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The Season of the Game*

By Earl Kemp

I played The Game from 1966 until 1972, and by saying I played it means that I recognized at the time that I was doing just that. Lots of people who get suckered into playing The Game don't even know they're doing it. There are firm time brackets around this memory because there is no way I want anyone to think I'm talking about terrorism or Homeland Security or today's notable Federal Bureau of Investigation.

I'm talking about an entirely different thing and an entirely different time. If ever there are any comparisons with anything arising from within Homeland Security, I am not going to be the person making them.

I'm talking about a time when a lot of people all over the United States got into playing The Game way over their heads when, at best, all they were really doing was treading water. The Game could be known as Cops and Robbers but it was the Cops who were the robbers and the Robbers who were the good guys, and every one of them will tell you that's God's own truth without hesitating.

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In science fiction fandom around Chicago in the early 1950s and well into the decade, it was commonplace to talk about and prepare for The Attack whenever it came from them. Them was the government who were going to come for us...because we were fans? I can't remember the exact reason at the time.

Henry and Martha Beck, Dean and Jean Grennell, Richard and Rosemary Hickey...Nancy and I...we would sit around cleaning our guns and ordering more ammo from the National Rifle Association. We would go to shooting ranges and practice our marksmanship. We had escape routes planned from Chicago for any contingency as well as stocked provisions, drinking water, first-aid supplies, etc. And we secretly stashed guns and ammunition where they could never find them but we could get to them easily when we

needed to protect ourselves from them the most.

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In 1954, in my fanzine *Destiny*, I published Robert Bloch's short story "The Communist." It is a story about a massive repression of fandom by them using the day's most fashionable label to brand them as eligible targets.

The Game, in reality, had been ongoing for a very long time but I was too naïve to know it. I certainly hadn't been playing it and should I have even momentarily contemplated it, I know I would have reacted with real shock and fear that I could be so daring.

I mention these things because I have been accused of thinking of the government as being the enemy, and these incidents—a few of many—indicate that concept to be an acquired belief earned over a span of time and that I am not alone.

#

In his monumental study of the season of sleaze, *An Amazing Kingdom of Thrills; American Pulp Erotica 1966-1973*, Stephen J. Gertz writes:

"A twisted troika, indeed! First Amendment true believers, First Amendment pretenders, opportunists, lowlives, highlives, writers attempting to make a statement, writers just trying to earn a living... What bound these disparate parties together was a healthy (for some, perhaps too healthy) dose of anti-authoritarianism, rebelliousness, and a rational mistrust of government borne of the older generation's battle scars earned during the '50's and early '60's through criminal or obscenity prosecutions, and the younger generation's shattered innocence, not by sex but by the Credibility Gap, the chasm between what the government was telling us about the war in Viet Nam and its realities as reported in the newspapers and seen on T.V., and the desire to shuck the hypocrisy of the 1950's. And, too, pornographers, whatever their differences and competitive drives, were all bound together in common cause, cooperating, aiding, and assisting each other because they couldn't count on anyone else to help them...."

Then, a bit later, Gertz gets right down to the heart of the matter [**boldface added for emphasis**]:

"It was an insular, tribal business community, us against them, 'them' being government agencies. And this wasn't paranoia, this was real fear because despite the fact that pornography was a legal business to be in, as far as police and prosecutors were concerned it wasn't, and the porn trade became one of the most closely monitored industries in U.S. business history. In some respects, **it was all a kid's game, cops 'n robbers, writ large with higher stakes, both sides pushing the envelope of what was allowable just to see what they could get away with, the pornographers tweaking the government's nose, the government squeezing pornographer's balls...."**

#

Any person can play The Game, as long as they play by the rules and keep in mind that the rules are subject to change without notice by those who make them to suit their own ends. Also, they have to know from the very beginning that they are going to be spending embarrassingly huge amounts of their personal expendable income doing so.

By 1966, I recognized that I was a player. I just didn't have the vaguest idea about how broad in scope The Game was and that, once in play, there was no ending until the umpire announced the score, whatever the outcome. And, every single player who ever played The Game, regardless of which side they were on, harmed themselves personally in numerous ways, many leaving permanent scars.

Milton Luros named the game for me in 1966. "Fuck the Feds" he called it. Milton should have known, he'd already been playing it for years by that time and was getting damned good at it. He was more than eager to teach me all he knew about playing The Game.

Confuse and misdirect.

Never use your real name except in passport or visa mandatory situations. Never when making airline or hotel reservations.

Always pay in cash and leave no paper trails.

Wear sunglasses and a hat outdoors to hinder photographers. (Added to the list by Dr. David Ruben of *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Sex Etc.*)

Loudly announce your plans then, at the very last minute, do something totally different.

Never make the mistake of thinking you're alone.

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Playing The Game perverts the players, regardless of their intents and desires.

The more you play the more you want to play. You push them one more notch and they push back the same amount.

You place an irresistible chip on your shoulder and dare them to knock it off, and they do.

Then they place an unavoidable obstacle in your path and you sidestep it adroitly while flipping them off.

Kid stuff. You have to be a kid to play it, or to think like a kid, because no one in their right mind would spend that much time and effort and...especially...money to accomplish no objective, to achieve no goal, to win on real-time brownie points. A gold starless day. Just to make the statement that they have the right to make the statement....

And before you know it, The Game's over and you lost. Cliché: You lose the battle but you

win the war.

#

In his article "Me And The Kingpin" (e/4, October 2002), Mike Resnick says his one-time employer Reuben Sturman "thought he was getting away with murder, and viewed his relationship with the feds and the courts as an exciting game...."

Then, later, Resnick continues: "It was all a game to him. He was worth well over \$100 million, had invested in a number of shopping malls, indeed had more invested in legit businesses than in pornography. How much better could he be living by not reporting a few million dollars of income? (But the feds were the opponents, and therefore the rules of the game made it mandatory that he lie to the IRS.)"

Exactly! Ruby was playing The Game. (I really need to clarify that Sturman was a bad man, guilty of many crimes but, standing at the First Amendment front-line, he was still a hero in spite of himself.)

Playing The Game becomes more important than anything else, it becomes obsessive, constantly driving you to greater, bigger, more astonishing lengths of defiance. You spend more and more time planning, devising more complex schemes to taunt them with, to flaunt in their faces, to challenge them with.

And all the while, they are doing exactly the same thing, directed at you...at me.

They are the feds, John Edgar Hoover's magnificent homosexual elite of goons, peeping toms, and rumormongers. They represent everything that is good and wholesome and legal in the whole country and I, or any other player in The Game, am scum. Who would ever believe that they were the bad guys and we/I represented the good?

Yet I, and Ruben Sturman (Barney Rosset, Bill Hamling, Milton Luros, Larry Flynt, and many others) stand in position on the playing board at the very forefront of our imaginations, alone and almost unaided, defending the right of all USA citizens to have and to hold the First Amendment. Alone, against an enormous army of evil and depravity that would not hesitate to rip all your rights aside then squeeze you dry for gristmill lubricant

Flags waving furiously... strobes reding, whiting, and blueing....

It is difficult, at the very best, to understand the concept of The Game, much less to what an extent it captivates the players, allowing them, literally, to sacrifice themselves completely. I don't know a one of those First Amendment warriors who does not feel that the battle was well fought and pride drives most of their subsequent actions.

It is doubly rewarding knowing that it required the full resources and financial capabilities of the entire perverted FBI and the direct instructions of a malevolent and evil President a decade of intense companionship to accomplish their illegal objectives.

Such has it always been.

*In memory of Martha Mitchell, "the nut" from Fort Smith; you never knew how much you helped-thanks for everything. Dated August 2002.

