous bodies. I helped Andre de Dienes--perhaps the world's best figure photographer--pick which pictures to include in a book. The most frightened I've been is crossing a fast-running jungle stream in Mexico, up to my chin, holding a camera over my head, and not being able to swim. I've been in love and I've been loved; I've been in like and I sure as hell have been in lust.

I love chilled, tree-ripened mangos, starry nights, Western art, Frank McCarthy, root beer, Sir Laurence Alma-Tadema, silent movie epics, Mobius, ancient cities, Louis L' Amour, the small perfect hands of babies, good typography, Len Wein, Paul Turner, Harlan Ellison, Piet Hein's super-ellipse, and chocolate.

I've had psychic experiences in Venice near a gondola, on a mountain in Big Sur, and elsewhere. I've climbed the Washington monument and been dropped by cable from helicopters to destroyers in the middle of the Pacific. I've been in castles, jail, palaces, and *both* secret rooms in Harlan Ellison's house. I've been in the cable anchorage of the Oakland Bay Bridge, Forry Ackerman's museum-home, caves, secret command centers, movies, Mexican warehouses, ancient ruins, and love.

If I turned my head I could have seen Hedy Lamarr on her toilet. I've led deputy sheriffs after escaped criminals and proposed marriage twice—once atop a double Ferris wheel—accepted both times, married once.

I've trudged up the Statue of Liberty, had both engines go out of a small plane over Oahu, dated a belly dancer, designed and built a futuristic atomic submarine set in 1958 when they had released only one photo of the interior. I've made pornographic Easter Eggs with Sheree



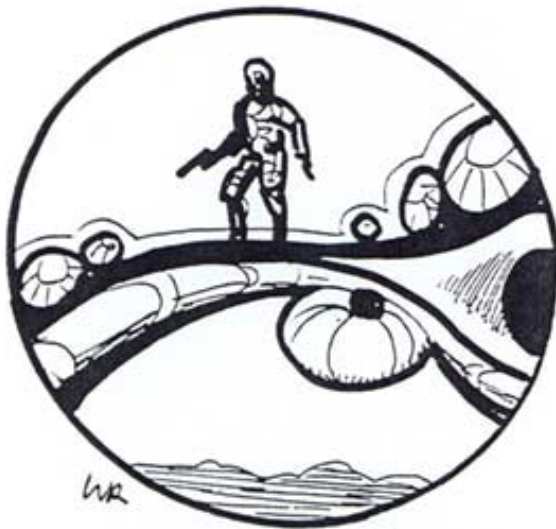
North and published--so far--54 books.

I've looked at volcanoes, Michelangelo's *David*, Aussie gold mines and the Senate, had week-long parties, had sex at Marineland and Disney World, taught writing that science fiction stuff, and been a mile from the epicenter.

I've been shotgunned in the stomach by my father (accidentally, I think), been in a bar fight in Mexico, sold a nurse to *Playboy*, looked at Mona Lisa in the original, been Down Under and Out West. I found out I was a diabetic the hard way--after I came out of a coma.

I've seen my name on a gravestone and on the door of my own industrial film company. I've been to Big Fancy parties, but the best ones, and the wildest ones, were those I gave.

I've written in the Star Trek, Marvel, and Tarzan universes. I've written comics and animated shows. I've published novels, poems, epigrams, photographs, drawings, and fanzines. I've made over 6,000 pieces of sculpture and hundreds of thousands of drawings.



I've been a fast gun and a slow burn. I've been shot at, laughed at, and laughed with. I've had a Corvette, a lot of laughs, and been house hunting with Marilyn Monroe.

I've made love to beautiful women and have friends I honor. I've dumped and I've been dumped. I've been in love and in pain. I've taken acid and liberties. I've told the truth at the wrong time and lied at the right.

I've found that no one--since my father and Uncle Sam-- can *make* me do anything, but I can be talked into all sorts of things. I've seen death and death has had a glimpse of me. And I'm a grandfather.

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\*Reprinted from posthumous *Masque* "The only fanzine in the world edited by William Rotsler."

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How can you write your autobiography when you've only seen your life from one side?

