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The sermon was based on what he claimed was a well-known fact, that there were no Atheists in foxholes. I asked Jack what he thought of the sermon afterwards, and he said, 'There's a Chaplain who never visited the front.'

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Hocus Pocus*, pg. 182

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In the world of science fiction, it is also in memory of G.M. Carr, Jack Chalker, and Andre Norton, but most especially for dear old friend F.M. "Buz" Busby; a better fan never lived.

In the world of counterculture and gonzo journalism, it is also in memory of my hero Hunter S. Thompson. It was Thompson, with his acute appreciation of master criminal and superevil person Richard Nixon, who set the course for the way I approach my own memoirs. My piece "Fear and Loathing in Evanston," in *e/11* (December 2003), was an unstated tribute to his influence on me.

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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.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *e/* possible: Forrest J Ackerman, Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, Brittany A. Daley, Bruce Gillespie, Elaine Kemp Harris, Erik Kemp, Miriam Linna, Lynn Munroe, Charles Nuetzel, Adam Parfrey, Ryan Richardson, Art Scott, Gary Sohler, Robert Speray, Jodi Walli, and Peter Weston.

**ARTWORK:** This issue of *e/* features original artwork by Harry Bell and recycled artwork by William Rotsler.

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I am an atheist (or at best a Unitarian who winds up in church quite a lot).

-- Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "Fates Worse than Death: An Autobiographical Collage of the 1980s"

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...Return to sender, address unknown.... 11

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.

**Saturday January 29, 2005:**



In the December issue of *e/* you ran a Milton Luros Science Fiction Cover Painting Archive ["Cherry Pink and Uncle Milty Time," *e/18* and it was very nice to see all those cover paintings together like that.

I've discovered two more Luros cover paintings, only they aren't on science fiction pulp magazines, they're on men's magazines. One is from *Man's Life*, July 1956 and the other from *Real Men*, November 1956. I'm sending them to you so your readers can enjoy them also.

--Tony Jacobs

**Thursday February 3, 2005:**

Hey, the issue is GREAT!!! (Of course, I've only skimmed over it -- other than Real Deep Study of mine, of course.) The puffin you found was pretty much like the one I was gonna draw -- except that I was going to put a mask on it and label it 'Incognito.' And I see you found covers, and lotsa info about Novel. So I'm the recipient of mafia money, huh. . . ?

--Shelby Vick

**Friday February 4, 2005:**

Thanks Earl, another magnificent issue. The articles by Brittany Daley and L. Truman Douglas are groundbreaking and fantastic - now on to Fixler!

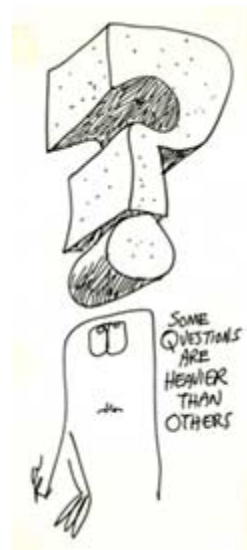
--Lynn Munroe

**Sunday February 6, 2005:**

I note that you dedicate *e/18* to, among others, my deceased friends Stieg Larsson and Sven Christer Swahn. A very nice gesture, and one I appreciate greatly and would like to thank you for.

As always, *e/* is a fanzine I read with great enjoyment and find myself hard up to comment on. Most of the texts are self-contained; good writing, interesting topics, more than a few insights and -- perhaps that is the comment which most easily does suggest itself -- an extremely refreshing reminder that the current wave of repressive moralism is reasonably not more than just a backlash, which will run its course and wither, as it should. But while we're wallowing in it, it can break your heart. This last week, two of the major news items in Sweden have concerned first, a experimental theater project centered on children's perceptions of sexuality, where students from the Stockholm Institute of Drama have confronted kids from six to twelve with different sexually charged experiences (in one

instance, a drama student read a very short story about two small girls engaging in oral sex; in another, kids were played a sound recording of an intercourse); and second, a direct-mail campaign by a German liquor manufacturer who has sent very small sample bottles of his product to a number of Swedes. In both cases, police investigations are now underway, since numerous Outraged Citizens have complained to the authorities -- in the first case, accusing the drama students of sexual molestation of children, in the second, accusing the liquor company of breaking the Swedish alcohol monopoly laws and inciting to illegal consumption of liquor. The direction in which Sweden is moving otherwise can, perhaps, be inferred from a third news item, also appearing this week but causing virtually no public outcry at all, as opposed to the two other: the Swedish attorney general is proposing a new law, by which "any person suspected of any crime the possible punishments for which include a prison sentence" (my italics) will be forced to give a DNA sample which will then be kept in a national criminal DNA library. Obviously, about the only crimes where a prison sentence is not possible are spitting in the street and parking in an allowed space but without paying the fee; also obviously, if they want the spitter's or parker's DNA, they can always suspect them of committing their foul deeds under the influence of \*gasp\* illicit drugs. But this suggestion has by most been greeted as very helpful to the police. Which I'm sure it is.



Oh, well. I should have written many issues ago; I should have congratulated you on your birthday (I really did mean to, since your daughter kindly invited me to the celebrations and I, unfortunately but inevitably, had to decline); I should have stayed more in touch. What the hell. Keep up the excellent work and keep doing your excellent fanzine, for which I'll keep vainly voting in the Hugos.

--John-Henri Holmberg

Thanks very much for the presentation of the Cordwainer Smith article. Love those *Galaxy* covers -- many are from an era slightly before I started buying *Galaxy*, so I've never seen the covers before.

However, it's hopeless trying to print out from an html file, so I will still appreciate having the PDF file from efanzines.com.

--Bruce R. Gillespie

### Saturday February 12, 2005:

LET IT B.E. ~ "Finding Bill Edwards" (revised)



Disappointment quickly replaced my glee over finding the Bill Edwards piece in e\*/\*18. My initial solution was to let the matter slide (after all, it's a short piece addressed to a small community about an obscure artist), but alas the author's omissions are too significant to ignore. The first and most important fact neglected was proper credit to the person who actually solved the B.E. puzzle: Eric Deutchman from, appropriately enough, the Show Me State. I'll admit L. Truman Douglas bears a passing resemblance, but really Eric's mug should be smiling back at us under the heading "Finding Bill Edwards."



Eric had the sort of good fortune that paperback collectors only DREAM of: being the sole heir to a vast archive of vintage smut paperbacks and magazines. Bequeathed by a distant uncle, this jaw-dropping collection almost went the way many other such collections have gone...to the dump. Eric sheepishly admitted to trashing one load before making the wise decision to investigate the outlandish notion that perhaps these books had some value. He quickly discovered this uncle -- whom he'd barely known -- had left him a treasure trove. eBay seller "showmemags" was born.

Like so many newcomers to the genre (myself included), Eric enjoyed and absorbed and quickly learned to differentiate between different artists and their styles. While our tastes in

cover artwork often didn't jibe, there were a couple imprints that we agreed had consistently top-notch artwork, and one such imprint was SABER. I told Eric that Saber, like Brandon House, had fantastic artwork that was unattributed or, in the case of Saber, credited to an artist known only as "B.E."

On a visit to Kayo Books in San Francisco, Ron Blum had shown me some original Parliament magazine pencil drawings that were -- without a doubt -- the work of the Saber artist. Many of the pieces bore the initials "B.E." Who was this B.E.? I wasn't the only one wondering....the collecting duo of Brittany Daley and L. Truman Douglas said they, too, were "on a quest" to put a name to the Saber artist. A few weeks later (June 2004), I told Brittany that Sanford Aday's daughter had provided me with a tantalizing lead (not matching the initials), though nothing to date had panned out.



Two months later (August 2004), I received the following e-mail from Eric Deutchman: "I've also discovered who B.E. is, I found his artwork in some of my old *Knight* mags from the early to mid '60s and he actually signed the work Bill Edwards. His telltale Mole on the cheek of his women and great legs. He's the artist that did so many of those 'Saber,' 'Vega,' and other PB covers." Eric followed up this e-mail with some scans which were indisputable proof that he'd found our man. I immediately dropped a line to Brittany and included the scans.

She, in turn, Googled an artist bio that appeared to match THE Bill Edwards. That bio, written by Edwards' widow and posted on the Judith Hale Gallery website ([http://www.judithhalegallery.com/featured\\_artists/artist\\_edwards.html](http://www.judithhalegallery.com/featured_artists/artist_edwards.html)), provides the word-for-word bulk of the "Finding Bill Edwards" article. Mrs. Edwards, like Eric Deutchman, is not credited.

Sorry for the long letter...the facts compelled me to set the record straight. Eric Deutchman was astute enough to notice and kind enough to share and, more than anyone else, he deserves the "hats off" for cracking the B.E. code. I only wish Bill Edwards (R.I.P. 1999) could've been around to enjoy some fan mail.

--Ryan Richardson

### **Sunday February 13, 2005:**

Immensely enjoyable as I find your ezines, I have never had occasion to comment until now, and it is a suggestion rather than a "fact".

In your newest ezine, rich brown (page 5) mentions a TV interview where a "WW1 fighter ace" on the (US) *This Is Your Life*, told the joke about fokkers and messerschmits. While I cannot prove this did not happen, it would seem to be overly coincidental that this happened on a \_ British \_ TV chat show only a

few years ago. A Liverpool comedian, Stan Boardman, was being interviewed by Des O'Connor, a singer-turned-chat-show-host. He began to tell the joke, and the nervous laughter and silence became greater the longer he went on... it was obvious he couldn't \_ not \_ go on, but just as obvious he wished he hadn't started. When he came to the punchline, "... those Fokkers were Messerschmitts," Des immediately jumped in, asked the audience for a round of applause, and went straight to commercial.

Boardman was never asked onto the show again (or any other chatshow for that matter), and was attacked in the media, as was the show for not stopping him, but the show was "live," which made it almost impossible to do so.

Why he told the joke at the time (8.30 pm on a family show), God only knows, 'cos I don't think Boardman does.  
--Ian Covell

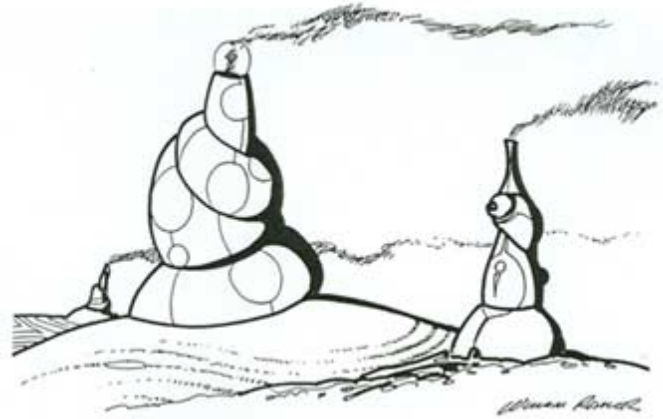
### Saturday February 19, 2005:



--Jack Calvert

I managed to pull two different kinds of homesicknesses out of *e/18*. Rich Coad's piece brought back a rush of associations with San Francisco. I was born and raised there, but rarely get over to that side of the bay, now that I am settled in Oakland. (I don't work any more, so I can't write about walking to work, but I'm tempted to try something similar about jogging to my gym in downtown Oakland.) The other nostalgia-provoking piece was Bruce Gillespie's introductions to Cordwainer Smith. I'd forgotten what a really fine magazine the *Galaxy* of that era was. Bruce's writing and the cover shots brought it back vividly.

Then there is rich brown's piece. He does go on a bit, but I can understand why he is steamed. I would be too in a similar situation. In her comments, Cheryl comes across way too much as someone who lives in a tall tower, and would rather not be disturbed by voices from the sweaty, roiling mobs in the street below. This may not be her actual attitude, but it's what the words convey.



**Friday March 11, 2005:**

Happy fourth anniversary, by the way!

Kelly Freas was our friend, too; he was a friend of all fans and readers. Too many friends have passed, as usual. More of the same will come, and I fear the names of those who have passed will get even closer to each of us.

Being a paper junkie's not bad, given what else we could be junkies to...SF took us to wonderful worlds, and IMHO, made our own worlds anywhere from barely tolerable to being wonderful in fact. It taught us to explore...modern video games merely teach us to kill. I wish SF in books could make a comeback and we could share our sensawunda with a whole new generation. But, that would be so retro...

Saw something about Sir Ian McKellen in today's papers. Now that he's performed the role of a lifetime with Gandalf in *The Lord of The Rings*, he's making his own acting dream come true...he'll be doing a guest appearance of Coronation Street, Britain's top soap opera.

I saw a photo of Billy Pettit in an issue of Arnie Katz' *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, perusing a copy of *Sin-A-Rama*. Nothing was revealed about his own thoughts on the book... I hope he had the chance to talk to you when he was in Las Vegas.

I can't comment on most of Gillespie's article on Cordwainer Smith, except to say that it's obvious I haven't read enough of him.

I've never been to San Francisco, but one thing I do like about it is its streetcars. Toronto has a long history of streetcars, and farming out its old models to other cities like Cleveland and San Diego. I remember the San Diego Trolley very well. Not a Toronto castoff, but a local streetcar that turns into a regional passenger train on its way to San Ysidro and Tijuana.

What a birthday party...I remember the notifications about it, and the hopes that all of your friends could make it. Looks like most of them did, but if we didn't all suffer from a surfeit of geography, many more of us could have been there to help you celebrate and remember, even the things you'd rather forget.

rich brown's article on Cheryl Morgan's Hugo win for *Emerald City* has raised eyebrows here and there, and I think this was the whole idea. The article certainly outlines rich's disdain for Cheryl's zine, and I am taking it for the subjective opinion piece it is. In the long run, one puts what they want in their own zine, should they choose to produce one, and Cheryl does that. You also choose what you don't want in your fanzine, and Cheryl does that, too. She doesn't want a letter column. She has opinions to express, and any discussions on that are done privately. For me, a loc writer, it would be great to see another letter in print, but I know it won't happen here. That's fine...as several people have said, locs and similar feedback are the lifeblood of fanzines, paper or otherwise. I know my letter won't get published, but I write locs to Cheryl anyway. I would like to think that my locs have added some quality to her zine. The feedback makes the zine better, that's the idea. The publication of the loc is just a perk. I like what she does, she reviews books I'll probably never read, and she talks about conventions I'll never get to. But then, most faneds do that. *Emerald City* is a fine nominee and winner of a Fan Hugo, no matter what you may think of those awards or awards in general.

Don Hutchison, one of the guests this year at our local SF convention, is the king of pulps in the Toronto area, and I believe his annual one-day pulp convention is coming up shortly. I must do a little web lookup to see when it is. One year...I can't remember his name, but he has a large collection of original art for pulp covers, few of which were ever saved. Wonderful to see, and admire, and I did that day.



Part of the *Sin-A-Rama* gang (l to r): Robert Bonfils, Adam Parfrey, and Earl Kemp. Foreground: Miriam Linna and Jodi Walli. Mission Hills Paperback Show and Sale, March 2005.

Ah, Bloch...I won a copy of *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* from Jan Stinson, and I've read a few of the essays within. Yet to get to this one. Great stuff. I met Bloch only once, and that was at a convention he was attending as a guest, along with Lin Carter. I think both died not long after that convention, and as a result, I think, the convention itself died the next year.

A little news I am quite happy with...2005 FAAn Awards, given out at Corflu Titanium in San Francisco February 27, 2005, picked me as Best Letterhack.

Murray Moore brought my certificate back from San Fran, and presented it to me at our last First Thursday pubnight. I wasn't happy with fandom for a while; I'm feeling a little better now. Next year's Corflu will be in Toronto some time in April, and I am hoping to meet a lot of faces and apply them to the names I've seen for so many years.  
--Lloyd Penney.

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Think a little! Don't be afraid of straining your brains. They won't break.  
--Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*

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## Reflections

by Bill Burns

It all started so innocently. I created eFanzines.com in December 2000 as a central resource for science fiction fanzine editors to publish on line. My thought was that freed from the need to set up web space and learn HTML, editors would be encouraged to put their work before a wider audience, and indeed that's what has happened.

Meanwhile, some old time fan named Earl Kemp emerged from a 37-year gafiation and started contributing to the SF email lists. He wanted to create a tribute page to the late fan artist Bill Rotsler (whose work enlivens every issue of *e/*), and asked if I'd help him put it together. Of course I agreed, and the result was "[...be forgot, and never....](#)", an on-line re-creation of a Rotsler portfolio which Earl first published in his fanzine *SaFari* in 1965.

Earl's next project was another reprint from *SaFari*, this time a Hannes Bok Christmas portfolio entitled [Feliz Navidad](#), published on line in December 2001.

These first ventures into on-line publishing fired Earl's enthusiasm, and in January 2002 he emailed me:

"I got up yesterday morning with the strongest compulsion to produce an ezine. I really had to fight against it and the funny part is, I hadn't even given the subject a passing thought.

"I grabbed paper and pen and began noodling around with a masthead and fought off writing an editorial.

"Today is a different story. The compulsion is still here and, if I allow it to grow at all, it will take a lot of help from you.

"The way I think of it is sort of like what you have already done for me, but different. I've rejected the thought of pages, and think of it as one long continuous sheet of paper for each issue and I think of it as being maybe a quarterly at best.

"The main reason why I am thinking about an ezine is because most of whatever it is I think I have to say is not interesting to most other people or most younger people who don't remember anything about any of it to begin with.

"So, Bill, is this a way to start a year or what?"

Well, Earl's concept has lasted into its fourth year so far, through 19 issues of *e/* and over 1500 pages of incredibly valuable articles on the history of science fiction, fandom, and the sleaze industry, and how they were interconnected. Much of this material is first-hand, from the writers, artists, and editors who were there, and would surely have been lost without Earl's encouragement. And that's not to mention *e/*'s portfolios, archives, and bibliographies, which will be a major resource for researchers in years to come.