Mr. Hoover is short, fat, businesslike, and walks with a mincing step. He dresses fastidiously, with Eleanor blue as the favourite colour of the matched shades of tie, handkerchief and socks. A little pompous, he rides in a limousine even if only to a nearby self-service cafeteria.
--Ray Tucker, Collier's Magazine, August 19, 1933

THIS ISSUE OF *e/* is for my old buddy James O'Meara of *Kramel* and Joe Sarno of *Joe-Jim*. It is dedicated to the memory of Lloyd Biggle, Jr., Donald Franson, Joan Harrison, Dave Van Arnam, and Sam and Florence Russell.

As always, everything with my byline on it is part of my ongoing, rough draft memoirs and I would appreciate any corrections, additions, explanations, photographs, drawings, jpegs, or whatnots sent to me at earlkemp@citlink.net and thanks for your efforts.

Bill Burns is a good man to have around because I couldn't do it without him. I call him my partner in crime because he puts so much into making me look good I just can't say enough good about him in return. He makes efandom worthwhile all by himself.

Quite a few tried and true science fiction fans have worked at making this issue of *e/* as good as I hope it turns out to be. Contributing significant pieces of work to this issue are: Hal Dresner, Stephen J. Gertz, Dwain Kaiser, Michael Resnick, and Charlie Williams. Plus these people all worked at assembling the illustrations that are scattered throughout its pages: Robert Bonfils, Cuyler Brooks, Ron Brown, Howard DeVore, Robert Lichtman, Dave Locke, Lynn Munroe, Gregory Pickersgill, Mike Resnick, William Rotsler, Joyce Scrivner, Robert Silverberg, and Robert Speray. Thank you very much and please don't stop.

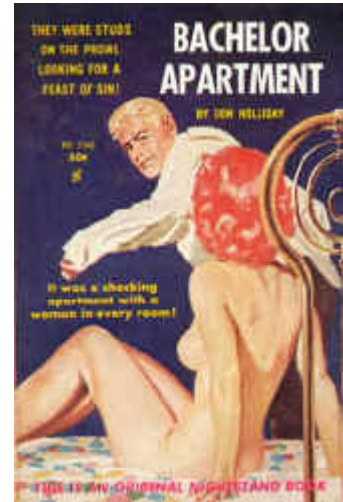
[Upon Hoover's death] It was a relief to have this man silenced who had no understanding of the underlying philosophy of our government or of our Bill of Rights, a man who had such enormous power, and used it to harass individuals with whom he disagreed politically and who had done so much as anyone to intimidate millions of Americans out of their right to hear and judge for themselves all political opinions.

-Dr. Benjamin Spock, May 2, 1972

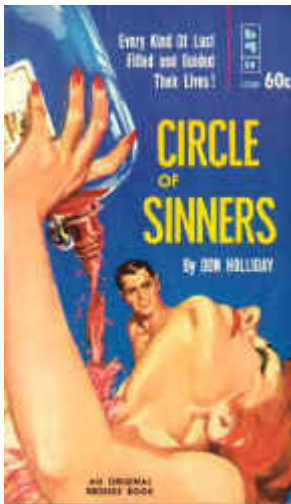
Futting With the F.B.I. Futter*

By Earl Kemp

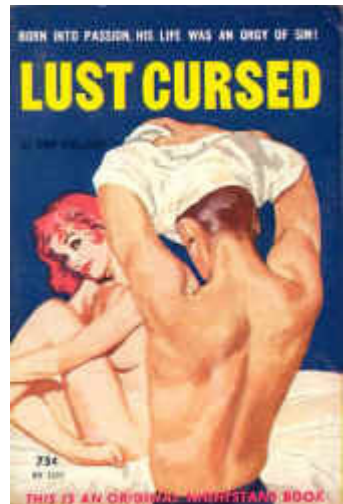
Shortly after I started working at the Porno Factory in Evanston, Illinois early 1961, I found one of my first neuvo [I had a lot of pulp-writing heroes] writer icons. His name was Don Holliday, and he really had a knack of pleasing me. In my naïve, internish mind, that meant he also pleased everyone else. I really liked working on his manuscripts once I discovered him in *Bachelor Apartment* (NB1540).



When I find a writer that I really like, it had always been my practice to let them know it. I would write them fan letters...embarrassingly flattering praising fan letters. I wanted to harass my new favorite in similar fashion, only I couldn't. There was a big wall separating the two of us named Scott Meredith.



By 1962, working on *Circle of Sinners* (BR1220) and again on *Lust Cursed* (NB1603), the urge to relate to and with Don Holliday began growing more insistent. I did my best to make contact, but Meredith stopped the effort at every attempt. He decreed that I could communicate with none of his writers directly and that I was not even to know their true identities. Everything had to be passed through Scott's hands and approved, and then again backward in the reverse direction. And all of this without any identification as to who Don could be.



What Meredith feared most was that we would actually somehow violate his orders and mail sample copies to the writers. In some cases, the writers made themselves known to us, and one of the more active writers, Robert Silverberg, was a personal friend. I kept asking them all to try to help make contact between me and Don Holliday possible.

In *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books*, Hal Dresner has a most unique relationship with his editor, Benjamin Wink. Wink contacts him repeatedly seeking an unfinished manuscript and Dresner as repeatedly stalls him.

In my case, I wasn't even allowed that routine editor/writer relationship. I envied them and what they shared. Wink didn't know how good he had it.



Lust Ring (NB1612) was the next manuscript I edited, followed shortly by *Hell's Harlot* (MR411)...and then...nothing. No more unrepressed outbursts of laughter in appreciation of a phrase well turned or an in-group joke well played. And now I couldn't reach my mystery buddy because he had seemingly disappeared.

All my attempts with Meredith to reach Holliday proved to be fruitless.

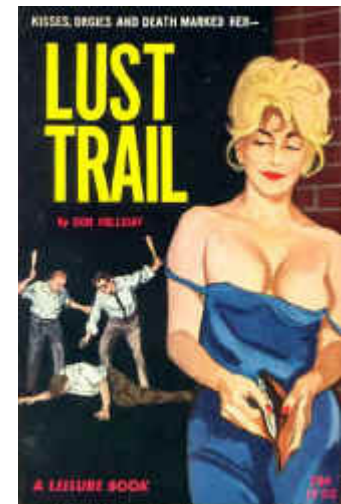


He did return for a quickie, in 1964, writing with his buddy Donald E. Westlake in *Lust Trail* (LB652), only to disappear again just as rapidly as he had earlier. Then I started missing Don quite a lot, and mourning his absence. And I became involved in other things and in being other people and, slowly, sort of started forgetting Don.

I did discover that he had quit the hack writing game and moved to Hollywood to try his hand at the money writing racket. And, at last, I discovered that his name was Hal Dresner. But, with him no longer one of my regulars, there was no need to try to follow him to California.

[There is an entirely different other Don Holliday story...The Man from C.A.M.P., but we are not concerned with that one here.]

In Hollywood, Dresner had an impressive career writing comedy for, among others, Jack Lemon. Originally I had heard that Dresner had been purchased by Lemon outright, to be his personal writer. Although I liked Lemon quite a bit as an actor, I resented him taking my best nonfriend away from me.



In a wonderful article Lynn Munroe wrote for *Books are Everything* called "The Men Who Wrote Dirty Books," Munroe touched briefly upon this Hollywood period. Munroe wrote: "William Coons suggested I call another writer who shall remain nameless. This writer told me Hal Dresner had been intrigued by the divorces of his friends Larry and Loretta Block and Don and Nedra Westlake: 'He turned the whole thing into a movie, *The April Fools*. In the movie, Jack Lemmon's character is based on Larry Block and Peter Lawford is playing Don'."