--William Rotsler, *Masque*

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"I Am, I Said...."\*

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By William Rotsler

7 October 1964

I stare with numbed brain and numbed finger at the words that come unbidden. Midnight wanderings. The Noon of Night brings the Saturnalia of all Monster Thoughts. Great limping Thoughts with electrodes in their necks. Dead-white Thoughts with a trickle of blood at the dreamline. Flittery, gibbery Thoughts with furry wings. Good-natured Thoughts that turn hairy at the full moon. Great stout-hearted Thoughts that change color in phone booths. Crime-fighting Thoughts that bleed in three colors.



WRITER WHO LOVES HIS OWN WORDS

Black things come twitching in the shadows and tear living flesh from Thoughts freshly felled by those great warriors Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Honesty, Patriotism, and all that gang. Black things nibble at the toes of Hope, lashed naked to a metaphor and crowned with thorns. Mind-spiders make your hair ripple. Dead thoughts are sloshing around in the scuppers, which are traditionally awash with blood (green added during the holiday season). The screams of someone I know are spun back on the turntable and erased from my memory. You step over something Unspeakable rutting with something Speakable in the doorway and go out for air.

The night is cool, as nights are as bound to tradition as we. The habit-forming cloak of darkness is thrown around you with a swash, buckled on with a rakish tilt and, fooling no one, you saunter away.

The night keeps secrets, they tell me, spilling the best secret of the lot. I stuff my night with secrets and hurry on into the day to arm myself with a fresh harvest of s\*e\*c\*r\*e\*t\*s for the next night's work.

I leap from simile to metaphor, hop from cliché to bon mot with dazzling ease, astounding all who know me, stunning those who have only heard The Legend of Me. I pirouette on a hard-won point until I am reminded I don't dance. I sit the next one out on an independent clause, my feet propped up on a pile of @@@@. A dainty taste of flesh and fantasy steps from behind a fence of \$\$\$\$\$\$ and winks at me, movie-style flirt. % go my eyes and = = = = go my feet.

I'm off and running, a slave to idealism....

#

27 October 1964

And what about me? (I'm glad someone asked that question...) Well, I think I'm one of the Good Guys, not one of the Bad Guys.

But I guess being a Good Guy isn't enough. You gotta be part bastard, part Savage, part Uncaring Male, part Adonis, part satyr, part stag movie, part dream, and part easy-laughter. You have to be Kooky and Witty and Cutely Shallow and hung like a prize bull. You have to breathe charm and exhale *joi de vie*. You have to act as if you did not care, to put on the Put Down, to create images of Rape and Father and Domination in the mind of a woman.

#

29 October 1964

Sometimes I delude myself. Sometimes I think lightning bolts flicker from my fingertips and that there is thunder in my voice. Sometimes I drip slime and rosewater and golden glitter. My head rises above the swamp, above the sluggish currents of blood and pus, above the great mold forests and unmoving dead trees, above the scuttling gray clouds, above the age-old dotted lines of satellites and moonbirds. My feet are encased in mud, in stone cairns, in bright blood, ankle-deep in coins and crushed beetles.

Sometimes I delude myself. I am Apollo and Hercules, King Stud and Hero, twisted Richard and the iron-clad man from tomorrow. I crush words into rigid lines, tempting fate, tempting immortality and ignoble death.

Sometimes I delude myself. I think I am Noble and True, Honest and Brave, Kind and Tough, Tiger-quick and Wise, Intelligent and Truly Talented.

Sometimes I delude myself. Sometimes I think I am drab and ordinary, cloddish and awkward, doomed to mediocrity, a featureless shadow on life's stage.

Sometimes I delude myself. I say "Rise!" to the Sun and "Glow!" to the stars and "Shine!" to the moon and they obey. I sprinkle temporary jewels on the crests of far-off waves, I cause flowers to color, and I give that special tender flesh of a woman's thighs the softness of cushioning life. I wave my hand and the whole vast curving dustcloud of stars and planets light the summer night.

Sometimes I delude myself. I say to me, you have known the love of women of worth, you have caused art and life and laughter—you are unique and solid.

Sometimes I delude myself. I am self-consciously arty and unreasoningly vain. I set neon-tinted words onto scented pages....