Earl spends most of his time between the bi-monthly issues of *e/* prodding, poking, and cajoling his contributors to create their best material. Then once every two months a CD containing a couple of hundred assorted images and anything up to a hundred thousand words of text drops in my mailbox, and I put the issue together. *e/* is electronic publishing at its finest, taking full advantage of the Internet for research, communication, collaboration, editing, and distribution. It's exactly what I envisioned when I started eFanzines.com (although I don't think I ever could have anticipated the range of content!), and I'm honoured to be associated with Earl and *e/*.

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You stand outside a society and a culture and realize that it is an invention and that you can improve it. Well, I like the American culture, such as it is, but let's get rid of the fucking guns.

--Kurt Vonnegut

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## It's Over\*

By Earl Kemp

It's over, and I'm not talking about waiting for Roy Orbison. Only for some reason I'm feeling like I've blown one of those too-brief, too-intense love affairs again. I'm weak and exhausted from the ordeal, limp from expended energy and expectations. Basking in the afterglow of orgasmic rushes of unfulfilled lusts.

It's *Firefly*...it flickered its last incandescent glow and faded away...unfinished, the foreplay long and extensive, but no...no reward? No release? Prurient pleasure indefinitely postponed again.



Part of the *Firefly* cast as they appeared at the San Diego Comiccon, July 2004.

There were numerous postings on the science fiction discussion lists on the Internet in the short-time past talking about *Firefly*, perhaps even raving about *Firefly*, and I did my best to not read them very carefully because I didn't want any interference with my enjoyment, my interpretation, of viewing that attempted epic. I don't even know where it appeared originally, or when.

For over a year now I've been off the satellite dish and exclusively onto DVDs for my evenings' entertainments. And, I've been inundated in discs to watch, far more than I can ever view and a few of them are worth the time and effort spent to watch them.

And then came *Firefly*. When my friends got their 4-disc set containing all the episodes in the complete run of *Firefly*, and a few extra goodies, they watched it straight through in one continuous viewing. They started at 6 AM and finished at 10 PM.

And gave the DVDs to me along with abundant raves of their appreciation of the series.

At last! I had it! I could now proceed at my own pace and find out what all the excitement was about.

#

I spent the entire last week watching two or three episodes of *Firefly* every evening. I started with the episodes in the order that they appear on the DVDs and presume that was broadcast order. I viewed them straight through in that fashion, finishing last night.

In fact, I squeezed every last digit out of those DVDs including the outtakes, the unused scenes, goofs, screen test, and “more” until the TV finally just faded into blackness and I still wasn’t ready to let go, to call it quits.

What a disappointment.

Not a disappointment in what they had accomplished, but a disappointment in the fact that they had not been allowed to finish their public service duty.

I found *Firefly* to be just about as close to perfect as anything can be in every respect that I judged it by. It was the perfect combination of horse opera and space opera. It was 1940s pulp with a hint of 1960s porno. It was the essence, the very flavor of “pulp” magazines, writers, editors, and illustrators.

***Firefly* creator:**

Josh Whedon

**Cast:**

Nathan Fillion – Captain Malcolm “Mal” Reynolds

Gina Torres – Zoe

Alan Tudyk – Wash

Morena Baccarin – Inara Serra

Adam Baldwin – Jayne Cobb

Jewel Staite – Kaywinnet Lee “Kaylee” Frye

Sean Mahr – Dr. Simon Tam

Summer Glau – River Tam

Ron Glass – The Shepherd Book

The costuming and stage sets, all from the old American West, fit in perfectly with the nuts and bolts of advanced spacecraftery. The music also a perfect reprieve of Saturday afternoon matinee Western double features with a sinister “Dr. Fu Manchu” serial and two cartoons all for a dime. That pulp-era Fu Manchu impression is further carried into the future by having numerous incidental and background characters in *Firefly* costumed in period-piece Chinese robes.

Plus having *everyone* in the cast occasionally speak passable Mandarin. *Delicious!*

*Firefly* moved effortlessly and naturally into the world of the far future where whores were whores but Companions were unbelievably expensive. Where criminals you wanted to touch and know did crimes and Feds you wanted to hate were Alliance blacksuits. It used all the bottom-line expectations of lust and rewards of early days porno books involving a group of characters who were hornier than most, the endless erotic tease, the lips almost but not quite touching, the lustful leers at crotch areas, Nathan Fillion’s (as Captain Mal Reynolds) freedom of release when finally flaunting his stature to all and sundry, bold bareass shots, and on endlessly.

I was thrown off stride initially by the bizarre order of appearance of the episodes. I am a traditionalist and I expect to be introduced to the characters and given at least an initial hint as to who is good, who is bad, and what’s being stolen from where and why. Not just tossed into the middle of a big battle with no one to cheer for and no one to boo!

By the time I had forced my way through two episodes, I was hooked and dragged into the boat, flopping and gasping for more.

The spacecraft itself, *Serenity*, is the star of the series. It is big and empty and houses vast echoes and hoped-for

loot...and the hopes and expectations of all the crewmembers and all the helpless watchers somehow intertwined in unquestioned love.

I loved every cast member, including especially the villains. I love the wishy washy flip-flop of apparent motivation especially on the part of Jayne (really great acting job by Adam Baldwin). I loved the guffaw uncontrollable laughter that erupted from me when certain very unexpected lines were delivered with more style than the writer of those words could have ever had any reason to expect was possible. I can see the writers just off set, giggling into their hands.

I do not know why or how the plug was pulled on this series prematurely. It is of such quality, across the board, as to be too good for television itself. Fox should have been proud to control such a thing of joy and perfection, and to push it forward energetically, but then they are Fox.



Jayne Cobb (Adam Baldwin), my hero.

*Firefly* will appear again, briefly, in September as a feature-length film. As I understand it, the original cast all have included in their contracts the option for three feature-length films as follow-ups. The first of those, *Serenity*, will focus on River Tam (Summer Glau) and who and how she was so screwed up. It has been announced for a September 2005 release date. I have no clues as to the other two films, if ever. Sob!

I will have to wait and see, impatiently as usual.

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\*This is for Steve and Elaine Kemp Harris...with a whole lot of love. Dated January 2005.

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There's a game for every season--ice hockey, basketball, baseball, football. Life soon appears to be a game, and it isn't. In games the object is to win, but in life the object is not to win. The object of the whole world is to preserve the game board and the pieces, and there is no such game.

--Kurt Vonnegut, March 1969

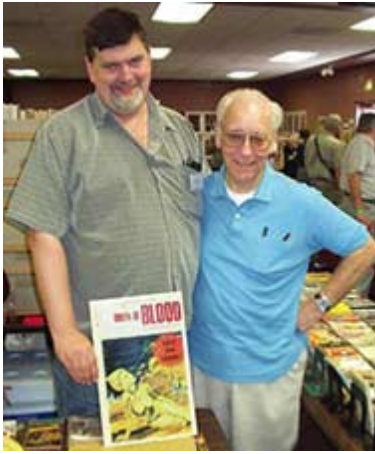
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## Nightmare With a Queen...of Blood\*

By Charles Nuetzel

Oh, the Queen of Blood, the Planet of Blood, call it what you want, but the Queen herself came to me via my agent Forrest J Ackerman (no period, thank you!). She came, probably, in the darkness of night like a very hateful vamp, teeth dripping in the blood of her victims (soon to add me to that list)! She was a vile, perverse, hungry creature from a hellish universe – dimension if you will – all her own: **Hollywoodland!** And it was shaped as a script of a somewhat inexpensively produced horror/sf flick written and directed by Curtis Harrington, Jr.

Well, as it turned out, it was my duty to convert these pages into a novel. And as I remember, it was one of those quickie assignments.



The ever-popular Lynn Munroe (left) is photographed with Charles Nuetzel. They are displaying a poster for *Queen of Blood* signed by Forrest Ackerman, Robert Bonfils, Earl Kemp, and Charles Nuetzel. Mission Hills, CA, April 2004.

I approached this whole thing with mixed emotions! Looking at the script was going to be hard enough, reading its contents might even be somewhat yucky. Converting it to a novel might be okay, since I'd been working in that area for some time – not conversions, but novels for paperback publication.

I had never been very interested in scripts. I mean in writing them. I had decided many years ago that possessing a mimeographed copy of some masterpiece I'd skillfully designed in a flush of creative madness was not very impressive. I mean: who the hell can't simply type something up and have it mimeographed? Not every impressive, that. And early on all my doubts concerning such projects were proven totally valid when I learned how many a script typist prided themselves in adding minor revisions, to say nothing about directors, actors, and who knows what other members of the production team, including producer and even his secretary with the REVISING compulsion! After all, the original author is considered less than a lowly flunky of first-draft concepts.

Hell, these Hollywood types figure that the jerk writer was already overpaid for his outline in dialogue form! What does he know? Less than nothing. And even if he does, so what? He's cashed his check and is now out of the picture – *for good!*

So. I figured. To hell with scripts. I wanted hard evidence of my creative genius printed on paper, bound solidly in place with an attractive full color cover. Plus, of course, a boldly obvious byline announcing my name in large letters under the title would be hard evidence of my importance. Even better: over the title. But, heck, and golly gee, I'd settle for even a small mention on the lower left or right – just so they spelled my name right: Charles Nuetzel!

That was what had driven me through a normally difficult teenage of hiding behind books and practicing behind a portable typewriter until I finally learned enough to think of myself as an author.

Oh, to be an author! To have my name in print. The glory of it all!

Well, reality was soon to flush some of those idea down the drain.

Interestingly enough, once you are skilled enough, getting your name in print isn't all that difficult, expect for a minor little factor:

Does ya really wanna have ya name linked to *that* manuscript?

Well, maybe. But, just think, I could invent a penname just for the hell of it! Why not? Hide behind that fake identity while you are learning your craft. And, geeze, now you've invented a "real" person that people will truly believe exists! A byline proves the existence of an author! Alive and breathing!

And I can save my real name for what I consider "quality" stuff. Ha! One wonders about the importance of that word! Quality! Yet a much desired concept!

My agent, nice man that he has always been, sweetly informed me that "quality comes with quantity" and like a devout devotee of a true godman's words, I listened and believed.

This drove whatever talents I had into turning blank pages into useless paper!

I mean, the writer splatters ink across the white surface of cheap paper, marring it forever more! If lucky he finds some editor foolish enough to believe that these pages should be magically converted into a printed form. I mean, WOW, they actually pay for this kind of used-up paper!

Well, I was soon in the paper selling business, though I didn't really think of it in quite that manner.

I was being paid while learning! And getting all those credits. Inventing not only fictional characters but “real life” authors!

I ended up with a number of pennames and a larger number of short novels scattering the local and national newsstands. Oh, the wonderful life of an author.

But it was some time before I considered offering up my own name to a book. And the first one was what else? **WHODUNIT? HOLLYWOOD SYTLE**. Horrors: a book on Hollywood; about the film industry. Was I mad or something?

Or something.

Then came this script to pervert my lingering doubts about the movie industry at large.

Now it isn't that I don't like Hollywood, hell I grew up in the business – indirectly. My father had been a commercial artist for Pacific Title & Arts for many years (they did the special effects and screen credit titles for some of the biggest movie industry's films). I'd been exposed to movies since a mere babe in San Francisco, where my dad worked for Fox West Coast Theaters, doing huge paintings for the theater lobbies (this was previous to the printed posters later used to announce the currently running movies). Remember, this was way back in the 1930s and beginning '40s. He got us into any picture we wanted to see for free! And that was something we enjoyed to the fullest on a weekly basis.

Anyway, I've gotten far from the dern track of the naughty, nasty *Queen of Blood!*

Ah, yes. That bloody screenplay!

The script had to be turned into a novel in quick time (and this was before computers, mind ya all!). I had a faithful electric typewriter with instant return carriage and all that, but any revisions meant a retyping! YUCK to that, thank you. And no thanks!

Anyway, I soon discovered that the Queen was somewhat missing in much of her details. I mean, the “lady” was stripped all but naked of anything but a big mouth that screamed endless dialogue. Well, okay, the Queen herself wasn't the only voice chattering madly away on these mimeographed pages!

But truth be known, the script, beyond mention of Mars and some sandstorms and a couple of rocket ships and a lotta eggs of questionable design, was on the short side of visual verbiage and/or background details. The only information offered concerned the vampin' Queen herself and a number of characters to serve as delicious meals for our hungry female alien monster from God knows where! Of course there was the “plot” of the thing – your standard science fiction storyline of people in distress and the normal run of the mill implication of what would devour Earth by the time the film ended. There really wasn't much to it other than the dialogue that filled around 100 pages or so – if that! I had to convert this into about 55,000 words, more or less.

Well, I did a bit of instant calculations. After deleting all the FADE INS & OUTS and character names above lines of dialogue and the now and then camera instructions or scene setting paragraphs, I learned I'd have to turn each script page into three pages of manuscript!

Well, it was typin' time! And no time to look back.

Nor be very inventive.

Nor take much time to breath between work sessions.



Charles Nuetzel and best friend, around the time of *Queen of Blood*.

Expanding dialogue was easy enough. But I had plenty of that as a central core. What I needed to do was write details that were missing! Landscapes. Rocket ship. Travel through space to Mars in days ...

HEY WAIT A MINUTE!

That ain't possible! Tain't gonna take a few days to leap across the vast distance between Earth and the Red Planet (being turned ever redder by the vampy Queen of Blood herself!).

Well, I had to be somewhat inventive there, creating what was, if memory serves me right, the Harrington drive to explained away the swift trip from Earth to Mars (a polite bow to the script writer/director!).

Little matters like that was necessary add-ons.

Then there was a small walk-on part that Forry Ackerman had in the film – courtesy of Mr. Harrington himself! I figured, heck, why not be a little more generous with this man who is so responsible for my nightmare with a queen.

So I literally invented an expanded role for my agent to play out. Even some actual dialogue! SUPER! But what are we gonna call this fella? Well, all authors and editors and agents and even would-be and real actors have an ego! Don't we all, man! Super-egos deluxe.

So what can I call him. Oh. Gee, let's see. Give him some importance. Ah. Yes. Make him a doctor. Sure fits in a sf flick. Now don't it? Sure does!

But Doctor who? Certainly not Who, that was already taken, natch, of course.

Dr. Ackerman? Well, that was too close to reality. After all Mr. Forrest J Ackerman has some kind of degree – even if it is simply a third one! Yes, I do believe he does hold a doctor of some sort that kept hangin' round the Ackermansion in all its modern variations.

So. That's out. Like flout! So to speak.

He was already famous as Dr. Acula in his *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, which he had edited and almost totally written over a 20-year period.

So maybe I should go Hollywoodish and in like Flynn!

Ah, ha. FORREST is the man's name.

Doctor is the first degree.

DR. FORRESTER became his name in actual fictional fact, Hollywood Style!

Enough of this foolishness.

Back to the Queen, once more. The blood-sucking vamp of somewhat greenish tint!

Well, first of all, let's get something straight right from the start: okay, from this point, anyway:

This was a somewhat young person's tale of a trip to Mars where our heroes come in bloody contact with a seductive lady from deep space! An alien creature that couldn't get enough of the living blood of these delightfully delicious Earthmen's bods. And don't forget the female scientists! After all you gotta have some implied romantic interest, even if it has to remain squeaky clean!



Forrest Ackerman and Charles Nuetzel  
in the late 1960s.

Oh, I'll admit it could have gone in either direction: slanted to a teenage market or liberally speckled with erotic scenes for an all-adult audience.

Well, I always figured that sf and sex simply didn't mix: not the same audience. Minors wanted adventure on a grand scale! Battling to the death against BEMs (bug eyed monsters) with super rays and screaming boy-like ladies who had to be rescued by daring deeds for, perhaps, a light embrace and maybe even a shocking kiss on the lips – closed mouth, of course, natch! While the adult market demanded super male studs and voluptuously vamping tarts hungrily seeking one another out like desperate wantons from orgyland.

Not, mind you, would those sexually overcharged teenagers be more than willing to share a bit of stimulating adventures between the covers of a paperback book (or bed sheets for that matter!).

*This was a matter of a serious consideration of the law itself.*

Adult meant *adult in years* – not necessarily in maturity, of course!

So, this was totally out of the question for teenagers – well commercially, anyway! Remember we're talking about the never-never land of the mid 20 th century where people saved such "trash" for adult consumption only!

Natch. Of course! That's the law, babe!

So gotta keep it clean as glass for the pure, untouched kiddies. Well, as they say in the cartoons: That's all folks!

Not so. Believe it or not!

And I ain't playin' dat game! Mind ya manners!

Well, I whacked out the manuscript in due time, and deadline time, too, to boot (and I did tell ya this was previous to the PC where ya can get the boot at the twist of a perverted mouse! And you always have to boot up just to get started. To boot!).

Again, I've perverted the sticky trail to the publication of the very Queen we've been chattin' about! But ain't sorry about that, thank you! I think I'm avoiding the obvious (to me, anyway!).

Back to the subject at hand, which could, under other circumstances be, perhaps, a delicious detour to land of passions unknown. But, alas, things never work out as you expect them to.

The very colorful Queen herself was something else, indeed! To say the least. And the least said about her the safer we all are. I mean, who wants a veggie suckin' a bod dry?

Veggie? Did I say Veggie? Sure did. With, perhaps, good reason. [And maybe pure madness!]

Thus it is that we come to the very color of her skin: Green as any proud celery stalk. And this, surprisingly enough, matched the name of the publisher! GREEN. Turn the leaf of a book and what do you get?

GREENLEAF.

[See how I manage to go quickly to the point?]

And since this was such a major production, both in the quickie production of the film and the rapid delivery of the manuscript, why not just give it a suitable label? After all it is truly a classic example of fast creative energy doled out to the public at large for a quick buck!

## GREENLEAF CLASSICS.

For sure that's impressive, don't ya think?

Sure was. As far as that goes.

And it actually went quite a distance.

The publishing complex which would deliver the Queen to the newsstands of America was owned by a master publisher with a magnificent background in the science fiction field!



Charles Nuetzel admiring his inspiration for Great Writing in the Ackermansion, Los Angeles, circa 1967.