In 1965, the extremely busy year when the Porno Factory switched over from being Blake Pharmaceuticals in Evanston, Illinois and began being Greenleaf Classics, Inc. in San Diego, a little ditty named *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books*, written by Hal Dresner, appeared from Simon & Schuster. In all the hassle of moving across country and starting all over with an entire crew of new employees, I never heard of it.

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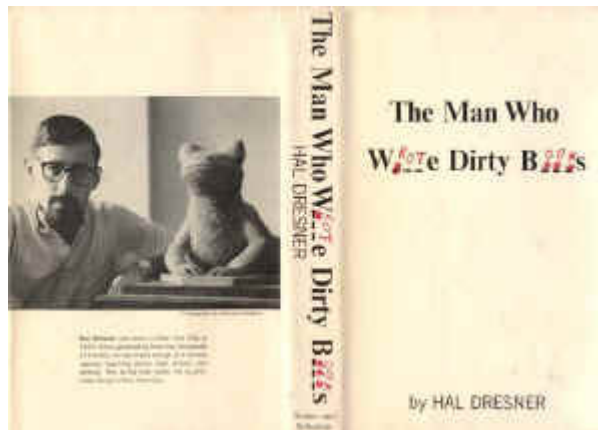
There was a time I thought the avant garde was dragging me along behind it at a breakneck speed. I couldn't wait to read a book in a timely fashion.

Like now....

In 2002, Lynn Munroe gave me a copy of *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books*, by Hal Dresner, at my request, little knowing what a phantom of lust and need he would dredge up within the sordid confines of my essentially full-of-pulp façade.

I sat down, intending to spend only a few minutes assessing the book and, three hours later, I took a break. Hooked all the cliché way, lined and sinkered.

Me, in lust again, rabid to get at Dresner...finally...and tell him that I really, really love that thing he does so well.



In the Munroe article for *Books Are Everything* named "The Men Who Wrote Dirty Books; The Story of 'Don Holliday' and Other Writers," he describes an interview he had with Dresner that included an extensive delving into Dresner's novel then questioning him about some of the more significant clues he had dropped in it.

At one point, Munroe says, "Dresner spoofs the books, the agents, the publishers, the cover artists, the readers, psychiatrists and law firms with a biting wit...nobody ever wrote a funnier book on the subject than Hal Dresner." And Munroe was right.

The pseudonym originated when Dresner reversed his initials then came up with Don Holliday to match. "I was the first Don Holliday," my hero told Munroe, "At various times a friendly ghost would rent the Holliday name and some...were written under such circumstances. In 1964-66, at the twilight of my career in pornography, I sold the Don Holliday name...and the tradition continued."

They all did that. Every one of the writers, it seemed, passed around their pseudonyms indiscriminately, trying their damndest to further confuse an almost recordless office struggling just to get through the day and avoid the cops who kept turning up here and there without warning.

Ironically, it is Munroe who provides part of the answer. Later, in an interview with William Coons (Andrew Shaw, Dell Holland, Etc.), Munroe quotes him as saying, "...they weren't

keeping those kind of records. And the publisher and the agency usually didn't know about us ghostwriters. The characters in the books weren't the only ones getting screwed. It can be tough to write one or two of these a month. After a while you know, there's only so much you can do with the form...."

#

I was ready, standing on the end of the diving board, starting my moves...and helplessly re-captivated by a once and past hero...Hal Dresner. What goodies did he have hidden inside *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books*...?

p. 7: "You've got something that makes the others look like the hacks they are and your readers know it."

p. 13: "I believe that writing pornography vicariously dulls one's sex life. I keep expecting my partners to have flanks like golden ramparts and breasts like cannon shells. Everyone seems flabby nowadays."

p. 13: "...has warned me of the danger of getting snowbound or going nuts."

Instantly this phrase made me think of Dresner's fellow Scott Meredith Black Box pornographer William Knoles, writer of the incredible License to Kill 0008 Man from Sadisto series.

By the time I discovered Clyde Allison, I had enough clout to get past Scott Meredith. As my new absolutely number one favorite writer pal funny guy, Clyde Allison could not be denied me. William Knoles, the man behind the Allison machine, and I became fast friends. This is the relationship that Benjamin Wink had with Hal Dresner when they were working on *This Flogged Flesh*. This was the relationship that was denied me when I wanted very much to communicate with Don Holliday when we were working on *Circle of Sinners*.

Now I had it in spades, and what a time it was. I enjoyed our communication with each other so much, there were times when I would just pick up the phone and call Bill Knoles so he could make me laugh. We had so much fun running up those phone bills and those typewriter ribbons way back then.

I wish I had copies of all those letters between the two of us. I never got out of the office with my copies and I've heard that everything of Bills, especially his correspondence, was unceremoniously ritualistically burned upon his death...everything, manuscripts, records, notes....a live of spreading fun....

With great reluctance I force myself away from fantasizing about what a wonderful book that would make, all those letters, suitably illustrated with those incredible Robert Bonfils and Harry Bremner covers for the 0008s. Narrations spanning our phone calls and some of the actual notes where we plotted the man from Sadisto's sordid affairs.

William Knoles, much better known as Clyde Allison, had quite a thirst for beer [various interviews say "I never saw him without a beer in his hand," "ugly drunk," "shitface"] and was missing a bit of wiring in the control center, only that didn't get in the way of his writing some of the damned funniest stuff you ever saw, and of becoming a real good friend.

We spent long hours, it seems, plotting out 0008's adventures. Some of the staff members in the Porno Factory were outlining possible titles as far ahead as three titles in the series, so all Bill had to do was write them.

Between beers and really ugly fits of bi-polar depression.

Then, I think it was Christmas, and Bill really hit the dumps. He was all alone, a thing he most hated to know, ever...no person to care for him and front for him and make sure he stopped drinking beer long enough to eat and finish that manuscript.

The depression was too much, the Man from Sadisto did himself in rather than finish out the holiday season alone and isolated and not quite snowbound.

p. 25: "...as in the case of "Brothers-in-Lust," published by Scepter Books and authored by Guy LaDouche."

p. 40: "Art just reminded me that somebody from the F.B.I. was in asking for you. Art thought it was a raid and locked himself in the storeroom with all the new stuff. But it was only a joke, thank God."

This was a routine happening around most publishing offices of the period, certainly around ours. The futters seemed to stalk the fringes somehow, ruffling the feathers of absolutely everyone near at hand. I would get so many complaints from my neighbors about their just being in the neighborhood all the time, roaming up and down in front of the house, occasionally asking one of them if they had anything bad to say about me.

p. 41: "...you still haven't forgiven me for becoming Required Reading for every lecher, pervert and spinster in America."

p. 41: "The only (writer)...I know who really seems to be approaching his life's goal is Dave. At last report he had notched #135, although personally I think 130 of them have been Cora in different nightgowns."

Am I to think that this is a reference to Westlake and his wife Nedra? Before the Foley switchover...?

p. 57: "Westlake" appears as Dresner's buddy's name. Naturally.

p. 72: "Your letter was apparently tampered with en route. Some fanatic typed in a bunch of bullshit about absolution at the bottom. Check your mailman, he may be a Jehovah's Witness."

This also was a commonplace occurrence with the mail. An even worse thing would happen every time my name would appear in newspapers. It would inevitably be accompanied by my residence address at that time. I would receive numerous overboard religious letters addressed there, to my home. Each one of them would be elaborately decorated on the outside and bear no return address. Each one would beseech me to stop my sinful ways...and, many of them would end with a clearly translatable prayer for God to strike me dead right away without hesitation or rational, conscious thought.