Sometimes I delude myself. I say, you, Bill Rotsler, you understand you. I say, I have ordered my house, I have stenciled Great Slogans on the inside of my head, I have armored my heart against Life, I have installed intricate alarms, I have unfurled the ancestral banners, blazoned with last week's clichés.

Sometimes I delude myself. But better me than someone else.

#

12 December 1964

I am gainfully employed at making molehills out of mountains.

Sometimes I wonder how I can stand myself, pawing around in the muck of my own brain, standing knee-deep in soggy memories and unused thoughts, bent under the skull dome of my head, watching the slippery crud seep out the eye sockets like the overflow of a bathtub. I bang my mind against the mossy inside of my skull as I try to straighten my back. I curse and the noise is hollow and wet, the darkness dank and filled with the buzzing of gnats and the swoops of the vampire bats of my subconscious. I dipper a mouthful of green filth with my hands and spew it onto white paper with a great burpy *Bleah!*

#

31 December 1964

I could point with bursting pride at a sentence well turned (literally spinning!) and a chance thought-line that brought in a clever cliché. I can harrumph and hope people will notice how devilishly clever I was to string together a lot of unpolished words into a necklace of dead albatrosses. The world can look into the Freak Tent. The gods of pagan times can stir in their vaults, knowing someone still recalls their imprisoning immortality. The police can stake out a Letter of Ill Repute and wait for it to be capitalized. The wiggly mind-spiders can find dark,



moist corners to lurk in. The tides of time can gurgle around the barnacled pilings of a burning bridge. Historians can reconstruct the Age from a stela of dung and gold and used newspaper I have constructed and paint the World at the Dawn of the Atom as a place to avoid. When the electronic boys in the backroom have finished tinkering with that Time Machine they will hang a notice of condemnation of the whole Era.

#

15 April 1965



I stand posturing before the mirror of my mind and say, What a marvelously ironic figure you are! What a profile of courage! What sacrifice! What vast nobility! Look how truly wondrously you have weaved a great tapestry of words and slithering snakes....

I posture and pose and catch glimpses of myself from the corner of my eye. My Hero's Suit is glittering. My shield of Righteousness is a wonder of shining strength. My face is a Hero's face for sure, reflecting Thought and Strength and Depth and Truth.

But I turn and the strings that hold on my breastplate and tie down my plumed helmet are broken and frayed and knotted. The straps that bind my dented shield to my good left arm are cracked and loose. My terrible sword of Vengeance and Right is nicked and the pommel is losing some of its semi-precious jewels. My boots have holes, my scabbard is scabby and termites have chewed my emblem.

My words echo hollowly in my pitted helmet when I cry out words of Wisdom. They dribble down my chin and spot my crested tunic. My arm grows tired waving my sword around and I sit down on a rock. A splendid

horse, until recently the property of Don Quixote, crops at the spring flowers and tender grass nearby.

The white clouds still stride majestically across the sky and the sounds of a fresh spring day ping off my armor like insects. The dark moist earth pushes forth the new greenery, fertilized by the dead winter.

- - -

\*Excerpted from "A Diary For Michele," posthumous *Masque 16*.

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My thoughts flow out faster than the keys move, even the sluggish thoughts that flow like cooling lava are faster than the one flying finger of Fate.

--William Rotsler, "A Diary For Michele," posthumous *Masque 16*

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# The Art of William Rotsler\*

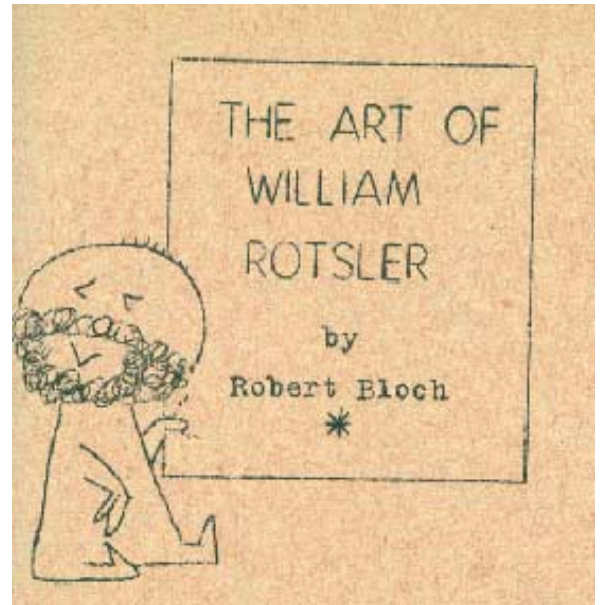
Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Robert Bloch

I do not know when the name of William Rotsler first flashed across the fannish horizon as an artist. Somebody must have the exact date—perhaps the postal authorities.