William L. Hamling had been a publisher of sf magazines like *Stardust*, *Imagination*, *Imaginative Tales*, and *Space Travel* in the early fifties. Before that, he worked as an editor on *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* for Ziff-Davis. Chicago. He was sure to respect the teenage sf market which had started in the mid-'20s when *Amazing Stories* first hit the newsstands. This magazine literally invented, just about single handedly, a totally new kind of pulp fiction called scientifiction that ended up being more classically labeled science fiction, which was changed by Mr. Science Fiction himself, Forry Ackerman, to *sci-fi!* BIG BILL H would certainly honor the memory of that grand literary standard of which he'd been such a famous supplier during his grand editing/publishing career.

Okay, I know. That was somewhat of a complicated footnote slapped into the above paragraph. Maybe implying far more innocence to those involved, but, well, never you mind that. The point is made.

Yes, I know that Big Bill was heavily involved in the adult fiction field!

Hamling was GREENLEAF CLASSICS, and well-known science fiction fan Earl Kemp was his editorial director. Before that, Kemp has been a co-founder of Advent Publishers in Chicago.

This certainly was the quality line of Hamling's many multiple lines that ground up endless adult titles from its San Diego central.

So this "classic" factor certainly must promise the best possible packaging for such a fine and deserving teenage novel of sf adventure in outer space with a vampire alien lady thirsty for an endless supply of blood that only Earth could, in the end, so generously offer.

Another of my magically complex statements. But it makes the point. I think. Maybe. I hope.

This was super clean, teenage packaging to match the squeaky pure story contents, based on the quickie sf horror flick slanted for the 20 th century movie audience.

Gulp!

Keep it Hays Office perfect!

How'd Mr. Hays get into the act? Again? And again. And again! I mean, he was always stickin' his prudish nose into the imaginary bedrooms of the All American Public. Okay. More clearly put: his famed office was the mighty voice of Censorship Deluxe! These blue nosey folk monitored the film Industry like super hawks to ax anything suggestive that might pervert the public morals. I mean, oh, heck! As Bette Davis might say: "What a dump!"

The Hays Office dictated that no couple could be seen together on a bed! If it so happened that a cozy bed was being used by a, say, lady much desired by all concerned, her male companion (married to her or not) had to keep

one foot planted safely on the floor!

Heaven's to Betsy were they inventing a new, interesting sexual position to foster onto the nation's public at large.

Hell no! [Though I'm certain that some creatively talented adult author could come up with something quite stimulating to teach his (or her) audience about a new and joyfully stimulating adult position to ecstasy. The One-Foot Passion Dance?]

Okay, bad idea.

Anyway, I've delayed long enough with coming to the most sinful element of this story of woe concerning the QUEEN OF BLOOD.



On the cover they literally offered up: MOVIE NOW SHOWING against a classic cover painting by the great Robert Bonfils of the Martian landscape featuring a threatening sandstorm with a couple of space-suited men in the distance approaching the green QUEEN who was blatantly presented totally stark naked for all to see! Can you believe? Believe! On your knees and believe you sinners all!

For shame! Perverting countless teenage boys to snap her up and devour that sensuously stimulating image until they turned as green as she appeared – but with envy that she wasn't real! How they must have wanted this lovely creature desperately clutched in their arms in a passionate embrace destined to

drain them of all their throbbing hot blood!

Okay. I made that up. Darn if I ain't ashamed of myself.

But, another point has been hammered home!

If I had retained any doubts about the book, a very delightful man named Bill Trotter told me that the Queen had been literally published as an Adult Novel. He was a part of this publishing giant in San Diego long before branching out on his own with Powell Publications. I packaged a number of books for his various lines, including "inventing" and developing POWELL SCI-FI during its first year of existence.

Well Trotter's words had stripped naked any doubts I might have retained in my mind.

The BIG BILL PUBLISHING HOUSE had lived up to its true rep and released just another grand sampling of Adult Packaging that has stayed with the book forever more!

Cheesy Adult fiction it has been called.

Imagine that. How insulting can "they" get (whom ever "they" may be!)?

I don't mind the Cheesy part for a quickie flickie turned into a quickie bookie of questionable quality – to boot.

But this was pushing things beyond bearable torment!

Can you imagine having your second book under your own name coming out as a cheesy adult novel of questionable design? And, on top of that, it was my very *first* sf novel ever published!

Of course there are some rewards hidden in what was to be the Queen's future, and now her present status in the

world of collectable items. Today the pricetag, which was originally a mere 75 cents has elevated to well, blushing at the thought, \$360 if you can get it!

[Just checked that out on the Internet and you *can* have it! Every bloody word and even that delicious, delectable Bonfils cover painting of the Queen lounging there in all her naked glory, stripped bare for all to feast upon before she catches you under her alien spell and drains the red blood out of your veins forever more!]

Well, Earl Kemp asked for it and he sure as hell has gotten it: a pure verbal nightmare designed to reveal an author's memory of his involvement with a *Queen of Blood*.

Now, just to confess something: I am fully aware that Mr. Kemp was intimately involved with Big Bill and all the many houses that were so furiously publishing at least fifty books a month – so it has been reported, real or imagined, myth or magic. Earl may have even been involved with the Queen, too, for all I know. And he probably knows far more about her than I have herein offered the reader.

Quite frankly, I guess I shouldn't be too pushed out of shape about how it all came out in the end. Taking everything into account, that is.

The hard facts (excuse the H word, please) is that all too many of those science fiction pulps of the '40s were known for offering cover art that presented horrid, terrifying BEMs (remember those Bug Eyed Monsters?) threatening nearly naked ladies screaming in desperate horror! And all those Damsels needed to be rescued! What red -blooded American boy would not eagerly leap across a thousand magazine stands to win their favor?

Certainly the fantasies held by these young male would-be studs ranged from more innocent motivations to rather raw dreams of ravishing their lush bods! Natch.

Those semi-naked ladies certainly served the same purpose, I suppose, as the fully naked green QUEEN OF BLOOD.

Perhaps those guys in San Diego knew what they were doing.

I suppose she's kinda okay, after all. And maybe that inflated pricetag now being demanded to totally possess her isn't out of line!

After all she *is* a bloody QUEEN?

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Most fascinating game there is, keeping things from staying the way they are.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*

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## The Bitch Queen of Blood\*

or,

Footnote to "Nightmare With a Queen...of Blood"

By Earl Kemp

In 1965, shortly after The Porno Factory had moved to San Diego and became reborn as Greenleaf Classics, Forrest J Ackerman came calling. Forrie had every right to do that; Greenleaf Classics boss William Hamling, Forrie, and I had been friends within the science fiction community for many years by that time. Besides that, Ackerman and I shared something genuinely unique together; Robert Heinlein disremembered both of us.

What Forrie had in mind was packaging a series of books for Greenleaf Classics. They would be just a little unusual in that each would be a movie tie-in involving allegedly a science fiction or fantasy film in the making. And, each book would be half text and half stills from the film itself. (Actually, that's still photographs made at the same time as the filming, not snips from filmstrips, but that's technical jargon.)



That's me in the right picture posing with an old fantasy friend from my childhood... Bela. His three Ladies of the Night (in the left picture) are Leigh Brackett, Nancy Kemp, and \_\_\_\_\_ [Identify please? [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) thanks}. Both photos taken at the Ackermansion, Solacon, Los Angeles, September 1958.

Ackerman's proposal was kinky enough to tease us for a bit, wondering how it would all work out. Eventually we decided to give it a go and to try two of them as a test fostered upon the waiting market. In due time, Ackerman presented us with two complete packages including stills, manuscript, and an Introduction by the one and only Dr. Acula himself.

Both of those books made instant history. Today, both of those books are eagerly sought after by people willing to pay embarrassingly large amounts of real-time dollars for a copy in almost any condition.

The first one was GC205, *Orgy of the Dead*, by Ed Wood [I wrote about this in "The Bela Tolls For You," in *e/12*, February 2004], and the second was the very next book in line, GC206, *Queen of Blood*, by Charles Nuetzel. They were both published in 1966, the year of release of both films.

And both of them dropped dead on the newsstands. We couldn't give copies of them away. Eventually they were stripped (front covers ripped off) then pulped to make more newspaper.

## *Queen of Blood*

An American International picture

original story and screenplay

by Curtis Harrington

### **Starring:**

John Saxon, Basil Rathbone, Judi Meredith,

Dennis Hopper, Florence Marley as Velana,

and Forrest J Ackerman

The reason was obvious...we were a specialty house providing masturbatory aids to chronic loners and there was absolutely nothing for them inside either of those two books, however horny they were and however far-ranging their imaginations. There was simply nothing genuinely erotic about either effort.

*Flashforward, science fiction style:* Today, almost forty years later, a copy of either of those two books is worth its weight in gold.

If Forrest Ackerman had intended to create an unequalled legacy for himself, he certainly succeeded. Imagine, in one move, creating two of the most valuable paperback books ever published, and doing them simultaneously. So what if the market they went to didn't appreciate them originally...just look at them today.

#

Shortly after our book version of *Queen of Blood* was released, we received a very threatening, demanding letter from a big-time Hollywood law firm on behalf of their client, Florence Marley. It was she who played the part of the bloodsucking, green vegetable alien from outer space in *Queen of Blood*. Our book, it seemed, had permanently crippled her Great Film Career by portraying her as some form of sleazy slut. She would never be able to work again (while a Google of her shows her still working, and still badly, well into the 1990s), and it was all Greenleaf Classics' fault. We had to Pay Up Largely for Miss Marley Or Else.

*Ho hum...another one....*

One thing we had at Greenleaf was lawyers. We had all kinds of lawyers for all kinds of things, like specialists at a hospital. The boss of all of them was Stanley Fleishman, himself a big-time Hollywood lawyer and The Master of All He Surveyed. We were used to receiving threatening letters all the time and had a standing routine of passing them directly on to Fleishman.

In this case, after Stanley finished laughing while reading the letter, he composed a very brief reply. Paraphrased, it went something like this:

"Thanks for your kind offer in regard to Miss Florence Marley. I couldn't imagine anything that I would enjoy more. By all means please do proceed with the proposed action. Can I do anything to help accelerate your schedule?"

There was never a reply to Fleishman's letter and Miss Marley promptly dropped her lawsuit against Greenleaf Classics before it ever got off the drawing board.



The right man for the right job at the right time is all it takes now and then.

- - -

\*For Forrest J Ackerman, No. 1 Science Fiction Fan, Dr.acula, and *Famous Monsters of Filmland*; I owe you. Special thanks to Bruce Brenner <http://www.vintagepbks.com> for help with this article.

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The Church of God the Utterly Indifferent...  
--Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan*

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## The Queen of Blood\*

By Forrest J Ackerman



Forrest J Ackerman as he appeared in *Queen of Blood*. Best possible scan from photo from the book. Courtesy Charles Nuetzel collection.

*BLOOD OF THE VAMPIRE*.  
And now -- *QUEEN OF BLOOD*.

No one who ever saw Bela Lugosi while he lived, in person on one of those thousand and one magic nights that he appeared on the dim-lit stage in *Dracula*;

Nor anyone who has ever sat in a darkened theater or before a TV set and seen the film version of Lugosi's *DRACULA*:

Is ever likely to forget those shuddersome sanguinary lines -- "For the blood is the life...."

Indeed, blood has proved to be the life of many a horror film.

It even, as spilled out on marquees, has definite box-office lure.

Consider:  
*BLOODLUST*.  
*BLOOD AND ROSES*.  
*BLOOD CREATURE*.  
*BUCKET OF BLOOD*.

Zsa Zsa Gabor gave a crowning performance in *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE*.

Gloria Holden knew the gore score as *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*.

Carroll Borland made an indelible impression as Countess Luna in *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*.

*BLOOD OF DRACULA* gave Sandra Harrison evil opportunities to quench her unnatural thirst.

Maila Nurmi made a "dying" out of her video career as Vampira, the TV horror film hostess, with a role she could really sink her teeth into.

And now, remembered for her lead in Karel Capek's *KRAKATIT*, comes the newest of the screen's vampires; suave, svelte and sinister Czechoslovakian-born Florence Marly as ... Velana. *QUEEN OF BLOOD* is her story.

It is also a fine vehicle for Basil Rathbone, who has distinguished himself in such past sci-fi and horror films as *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, *TOWER OF LONDON*, *POE'S TALES OF TERROR* and

### The Photo that Didn't

We had grand plans of taking *the Queen of Blood* photograph in Los Angeles at the Paperback Show and Sale in March 2005 only, as it often happens, everything went astray.

It was all set that Bruce Brenner would take the photograph and rush it to this issue of *e!*, only it never happened. We four of us simply couldn't get together at the right time in the right place so Charles Nuetzel came up with this substitute, separate photos of us taken most recently.

So here is the substitute *Queen of Blood* photo...er...photos:



Forty years after the fact, the original *Queen of Blood* crew reunites. In the photo to the left are Forrest J Ackerman (packager) and Charles Nuetzel (writer) made in February 2005. In the center photograph Earl Kemp (editor), and the right photo, Robert Bonfils (cover painting), both taken at the Mission Hills show in March 2005. Courtesy Charles Nuetzel Collection.

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It is also an incidental opportunity for readers of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and *Monster World* to see the editor (hey, that's me) do a little emoting. In case you miss any of the other actor's dialogue, you're bound to understand my lines as I don't say a word. However, I'm not so dumb: look at Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre dame -- he was played by a man whose father and mother were deaf mutes, and he became world-famous as an actor. I wouldn't mind being the new Lon Chaney, or the old Lon Chaney, in fact.

The author of the original screenplay, and director of the picture, is Curtis Harrington, who as a child prodigy made a version of "*The Fall of the House of Usher*" and as an adult prodigy made *NIGHT TIDE*, nocturnal, underground sleeper of the New Wave. (In fact it's the only New Wave film with a mermaid in it -- but that's another tail.)

The author of the novelization, Charles Nuetzel, has over thirty pocketbooks to his credit.

Read the book. See the picture. Watch for the sequel.

--FJA

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\*Reprinted from *Queen of Blood*, GC206, 1966. Special thanks to Charles Nuetzel <http://haldolen.com> for help with this article.

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People have to talk about something just to keep their voice boxes in working order so they'll have good voice boxes in case there's ever anything really meaningful to say.

--Kurt Vonnegut

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# Curious Couplings 1

By Earl Kemp

My old friend Robert Bloch used to live in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, a small suburb of Milwaukee. He would tell people that it was so dull there that he had to walk beside the railroad tracks and watch the trains coupling for excitement.

Now see how curiously that couples into the subject at hand:

I have noticed a number of odd coincidences regarding sleaze paperback covers and other publications that have intrigued me. Some of them were reasonable and understandable, some of them were outright criminal theft, and some of them were beneath contempt. Because of that, I wanted to run an article about them, only everyone I approached with writing on the topic laughed at me and turned me down flat.

“That’s too old hat,” they all said. “Been there, done that....”

Only I haven’t. And I suspect there are a lot more people out there who haven’t either. So, even though I’ve been put down on the subject, I’m continuing anyway.

What I propose to do is to run a few of them in some issues of *e!* to see if I can create real interest in perusing the venture. It is a participation project. You send me jpegs of your favorite duos to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and I’ll take it from there.

This is the first installment of this projected new reader participation series.

The last time I began something similar, “Who Dat?,” to identify old photos of science fiction fans from the past, the attempt hit my viewers with a resounding silence. I hope I am not repeating the same mistake again.

Here then are the first examples of Curious Couplings. The ever-popular Lynn Munroe, the man to go to for the books you most want, contributed them.

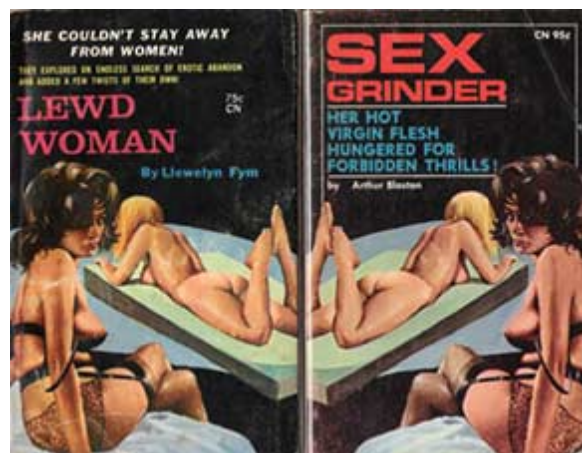


Then there are the following three jpegs also contributed by Lynn Munroe. The first is a still from the movie *La Dolce Vita* and the other two are the results of that photograph.



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And one more to close out this installment of Curious Couplings. This one contributed by Brittany A. Daley.



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We welcome your contributions to this series. Please email your jpegs to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thank you very much for participating in this novel and interesting exercise in futility.

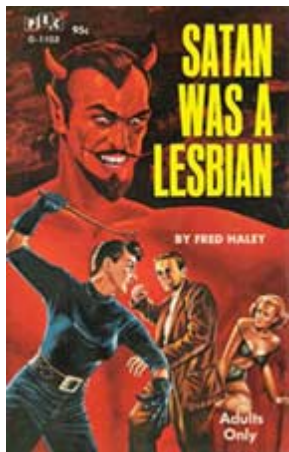
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Epitaph: "The good Earth--we could have saved it, but we were too damn cheap and lazy."  
--Kurt Vonnegut, 10/99 Salon interview

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# Finding Doug Weaver

By Brittany A. Daley



As a collector and researcher of 1960's sleaze paperbacks, I always find it exciting to discover the identity of or more about a previously unknown artist who worked in the industry. I had always known the name of an artist named Doug Weaver because of a few covers he had signed including the famous lesbian classic *Satan's Daughter* by Jan Hudson [a pseudonym of George H. Smith] (Epic Book 113; Dated 1961), which was repainted to become the even more famous lesbian classic *Satan Was a Lesbian* by Fred Haley (P.E.C. Giant G-1103; Dated 1966).