Me and God already had the whole thing handled, only they didn't know it, or much else apparently.

p. 72-3: "I'm getting in on the ground floor of a growing enterprise. Pornography is definitely on the come. Now that they've used Henry Miller's glossy pate to batter down the doors of prurience, all the rest of the Club will be pouring in, whips and dirty plumes in hand. Pornographic comics, pornographic children's books (*Leon the Lecherous Lion*, *Porter the Pederast Porpoise*), pornographic sweatshirts, pornographic beanies, pornographic potties. When we incorporate and get on the big board, you'd be smart to get yourself a piece. In fact, that's our motto.

"But I am not in this just for the cash. Money alone cannot compensate a writer for doing a nasty job. It is the work itself that is the great mainstay of the hack because—believe it or not—his love for writing is as great as the artist's. It may even be greater love because the hack usually works more.

"Then there is the added satisfaction of attaining one's goal. Granted these books are worthless, but I am not above feeling Ma Barker's cackling pride toward even such disreputable offspring. Sometimes I take one of the books in hand, stare at my cunning pseudonym on the cover, narcissistically stroke the cheap binding. It is a book. I have written it. No one else could have done so in precisely the same way. According to those three precepts, I am akin to Dostoevski, Cervantes, all the greats. Often I riffle the pages and stop to read a line at random. I am in awe that words fill every line and lines fill every page. There are no blank spaces. I have glutted 200 pages with my fictions. And here, in a binding of virgin blush, are 200 more I have done. And 200 more. Three thousand published pages so far. Almost one million words, not many of them forming the same sentences.

"Bill Feuer, whose sin pseudonyms include Walter Espanos, Andrew Mark, Brant Hudson and Constance Ball, has papered a wall of his apartment with his book covers. One wall from desk top to ceiling and he has turned the corner. At two books a month for the last three years, he may be the most prolific writer in the world today. He told me once, 'They represent achievement. Time, work, creativity. Not everyone could do it.'

"...a writer sells out when he agrees to do a bad book; he consummates the bargain when he knowingly lets a bad book slip from his hands. But during the actual writing, there is no such thing as 'selling out' or 'writing down.' A writer has but one voice and he must use it if he is to write, no matter what he is writing. To try to alter that voice for any sustained period is as difficult as trying to talk in a falsetto for a month. He may simplify, but that is simplification and not easy to do. He may also embellish with prosy curlicues, but that is only obfuscation and the true voice remains beneath the fruity tones. He may revise and rewrite and fill his drawers and trunks and wastebaskets in the process. I prefer to keep my wastebasket empty and fill my wallet, so I publish my little keepsakes.

"But make no mistake. They are mine and that is my voice you read. It can't be any other way. The limitations and requirements of the book limit my register and filter my tone like a bad microphone but I am still using my true voice. So if you didn't like *This Flogged Flesh*, the chances are you won't like my 'real books' either.

"There is even a bright moral side to the picture. I have encountered some ass-brained support for the case that sex books are really goodness and that the maniac who gets his gratification from reading in the bathroom is not likely to hulk rapaciously in the alley.... There is also evidence that these things are basically moral writings since sinners are usually punished, albeit by other sinners. I know that in my books no one ever screws out of wedlock and survives. Sometimes I have to load them all on a bus and roll it off a cliff to dispose of them, but disposed of they usually are. 'Screw and get screwed' is my motto.

"And, of course, Art is sufficient justification for anything. If Dostoevski had to bash in a little old woman to get the feel for *Crime and Punishment*, well, isn't that book worth any number of old Russian women?...an artist should be allowed to shout from the housetops. I am going up on the roof now and give a little yell."

This is the best part of the whole book for me. I moved slowly and cautiously across the words savoring them one by one. This section alone made reading the entire book worth doing.

p. 90: "If you have some integrity, then show it by writing something decent. But writing 'truths' into a trash book is as half-assed as sprinkling a decent book with trash."

p. 101: "Kenny wrote two Negresses into the last scene. They walk into this fella's bedroom out of the middle of nowhere and then the book is over. It doesn't make any sense to me but Kenny says it's symbolic. But the cover looks great."

p. 128: "...asked him what "futting" meant.
"What it sounds like," he said. "It's Bureau slang. Hoover's orders. Lets the boys sound like men without offending anybody..."

p. 134: "...Unless all those things really happened to you. Do they?"
"No. I make them up."

This is one of the most frequently asked questions. Even close friends have attempted to get me to go into sordid detail about the "real" sex involved with the job. It didn't matter how often or how intensely I denied it, the feeling seemed to persist.

p. 145: "It means they don't know what the fut they're doing. Whenever they don't know what else to do, they put a case under surveillance. Spies, bankrobbers, junkies. We got a man covering every one of them. You want to know where your tax dollar is going, you're paying some poor bastard to follow a junkie all day."

And quite a few book publishers, editors, and writers as well.

p. 187: "Now, idiot. The purpose of a bad writer is the same as that of a good writer and everyone else in the world: to do the best he can. If he accomplishes something monumental, fine; but it is the work that is his real function and it is the dream of greatness that really matters...."

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Thanks for the articles. Of the one about Don Holliday, I am flattered, flabbergasted and flummoxed. I never gave much thought to the Holliday books and am surprised that anyone else did. Around 1961, there was an article in a men's mag that picked out Holliday, Andrew Lord and Edwin West as three "distinctive," I think it said---voices in the field. All three of us distinctive voices had a hoot about that but secretly I bet we each thought "about fucking time." Writers!

I don't have the Lynn Munroe article at hand but I do recall thinking there were errors in it---including Bill Coons saying the events in a film I wrote called THE APRIL FOOLS were

inspired by people we knew. Not true. Likewise, the quote in TMWWDB about "Dave and Cora" was not in any way a reference to Don Westlake.

As for the one error he remembers, he tells you that "Bill Coons" told me *The April Fools* was inspired by real people. If you will dig out my article, you will see that it is not Coons who told me that, but rather "another writer who will remain nameless." That other writer was Nedra Westlake, and she is the one who recognized HERSELF and Don and their friends Larry and Loretta Block in the characters. I thought that was fairly interesting so I included it. Dresner says that was not the case, and be that as it may, it's no "error" that Nedra Westlake remembers it otherwise.

--Lynn Munroe, email, April 2002

The only personal anecdote I can share about that period is that when the other porn writers shed their image and went on to bigger things, I was always saddled with Hal ("The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books") Dresner--like some Mafioso nickname. Ah well, I suppose it could be worse. It still amuses my grown daughter.

One coda to TMWWDB: in 1988, Carroll and Graf published a collection of essays titled REDISCOVERIES II in which Robie Macauley, novelist and editor, has some unconscionably kind words to say about the book. I thought that was the end of it until I read your lovely article. The 26-year-old who still, unfortunately, lives within me is very pleased.

All best, Hal Dresner

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Of THE APRIL FOOLS misunderstanding, I can understand how Nedra might have identified with the premise. And we scribblers do tend to be cannibalistic. As Philip Roth once quoted "When a writer is born into the family, the family is finished."

All best,
Hal D.

- - -

*In memory of Don Holliday; may he rest in peace. For Hal Dresner for all the laughs. Special thanks to Lynn Munroe for help with this article. Copyright 2002 by Earl Kemp. All rights reserved. Dated April 2002.

We are a fact-gathering organization only. We don't clear anybody. We don't condemn anybody.

--J. Edgar Hoover, Look, June 14, 1956

Beauty and the Beast Otra Vez*

By Earl Kemp

This is a love story. To some it could be a private dick yarn, and even others would think of it as being a good bit more *Bride of Frankenstein*. Still, it is a love story of enormous magnitude played out on the big Cinemascope screen of life. All the colors are there of loving and of being loved, the warm yellows and cuddly pinks leading into the passionate carmines and lusty purples needed to backdrop any romance. The Surroundsound is cranked up a bit extra and the whole universe is vibrating to its frequency. The full symphony orchestra is giving it all they have with heart-beating throbs and pulse-pounding thumps, rendering the grand concert hall version of the intertwined songs of our soul.