Sufficient it is to say that at this moment another great name emerged to take its rightful place alongside Van Goo, Tooloose LaDreck, Anonymous Bosh, Grandpa Breughel (not the Elder Breughel, but his father), and Ub lwerks.

Not since the immortal Goyim painted *La Maja* has any artist displayed such a mastery of the nude. Combining the delicacy of a Boucher (not Tony you ignorant lout, but Francois) with the draughtsmanship of a Degas or even a Degler, William Rotsler has established a definite niche for himself in the ranks of the *Saturday Evening Post*-Impressionists.

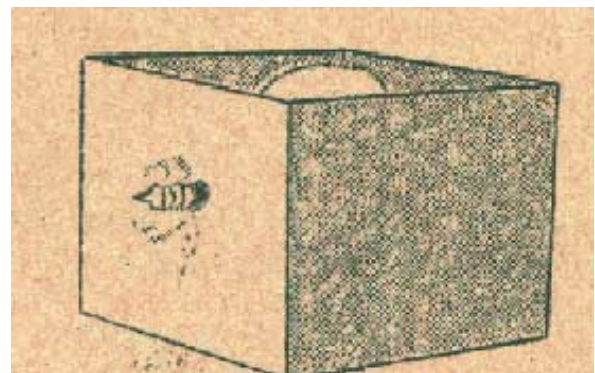
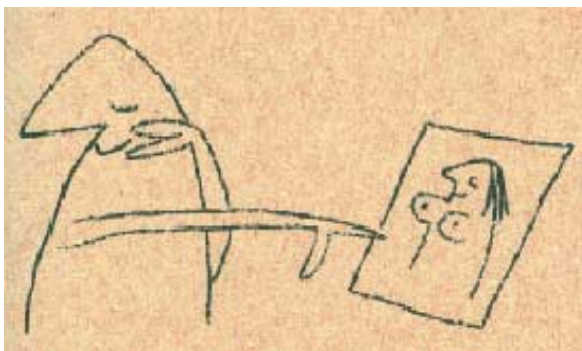


For a while, his early work exhibited some of the massive lines of the Dutch Masters—Van Dyck, La Palina, and the immortal Panatella. A later phase brought to mind the odd distortions found in the work of that unique Greek genius who painted in Spain and whose tremendous output won for him the name of El Producto.

A brief fling at abstractions found Rotsler abandoning the Cubists and taking his rightful place amongst the Squares.

And there he remains today.

His work in fan magazines has invoked the attention of numerous fen, to say nothing of the above-mentioned authorities. It has lent itself, all too frequently, to glib tongue-in-cheek commentary by people like myself.



But I have waited patiently for someone to come forth and proclaim what I seriously believe to be the truth—that Rotsler is a remarkably gifted talent dealing in evocative symbolism.

Anyone privileged to have seen his compendium, *The Tattooed Dragon*, must be aware of this. His ability to recreate imagery arising from subliminal levels is almost unique in our times. Actually, when Rotsler's work is viewed as a whole, both the nudes and the noodling are all part of a pattern. He has captured and set down the ideology of the Id. Although the government will probably never commission him to do a set of murals for post office walls, it's about time all of us (including this tongue-in-cheek commentator) realized that his art is completely graphic without a hint of porno. His is the gift of insight...insight directed toward the hidden erotic imagery of our sexual nature, and toward the un verbalized visualizations of inner reality usually translated only through the medium of a Rorschach Test.



There are hints of this rare talent in the art of Paul Klee, Heinrich Kley, Max Ernst, George Grocz—and on another level, Chagall. Steinberg does it, and Thurber at times seems to be the Grandma Moses of this particular (and as yet undesignated) school.