I had performed numerous Internet searches for this artist to find out more about him but was unable to find anything when I typed in "Doug Weaver." One day, I was casually surfing the net, and it occurred to me that I should try "Douglas Weaver." It seemed obvious enough, but for some reason I had never tried that variant. When I typed in "Douglas Weaver," I immediately came to the website of an artist named Douglas B. Weaver out of Roswell, New Mexico.

Looking at the artwork Douglas B. Weaver had posted on his website, I noticed immediate similarities with the sleaze paperback art that made me feel this was more than a shared namesake. This artist, like the Weaver I was looking for, tended to paint shiny, glossy skin and painted men with a certain look. It is hard for me to put into words because of my lack of art training, but the art looked strikingly the same in other ways as well, albeit the artist was no longer depicting beautiful women in sexy scenes.

Then, I tried to compare signatures. I looked around the site but had little luck because most of Doug Weaver's sleaze paperback signatures were in block print lettering whereas most of Douglas B. Weaver's signatures were in cursive. Finally, I came upon a portrait Weaver had done of his son at age 12, which looked to be from the 1960s. This time I had a match, as the signature on this piece was the exact same style of block lettering as on the sleaze paperback signatures. It would make sense that he might change his signature over the years, and this portrait of his son was from approximately the same period as the sleaze paperbacks, and it was the same signature!



This was enough evidence for me to get on the phone with Douglas B. Weaver, as there was a phone number on the website. On the phone with Weaver, he said that he did commercial art at this time and that he did do these paperback covers. He said that any that were signed with "Doug Weaver" or any variant were for sure his work. He said also that he didn't know the exact imprints he worked for, since he was employed by an art agency.

Overall, though, Weaver was quite irritable over the whole conversation and probably only answered these questions because he was taken off guard. He seemed to have a condescending attitude toward the "commercial art" he did and mentioned that he was doing "fine art" now. Despite his overall crabbiness, Weaver agreed to let me

send him pictures of paperbacks to identify as his work or not, since many were unsigned.

I was overjoyed at the prospect of being able to confirm certain covers as Weaver's, because even though I feel I am very adept at recognizing his work, I wanted that verification. So, I got together a packet of photocopied covers along with a nice letter detailing his popularity among sleaze collectors and researchers, and a photocopy of the *Illustration Magazine* article on Robert Bonfils to evidence the popularity and appreciation of sleaze paperback art. I even made sure to be careful about the kind of language I used. Here is an excerpt of my letter to Douglas B. Weaver:

"This art helped create a world with greater freedom for all. This art is of historic importance and deserves to be researched and recognized. Forty years ago the subjects painted on these covers were taboo, and they broke the taboos."



In fact, in writing this letter to Weaver, I never even used the words "sleaze" or "adult" or anything of that ilk. I was aware that this is a sensitive subject for many people involved in the industry and wanted to be as careful as possible with how I framed things. So I sent my packet to Weaver along with an SASE so he would incur no costs and hoped for the best.

About ten days later, I received my packet back from Weaver with everything I had sent him inside of it accompanied by a typed note that said "Sorry, I can't help you. Douglas Weaver." The man didn't even give me his autograph! I was quite saddened that he would agree to this and then turn back on his word, but I shouldn't have been so surprised. Nonetheless, if he didn't want to help me out, I wish he had said so on the phone and saved me the trouble of all the scanning and typing I did.

Because of Weaver's unwillingness to enrich the sleaze community with information and cover identification, all covers shown in this article are either signed by Weaver, or I am 99% sure they are his (I could only be 100% sure if he would identify them). Furthermore, the biographical information I have on Weaver is limited, as my only resource at this point is his website.

What I do know about Douglas B. Weaver is that he began doing commercial artwork in the 1940s. Other than paperbacks, he did girlie pin-up work, men's adventure magazine covers, and miscellaneous advertisements. Weaver did a huge portion of covers for P.E.C. (Publisher's Export Company), which was run by Donald Partrick out of El Cajon, CA, and in the sleaze community, he is probably best known for his P.E.C. work.



Weaver also worked for companies like Rapture Books, All Star, Raven Books, Nite Time Books, and Epic Books, although I am still trying to compile a more complete list of who he worked for. Weaver signed a few random covers here and there either as “Doug Weaver” or “DBW” on at least one book cover, but mostly did not sign his covers, probably at the agency’s request. Although I have no formal art education, from what I can see Weaver art characteristics include shiny, glossy looking skin tones; some characters, mostly women, that look like elves; and a tendency to paint a large face of one character surrounded by the smaller faces of other characters. Weaver probably began painting for sleaze paperback companies in the early 1960s and likely ceased in the late ‘60s or early ‘70s. He painted throughout the 1960s but interestingly, I have never encountered any ‘40s or ‘50s covers by him for “legit” pulp publishers like Bantam, Avon, Popular Library, etc even though he began doing commercial art in the 1940s.

Today, Weaver paints the Old West, various cultures, and portraits. He has had many exhibitions particularly around the Southwest and such famous figures as President Ronald Reagan and California Governor Pete Wilson own his paintings. Weaver, who currently resides in Roswell, New Mexico, prides himself on his “fine art” work and seems most notable nationally for artwork featuring Native Americans.

Unfortunately, Weaver’s website does not provide such basic information as his date of birth or location of birth, and our phone conversation was so quick that I did not get a chance to ask him those questions. While I am unable to provide a photo of Weaver as he obviously wouldn’t give permission, I have provided a scan of *The Hypnotist* by Jack Kahler (P.E.C. N-143; Dated 1966); this is a Weaver cover painting that he obviously used himself as the male model for. I wish I could provide a photograph of Weaver to prove my point!



If anyone reading this has any further information to add on Weaver, I would appreciate being notified. I can be reached through *e!* or emailed directly at [daley@intergate.com](mailto:daley@intergate.com).

#### **Publication data to Doug Weaver Images:**

- 1.) *Girls in Bondage* by Patrice Caval. P.E.C. N-155. Dated 1967. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 2.) *Passionate Satyr* by Jack Kahler. Rapture Book 404. Dated 1964. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 3.) *Suburban Sexpots* by Frank G. Harris. All Star Books 8. Dated 1963. Cover art by Doug Weaver (signed).
- 4.) *The Hypnotist* by Jack Kahler. P.E.C. N-143. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver (self-portrait).
- 5.) *Love Me To Death* by Alex Blake. Epic Book 105. Dated 1961. Cover art by Doug Weaver (signed).
- 6.) *Satan Was A Lesbian* by Fred Haley. P.E.C. G-1103. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver.

- 7.) *Delta Mistress* by T.R. Young. P.E.C. G-1122. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 8.) *Sex Alley* by Ron Gold. P.E.C. G-1106. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 9.) *Gay Brother* by James Harper. P.E.C. French Line 43. Dated 1968. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 10.) *The Rapist* by Jeff Hart. P.E.C. N-153. Dated 1967. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 11.) *Strange Honeymoon* by Ray Wilde. P.E.C. N-111. Dated 1965. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 12.) *Silent Siren* by Jack Love. P.E.C. N-131. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver.
- 13.) *Flesh Trap* by Jack Love. P.E.C. N-133. Dated 1966. Cover art by Doug Weaver.

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As for literary criticism in general: I have long felt that any reviewer who expresses rage and loathing for a novel or a play or a poem is preposterous. He or she is like a person who has put on full armor and attacked a hot fudge sundae or a banana split.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*

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## The Star of the East\*

or,

*Lo Mejor de lo Mejor*

By Earl Kemp

It was customary, in those days, to punish convicted criminals and habitual troublemakers, and not at all unusual to crucify them in public displays as object lessons to disinform and amuse the populace. A prototype Orange Level exercise. So, in A.D. 29, when it was Christ's turn, Jesus of Nazareth, to die for your sins, there wasn't anything very special about it...just another one.

Fifty miles away, no one even knew anything about it happening at all.

Another one hundred miles, down the side of the incredibly blue Mediterranean Sea and onto the sunny side, they hadn't even heard of him.

All the way west along those fabulous African beaches to where the Mediterranean converged with the Atlantic Ocean, right on that perfect point of the Strait of Gibraltar, a settlement was already forming, a Phoenician trading post. It was the most logical place for it, with that unimpeded view into two vast oceans and where, seemingly, everything in the world passed by if you happened to be watching for it. A paradise in the birthing...the very best of the very best...*lo mejor de lo mejor*.

After the Phoenician period it became a Carthaginian and then a Roman settlement. The Romans renamed it Tingis. It became a free city in A.D. 42 and was capital of the Roman province of Mauretania Tingitana, from which the Romans ruled for five centuries.

There followed a long series of captures, occupations, releases, recaptures, etc. through centuries of Byzantines, Arabs, Islamic



That's me. On the left I'm wearing a Florence of Arabia burnoose and under it,

dynasties, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the British, the French, and finally the Moroccan in 1956.

Tangier is built right on the oceanfront on slopes of a chalky limestone hill. The Medina (the old original city) is enclosed by 15th-century ramparts. It is dominated by a Casbah (a dream fantasy of an incredible marketplace), the Museum of Moroccan Art (that was formerly the sultan's palace), and the Great Mosque.



Mohamed Yasin on the desolate December beach. All along the skyline you can see the rooftop "blanket of bright new snow" that marks Tangier as its own.

to the right, a kaftan. Both of these were purchased on my first trip to Tangier.

Somewhere along the way, I lost the required skullcap and sandals. Photo by Erik Kemp dated March 2005.

It became a Mecca for intelligentsia, for writers, artists, and creative types, for freethinkers and sexual and moral experimenters and extentionists. Many such passed through from time to time, remaining for as long as they dared. In 1867 Mark Twain wrote that the houses were so jammed together it seemed like "a crowded city of snowy tombs." And was he ever right about that. From a distance, the outlines of the Tangier rooftops blend into one continuous undulating blanket of bright new snow.

In the early 1900s, Matisse lived there long enough to have many unique experiences and to paint many canvases.

But Tangier was also gaining a reputation of another sort as well...running right along the cutting edge of alternate routes to perception. Here, hard drugs were sold over the counter to anyone with enough money to pay for them. Kif and hashish were smoked openly everywhere. Of this, Robert Ruark wrote that Tangier "contained more thieves, black marketers, spies,

thugs, phonies, beachcombers, expatriates, degenerates, characters, operators, bandits, tramps, politicians, and charlatans" than any place he'd ever visited.

#

Josephine Baker, naked, was the toast of all Paris in 1929, when I was born. I loved her from the first moment I ever saw her. I grew up with the conviction that she personified my fairy godmother and it was Josephine, naked, who watched over all my formative years. She alone insisted that I owed genuine allegiance to Paris, the home of her real birth, the residence of my unknown and unrealized literary aspirations.

In 1931, Paul Bowles went to Morocco. Gertrude Stein sent him. She was always doing things like that, damn her. She did it to everyone but me. After all, I was two years old at the time, and aching all over for the touch of her magical mind.

It's all somehow connected with the fact that I managed to get out of the time machine at the wrong time and place. I've always been from ten to twenty years out of phase with myself, and it's been damned hard to accommodate, too. Imagine never being with any of your friends or contemporaries. Never being able to have those long, meaningful conversations with every idol in front of a fireplace while sipping select Sherry. Never being able to enjoy those brilliant letters exchanged with Great Writers with such enthusiasm and joy, imparting so much knowledge and worldly wisdom.

I was supposed to have been an adult by then, by the date of my birth in 1929, and right in the middle of Paris' burgeoning, free-running thinkers...sitting at Gertrude Stein's feet and trying to not look too stupid while scarfing up Alice's too-damned-good brownies. *Pet me please. Lay some truthandfacts on me....*

In an interview with Paul Bowles [named "Stranger in a Strange Land"], Gaither Stewart wrote"

Paul Bowles went to Morocco the first time in 1931, on the recommendation of his new friend, Gertrude Stein. "I had spent that spring in Berlin studying music with Aaron Copland," he recalled. "In Paris I told Gertrude that I

planned to pass the summer in Villefranche. She found that idea frankly absurd. Alice Toklas said: 'Tangier!' And Gertrude said: 'That's the right place.' So Aaron and I came here together and rented a house. That summer he worked on his *Short Symphony* and I composed my first piece – *Sonata For Oboe and Clarinette* - that was played that winter in London."

#

Enter Significant Person No. 1 Henry Miller. My hero of heroes. My self-identified other. The man I once thought I wanted to become in the worst way possible. He answered the call of the sirens that lured him to Paris in 1932 when I was only three years old. When I was five, his world-shaking book *Tropic of Cancer* was published. Miller remained in Paris for a few more years, writing more and more of the books that were by law forbidden to know about, to own, or to read in the USA. I would eventually get to read, to possess, and to own those books. To republish them and glorify them and spread them as far and as wide as I could.

I even handset the type for Greenleaf Classics' first paperback edition of *Tropic of Cancer*. It was the first time I had ever touched a rack of type fonts. Not necessarily an experience I'd want to relive but at the time it was all part of being the boss and needing to ram a project through the works as quickly as possible in order to beat Grove Press onto the marketplace.

Every day it seemed they all called to me, Gertrude and Alice and Henry. Bowles and Jones and Hemingway. Anais Nin, the secret love that I somehow acquired second hand from Henry but loved her nonetheless.

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"The 1920s and 1930s radiate a glamour they can only possess for someone who didn't live through them." Here, then, are Gertrude Stein and Alice B Toklas installed in the rue de Fleurus, Hemingway and the Shakespeare & Co set, Man Ray, Dali and the other surrealists turning the world upside down, Josephine Baker dancing naked but for a feather between her legs or a skirt of rampant bananas; while the girls at the Moulin Rouge do their high kicks, the Crazy Horse gang struts its stuff in the half-light and clients are entertained at the Sphinx and other brothels. The spirit of George Orwell, down and out in Paris during this period, will cry out in vain to be heard.

--Anthony Sattin, *We'll Always Have Paris*, by John Baxter,  
*The Sunday Times*, January 30, 2005.

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*Where are you? They all keep asking. We're still waiting. What's keeping you? Don't you know you have to get it while you can? Most of it only goes around once....*

#

I went to Paris looking for them, hoping I would find them there where I found them, between the pages of their books and leering outward toward a world that no one else could recognize except them, and they were trying to give it to me and all I had to do was reach out and take it from their hands ten years earlier. I dogged the memory of their shadows and the echoes of their footsteps. I sought out Gertrude and Alice, and Henry and Anais, and I saw where they lived and loved...and had sex, where they thought and worked, where they ate and where they starved. I climbed their stairs and I trod over their footsteps. I sat in their favorite restaurants and ordered their favorite meals. I breathed the air that they breathed...so where was it? All that magical stuff that was supposed to appear up there inside my head as if by magic to download within me all the essences of life itself.

Hey, wait for me, guys. I want to belong. Teach me how to think great thoughts and write great words and hear the lost chord.

#

Enter Significant Person No. 2 William S. Burroughs. He was born in 1914, fifteen years before me. Bad timing again; he should have waited. I would have done it for him. We could have found new and novel ways to spend more of daddy's money together...Burroughs adding machine money that, in those days, came in endless, big-

number quantities.

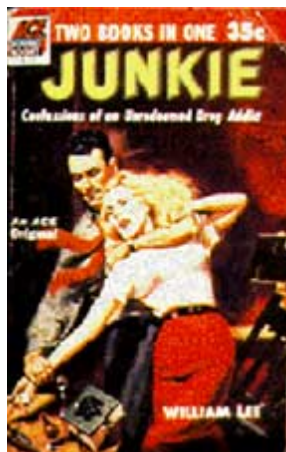
When he went away to school, mostly sent somewhere reasonably safe and out of the sight of his parents, he could let himself run free. That other self, the one inside him that he hardly knew and who was bugging the crap out of him day and night pleading for a little recognition. All those questions he kept asking himself about who he was and what he was and what he was supposed to be. All those desires that couldn't be suppressed that needed feeding... experimenting with...touching bodies...those inescapably haunting sexual images where gender had much less to do with whatever was ongoing than simple physical communion and much needed relief.

It was there Burroughs encountered people who would become life-long friends: Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Joan Vollmer Adams, who became Burroughs' common-law wife and mother of his children...until he played William Tell and shot a glass off the top of her head and missed.

Wallowing in remorse, guilt, and all those plaguing, unanswered questions, Burroughs began wandering the world and experiencing forbidden things and living in remote places in strange and unusual circumstances. Of grabbing his love where and with whom it happened to arrive. For delving deeply—perhaps too deeply—into drugs and degradation.

Burroughs had read two of Paul Bowles' novels, *Let It Come Down* and *The Sheltering Sky*, with locations in Tangier and elsewhere in Morocco. Burroughs recognized his kind of place from Bowles' books indicating that Tangier had a wide reputation as a city of wickedness. He arranged his transportation quickly and headed for Morocco. Once there, he knew he had been right all along, he had found his sanctuary of noninterference that he had been looking for in all his journeys around the world.

Naturally he met Bowles right away, and they became good friends and dope buddies. And it was there, in Tangier in 1954, that Burroughs celebrated his fortieth birthday, ten years after he first had attempted to write seriously. I was 24 years old then, and would have been glad to try to keep up with him had he asked. As it was, it took me an extra 13 years to get there on my own; I didn't make it to Tangier until 1967. Always dragging in much too late and much too broke for any real-time brain stuff that I really, really needed.



Under the drug-induced euphoria of sultry Tangier, William Burroughs wrote his first novel. It appeared as *Junkie* from Ace Books in 1953.

Encouraged by his friends and based on that minimum success, he produced his greatest work, *Naked Lunch*, in 1959.

#

Finally I came along, dragging ass and badly in need of a good joint, always running late as usual. Only, for the first time in my life, I managed to do it ahead of William Burroughs. He was 40 when he first visited Tangier, and I had just turned 38 the week before in Paris.

It was 1967...a very good year, ignoring the fact that Hugo Gernsback, the father of science fiction, died. Public Law 90-100 became effective, creating the president's commission on obscenity and pornography, an act that would figure prominently in my future. And I did one hell of a lot of traveling.