It is a classic fairy tale about two widely different types of people who, despite all obstacles standing in their way, despite enormous physical differences, still manage, before their tale is told, to fall in love and live happily ever after. Would it make any difference, do you suppose, if the fairy in this fairy tale happened to be a fairy?

Is love love or does it depend upon what the meaning of is is?

Enter Beast, snarling.

It is the new beginning, the fresh start...New Year's Day 1895 in Washington, DC. Beast is born to Annie Marie Stutter Hoover and Dickerson Hoover...their third child and second son. They christened Beast John Edgar Hoover but, to Annie Marie, he was already her "little man." Because his brother and sister were more than a dozen years his senior, for all practical purposes, Edgar was raised as an only child.

Unfortunately he had been born into an amazingly dysfunctional family. His mother was very strong-willed and controlling. She dominated her surroundings. His father was ineffectual and standoffish. Nevertheless, the family managed to struggle ahead in their own conflicted way.

And, worse than that, the very existence of the Hoover family itself was brought into question. Edgar's birth certificate itself is a doubtful and unsubstantiable thing. Beyond Edgar and his parents lurked only a yawning abyss. There was no past, no records, no existence for any of them. This was brought about because of the family's overriding obsession and paranoia with the thought that someone...soon...would discover exactly when the legally black Hoover started passing as a functional white Hoover.

Over the years billions of dollars and countless man-hours of futile effort were spent by the entire resources of a number of federal agencies trying to document just that occurrence. This included especially the entire Federal Bureau of Investigation which, with or without Hoover's commands or knowledge, was almost as obsessed as Hoover about the answer to the riddle. All any of them were ever to discover was that the paper trail backward beyond Hoover's immediate family had been, in government squabble, thoroughly "sanitized."

Author Anthony Summers, in researching his book *Official and Confidential*, interviewed writer Gore Vidal, who grew up in Washington, D.C. in the 1930s. "Hoover was becoming famous," Vidal told Summers, "and it was always said of him--in my family and around the city--that he was mulatto. People said he came from a family that had 'passed.' It was the word they used for people of black origin who, after generations of inbreeding, have enough white blood to pass themselves off as white. That's what was always said about Hoover."

Summers also cited a New York Post reporter, who, while researching an article on Hoover, found that blacks referred to Hoover as "some kind of spook" and even "soul brother," and realized that in African-American communities in the East, it was generally believed that Edgar had black roots.

Mama's "little man" was a petulant, noisemaking machine within the household of rapidly aging parents. He grew to be a pampered, catered-to, over-controlled and -fed, mama's boy. Although studious and bright, fortified with an unusually extra large helping of lust and greed, Edgar managed to excel in his schoolwork despite being the designated sissy in every class he ever entered. He did not relate with any of his peers or contemporaries...ever. He was extremely standoffish. He abhorred anything related to participation sports and avoided all females as if he knew for sure that they were spewing jet-propelled plague particles in his direction.

Into this idyllic world, tragedy struck. Edgar's father crumpled, flipped out, and was declared mentally insane; he spent the last eight years of his life institutionalized. This, along with Annie Marie's sudden intense dependence on her "little man," cemented the character, or lack thereof, that would dominate the rest of Beast's existence. She quickly drew him to herself to such an extent that their bonding would insure, for all of Edgar's days, that she alone would be woman enough for him; none other need ever apply.

Annie Marie's "little man" quit school, got a job, and began supporting his family. He worked long hours, hard and diligently, and still managed to finish school and attend night school after that. He worked in the Library of Congress while much of this was transpiring. Just as soon as he received his law degree, he found a job working for the Department of Justice.

In this position he became very successful and attracted the attention of his superiors to such an extent that, in 1924, at the tender age of 29, he became Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Pretty good gig for the most dysfunctional, fucked-up mama's boy in the whole District.

#

Edgar had two big, big problems...his two pet hates. First, he hated fags and queers the most. Second, he hated niggers. That was his word, not mine. He used it excessively and with genuine enthusiasm and invective, intermixing it into run-on strings of obscenities about what he'd like to do to every one of them. Edgar simply couldn't stand niggers.

(There was a third hate, but it was pretty insignificant in the over-all grand scheme of what made Edgar tick...females...and keeping them in a chattel position. He felt they were only good for menial and subservient tasks and couldn't be trusted to do anything worthwhile.)

The thing that Edgar could never figure out for himself was that he was both of them. He himself embodied both of his major hates while he physically exhibited traits much more in

common with the females he detested than the mother he loved. He was a bubble-butt mincer, a screaming maricon, a foot-stamping, pissed-off, flaming nelly faggot who, within his own imagination, was johnny straightarrow and, simultaneously, Mr. Law.

Auntie Edgar hated most the things that most made her what he was.

Edgar drove himself so far back inside the closet he was marinating in his own vile, stinking secretions and in the incessant, perverted, and disgusting sexual scenarios that ran...endlessly...through his tortured, unloved, even untouched psyche. He turned into such a homophobe that he became The Antifag...the single thing in the entire world he least wanted to turn out to be....

#

Enter Beauty, acquiescing.

Beauty was born in Missouri in 1900, five years after Beast. His parents named him Clyde Anderson Tolson, and he was truly beautiful to behold. Everyone who ever saw him wanted to touch him...wanted him...he was that special. He grew up passably normal, the hit of every party and the person everyone most wanted to possess. After he acquired his law degree, he applied for a position as an FBI agent but was not accepted.

Not totally discouraged from his first attempt, a year or so later, Tolson applied again to the FBI only the second time he included a photograph of himself along with his job application. When the Tolson file folder reached Hoover's hands and he opened it and looked into that achingly beautiful face staring back at him, the entire world stood still.

Mine, he thought, *finally*...as Cupid's arrow pierced his groin and that old familiar thumping in his testes and the twitching between them started happening involuntarily like it didn't happen nearly often enough anyway.



It was love at first photo. John Edgar had found his man.

Clyde Tolson was one stunner of a looker as seen through Hoover's eyes. He was handsome almost to the point of painful beauty and favored with a physique that would make professional models blush. It was all just natural with him, he didn't have to work at maintaining it or watch his diet or do anything but the thing he knew how to do best, lean back, relax, and enjoy it enveloping and consuming him until the whole scenario just somehow blurred out into commonplace reality for Tolson. He knew positively that he was a headturner because heads had been turning, following his footsteps, every minute of his life.

Tolson was hung meat, the absolute perfect studhustler. He was equally at home in any crowd, of any gender, and they all welcomed him as if he was the ultimate prototype bisexual.

Little wonder Hoover hired Tolson, sight unseen, in that moment on the basis of his photographed appearance and the reaction of Hoover's own orgasming imagination. That

was in 1928, one year before my birth, and on that day Tolson began a remarkably rapid rocket-ship ride to Paradise and back. In rapid succession Hoover and Tolson became engaged and then married, figuratively, although neither of them was pregnant at the time. And, during that same feverishly intense sexual and emotional awaking interval of their relationship, Tolson, remarkably, was quickly elevated to the position of Assistant Director of the FBI within less than three years time.

It was a made-up position that Hoover used to accommodate Tolson and he did it because he could. With Clyde in that position, at his side day after day at the office, Hoover could reach out and caress the rest of himself whenever the whim was irresistible.

The job Hoover created for his spouse, as Assistant Director of the FBI, was a very high executive-level position. It came complete with every federal bennie that could be bribed or extorted and a salary considerably larger than that paid to most big-city mayors across the USA at the time. Hoover had practically perfected, single-handedly, the fine art of robbing from the citizens to pay for the bizarre and immoral whims of the truly depraved.