But few artists have taken the direct and candid approach which is Rotsler's specialty. In *The Tattooed Dragon*, most particularly, he has managed to combine the presentation of individualized "moments of truth" with deft social (or even antisocial) commentary.

Naturally, I realize that significance, as well as beauty, resides in the eye of the beholder. But this beholder is beholden to William Rotsler for flashes of perception

which are directly inspired by his unique genius.

Okay, so the word slipped out. And that means it's time for me to get back in line again, and in future to continue the great fannish pastime of making with the funnies about "Rotsler's nudes."

Still, just this once, I wanted to say that I think we have something very special in our midst. And I venture to prophesy that the day will come when Rotsler will win a much wider and justly deserved recognition.

And that's where all the gagsters, myself included, are going to be proud to say, "I knew him when."

For that matter, I'm proud to know him *now*.

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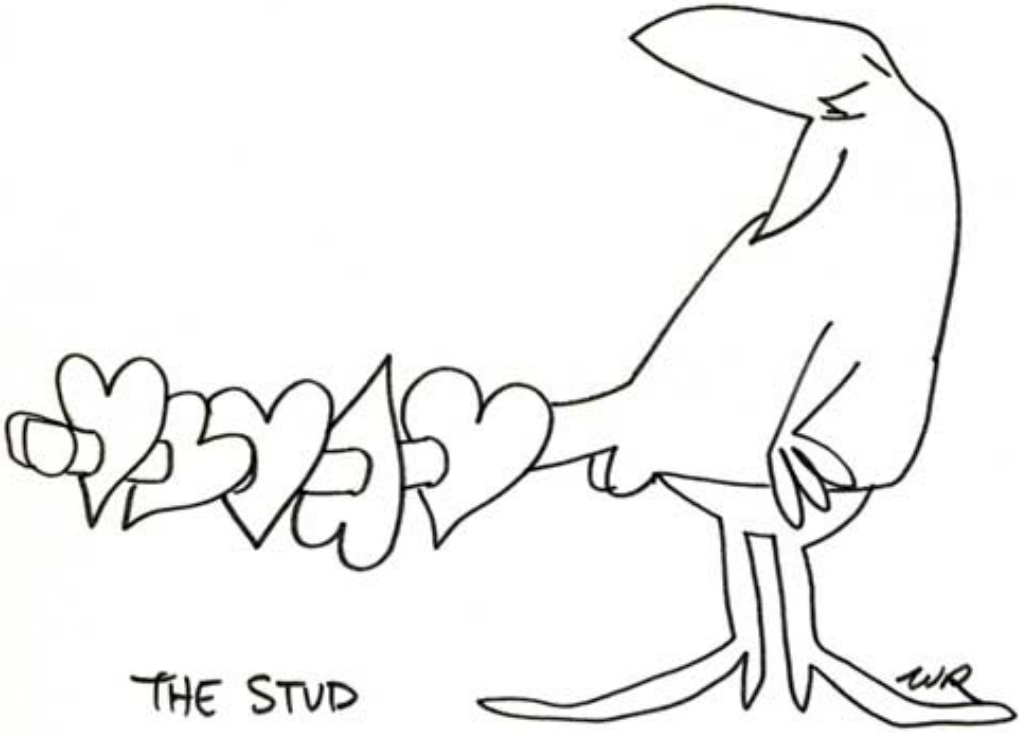
\*Reprinted from *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*, Advent, 1962. Originally published in Terry Carr's *Innuendo* 8, August 1958. Special thanks to Robert Lichtman for the cover scans of *Innuendo* [including the original Rotsler illustrations for the piece on tinted paper] and *The Tattooed Dragon* from his incredible collection.