I don't even believe it myself. Yet, there I was, only three months earlier, hanging out with my jarhead buddies in Chu Li, Vietnam, getting royally blasted and listening to bloody death stories between head-cleaning visits to the underground Dragon's Asshole. I wrote of this in "Shrink, I Wanna Kill....," and "The Dragon's Asshole," in *e/16* for October 2004.

My travel log tells this tale of those hectic days: Saigon to Phnom Penh to Hong Kong to Sydney to Auckland to Sydney to Tahiti to Acapulco to Guadalajara (my home away from home in suburban Ajijic) to Tijuana (25 miles to the Greenleaf Classics office in San Diego and another 6 to my residence in El Cajon) to London to Copenhagen to Paris to Athens to Milan to Tangier. Damn, those three months just seemed to fly past.

#

While I was in Paris, I celebrated my 38 th birthday with a round of my favorite showgirl nightclubs like Moulin Rouge, Crazy Horse, Alcazar, Bobino, etc. I figured it was the best I could do so far away from home and all that, and with a cooperative expense account to pick up the tabs.

After I reached Milan, I discovered that my business was concluded earlier than expected and I had a gap of over a week in my schedule before my next appointment in Nice. *What to do? Oh, the agony of it all...decisions, decisions, decisions.*

I could hear Josephine Baker in the background, Thighmastering her bananas from side to side. *Baby, you're not listening again,* she said. Henry and Anais paused just long enough to take notice of my predicament and laugh before picking up where they left off. Gertrude was pissed. *Goddamnit! Haven't you learned anything yet?* Alice, always the kind one, leaned over with a couple of special brownies and stuck them inside my hand clandestinely. That's how I knew she liked me. *Tangier,* she said, *like I said before. It's where you want to go.*

Calling to me, all of them, demanding that I hurry, complaining about being tired of waiting. Endlessly bitching.

---

In 1947, Paul and Jane Bowles, talented writers, homosexuals, and married... ..found a refuge in Morocco's exotic blend of worldly pleasures, decadence, spirituality, and occult. Over the next 40 years, they were joined or visited by Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Timothy Leary, Susan Sontag, Mick Jagger, New York intellectuals, European aristocrats, and American heiresses such as Barbara Hutton and her various consorts.... [T]he sybaritic expatriates, their activities only partly curtailed by new restrictions, wandered about the Casbah...gathered periodically at the Parade bar, exchanged sexual partners, experimented with drugs, and created an entire culture of their own, hallucinatory and brutal, where deviance, eccentricity, extravagance, even insanity were the norm. Here Burroughs, living in a male brothel he called "Villa Delirium," wrote "routines" that his friends, particularly Ginsberg, gathered into *Naked Lunch*.

--Kirkus Reviews, *The Dream at the End of the World: Paul Bowles and the Literary Renegades in Tangier*, by Michelle Green, 1991

---

*Where are you? They all keep asking. We're still waiting. What's keeping you? Don't you know you have to get it while you can? Most of it only goes around once....*

#

Damn! I had waited so long and there it was, wintertime or not, just waiting for me and resounding with all the words and thoughts and drug-induced realizations of countless people calling out just to me.

*Gertrude sent me,* Paul Bowles said.

*Funny, I said. Me too.*

So I bought a ticket on the next nonstop flight from Milan to Tangier.

Major international airports have a sameness to them that can be hypnotic to frequent flyers, wondering where they are between planes, trying to remember where it is they're going to and why. Tangier has one of them. The big airliners keep coming in and out with ever-increasing frequency just like Somewhere Important and everything you see looks just like everything you see in every other airport.

The flight to Tangier and the landing were both uneventful, smooth as silk. As soon as I entered the airport, I went to baggage claim to pick up my checked baggage and was surprised when it bounced through on the conveyor belt. There had been numerous times in the past when it never did.

With my bag in hand, I proceeded to Immigration and Customs, the obligatory cursory glance at my passport, a couple of rapid rubber stamps, and on to Customs. Here the incoming passengers waited patiently in line while the contents of their luggage was glanced at almost as cursory as the Immigration person had looked at their passports. Only not this day of all days.

The person two people in line ahead of me was flat-out busted smuggling a kilo of weed into Tangier. From Milan, of all places...talk about ridiculous.

The custom's man hardly knew how to react to the aromatic package he was holding up in his hands for all to see. He broke out into near hysterical laughter as did a number of his counterparts. Finally, the people waiting in line to have their luggage checked realized what was ongoing and they, too, broke out into boisterous giggles that turned into loud guffaws. It was hardly necessary to smuggle pot into Tangier where it is dispensed free in large quantities of exquisite quality for all takers around the clock.

Once through the easy Customs routine and released into the general airport population, everything still looked just like everywhere else I had ever been, except that it was winter, and a little bleak and overcast, but you expect that from oceanfront locations. I boarded a normal-looking bus that would take me directly to my hotel in downtown Tangier, an unknown number of miles away. Soon, having taken on a number of passengers, the bus slowly began moving away from the airport terminal. And out of the airport compound, and onto the highway leading directly into several centuries earlier. Talk about being aboard a time machine and getting dumped into the wrong century....

#

There I am, seated inside the airport bus pulling clear of the airport area and heading toward Tangier. And I am scared. I recognize the feeling instantly and the shocked initial reaction came in rapid waves of questions: *What the fuck am I doing here? Is this the one? The place where I lose it? How do I get out of here?*

The bus is tooling along at a nice, safe pace down an ordinary looking highway through...incredible unrealities... unfolding right before my eyes in every direction like some kind of Cinerama travelogue created just for me. I think it was one of Cecil B. DeMille's earlier costume epics...some religious stories blown up to the ultimate extreme in sight and sound and Technicolor grandeur.

Blacks...real blacks not political correct labels were everywhere...in really odd costumes that looked somehow natural to them and not something from Wardrobe hastily assigned to run-of-the-mill extras. Camels and their handlers just plodding along like normal, all decked out in harness arrays that involved lots of colored blankets and dangling chords. The tinkling of long strings of tiny little bells hanging all about them could be heard over the noise of the bus engine. Beasts of burden carrying things; merchandise, people, drugs, the usual. Only they were so usual they were really frightening. There was no way I could possibly communicate with a one of them ever, no matter how long I tried or what I did.

All along the bus route I watched the people trotting along beside the highway, with or

without camels. And I noted that the closer I came to the city, the lighter their skin color appeared to become. By the time I reached Tangier, there were no natives in sight and everyone had mellowed out into a nice Arabic color.

I was damned glad when the airport bus finally reached Tangier and moved on toward the inner city where things began looking quite a bit more familiar. Perhaps my initial reaction had been completely false and it really was a warm, welcoming place eager to suck up and absorb yet another pretentious would-be character from a some-years-distant sick fantasy about how he too did it in Tangier just like the rest of his gang...but late as usual.

I checked into my hotel and eagerly rushed out into the street, anxious to explore this exotic and obsession-laden fantasyland. And ran right into the perfect person who just happened to be waiting there for me. Neither of us knew it at the time, but we were destined to become quick and permanent friends even though we would never see each other again.

His name was Mohamed Yasin and he was a tourist hustler, and I was his target. He latched onto me the moment I stepped outside the hotel door and was very tenacious. In almost no time at all he began telling me all about himself, even though I hadn't asked.

[Mohamed, who was well into his thirties at least, lived at home with his parents and a number of siblings. He was not married. He had no prospects of any sort. The family lived a meager, hand-to-mouth existence. He would not take me anywhere near his residence.]

He knew exactly what he was doing. He had read me in an instant and had almost all my priorities lined up correctly. And, at the same time, he convinced me that not only was there nothing to fear from him, there was much to be desired about having him around me. Every word he said to me was the word I most needed to hear.

He spoke rather good English, and almost all of it had been acquired first hand by using the language with tourists. He was on a continuous pathway of self improvement. And the best part of it all, being a local, he knew where everything was that I wanted to get close to.





It was commonplace for fakirs to take out their snakes and play with them in public.

“Absolutely anything,” Mohamed promised me. “Your deepest, most secret desire. It is here for you.”

I was hooked. I’ve always been a push-over for a smooth talker. “Take me to your dealer,” I said spontaneously. My most pressing desire making itself known loud and clear.

#

I am sure it was not his dealer’s place that Mohamed took me to. There is no way he could afford to go there on his own. It looked like any of several hundred apartment type structures near the downtown section. The first floor was occupied by commercial establishments but the upstairs was all apartments, and we were destined for the third floor.



Mohamed had instant entrée for both of us. The door opened promptly at his gentle touch and we were greeted most respectfully.

In Arabic that I didn’t understand a word of, Mohamed introduced me and the proprietor who ushered us inside like royalty. He led us up two flights of stairs and through what was clearly a private residence...a penthouse apartment atop the building. He directed us to a private balcony overlooking downtown Tangier. The apartment and balcony were large and rather elaborately decorated and furnished. The private balcony was through a large open archway to the outside.

There were actually a number of these private balconies lined up along the side of the building. They were almost theatrical in their decoration, as if DeMille had been at it again, with large colorful awnings that could be moved to accommodate the sunshine as desired. There were several comfortable couches with piles of fluffy pillows. There was much beautiful tile work all over the place, along the balcony railings and set into

little designs into the walls. The floors were all tiled and shiny...squeaky clean.

Somewhere incense was burning and the aroma drifting lazily through the breezes. A wind chime tinkled pleasantly from somewhere in the background. Looking out from the balcony across downtown Tangier, I was amazed at how much the view had improved from on high. I could see spires and minarets here and there in the distance, evidence of Allah’s power and influence. I could almost imagine a view to the ocean and see, in the distance, the charming white roofs that had so fascinated Mark Twain a century earlier. And, from the balcony, I could also detect Tangier’s special ingredient, the omnipresent odor of constantly burning marijuana in one form or another.

What I didn’t see, but expected to at any moment, was Sabu floating past on a flying carpet or forty thieves on horseback pounding furiously down the main street.

We settled back like visiting sheikhs and allowed the drug dealer to serve us. He brought out a large copper tray carrying a king's ransom in cannabis related products as well as an assortment of pipes and other paraphernalia. Without hesitating, he picked up a nice hash pipe and filled it with gold... *lo mejor de lo mejor...* and lighted it.

And passed it right to me. Gold...Afghani gold flake hashish.... *Ecstasy!* In no time at all, Mohamed and I were right where I wanted to be all along. *Alice was right, this is the place where I want to be.*

#

All the time that Mohamed and I were seated there on that private balcony, there were a number of small children who would wander through, giggling and grinning in delight. There were at least three of them and they were less than a year apart from each other. They were all still in diapers but two of them kept trying to walk, toddling around, falling, then getting up again. I found myself watching the children as we toked away on those hash pipes, as if they were some little acrobatic troupe performing fetes for our amusement.

They were crawling around on the floor of that private balcony on those beautifully polished tiles playing building blocks. They were stacking them up to make odd-looking and funny shaped structures. They were using some of the blocks as vehicles, crawling around and pushing them ahead of them while making "Zoom. Zoom." noises. They could have been children from anywhere in the world, all acting instinctively.

Only thing is, the building blocks that were those children's toys were assorted, various colors and types of kilos of hashish. The "Zoom. Zoom." toy trucks were hard-packed kilos of Cannabis Indica. *What more could any child want?*

Finally tiring of watching the construction crew at work, and unable to ingest one single hit of hashish more, I asked Mohamed how much money I owed the proprietor for our prolonged, eagerly consuming visit. He told me not to worry, that a tab was being run on the accounting and that we could settle it at sometime in the future. It worked for me so we floated away to the restaurant of Mohamed's choice.

I made it clear to Mohamed that I did not want to go to any of the usual tourist places, restaurants, bars, etc., that I wanted only the real stuff. The closer it came to one of my literary heroes, the better it was for me. And there was another factor that I tried to take into consideration. I had noticed that Mohamed absolutely would not set one foot inside my tourist hotel, nor would he even approach certain restaurants, venues, etc. That meant that some form of caste system was in operation, so I avoided those places whenever I was with Mohamed, and that was most of the time.

Instead we went to his favorite choice places...restaurants galore with bands and good music and dancing and lots and lots of lighted hash pipes. And couscous by the mounding bowlfuls that you eat with your fingers just like finger lickin' good right at home.

#

We visited his dealer's salon many times, Mohamed and I. On one of those delightful occasions, as soon as we could move again, I asked Mohamed to take me to his second most favorite place, assuming that his dealer's was number one.

That's how I came to be The Star of the East's most envious



Mohamed Yasin by matchlight on his favorite dealer's penthouse balcony doing one of his favorite things.

customer.

This was during the height of the Vietnam “police action” and things were really unraveling back in the USA. So much so in fact that atrocities like Iraq should never have been allowed to happen again for much the same reasons, and they having nothing to do with the USA in any respect. So you don’t live and learn....



The Star of the East was filled with bright, handsome, healthy, rich USA draft dodgers. The really lucky ones with enough money and parental support to stay wherever they want to as long as they want to and do whatever they want to do there except killing or being killed. The poor people with consciences who thought about what they were doing had to flee to Canada to wait out the war. The really poor ones had to make do with cut-rate Mexico for the same duration.

But the kids who flocked to The Star of the East were the cream of tomorrow’s executive crop...the leaders of industry...the Yuppies to be.

My kind of people...dopers all.

And The Star of the East was my kind of place. “A tea house,” Mohamed called it, though it was much, much more. It was large and rather well outfitted as a restaurant/night club combination showroom/theatre. There was an orchestra, a dance floor, a stage, and many large tables around the dance floor, the usual stuff. With some damned nice fringe benefits.

As we were seated at a table, a waiter approached us right away with menus and a lighted hash pipe. I was astounded to discover that we were expected to toke on that pipe while trying to make up our minds what if anything we wanted to order. The specialty of the house was hot tea served in tall Collins glasses decorated with a sprig of fresh mint. It was a real trick picking up that hot glass and holding it long enough to take a sip of the tea... delicious as it was with the tangy mint overlay.

The waiter took away our hash pipe along with our orders but not to worry. Within seconds it seemed, the belly dancer who was energetically gyrating around on the dance floor picked up one from somewhere and deftly wiggled past long enough to stick it into my hand. As I watched, I saw that was part of her routine, constantly keeping lighted hash pipes moving around from table to table in a dance of frenzied movements. The orchestra just kept pounding away at ever-increasing heartbeat rhythms.



These two photos were taken inside The Star of the East. In the left photo, the band is playing. In the right photo, the backdrop of the stage is shown with costumes and props for the spontaneous use of the customers.

The stage of The Star of the East had costumes, clothing, musical instruments and other props hanging along the backdrop. The entertainment was supplied by the audience. Now and then, one or more people would go up onto the stage, select garments and props, and move right into some impromptu performance. Some of them were really quite good and I can see that repeated visits to The Star would greatly improve one's repertoire.

#

Mohamed took me next to the Casbah, the old-world marketplace in the center of Medina, the old walled city portion of Tangier that looked like marketplaces anywhere in the world with one large difference. This one had a specialty product, anything that could be made out of cannabis in solid, liquid, or vaporous forms. Anything that it could be cooked into: entrees, sides, desserts, and beverages. We would move along from stall to stall looking at objects for sale. Whenever I felt like I could tolerate another hit, I'd merely grin at one of the salespeople who would instantly stick a lighted pipe into my hand.

And so it went, day and night, wherever I was there was much more marijuana than I could handle and I never thought that could be possible. Perhaps Burroughs was right after all and too much sex and too many drugs could...*naah! Not me. Never time doing.*

#

Mohamed tried his very best to convince me to try some of the more freely available specialties of Tangier, like the bordellos, but I felt I had enough of them already and could never get enough of the green stuff, so I kept turning him down and turning us on.

Women? Men? Girls? Boys? Young girls? Young boys? Sheep? Camel? Kinky? Numbers, combinations, colors, genders, clusterfucking like Burroughs and all the boys in the all-male "Villa Delirium" whorehouse. The best I could manage was a grand tour, checking them out for style and class...finding it hard to realize that some people do these things every day as a matter of routine and what's love got to do with it?



Now and then, Mohamed would excuse himself for his required prayer sessions and slip away quietly, only to reappear the moment he would be freed of his religious obligations to lead me to more sinful spots. And, too, there were times when I did not want him to be with me, however protected I felt when he was.

It quickly became clear to me that I had nothing to fear from Tangier either, in spite of my initial feelings of shock and consternation upon arriving at the airport. At these Mohamedless times, I would do Ugly American things like take deluxe tours of all the major night-life venues, the type place that I suspect Mohamed would never be allowed to enter. I felt it was my civic duty as a pornographer to know first hand just about everything sexual that I could tolerate.

During the daytimes, Mohamed and I would take long walks whereupon he would point out the very places where Burroughs and the boys lived, where Bowles did his thing, where Barbara Hutton brought her boytoys. He seemed to know all the places I wanted to know and that was okay with me. There is even the possibility that he was putting me on with some of those sites, those tales of Tangier's naughty past, but if so he did it so well I forgive him completely.



In the center of the left side of this photo several stacks of Mexican Falsa blankets can be seen looking as at home in the Casbah as in downtown Tijuana. A remarkable accomplishment by 1967 for Falsa, a Mexican manufacturer.



This world-class ficus tree is centuries old. It grows inside the Medina, Tangier, Morocco.

I took a camera along with me on those long walks through historic streets and in and out of notorious establishments. I photographed everything in sight from the fakirs on beds of nails to the snake charmers with hand-made flutes and cobras in exquisite baskets. I photographed a centuries old ficus tree (the fig family; “rubber tree”) that was incredibly beautiful. I photographed random street scenes with the native population going about their daily routines. Far too many of those photos disappeared from my possession, but there are a few leftover ones scattered throughout this article.

While I was shopping in the Casbah, soaking up the heady aroma and lots and lots of free pipeloads of hash, I bought some souvenirs. First and foremost, of course, was a native hash pipe, nicely decorated, and fitted with disposable clay bowls for your ultimate convenience. And, because the native costumes were so attractive, I also had to buy a kaftan and a

burnoose that I have somehow managed to hold onto all these years.