They dressed alike; Siamese twins connected at the dick. Hoover thought it was really cute, but he was the only one. Within the FBI itself, the happy couple were known as "J. Edna and Mother Tolson." "Johnny and Clyde" was Truman Capote's pet name for them and, where I worked within the Porno Factory, he became known, first, as the Director of the Federal Buttfuckers Incorporated. Then, thanks mostly to people like Stanley Fleishman and Percy Foreman, all of us in the office came to really know him as "Auntie Edgar." The best-known married couple in the USA, they were daily fodder for boardroom and loading-dock humor nationwide.



In Washington, their antics reached such a point that each day began with coffee and the newest obligatory Hoover fuck fantasy that ran from government office to government office on instantaneous feet.

It became a bit of a problem choosing pronouns to represent Hoover because, without intent, he became she almost half the time automatically. As he or she, Hoover became very dependent upon his lover, assigning him most of the tasks he would normally do himself plus all the really ugly stuff, the hatchet work, the figurative destructions. "Clyde Tolson is my alter ego. He can read my mind," Hoover was heard to say frequently.

Of Tolson it has been said, "Tolson was smarter than Mr. Hoover-he had a razor-sharp mind. His great failing was that he slavishly followed Mr. Hoover's every dictate."

#

New York powerbroker Roy Cohn used his leverage over Hoover to make "Mary"-Cohn's nickname for Edgar--his private sex slave. At a private party in Cohn's townhouse, Mary, dressed in a black garter belt, had one underaged male lover read to him from the Bible, while another engaged him in a sex act, as

Cohn's partygoers looked on. --Albert Bates



Portrait of Auntie Edgar as Mary, by Charlie Williams. Copyright 2002.

In public, always together, Hoover and Tolson cut a wide path across the country, and always at someone else's expense, more often than not the USA citizenry. Hoover felt they were an exemplary couple and role models for masculinity and heterosexuality. He was never ever to see himself through the eyes of the multitude. Tolson, who completed Hoover, represented everything Hoover wanted to be...to possess...to alone dominate, starting with the sharply chiseled chin and master-sculpted facial structure and ending right down there where Hoover liked it the best in his perverted clutches.



Hoover liked nothing better than being seen walking into the Stork Club (see photo) or some other nightclub with Tolson not exactly on his arm and not exactly a token sex toy to flaunt in nearly the fashion he did. He felt so proud standing there with him at his side.

Eat your heart out. Look what I've got!

Hoover had a passion for trying to look butch and, somehow, that became associated with gambling on sporting events inside his thoughts. In spite of his childhood aversion to sports participation, the inseparable duo would attend ballgames at Yankee Stadium, front and center, more to be seen than to see. They would go to different racetracks and, seated in the Number One box, demand all manner of extra service and numbers runners and waiter-delivered (never waitress) drinks.

San Diego County was one of their favorite party places. They would appear frequently for things like the races at the Del Mar Racetrack where they would run up huge tabs.

It was a matter of principal with Hoover to never pay any of those bills. Not only that, he would stiff the little man as well, the below minimum wage slaves who bussed or bellboyed or waited on them, every maid who ever stripped away their soggy, funk-smelling, semen-

streaked sheets and made up their beds...not one penny. No payments. No tips. No gratuities. And, especially, no "thank yous."

Hoover was always ready to teach anyone who felt like asking for payment what real power could do to them before they knew anything was happening.

Within the office itself, at the FBI, Hoover spent much time with his bookie, making bets with taxpayer money. He absolutely never allowed anything like law enforcement or crime investigation to interfere with his capricious whims as his power grew increasingly greater and his uses of it even more reprehensible and illegal.

By 1962 Hoover had discovered me. Well, it wasn't just me of course...it was all of us at the Porno Factory in Evanston, Illinois, and with an unmeasured regularity his minions started turning up here and there, circling around us, making vague and meaningless movements and outrageous allegations. By 1965, when Blake Pharmaceuticals died and Greenleaf Classics was reborn in San Diego, California, they were shifting into high gear and, in general, making nuisances of themselves with their snooping around my neighborhood and annoying my neighbors while fishing for any type "negative only" gossip they could inspire regarding me. What a force to be proud of!

We didn't even have time enough to get completely set up good in our new offices before they started increasing their pressure on us, illegal pressure being used in an attempt at prior restraint of trade, of telling us what we could publish. Hoover was so pissed-off at us and some of our completely innocuous newsstand paperbacks, that he began a serious crush effort. His agents would drop by my house with annoying frequency, asking if they could first come inside and second ask me some questions about our company.

Stanley Fleishman, our boss attorney, kept telling me that I didn't have to let them into the house and I didn't have to talk to them but that I could tell them that anytime they wanted to set up an appointment through Stanley's office to do so, Stanley would be waiting for them. For some reason, they never did, and they kept coming back to my house and I kept refusing.

Finally, the feds used the double whammy, they said that seven of our novels were obscene and that we would have to answer for it in court. Several employees within the company were personally indicted, including William Hamling, the President and CEO but, miraculously, I was not...the Editor in Chief...? What luck.

But I was handed a subpoena to appear at the trial as a prosecution witness testifying on behalf of the FBI. I was? I who had never spoken with them at all? Surely there was some mistake?

#

It was hot as hell in Houston in July and August 1966, but there I was, reporting in to the feds in answer to the subpoena issued commanding me to do so. I was in a rather large group of witnesses called to appear at that trial, either for the prosecution or the defense, and there was never a dull moment for any of us. We were: Dr. Wardell E. Pomeroy of the Kinsey Institute, Professor of Journalism Dwight V. Swain, Dr. Roger D. Chittick, a cleric, Arthur Knight of Playboy, Ian and Betty Ballantine of Ballantine Books, Richard S. Shaver a

fiction writer, Robert Bonfils an art director, Richard Yerxa, Hamling's stepson, Tony Calvano, a porno writer, a particularly beautiful young married couple, swingers, there to testify about "real life," Etc.



Cover scan of *Imagination*
September 1952 courtesy Cuyler
Brooks collection.

Stanley Fleishman had hired local Houston attorney Percy Foreman to back him in the defense and I was allowed to spend lots of down-trial time with them while they prepared me to meet with the FBI. Percy Foreman was a shit-face drunk; you could smell the alcohol on him from a block away at 8 a.m. every day, and he was the best money could buy. He was an early day F. Lee Bailey, always seeming to get the right (rich) clients and provide the correct outcome to any of their problems, including his specialty, smoking-gun murders.

Naturally he was our man, drunk or not. He was Number One Top Dog Lawyer in Houston and most of the South. Everyone knew him and everyone knew he was the man that delivered, for embarrassingly huge legal fees, freedom for the truly guilty which we were not but it never hurts to stack the deck if at all possible. Percy, particularly, hated J. Edgar Hoover, and couldn't say enough bad about him. It

was truly a delight just listening to him and Stanley, together, running a rant against their pet project. It was from Percy Foreman, during one of those rants, that the name of Auntie Edgar arrived. It stuck, and I brought it back to the office with me.

Finally the time came when I was to appear for an interview with the FBI. Before leaving for the meeting, Percy Foreman told me in the most strident tones, "Don't give those fucking FBI cocksuckers the time of day."

It became my motto for the season.

I was ushered into a small conference room deep inside the federal courthouse that had no windows and no view. I was told to sit down and wait. Shortly two suits entered the room and sat down opposite me, introducing themselves by name. Next, one of them opened a briefcase and took out a stack of papers and handed them to me.