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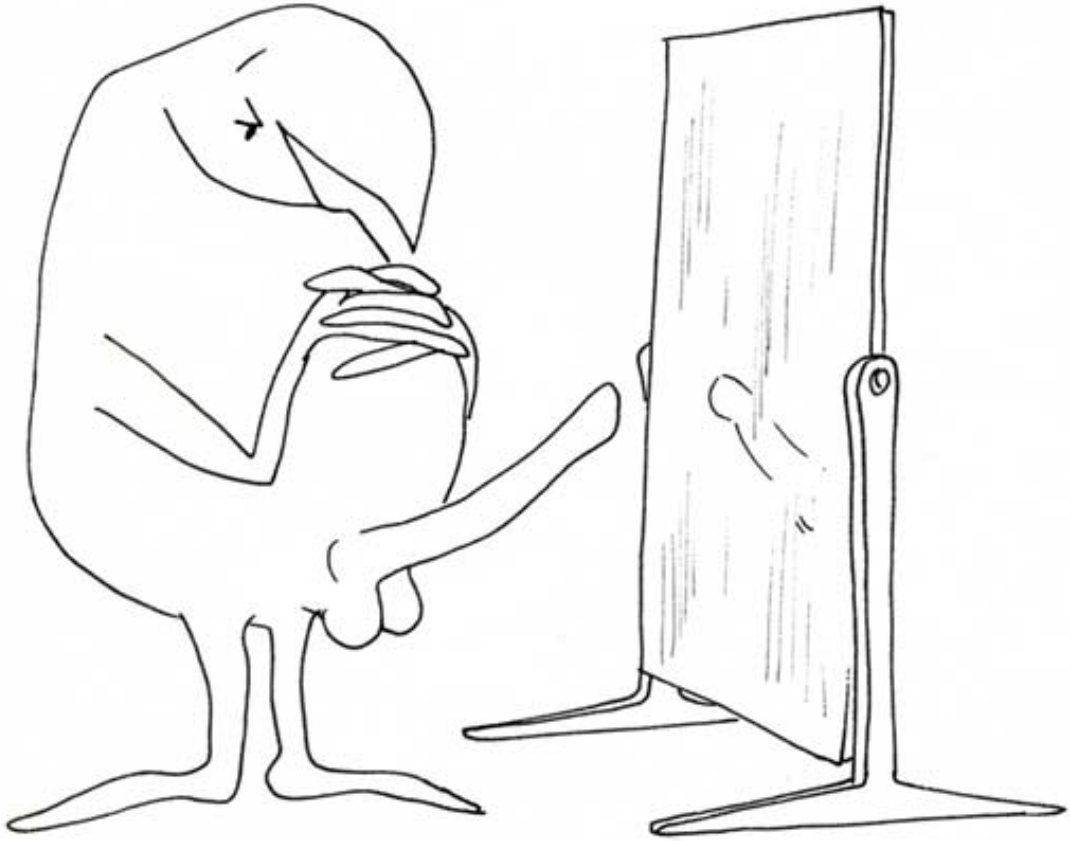
A moral at the end of a story makes people believe they understood it all along.  
--William Rotsler, *Masque*

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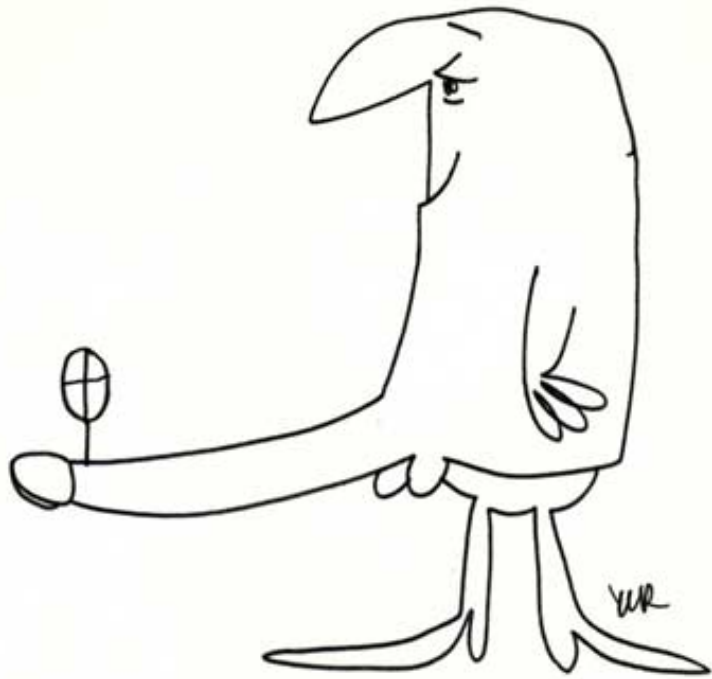
THE STUD