During the evenings, when it was time for me to fold up and crash, I would send Mohamed away to his home but not before performing The Ritual. This was a thing that Mohamed offered as a special treat on the first evening we met

He had a routine, Mohamed did, that he tried to perform every evening last thing before going to bed somewhere around midnight. He would stop at the USA embassy building—a block and a half from my hotel--and piss on the front gates as a token of his personal esteem, and he asked me if I'd care to join him, and I did, standing side by side. Quite refreshing, actually.

I had seen the same ritual performed three months earlier, on the front gates of the USA embassy in Saigon, for much the same reason.

#



When it finally came time for me to leave Tangier and get back on the road, I told Mohamed that we needed to pass by his dealer's place one more time for a final dance with the hookah and to clear up my account. We had been going there from three to six times a day for the entire week whenever I felt like it. The fact that it was an easy walking distance from my hotel, perhaps three intriguing blocks, made it all so much easier...not like holding or anything. I was a bit apprehensive as to what the total of my running-account for two people would amount to.

When Mohamed told the proprietor that I was leaving Tangier the following morning, he began offering me superb discounts on kilos to go and couldn't understand why I wouldn't take some away with me. After all, it would be a cold day in hell before I saw so much of

the very best spread out like that for me. *Everyone else did*, he told me.

But I had far too much experience with USA customs people prodding and probing me for additional evidence to last me forever. I wouldn't take an illegal drug with me on an airplane on a bet...in the 1960s...long before Homeland Security ever thought of screwing up air travel. Besides, in those days there was one solid fact--someone was going to offer it to me wherever I happened to be.

Instead, the proprietor humbly presented me with the itemized list of my and Mohamed's drug consumption. It amounted to just over \$10 USA. Naturally I paid it and included a generous tip and, floating on a newly reinforced Indica haze, Mohamed and I left that pleasure palace behind, building blocks, toy truck drivers, and all.

#

I said good-bye to Mohamed and told him that I would never forget him, and I haven't. Then I asked him what I owed him for his week-long lessons in ecstatic living, and he did not want to talk about that subject. I insisted, and finally he told me what he wanted.

Mohamed Yasin wanted the old, worn, dirty Levi's jeans I had worn on our first-day's walkabout of the old Tangier inner city. I protested that they hadn't been laundered but he said that didn't matter, so I said okay.

In my hotel room, I took those dirty old jeans, placed a \$20 bill in one of the pockets where it would be easily found, and rolled the jeans up around the long-sleeved chambray work shirt I usually wore with those Levi's. I gave the bundle to Mohamed who reluctantly took it from me and walked away, tightly clutching a soiled bundle of cast-offs as if they were somehow special.



#

On the way to the Tangier airport in the bus, I kept looking out at the passing parade of fantastic people ambling along beside the highway. The bright black faces with the brighter flashing teeth. The camels, drooling, loping along unconsciously, their bells tinkling comfortingly with their footsteps. The colors, the smells, the sounds...all so alien to me just a week ago, and so frightening...bothersome no more.

They made me begin to plan my next trip to Tangier ever before I boarded the airplane to leave it. I had come there expecting to walk in the footsteps of greatness and I had certainly done that, and smoked it and breathed it and licked it and ate it and loved it and known it. In an odd way, I felt that I had fulfilled the obligations I assumed from my Parisian mentors, and from my Tangierian literary rebels.

Gertrude: *Pissant, I thought you'd never....*

Alice: *Wasn't I right? Didn't I tell you so? Good stuff, hunh?*

Henry: *Coming, Mother....*

Anais: *Oh, God! Oh, God! Now! Now! Aarrgh...!*

William: *Goddamned motherfucking candyasshole junkie flaunting a good 'n plenty naked lunch....*

Josephine: *Baby....* A foolish grin of knew-it-all-along satisfaction on her proud black naked face.

I came back to Tangier as quickly as I could make it happen, but then that's another story....

### **Flashforward:**

"Two of America's great writers of the last half of the 20th century appreciated *[The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography]*'s significance as subversive social commentary, satire, obscenity law arson, and political grenade, finding literary inspiration within its covers. A copy found in the Ohio State University Library has an autograph note on the title page: "This copy given to me by Terry Southern 1971, source material for scrap books, William S. Burroughs, Feb. 2, 1974." [Ohio State University Library Special Collections, SPEC.CMS.90 William S. Burroughs Papers, WSB98, Box 18.]

"There are pages missing."

--Stephen J. Gertz, "The Apotheosis," *e18*, June 2003

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\*This is for Gregory Pickersgill and Robert Lichtman because they retroactively wanted me to take the trip. Then they wanted me to write about it for them to read. "This bud's for you." Special thanks to Robert Lichtman for vetting and proofreading this piece. Josephine Baker silhouettes by Paul Colin, circa 1927. All photography by Earl Kemp, Tangier, Morocco, December 1967.

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I was as excited about meeting [Paul Bowles] as the many others who had traveled to Tangier had been during the 1960s. However, by the 1980s literary figures like Allan Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Truman Capote, Jean Genet, and the Rolling Stones no longer crowded into Morocco and young people no longer made the pilgrimage to exotic Tangier to search for the strange man who lived as if in exile among his Moroccan friends. The Tangier craze was over.

--Gaither Stewart, "Stranger in a Strange Land," September 2002

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## Last Call! Closing Time!

By Earl Kemp

I've just received an airmail copy of an exciting new book and need to share it with you. It is an advance copy of a special book created for a very specific purpose. It is a university press book produced for one professor and one special course he is teaching. It was not intended to be a trade book and circulation is restricted and limited to a small number of copies.

All of that is important if you read through the rest of this.

The book is *Spine Intact, Some Creases*, by Victor J. Banis. It is subtitled "Remembrances of a Paperback Writer."

You will recognize the name of Victor Banis as a frequent contributor to my ezine *e/*.

Banis has written something less than 200 sleaze paperbacks in his pulp career for a number of publishers in a number of different genre categories. He is also a Gay Liberation political activist and a First Amendment freedom fighter with battle scars. All of this is covered within his remembrances, along with hundreds of photographs and cover scans of sleaze, comics, gothics, romances, and what have you pulps. (All unfortunately in black and white only.)

The book far surpasses any expectation I ever had for it and the scope of its contents is truly amazing.

Now the good stuff:

I have pulled enough strings to place a hold on a very few copies of this book, actually an unknown very small quantity somewhere BETWEEN 25 TO 35 SINGLE COPIES. These copies are at this moment enroute to the USA via slow boat. Those reserve copies will be offered for sale on a first come first served basis.

They are signed, limited, first edition copies and they will be offered for sale at \$35 per copy via media mail or \$40 per copy via priority mail USA only. [Foreign copies by special arrangement only.]

And here's how you can be one of those very few people:

I'm taking email reservations from persons wishing to purchase a copy of this book. Send your request to me at [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and receive a priority number entitling you to the secret data about how to go about buying a



copy.

Anyone defaulting on their priority number will have it fall to the next person in line.

Keep in mind that's BETWEEN 25 TO 35 SINGLE COPIES so time's critical here.

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The humanist behaves well without any expectations of rewards or punishments in an afterlife. They served, as indeed my ancestors in Indianapolis had done, the only abstraction with which they had any familiarity, which is community. And that's been enough.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Star News* article, 6/00

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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]

## Norstrilia Press: The Fannish Way to Publish

By Bruce R. Gillespie

### Introduction:

I've tried to capture the atmosphere of a time when rank amateurs such as Carey Handfield, Rob Gerrand and me could keep a publishing company solvent for ten years. As Paul Simon wrote: 'A time of innocence, A time of confidences... I have a photograph. Preserve your memories.'



Bruce Gillespie and Carey Handfield in 1975.

Let's not overdo the nostalgia. Carey and Rob and I disagreed on most things most of the time — but we still like looking through those NP books sitting on the shelves.

The unheralded heroes of this story are Maggie Gerrand; Jo Handfield, whose husband eventually emptied the garage of all those boxes of books; and Elaine Cochrane, who had to endure Norstrilia Press board meetings in her own living room.

#

In 1975, three moderately innocent fans lived in Melbourne, Australia, which was about to play host to Australia's first World SF Convention, Aussiecon I.

Rob Gerrand had already been listed as Assistant Editor of *Australian Science Fiction Review* (the 1966–69 incarnation), and had once been chosen by *Cleo* magazine as its Bachelor of the Month. Although he did not know it in 1975, his bachelor status was about to change.

Although he joined fandom only in 1969, by 1975 Carey Handfield was already known as the fan whose *Fault It Always Was*. When he had met David Grigg, aspiring writer, at school, he had offered to become David's manager. Carey wrote, and still writes very little; but he still makes things happen for those poor incompetent souls who call themselves writers, editors or publishers. In 1975 Carey's managerial skills were still unencumbered by romantic attachments.

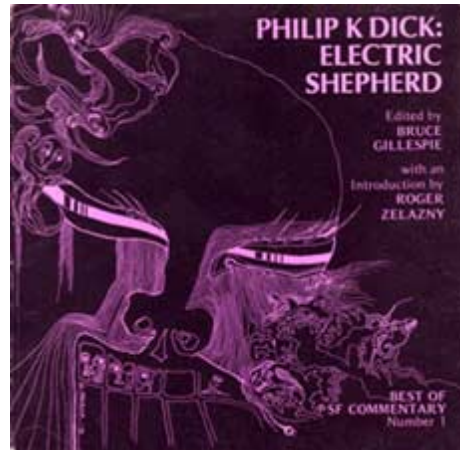


Rob Gerrand in 1978.

Bruce Gillespie had joined fandom in 1968, and had immediately decided that the only fannish activity worth 120 per cent of his time was publishing fanzines. Then as now, he came up against the immutable economic law that fanzines cost money to publish, and never make money. By mid 1975 his fanzine *SF Commentary* had already

picked up three Hugo nominations and several Ditmar wins, but Gillespie was always broke. (And still is.)

#



One fateful day in the fateful year of 1975, I, Bruce Gillespie, asked Carey Handfield if he could think of a way to earn the money to produce *SF Commentary* regularly. (This pattern repeats itself forever in my life.) 'Sure,' said Carey. 'You put together a *Best of SF Commentary*. We'll publish it, and the profits will pay for regular issues of the magazine.' Carey gave little idea of how this would be done, but was quite certain that it would happen.



Bill Burns and Bruce Gillespie. Photo by Peter Weston, Corflu Titanium, San Francisco, March 2005.

Since we were both admirers of the SF stories of Cordwainer Smith (Dr Paul Linebarger), and liked the title *Norstrilian News* (John Foyster's newszine of the early seventies), we wrote to Linebarger's widow, who gave us permission to call ourselves Norstrilia Press. Irene Pagram, then partner of Lee Harding, designed our logo and the cover of our first book, *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd*, which was edited by me, based on all the stuff on Dick that had appeared in *SF Commentary* since Issue No. 1, January 1969. Roger Zelazny, who had made Australia's presentation at Torcon II in 1973, wrote the Introduction. Suddenly we had a manuscript in hand. How would we pay for its publication?

Carey is perhaps the first Melbourne fan to have a vision of other fans as people from whom one might raise large amounts of money. He put out his hand to lots of them. Each was asked to 'invest' a sum of \$50 or more in

Norstrilia Press. Nobody was promised any dividend on that investment, but Cary did promise to give back each sum as soon as possible. Suddenly Carey had in hand the \$2000 or so he needed to publish our first book.

*Electric Shepherd* was being prepared as Carey and the rest of the Committee were frantically organising the last stages of Aussiecon I, to be held in August. Carey's guiding business principle was 'cheap! cheap! cheap!' He made contact with a printer who lived in a country town 100 miles away. This printer promised unbelievably cheap rates, and also promised to deliver the Aussiecon Program Book, *Electric Shepherd*, and a special issue of *SF Commentary* in time for the convention. As I recall, *Electric Shepherd* was delivered with a few days to spare, the Program Book was delivered with a few hours to spare (many of the copies misbound), and the special Tucker issue of *SFC* was never delivered. (Nearly twelve months later I published it as a mimeoed fanzine.) We have ever heard from or of this printer again.

Only Carey's persistence dragged copies of *Electric Shepherd* from the printer on the eve of Aussiecon I. We

printed 1000 copies, which took twenty-two years to sell out.



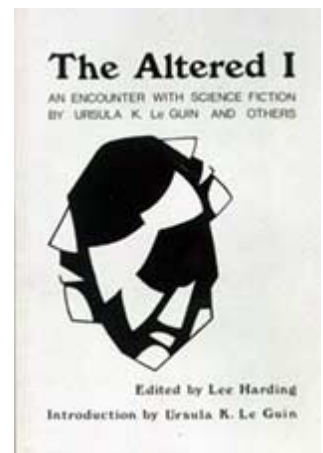
Everything went well with the new enterprise, except that it did not fulfill its original aim. No profits reached the constantly empty coffers of *SF Commentary* because Carey had found a Mission In Life. He did 90 per cent of the work on Norstrilia Press, but in return he demanded that we keep publishing new books. And each of these books needed some new source of capital.

Rob Gerrand joined the partnership six months later, originally because he invested a whole lot of money into the venture. He and Carey changed the direction of our publishing policy from the Shining Vision of Pure Criticism that I had envisioned. I wanted Norstrilia Press to become the next Advent Publishers, concentrating on critical books derived from *SFC's* articles. Instead, Carey and Rob announced to me that Lee Harding had offered to put together a book about the Ursula Le Guin Writers' Workshop that had been held during the week before Aussiecon I. *The Altered I* would feature submission stories, stories written at the workshop, and 'atmosphere articles' about that magical week in the Dandenong Ranges. Again Irene Pagram designed the cover. The resulting book was received well within fandom, and has since become a textbook for the writers' workshop movement that spread throughout Australia during the seventies and eighties. Better still, Berkley Books paid \$2000 for the American reprint rights, immediately enabling us to pay back our most pressing debts and start thinking about a program for publishing new works.

Carey, Rob or I were still not earning a living from our work on Norstrilia Press, but we could now see a way clear to publishing without going broke after the release of each book.

And of all people, the Commonwealth Government was our most helpful partner in this program.

During the three years of the Whitlam Labor Government (1972 to 1975), the Australia Council had been set up to help fund all aspects of the arts in Australia. In December 1975 Labor lost office, but the essential structure of Labor's arts policy remained. There were grants available for individual authors and writer-oriented projects, plus an equally generous subsidy for the publication costs of any book produced entirely in Australia. The Le Guin Writers Workshop was made possible only by an Australia Council grant.



A year later, Kitty Vigo obtained a grant to help pay for the tuition costs of a second large Writers Workshop. It was held at Monash University, east of Melbourne, with George Turner, Christopher Priest and Vonda McIntyre as Writers in Residence. George edited for Norstrilia Press *The View from the Edge* as a complement to *The Altered I*. More didactic about the art of writing than *The Altered I*, it gives a vivid idea of the workshop method (that is, America's Clarion Method adapted for Australian conditions), and features some memorable stories. *The View from the Edge* did not sell to an American publisher, but it made back its costs.

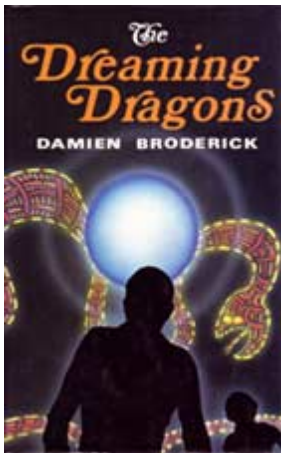
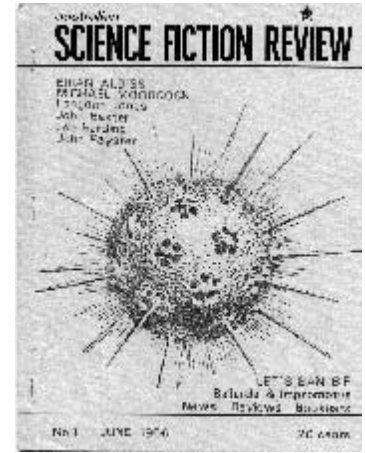
Even after three releases, Norstrilia's financial position was precarious. Carey always had to put a hand out to new investors to keep the program going. However, we felt that the enterprise was worthwhile because we were publishing books that would never be looked at by the mainstream publishers. It took ten years to make us realise that books that probably won't make money for Murdoch or Pearson probably would never make money for us either.

In the late 1970s we kept going because (a) we succeeded in gaining publishing grants from the Literature Board, which meant we only needed to sell 500 copies to break even on a book; and (b) we bought an IBM Electronic Composer (the golfball-type typesetting machine), with which I typeset about twenty books, both for us and for other publishers. This typesetting business gave me a healthy income from 1978 to 1982, and saved a small fortune in costs for NP itself.

Gradually we became more ambitious and more foolish. Like many SF publishers before and since, we felt that we would make a vital connection with the mainstream of Australian writing that would save us from remaining a ghetto publisher. There were harbingers.

In 1970 John Bangsund, editor of the first series of *Australian Science Fiction Review*, had been in touch with Keith Antill, whose book, *Moon in the Ground*, had won the Dame Mary Gilmore Award. This was awarded to books of literary merit that reflected Dame Mary Gilmore's leftish view of Australian life. *Moon in the Ground* received quite a bit of publicity when it won the award, especially as it was -- horror! -- an SF novel, but it remained in manuscript, and had not found a publisher. No Australian mainstream publisher would touch SF at that time. Carey tracked down Antill, bought the manuscript, and we made it our next project. Stephen Campbell, whom I had met in Ararat in 1969 and had done illustrations for early issues of *SFC*, painted the cover.

We sold enough copies of *Moon in the Ground* to make it possible to publish another novel.