I took the pages from him and looked at them, scanning them briefly, noting the nature of the text and the arrangement of the wording. It was a script. It was the scenario the FBI had prepared to be my testimony against my employer in their attempt to convict him of something he hadn't done.

I laughed in their faces, spontaneously, loudly, and uncontrollably.

They brought in two other agents and the four of them surrounded me, leaning inward threateningly, menacingly, and I laughed again. They tried to rehearse me in their script repeatedly and the more they did, the more I laughed at them.

Finally, they resorted to threats. "We could lock you up right now." "We have enough on

you to put you away for a long time." "We could even...well...you know; no one would ever know what happened to you."

And as their threats became increasingly more serious and potentially fatal, my laughter only increased.

Needless to say, they never called upon me to testify. The trial was finally declared to be a Mistrial and all the charges dismissed...everything except my vivid, up-close-and-personal, very first interrogation by Auntie Edgar's "little men."

#

Laughter at Smut Case Trial Causes Recess

The Houston *Chronicle* of Tuesday August 9, 1968 bore this big, bold, banner headline atop four columns of type.

Bob Tutt, the *Chronicle* reporter assigned to cover the trial, wrote in part:

"Laughter triggered by a passage from one of seven books named in an obscenity trial here caused court to recess this morning.

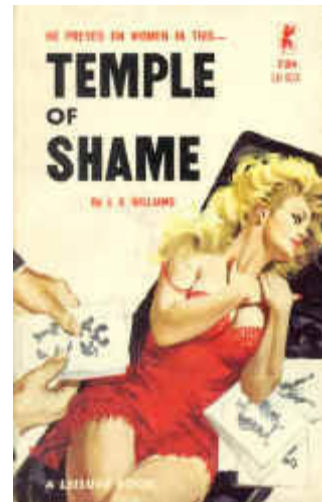
"The jury laughed heartily when Dr. Roger D. Chittick, a California literature professor appearing as a defense witness, read from *Temple of Shame*, the story of a fake marriage counselor.

"The humorous passage described the counselor, imagining he was a bubble, prancing like a goat around two nude women.

"Stanley Fleishman, one of the attorneys...was so broken up by the reading that he had to request a recess.... Fleishman...claimed Monday that federal prosecutors in the trial are trying to discredit defense witnesses through 'impeachment by ridicule' and 'covert snickering.'

"...Chattick of Fresno State College Monday defended the literary merit of the books in the case, punctuating his testimony with frequent quotations from Shakespeare.

"Chittick, a Presbyterian church elder, described *Passion Carousel*, the story of a girl involved with a satanic cult, as 'a kind of morality play,'"



LB673 *Temple of Shame*, by J.X. Williams, cover painting by Robert Bonfils. Dated 1965.

The federal prosecutor in that Houston trial was named Morton Susman. Displaying a rare sense of humor, Porno Factory President William Hamling directed the editorial department

to undertake a special project. In every book produced, they were to change the name of all the more reprehensible characters, the prostitutes, low-lives, and criminal types, to Susman. It was a bit of a time-consuming chore but, for just over one year, hundreds of thousands of sleazy paperbacks about the sexy, sinful Susman family appeared all over the USA.

#

In 1966, after returning to San Diego from the Houston trial, I acquired a highly improbable mentor. He was improbable because Milton Luros (also with a science fiction background), of American Arts Enterprises in Los Angeles, was William Hamling's single biggest direct competitor, and he adopted me. [It is, however, a different story.]

Stanley Fleishman was in there as well, the three of us, some devilish trio we made, too. Because I was spending more and more time in Los Angeles with Stanley, and carrying more and more messages from Bill Hamling to Luros, I kept running into both of them regularly. Neither had a kind word to say for J. Edgar Hoover and almost less to say for his Bureau.

It was Milton Luros who gave the name to The Game we were all inadvertently playing, even if we hadn't acknowledged that to ourselves.

"Fuck the Feds," he called it, and was he ever right. From that moment on, he began giving me lessons on how The Game should be played and I took to the sport like a natural. Milton loved to leave the followers behind, in the dust, as often as he could. He would devise rather elaborate fake plans in attempts to lead them astray.

Milton and I, commandeering two or three limousines each, would lead them around the German countryside for hours on end. They never had it so good.

#

The following year, 1967, Hoover began blackmailing Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas because, among other things, Fortas made too liberal decisions regarding pornography to suit Hoover. And, the ridiculousness of his blackmailing is in that Hoover, The Antifag, had hands-down proof of Fortas' gay activities. Ultimately, to avoid further harassment, Fortas resigned from the Supreme Court on May 14, 1969.

A pity, too; you can never find the right Supreme Court Justice when you need them the most...right around the very next corner.

#

Hoover felt that his job was to discover how the rich and famous, the notorious and salacious, fornicated and, whenever he discovered anything he disapproved of, to do something righteous about it. It really helped, though, if they somehow offended him politically as well. No single person was beyond the reach of Auntie Edgar and Clyde, her familiar.

Presidents fell before him...eight of them. Their wives as well, and their lovers of either

gender, color, or combination. Supreme Court Justices were no more immune than were senators, congressmen, governors, streetsweepers, or janitors. They were especially printers, publishers, editors, agents, writers, journalists, etc...the usual criminal types. Everyone he personally disliked fell to his whim, whether they ever knew it or not. The file folders, the photographs of the familiar people, naked and engaging in various forms of ostensibly normal sexual intercourse, the reels of film, the noisy little voice recordings...all made in absolute secrecy of course...and all absolutely illegal...they grew to fill numerous file cabinets attesting to and maintaining Hoover's absolute power.

Rumors of Hoover's Hit List persists throughout all records of his reign as well as unsubstantiated murders performed at his whim with some regularity. The delegates on this list were people like Ernest Hemingway, ordered murdered by Hoover while the official record says "suicide." People like Marilyn Munroe, ordered murdered by Hoover while the official record says "suicide." With some significant amount of supporting documentation as well.

The sordid sex files of the innocent, untried, and unconvicted were maintained secretly within the control of Hoover's secretary, and all of them carried Hoover's personal selection of code names. Hoover's file for Richard Nixon, for example, was aptly named "Obscene Matters."

#



Hoover ruled as much by example as he did by his dictates. He, with Tolson's help, tacitly encouraged the agents of the agency to do as they did, and far too many of them did. This was an additional corrupting act committed against the bureau he was allegedly directing, dragging his followers even deeper and deeper into depravity and rampant lawlessness. Hoover gave the bureau a virus that infected almost everything he touched or thought

about touching.

Having all that data about the sordid secret sex lives of the far-flung populace at his fingertips drove Hoover to even more excesses. He couldn't resist using it against his enemies. He leaked the vilest stories about the nation's very best people to known-liar cronies like Walter Winchell. Hoover drove some of those totally innocent people into exile, into disgrace, into poverty, and into suicide...without even flinching.

They used the data to blackmail people and to extort things of value and things of intangible worth all over the country and they would, particularly, crush anyone who even thought about "suggesting" anything to Hoover in any manner similar to an order. Hoover was above orders. He was untouchable. He could do anything.

Hoover could walk into the Oval Office and confront an angry Richard Nixon and both of them could pull out guns and wipe out the other in a bloody frenzy and no single person in the whole USA would ever know a thing about any part of the reality of it and no blame would ever be ascribed to either.

They were robbing the country blind and really earning Truman Capote's label of "Johnny and Clyde."

#

One target of the combined forces of hell was Martha Mitchell, wife of Attorney General John Mitchell, "Mr. Law And Order," henchman of Richard Nixon, and Future Felon of America. Martha was a good old girl from Arkansas and Texas, a child of the South; we had much in common because of our backgrounds and that especially included a high regard for honor and truth.