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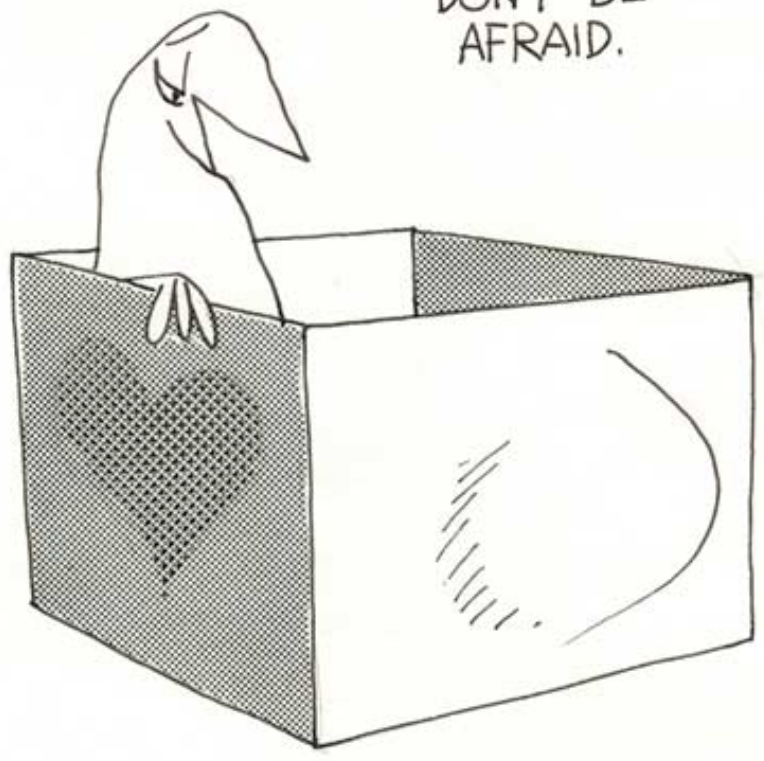