My great dream of publishing SF criticism was politely but firmly squelched. I was always outvoted two to one. NP decided to do Damien Broderick's *The Dreaming Dragons*, which I had read in manuscript before Norstrilia Press existed. It had languished for two years, but by the time we came back to it, Damien had already sold it to Dave Hartwell's Timescape Books in America. We had to buy back Australian rights from Timescape, which added \$2000 to our upfront costs. However, both the American paperback and our hardback were well reviewed, and we were able to sell Australian paperback rights to Penguin Books. Again we had snatched poverty from the jaws of bankruptcy. *The Dreaming Dragons* came second in the Campbell Award (America's jury award for Best SF Novel of the Year), was chosen by David Pringle in Britain as one of the Top 100 SF Novels Ever, and generally gained much prestige. (It was hardly a bestseller in Australia, but we offer the only edition still in print.)

At about this time Roger Zelazny offered us the only edition, in both hardback and paperback, of his second book of poems, *When Pussywillows Last in the Catyard Bloomed*. Poetry! Had we gone stark mad? But if we'd had American distribution, we probably could have sold quite a few copies of this book. In the end, we didn't. Worse, because we were publishing a non-Australian author, *Pussywillows* wasn't eligible for a publishing grant.

Our most spectacular publishing disaster was, as you might have guessed, a book of SF criticism. Kirpal Singh and Michael Tolley were both teaching in the English Department at Adelaide University. They put together *The Stellar Gauge*, a collection of fine critical essays written by prestigious people. Sladek's essay on Disch was my favourite essay (as far as I know, never reprinted, although it's one of the best things ever written on Disch), and I had glee in my fingertips as I typeset George Turner's magnificently nasty essay about Fred Pohl's *Gateway*. *The Stellar Gauge* seemed to me then, and still does, a repository of Fabulous Stuff, but readers did not want to know about it.

*The Stellar Gauge* was the third book we did in one year. Usually we did one book a year, then waited for the returns to finance the next project. Broke, we borrowed almost all the costs for *The Stellar Gauge* from a friend of Mike Tolley. She was not a fan; she expected to be paid back within a reasonable time; and the book failed utterly. I still don't know whether she ever received back all her money. The book failed because there was no definite audience for it in Australia. If we could have launched it into the American college market we might have done quite well. The book had a rotten cover, about which I protested. I was outvoted again. I've always been afraid to ask what Carey did with the umpteen boxes of unsold *Stellar Gauges*.

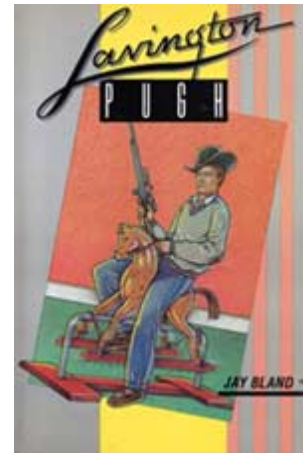
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Norstrilia Press was the first Australian specialist SF publisher since the downmarket fan presses of the early 1950s. Manuscripts poured in. Almost without exception, they made us flinch. Many of them, rescued from deep desk drawers, were literally stinkers. Phew!

But there were exceptions. One day the mail disgorged the manuscript of a nicely satirical novel, *Lavington Pugh*, by Adelaide writer Jay Bland. He used SF as an

enabling device for an amusing novel about the lunacies of the 1960s. Not a great success, but it didn't lose money and we've never regretted publishing it.

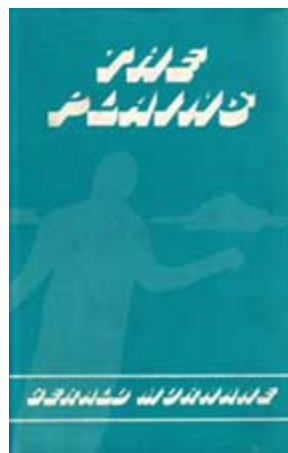
We also received an astonishing manuscript from a bloke from Western Australia called Greg Egan. The first twenty pages bordered on the incomprehensible, but they were real writing, chewy and funny and passionate. Soon the reader discovers that the main character is a teenager, living in Perth, Western Australia, who has a camera in his head. Day by day he films his life, but he can't retrieve the film to develop it. *An Unusual Angle* is the story of the film he can never make. The subject matter is suburban high school life in Australia in the 1970s. That might not sound exciting, but it was, and still is, unique in Australia. Most other Australian school stories have been written about impoverished kids in isolated country schools or rich kids in private schools.



As it proceeds, *An Unusual Angle* becomes increasingly zany and funny and vivid. We discovered that Greg had written it when he was seventeen. When we published it, he was still in his early twenties. It received only one major review (Veronica Brady in Van Ikin's *Science Fiction*), didn't sell much, but it put a bomb under Greg Egan. In the next few years he sent us five novels and three books of short stories. They were brilliant but unpublishable. They still have not been published. At the 1985 Worldcon Carey, Lucy and I actually met Greg. He lurked at the edge of the last hours of Aussiecon II, observing fandom in all its glory. Nobody in the SF world has set eyes on him since. Even his publisher has never met him.

Because of Norstrilia Press's fabulous incapacity for publicity, most Greg Egan fans still do not realise that *An Unusual Angle* ever existed, and do not know that we still have a small number of copies for sale. I'm told that secondhand copies fetch fabulous sums in America.

Our greatest success arose not from a submitted manuscript but from a book that we commissioned. In 1971 I had been worked with Gerald Murnane at the Publications Branch of the Education Department. Although we shared a passionate interest in books, I did not realise that Gerald had been writing a novel for the previous ten years. That first novel, *Tamarisk Row*, appeared in 1973, to considerable acclaim. I typed the manuscripts of several of his novels, including a large book that he could not sell. I suggested detaching one 20,000-word section from it and releasing it as a novella/novel (in a large-print edition). Norstrilia Press published it in 1981 as *The Plains*.



The original cover of *The Plains* is shown to the left and the replacement cover to the right.

The first cover we put on it was so blindingly awful that the distributor refused to put copies in bookshops. In one week, Carey commissioned a somewhat better cover from an artist friend of his and arranged for 1500 copies of the

new cover to be printed. The first cover had to be taken off every copy, and the new cover wrapped around it by hand. The ecstatic reviews began to appear before copies were distributed to bookshops.

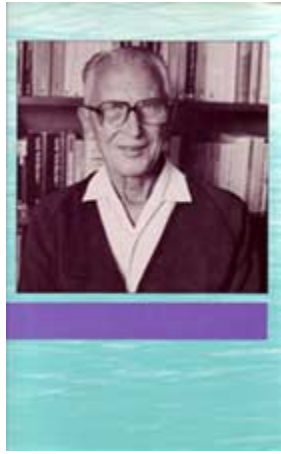
It's impossible to describe *The Plains*, although I have a go in my entry on it in the Nicholls/Clute *SF Encyclopedia*. I talked about it in a conference paper that Van Ikin published in *Science Fiction* in 1982. No longer was Norstrilia Press merely a publisher of science fiction; we had waded out into the big wide puddle of Australian Literature. *The Plains* was nominated for, and came very near to winning *The Age* Book of the Year Award for 1982. It's our bestseller — the only book of ours to sell more than a thousand copies in hardback.



Flush with Murnane's and our success, we published his next book, *Landscape with Landscape*, a series of five linked novellas, including at least two stories that I would call SF. It did not sell nearly as well as *The Plains*, and gained no prizes. Murnane announced that he would be sending his next book to another publisher, but never again sold as many copies in hardback as he did with us.

We weren't good at publicity. Carey refused to untighten the purse strings to spend money on advertising, and we didn't know how to get our authors featured on radio, which, more than TV, sells books in Australia. However, Carey's mother Esta, who had been in the PR business, decided to have one last fling to putting us on the map. She organised the launch at the Melbourne Planetarium of David King's collection of SF/fantasy/magic realist stories called *Dreamworks* (1982). (We weren't to know we should have patented the title.) It included some notable stories, including Greg Egan's first published short story, Lucy Sussex's first, one of George Turner's short stories, and the last piece of Gillespie fiction. *Dreamworks* received a large number of favourable reviews; Andrew Whitmore's 'Above Atlas His Shoulders' won a Ditmar Award; and I think we made our money back.

Time was running out for the small publishers. With its funds constantly crimped by both conservative and Labor governments, by the mid 1980s the Australia Council started to move away from funding books of fiction, but were still not supporting non-fiction. In the mid-1980s I met for the first time in many years my English tutor from 1966, Dinny O'Hearn (for some years before his death, the co-presenter of SBS's *Book Show*). He remembered me, as he remembered all his former students, and agreed to write a one-page critique/puff for George Turner's *In the Heart or in the Head*, his literary biography. George's book was one of only 5 per cent of non-fiction titles to receive a grant that year. John Bangsund edited it (whereas all the other NP books had been edited at the keyboard by me during the process of typesetting), and the book came out. Many copies remained in storage. Somehow many boxes of them were left under a house in a western suburb of Melbourne, and have never been seen since. Ask Carey the full story. (Thanks to George, I still have a box of *In the Heart or in the Head* at my place.)



*In the Heart or in the Head* is my favourite among the books we published. At least half of it a literary essay (a history of SF), so it was a return to the world of criticism for Norstrilia Press. It arose from my attempts to persuade George to write a new version of his 'On Writing About Science Fiction', his famous long essay from 1968. In George's writing credo, contained in *In the Heart's* last chapter, he posed a challenge to himself: what would this ideal SF novel read like? George's answer to himself and us was *The Sea and Summer* (*Drowning Towers* in USA), his magnum opus, Arthur Clarke Award winner, Commonwealth Writers Prize runner-up, and much else besides.

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And that is the story of Norstrilia Press. It's all about fannish friendships, fabulous Carey Handfield organisational triumphs, and our naivety at mistaking the impossible for the possible. We didn't lose any money, but we didn't make much. Eventually we came unstuck because Carey got a new hobby. In 1984 (as I remember) he and Jo got together, and shortly they were thinking about marriage, and kids, and houses, and they had a shed full of unsold Norstrilia Press books. Jo once said, 'I only married him for his junk', but eventually the junk was disposed of, and Carey distributed a modest profit to the three of us. Between us we still have a few copies for sale of all our books except *Electric Shepherd* and *Pussywillows*. Melbourne's Slow Glass Books holds substantial stocks of some of our titles. Our prices are \$A14.95 for paperbacks plus \$A24.95 for hardbacks, plus postage. Try us for a good deal. I don't know what to charge for *An Unusual Angle* now. According to one American dealer, the sky's the limit. Our hardback edition of Zelazny's collection is so rare that it is not even listed in the complete Zelazny bibliography.

Norstrilia Press stopped publishing because (a) Carey gained new interests in life: wife, kids and household; (b) Gerald Murnane did not offer us the novel that followed *Landscape with Landscape*; and (c) our next project, a book of SF stories set in Australia, to be edited by Harlan Ellison and Terry Dowling, was scuppered by exactly the same factors that stopped *The Last Dangerous Visions*. Ellison made all the noise; Terry was left out of pocket; in the end Carey, Rob and I lost interest. Each of us had livings to make and other fish to fry. A few years later, Carey declared a dividend, which helped to pay my pressing debts of the time, but I never received that continuous tinkle of cash that would have guaranteed the regular publication of *SF Commentary*. Instead I began publishing *The Metaphysical Review*. Most people have forgotten what we did (although other people have chosen to misrepresent what we attempted to do), and in the end our main 'rival', Cory & Collins, made no more money than we did. Peter McNamara started up Aphelion Books, and had to close it. Australian SF stalled for a some years until the mainstream publishers began to take it up; once the big birds moved in, the boom really began.

**Footnote:** Why there may never be a Second Edition of *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd*

The centrepiece of *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd*, one of Norstrilia Press's only two books to sell out, is Stanislaw Lem's essay 'SF: A Hopeless Case, with Exceptions'. The exception, of course, was Philip K. Dick, who became more than usually paranoid in 1974 and repaid Lem's compliment by coming to regard Lem as his deadly enemy. It's not worth doing a second edition of *Electric Shepherd* without including that essay (plus George Turner's long article of comment on it), but meanwhile Stanislaw Lem has had a ferocious disagreement with Franz Rottensteiner, his champion and agent

for nearly thirty years, believing that Franz had turned on him. The essay may no longer be available for reprinting. Meanwhile, I'll reprint Famous Phil Dick Essays from *SFC* in my own fanzines or in others', from time to time.

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Written February 1999.

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I'm paranoid as an act of good citizenship, concerned about what the powerful people are up to. I suspect them of making money any way they can. It intrigues me that people want to be rich, and I try to imagine what they do when they are rich.

--Kurt Vonnegut, 1963

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# I Remember Fred Fixler

Artwork by Harry Bell

By Gary Sohler

In the late 1960s, Milton Luros hired Fred Fixler as the overall photo editor for the burgeoning girly and nudist magazine empire which had grown substantially as a result of Milt's having added several new girly book titles as well as an entire new department of "legitimate" nudist magazines created by my father Stan Sohler.

Previously, the burden of reviewing and purchasing both staff and freelance photographic submissions had fallen to the art directors Wil Hulseley and Jerry Pecerrera, but the sheer volume of photographic material which came in the door every day finally demanded a dedicated position to handle this aspect of the Luros publishing machine.

I was a staff photographer for both Parliament News and Sun Era, the girly and nudist divisions at the time Fred was hired, and was one of two regular staff photographer, the other staffer being a tall black prolific photographer named "Nippy."



Gary Sohler is proudly fronting this sleazy gaggle of Hawaiian flesh.

Fred was uncomfortable in his new role from the very start. We knew that Fred had come from a fine arts background as an illustrator and therefore, according to Milt, "Had the artist's eye." And he did. During the brief period when both Fred and I worked together he taught me much about lighting, composition, backgrounds, and line and form as it applied to the human figure. Fred's discomfort however came from the fact that, for whatever reason, he had been relegated by life's circumstances to looking at blatantly sexual images all day as a cog in the wheel of America's largest porno empire.



Nobody ever asked, and Fred never revealed, why he had abandoned what was obviously a very successful and lucrative career as a commercial illustrator, and became Milt's photo editor. His basic distaste for the job and the content of the magazines was written across his face and visible to all. Fred was also very uncomfortable in the role of an executive running a department which at that time consisted of his assistant Bob Cohen, a wise guy law student who roundly despised and disrespected him, photographers Nippy and myself, photo archivist and librarian Bernie, a photo lab crew of three, and several part-time and freelance photographers.

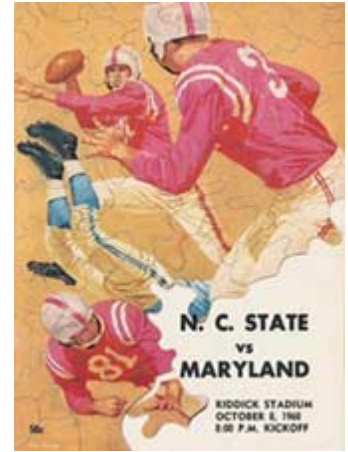
Like many truly fine artists I have met, Fred was desperately bereft of the leadership, command, negotiating, and/or organizational skills which his position demanded. Though he did indeed have the "artists eye," he frequently found himself in awkward and uncomfortable situations when it came to negotiating freelance fees, freelance purchase prices for submissions, preparing assignments, hiring and firing of people in his department, and the everyday problems which arose at the photo lab, not to mention reconciling sometimes outlandish expense reports from staff photographers such as myself and Bill Graham for remote location trips.

On several occasions, as a result of poor decisions, or worse, dithering when an important decision needed to be made immediately, Fred found himself at the receiving end of Milt's wrath. Whenever this occurred, and it occurred frequently, it was necessary for everyone nearby to exit quickly and gracefully to the parking lot until the storm had passed. Upon re-entering Fred's office, there he would be, totally *verklemt* and often on the edge of tears. Fred also hated wearing a suit and tie that Milt insisted all of his executives and department heads wear in those days. I frequently saw him insert his finger under his always-too-tight shirt collar, as if he were being strangled. I remember often feeling very sorry for him. He was a man who was truly beyond his depth and ill-suited for his post.

During our brief association I did have one occasion to visit Fred's house, a lovely home high in the Hollywood hills overlooking the San Fernando Valley. What I do remember about the visit was that Fred's home was a veritable museum of fine art, both his and works by other accomplished artists. Fred invited me into his studio to show me his voluminous portfolio. He was justifiably proud of his body of work, and I was very impressed with the depth and breadth of his capabilities. The portfolio was a stunning array of magazine and book cover art, advertising illustrations, and movie posters, among many other things. You name it, he had done it.

What really blew my mind though were the small duotone posters Fred had painted for the Coca-Cola Company back in the late fifties and early sixties. These were the series of illustrations of high school football, baseball, and basketball athletes in various action poses onto which the season schedules of various high schools would be overprinted. There, among all these posters, were several which promoted the varsity football schedule for my own Alma Mater, Redondo Union High School which I had seen hundreds of times plastered all over my school, had always admired but had never known who had created them until then.

My last visit with Fred Fixler occurred upon my unannounced and unauthorized return from London where I had spent several months on assignment with my wife Gloria busily producing three photo shootings a week for the girly book magazines and being the recipient for consignments of Milt's retread girly magazines for his London distributor Ben Holloway of Ben's Books.



This football poster, dated 1960, is signed by Fred Fixler. It is representative of the type used at Redondo Union High School. Courtesy Art Scott Collection.

I wrote of this before last December in "Recollections of a Porn Photographer" in *e/17*.



Prior to leaving for this assignment, Fred and Milt had promised me a substantial raise that had never materialized. In addition, the regular expense reimbursement checks on which Gloria and I relied heavily, suddenly and mysteriously dried up as well. We tried to survive on our own resources for awhile, but were ultimately forced to approach Ben Holloway, hat in hand, for help paying our rather large bills for our large leased house, car, and business expenses. Several letters and phone calls to Fred produced excuses, delays, dithering, or no response at all. Finally in frustration, Gloria and I decided to return to Los Angeles and quit my staff job with Milt entirely.

At 8 a.m. on the morning after arriving back in Los Angeles, I marched into Fred's office carrying a large box of Parliament News' photographic equipment which I had been using in London, a carefully worded resignation letter, and an invoice for several thousand dollars in back pay and expenses. When Fred and Bob Cohen looked up and saw me they both went into shock. I wasted no time in delivering a rather withering diatribe, punctuated with a lot of choice words I had been saving up during months of frustration overseas. When Fred partially recovered he immediately tried to mollify me with promises of an immediate meeting with Milt who, fortunately was not there at the moment. No dice.

I marched out of Fred's office and out of Milt Luros' empire forever. I heard that Fred also

left Milt's employment shortly thereafter.

Not long after departing Milt Luros, I began packaging magazines for one of the most tyrannical, cutthroat, and avaricious hillbillies in the history of pornography, Earl Kemp at Greenleaf Classics in San Diego....

But that's another story....

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A step backward, after making a wrong turn, is a step in the right direction.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*

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[Lance Casebere was the "Godfather of Paperback Collecting." It was Lance's challenge to own every paperback book in every series line from every USA publisher, and he succeeded at his goal more than any other collector. When he died a couple of years ago, there was an auction of his collection for the benefit of his heirs. The books were sold in lots of complete runs of series titles. Ryan Richardson picks up the story from there.... –Earl Kemp]

## "TAWCE'd About..."\*

By Ryan Richardson

Lance Casebere made it simple: all or nothing. The Brandon House artwork made the decision even simpler: *I'll take 'em all*. And with that, I left that auction in Portland with an instant Brandon House collection, not quite complete and often "lanced," but a sufficient fix. From the get-go of paperback collecting, sleaze was what I wanted and the Brandon House cover girls sharing the are-you-thinkin'-what-I'm-thinkin', over-the-shoulder glances...well, they had my number. Seasoned collectors attributed the artwork to "Elaine." I was immediately skeptical. To me, there was a heavy dose of the "male gaze" in the artwork... it was hard to believe a woman was responsible. Now, the "Elaine" attribution was not simply a guess; it was a deduction by Chris Eckhoff based on a signed piece. The style was certainly similar, and Eckhoff was well versed in paperback artwork. But I still wasn't buying. The skepticism began to creep... fellow collector and eBay rabble-rouser Robert Speray coined the acronym TAWCE (The Artist We Call Elaine) which he began to use for his Brandon House listings.



When I asked Ryan Richardson to furnish a recent photo of himself with a caption to run with his article, this is what he sent. There is no caption.

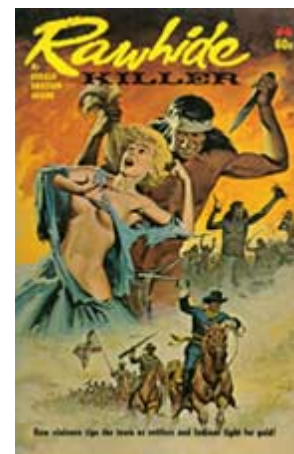
One day as I Googled around for "Brandon House," I ran across the name of a former editor: Brian Kirby. If this guy was still with us, surely he'd know whether "Elaine" was the Brandon House artist. I excavated what appeared to be a current mailing address and dashed off a letter. Weeks later and much to my surprise, the self-addressed, stamped postcard came back with an answer: "Elaine" never worked at Brandon House. But Kirby didn't leave it at that... he volunteered the names of people who DID work there: Wil Hulseley, Jerry Pecoraro, Fred Fixler, Kadi Tint, Etc. If I didn't skip work that day, I probably should have. My mind was reeling.

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Wil Hulseley was out. One of the few (only?) Western paperbacks published by Brandon House was *Rawhide Killer*, by Gerald Drayson Adams, and the artwork was credited to "Wil Hulseley." After locating another example of Hulseley's work, I concluded this wasn't the guy.

[I am aware of one other Brandon pure Western, BB6401 *Ride, Gunfighter, Ride!*, by Jeff Travis, and I believe it also sports a fine Wil Hulseley cover painting. –Earl Kemp]

Kadi Tint (this is how Kirby spelled it) was also a dead-end. Was it Katy Tint? K.D. Tint? Catie Tint? In my frequent searches for long-gone punk rockers, I'd found women to be far more difficult to find due to marital name changes and the custom of abbreviating first names in White Pages listings. If Kadi Tint was the uncredited artist, it looked like she'd remain that way. I couldn't find anything.



I found an address for Jerry Pecoraro and sent off a letter. I never received a reply. I later discovered Mr. Pecoraro had a good reason for not writing back: he was dead.

Fred Fixler. Now, HERE was a name I could work with. A quick search of telephone directories turned up nothing. The thrill of Kirby's revelation was fading quickly. Was everyone dead or missing? I decided to pay for a Public Records search on Fixler and sure enough a promising address popped up. In March 2002, I mailed off a low-key inquiry to Fred Fixler which in and of itself was an achievement – truth be told, I was boiling with excitement over

the prospect of FINDING THE ARTIST. I color-copied several book covers and included those with my note. Months passed...nothing. Perhaps Fixler, too, had died. Maybe the address was wrong, though my letter hadn't been returned.

October rolled around, and I was Googling Fixler again. I ran across the website of an illustrator who'd studied under Fixler. After trading a couple e-mails about my interest, the former student asked to see some of the Brandon House book covers. His response still tingles my spine a bit....

"Fred use to tell us stories about these covers he painted for some underground studio. He said the police would raid them often. They would come through the front door and all the artists would run out the back door avoiding capture. He never told us what covers they were or their subject matter. In fact he never signed them; I think if he did he used an assumed name.

"If I were told Fred did these two covers I would have no doubt in my mind. I have seen at least a hundred of his paintings and am 90% sure he did these. Fred had a distinct gouache style and specialized in pretty girls. I cannot verify for sure if he is the artist and I know Fred would be very angry if I asked him about it. I know it doesn't answer the most frequently asked question, but Fred would be the only one to do that. I can guarantee he will not even talk about this. Sorry I can't help any further on this."

This former student's assessment compelled me to try one more time. Realizing the artwork might be a source of embarrassment, I spent considerable time composing a heartfelt letter, one that addressed the concerns an older artist might feel about this work and one, which re-emphasized my admiration. I also made it clear I wanted nothing more than a "yes, that is my work" or "no, that is not my work." With the answer, I promised no follow-ups or further inquiries. Sincerity can be an effective barrier breaker, and I thought Fixler might respond. I couldn't, however, bear to sit around for a few more months, nay forever, not knowing whether Fixler had even received the letter. I decided to use Express Mail, which would not only have it there the next day, it would require a signature. Late the following night, I tracked the envelope online. Recipient name: F. Fixler. And so I waited....

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Two months later, Ron Blum (Kayo Books) exacerbated the Fixler fixation and drained my checking account by turning up several original Brandon House paintings, among them those used for *Mr. Sex*, *Flying Lesbian*, *Lesbian Gym*, *Two Women In Love*, *Suzy & Vera*, and *Queer Beach*. I bought these last two...and continued to wait.

Fast forward to February 2003: upon hearing about my failed attempts to reach Fred Fixler, our man Earl Kemp decided to roll up his sleeves and put his own keyboard into the fray. I passed on Fixler's address and crossed my fingers. Kemp had the personal connections to cite and the requisite finesse and brevity which I apparently lacked. Kemp's assessment of my last Fixler letter was sternly editorial with a splash of golden years impatience:

And, Kemp sent me a copy of his letter to Fixler.

Therefore I know why he never heard from him. I realize

he was writing a very thoughtful, sincere letter, but instead he just blew him away. You can't hit an old man with that many words even if you are kissing his ass. All you do is scare him away. Many times (and I am often wrong) less produces much more than more does. Consider that Kemp's deduction of one gold star for the day.

In Fixler's case, Kemp's half-page produced not more, not less, but the exact same as my full-page plea:

NOTHING. A year later (Valentine's Day 2004), Brittany Daley dug up a tidbit on [adultvideonews.com](http://adultvideonews.com) that provided a fairly compelling reason for Fixler's reticence: *The People v. Fred Fixler (1976)*. And, in another delightful harnessing of Internet power, Daley dug out the appeals court opinion in the case:



Original cover paintings by Fred Fixler for *Suzy & Vera* to the left and *Queer Beach* to the right.

In a no jury trial defendants Fixler and Utterback were convicted of conspiring to violate Penal Code section 266i (pandering). In addition, Fixler was convicted of two substantive counts of pandering and Utterback was convicted of one substantive count of pandering. They appeal from the judgment of conviction.

There is little dispute as to the facts underlying the judgment. Utterback was one of several photographers employed by American Art Enterprises, a concern that publishes various magazines devoted to the depiction of sexual activity. Fixler was Art Director of all photo shoots for American Art Enterprises. In that capacity he directed the work of the photographers and from time to time held meetings at which the quality and content of the pictures were discussed. At one meeting, Fixler gave instructions to the photographers as to what they should do in the case of arrest.

*The conviction stood, and one has little difficulty imagining Fixler wanting that chapter of his life -- all things Brandon House, all things American Art Enterprises, all things Luros -- excised and forgotten.*

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Earl, I never knew that Fred got busted in '76. Interesting. No wonder he wants to have the whole sordid business just go away. Funny how some people see that fascinating and adventurous part of their lives as a stigma and others of us are neither ashamed of it nor try to hide it. I have listed my positions for Milt and you on my resume', and it didn't get in the way of landing a six figure job with the most prestigious and highly awarded engineering, architectural and construction management company in the State of Hawaii. My colleagues (including my boss) ask me every day to tell them stories from the good old porno days.

--Gary Sohler, email, February 13, 2005

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In the 1980s, Fixler took up teaching and fostered many talented artists and devoted students. There is no shortage of accolades to be found on the web...

<http://www.pinwire.com/article96.html>

<http://www.nasonart.com/writing/fixlerpainting.html>

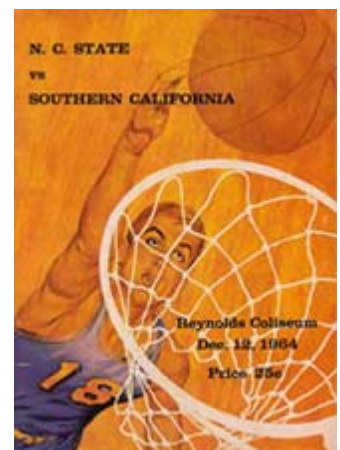
<http://www.marymabry.com/about.html>

<http://www.darrowart.com/bio/bio2.html>

Truly, I hadn't planned on spending one more minute working on the Brandon House mystery, but Earl Kemp insisted that I re-hash the search despite its wholly unsatisfactory conclusion. I'm steadfast in my belief that Fixler IS the Brandon House artist, and that belief has only been tempered by seeing more and more examples of his signed work. In addition to painting those beautiful gals, Fixler created some fantastic sports illustrations which appeared (along with his signature) on game programs and posters from coast to coast. At the time of this writing, there are two programs with Fixler covers listed on eBay – one from California, one from Pennsylvania! Of the dozen or so sports-themed paintings I've seen, the one shown here was certainly the best tip.

And with that, Earl, consider me fouled out of this issue of *e/*.

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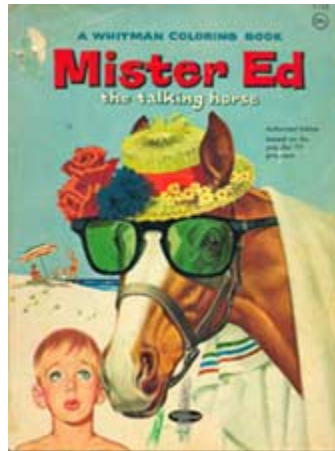


\*The above image and others can be found on the NCSU Archives website:

Thanks to all the premier scholars/historians who planted seeds and cleared some brush along the way: Brian Kirby, Chris Eckhoff, Ron Blum, Lance Casebere, Brittany Daley, and Bob Speray.

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## Talking Horses, Silent Artists



I noticed in *e/17* that Greenleaf Classics published *Dirty Ol' Man* coloring book in 1970. But, I recently discovered that seven years earlier, in 1963, there was another popular coloring book.

Whitman Publishing Co., a very well known children's book producer, issued *Mister Ed The Talking Horse* coloring book in 1963.

1963...no wonder Fred Fixler didn't sign any of his sleazebook cover paintings.

A Brandon House coloring book would've been nice too....

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"Your planet's immune system is trying to get rid of you."  
--a Kurt Vonnegut bumpersticker

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## Fred Fixler – Mystery Artist at Last Unmasked

By Art Scott

When you admire a creative artist's work, you want to know who he or she is. Unfortunately, if you're one of the foolhardy souls like me who collects and inspects sleaze sex paperbacks from the '60s, there are many names you don't know. Much of the cover art was unsigned and virtually all of the writing was pseudonymous. One of the longstanding mysteries was the identity of the superb illustrator who did a series of covers for Brandon House around 1965. We paperback scholars -- stalwarts like Munroe, Speray, Blum and

Brenner -- broke our picks trying to put a name to the Brandon House Mystery Artist. For a while we thought it was Elaine Duillo, based on the flimsy evidence that she had done, and signed, a handful of covers for another publisher at about the same time in a similar photo-realist style. When that theory bombed out, somebody -- not me! -- took to calling the B.H.M.A. "TAWCE". At least pronounceable as a word, it stood for The Artist We Call Elaine.



Image removed by request of the copyright holder

But enough of this nonsense. The mystery has been solved, thanks to outstanding detective work by Brittany Daley of *Sin-a-Rama*. The Brandon House artist is **Fred Fixler**. There's

Art Scott by Robert McGinnis.

not a lot of information on the web, yet, about Fixler's work as an illustrator, but late in his career he was a much-admired teacher of painting and life drawing, and it was through his students that his paperback work was identified.

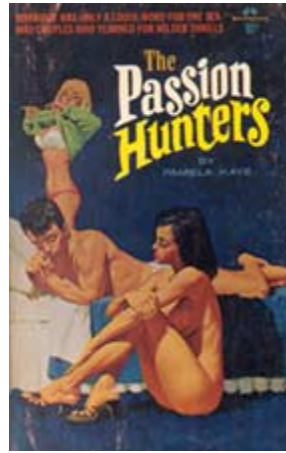
That's the Fred Fixler I worked with okay. I'd recognize him anywhere. --Gary Sohler

So now that, at last, I can put a name to him, let me say something about why I consider his work to be something special in the sleaze paperback genre. The first thing that hits you about Fixler's paintings is that he's a superb illustrator. The anatomy and rendering are impeccable, every bit as good as the work of the Big Name mainstream paperback artists: Avati, McGinnis, Zuckerberg, Phillips, etc.

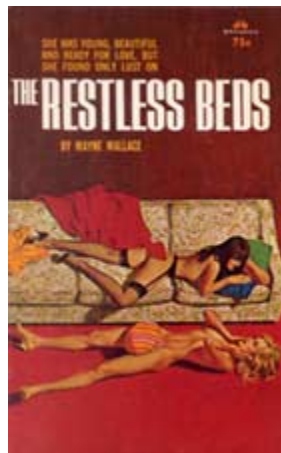
The technical quality of his painting immediately puts his work in the top rank. In the sea of mostly second-raters who ground out covers for the sleaze market, it's no wonder that Fixler caught the eye of collectors like myself.



For me, there are only four cover artists with substantial careers in the '60s sleaze realm whose technical excellence puts them in the same league as the mainstream cover artists. Any of these "Big Four" could have had success and acclaim doing covers for Signet or Dell or Bantam. In fact one of them did: Robert Maguire, who is unique in the paperback world in having done hundreds of fine covers both above and below the Respectability Line. The paperback work of other three -- Robert Bonfils, Paul Rader, and Fred Fixler -- was confined to the sleaze ghetto, for whatever reasons, certainly not lack of skill or talent.



In their cover illustrations, principally for Midwood, Maguire and Rader were essentially cheesecake artists, working in the tradition of Petty and Elvgren. The focus of their paintings was the pretty girl in the sexy pose. Bonfils ranged over a much wider range of styles and themes in his huge career for Greenleaf. There was scarcely an aspect of female beauty or human sexuality that he didn't depict at one time or another. However, if there's such a thing as the archetypal Bonfils cover, I think it's those zillion paintings he did depicting the Swinging Sixties: the smiling, uninhibited babes ready to take on all comers; the happy, horny swingers and swappers all set to lube up with Mazola and jump into the dogpile.



Of the four, Fixler has by far the smallest body of work, but I find it fascinating because it is so distinctively different from the other three. If Bonfils is the iconographer of Sex as Fun, then Fixler is the anti-Bonfils, the dark poet of Sex as Angst. Look at Fixler's covers; nobody is smiling. With a masterful depiction of expression and body language, the men and women in Fixler's paintings are telling you that sex *isn't* fun; it's rather a force that can mess with your head and screw up your life. Look at the way he uses eye contact. In the typical cheesecake illustration, the babe is looking out at the viewer. Fixler never does this; there are always two or three people on his covers, and they are usually looking, intently, at each other. The viewer gets the feeling that he is an unwilling and uncomfortable spectator of a moment of smoldering sexual tension. Fixler puts much more into his paintings than the requisite pretty girl (though his women are gorgeous!). He is rather concerned with depicting moments of sexual drama between men and women, or women and women. Note too how he handles men (or, more properly a man, since he almost always uses the same model, a brooding, dark-haired fellow with a sort of young John Garfield look to him). On most sleaze covers the males are supers, there mainly to gawk at the sexy babes. Fixler's men are depicted with the same care he gives to his women, they are coequal partners in the story his illustration is telling. Hidden away in a small, dark corner of the sleaze world, Fred Fixler's art is quite extraordinary, and worth your attention if you love illustration.

As a P.S., one reason I was so pleased to learn Fixler's name at last, is that I *think* I own a piece of his original art. It's a monochrome illustration of what is evidently a pretty bizarre story in *Midnight*, a men's mag. The style and

rendering look right, and certainly the outstanding anatomy of the woman, happily nuder than on any Brandon House cover (though still wearing high heels, which in this male fantasy world women are required to wear 24/7), screams "Fixler" to me. I hope so.



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The big trouble with print, of course, is that it is an elitist art form. Most people can't read very well.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 1972 preface to *Between Time and Timbuktu*

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