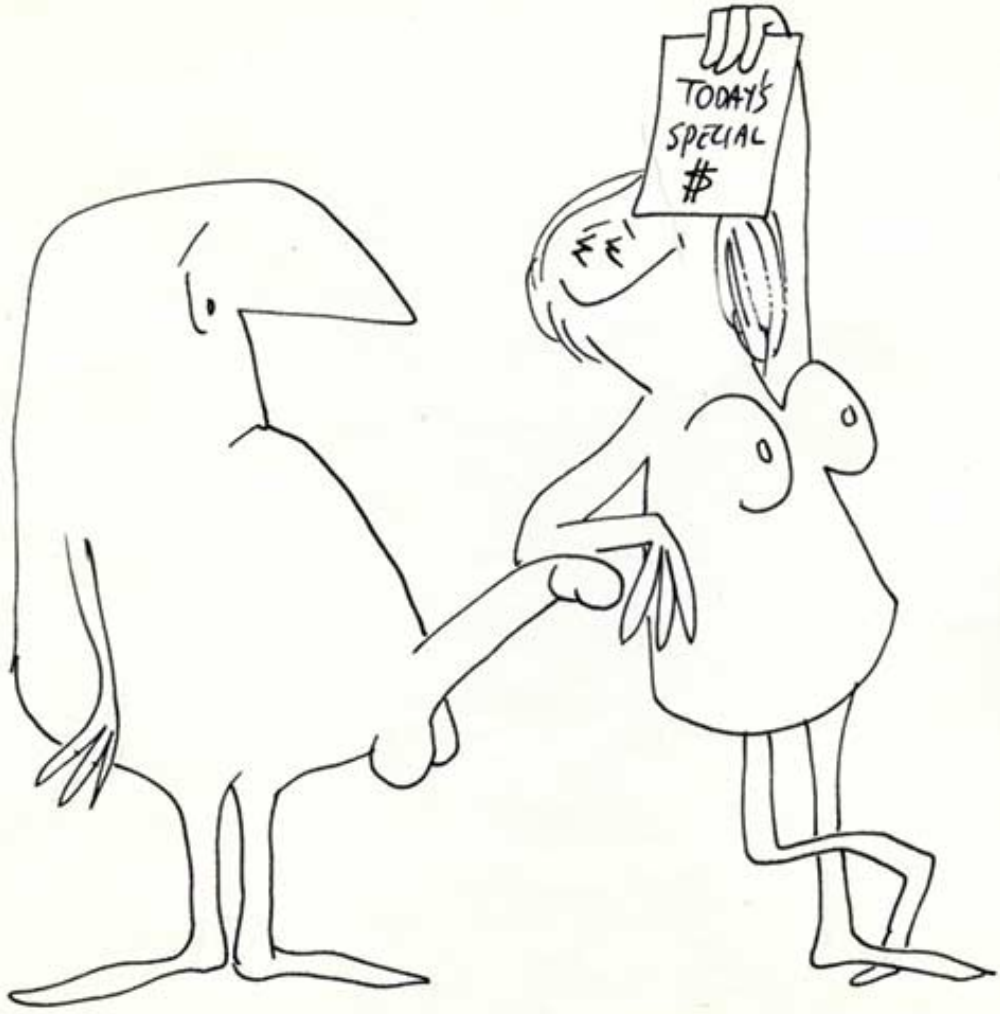






WHY,  
MY DEAR,  
DON'T BE  
AFRAID.







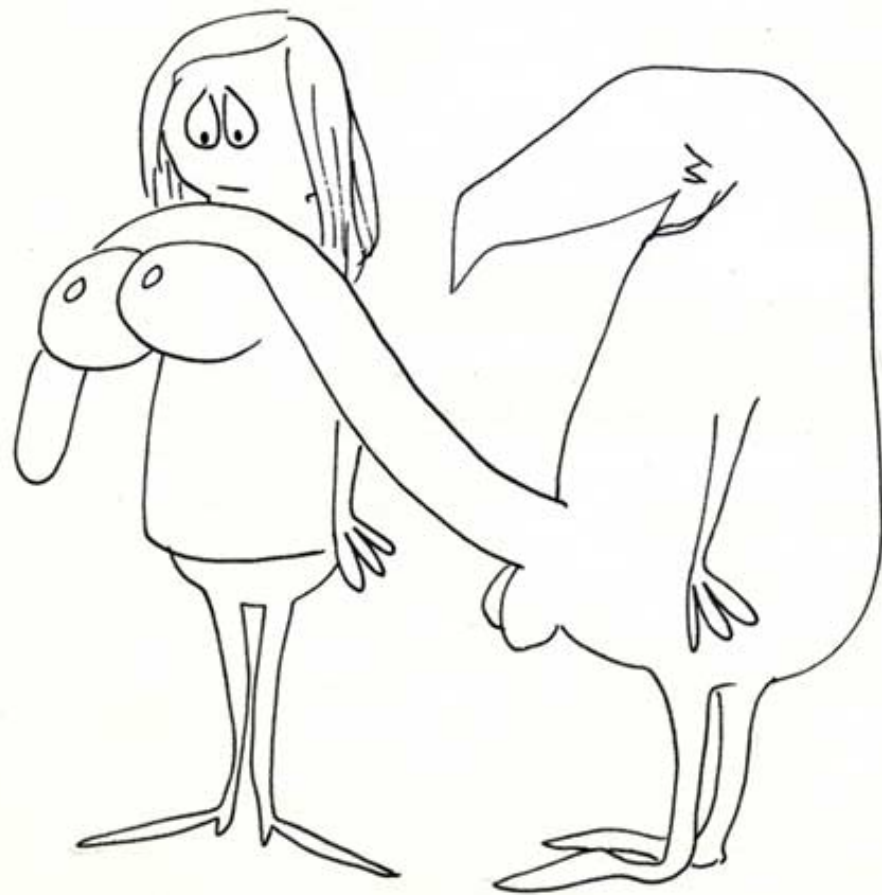
THAT AIN'T NO BIG THING

WHUZZAT?





SURPRIZE!



SEE? ALL YOUR STRUGGLES  
WERE FOR NAUGHT...





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One man's pornography is another man's erotica. One man's ho-hum is another man's fevered excitement.

--William Rotsler, *Masque*

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