Martha Mitchell was only one of many extremely close-placed Washington insiders who didn't exactly agree with what was going on. She knew things that no living person ever needed to know and she couldn't even get her own husband to do anything about correcting what she felt was wrong within her observations. She decided to go public. First she would telephone local newspaper reporters and columnists and pass along some incredibly unbelievable gossip, then she started appearing on occasional television shows, furthering her traitorous rants against Nixon and his Administration and babbling away about the peculiarly illegal things she said they were trying to do to her.

She expanded her reach to every person or organization, however remote, she felt could help do something about exposing the criminality of what she was privy to. She was very fast on the speed-dialing before there was any such thing, and even quicker to mail, anonymously if necessary, photocopies of nonexistent and highly flammable memoranda, all the way across the country.

They thomped her royally, every one of Nixon's men, assisted by Hoover and his minions, and when they were through, Martha would never play The Game again. They quietly shipped "the nut" back to the sticks and most people forgot about the woman who was the shining herald of the entire Watergate period and the one rational denouncer of Richard Nixon.

Every single one of Martha Mitchell's stories, tips, and warnings turned out to be 100% true.

#

I was personally a target of much FBI admiration. Because I had Stanley Fleishman standing directly behind me, and guiding most of my movements, I accepted their presence far too casually and grew to think of them as persistent, annoying, insects. However, there were rogue agents who felt a compulsion to extend themselves just a bit beyond the call of duty, which was already a good deal beyond the limits of legality.

These rogues had a real hate-on for me, personally. You could tell they were rogues because they were acting alone, and often not in uniform but wearing civvies and attempting to blend in with the general population, and out of control. These men would accost me in the oddest places at the most unexpected times, like jumping out of doorways or landscaping ahead of me and snarling at me more like animals than men. Blocking my pathway and looking right into my face, their eyes aflame and their faces flushed with an adrenaline rush they couldn't suppress and their body shaking with visible convulsions they

couldn't control.

"I'm going to get you, motherfucker!"

These rogue agents were particularly dangerous. There were a few moments when I actually feared for my life, and countless times and places where anything could have happened to me easily. In retrospect, I should have been more cautious and less...surely not stupid.

It took me a very long time to figure out why the violent radicals were so personally fixated onto me. Every one of them thought I was doing, every day in numerous ways, every filthy, perverted, disgusting sex thing they were as individuals forbidden to do, either by themselves or some other authority. And they wanted to do those sex things and because they couldn't they were going to see to it that I didn't either, only I wasn't. That didn't matter either, to them, as long as they were inside the boundaries of The Game.

#

In the office, all our telephone lines were tapped. There were so many different agencies dogging us even we couldn't tell who was on first without a program. Every one of those agencies felt the need to maintain their own wiretaps and to never, absolutely never, share one single fragment of intelligence they might gather with any other agency. It was a real bitch at times just trying to use the phone. There were entire days where, every time we picked up a phone receiver, all we could hear were police calls.

There was a telephone pole outside my office window less than 100 feet away from my desk. For months, hidden inside a small little tent atop that pole, an alleged "repair man" was working on some really serious problem...for six months or longer. The man inside that tent, and the rest of his particular squadron of FBI agents, all pretending to be telephone company employees, was held in the highest contempt by the telephone company itself. In fact, after we complained to them about the length of time they were taking to affect their repairs, they laughed and said they weren't involved at all. "It's the FBI. Look at their trucks. They can't get an appropriation to paint them." And they were right; you could always spot an FBI surveillance team because all their vehicles sported a two-year-old, out-of-date, replaced, color scheme and logo at the time.

The surveillance became so intense, at times, that in order to have a private business conversation, every party to that conversation would gather around the conference table in the editorial office. We would sit there in silence, letting our fingers do the talking. We had a small portable typewriter and it would be loaded with a sheet of paper. One of us would type some important part of the discussion onto the paper and begin passing the typewriter around. Each person, in turn, would read what was there then type in their comments. After the conversation was finished, every sheet of paper used to house it was burned and the ashes flushed down the toilet. The typewriter ribbon was disposed of away from the office.

All our mail, incoming and outgoing, was routinely captured, examined minutely, delayed unreasonably, and begrudgingly passed on.

#

Fortunately, as in the population itself, there were some good guys who worked for the FBI. It is unreasonable to think of the agency as having been all bad in those days. Today's Bureau bears little or no resemblance to Hoover's crew, thank God for small favors. The good agents would surface just as easily as the rogue agents had, quietly and in shaded, out-of-the-way places.

They would hand me photocopies of notes or memoranda containing startling things about me that I thought no single person knew, but there it would be, in black and white. Or they would whisper hurried warnings into my ear...warnings about their fellow agents.

And, relearning a hard lesson already forgotten, I found out that however much I might like those good agents, and think of them as perhaps being friends, when it really mattered, I could never depend on a one of them because, even to them, the Bureau was more important than anything...certainly lowly little me didn't count for a damn. They would dump you in an instant; the first thing they learn in FBI school is how to lie convincingly under oath.

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At times almost as predictable as PMS, Hoover would go into rants about being personally maligned by the press and the media in general. These dark periods would begin whenever anyone would mention, to Hoover's knowledge, anything about him being either homosexual or Negro. He would gather all his forces, which were considerable, and attack the offending liar with a full-frontal assault. It was, literally, a crime to mention either and the consequences were almost insurmountable.

When Kenneth Anger's book *Hollywood Babylon* first appeared, it was instantly jumped upon by agents of the FBI. All over the country in book stores and drug stores, federal agents confiscated every known copy of the book, because it contained some details about Hoover's crossdressing, and they destroyed every copy. Many true first edition copies still exist, of course, but they are valuable and very hard to locate. The publisher quickly exorcised the wordage that offended Hoover, replaced the "first edition" with a second first edition, and really lost a bundle in the process.

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Meanwhile, back in the offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hoover had a large staff whose job was to act as press agents to enhance Hoover's personal reputation and to earn money for Hoover. That's right, to earn money for Hoover. Pay attention: At US taxpayer expense a battery of people, working full time every day, did nothing but write press releases, articles, lectures, and books all carrying the byline of John Edgar Hoover. Whenever one of these would be finished, it would be presented to some publisher whose worst nightmare was to receive it in the first place under circumstances he couldn't possibly refuse at ridiculously exaggerated rates and every single payment went into Hoover's private coffer along with all that filthy lucre seeming to pour in automatically from anonymous and contributory sources.

At home, just the two of them, together and in bed, they would chortle over the fortune they were amassing and the power they were expending and the righteous sex they were having surrounded as they were, so totally, within the imagination of John Edgar Hoover.

The house was his, as were the contents and this especially included Clyde, and it was filled almost to being overstuffed with Hoover's accumulation of rare and priceless antiques and, the most prominent thing throughout the house and what passed for a pretend garden, the penises.

There were penises everywhere. Hoover had to have one-and he most preferred Clyde's-in view from every angle and every approach throughout his domain with some of them being bounced back and forth numbers of times in mirrors until they seemed to surround him suffocatingly. Pictures, engravings, sculptures...statuary with exaggerated genitalia...the knickknacks and bric-a-brac of a dedicated, serious, queer hater.

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Very late into his life of shame and his career of criminality, Hoover began construction of his Great Pyramid, a tribute to himself as he wanted to appear to be, a monument that would outlast time itself, the impressive, painfully expensive, Federal Bureau of Investigation Building. To Auntie Edgar's continuing credit, that building is known to every insider in the country as Hoover's Last Erection.

Johnnie and Clyde's marriage ended abruptly on May 2, 1972 with Hoover's death. They had been together for 44 years...an admirable record by any standard.

When he was informed that Hoover had just died, Richard Nixon said, "Jesus Christ, that old cocksucker," in his best presidentialese.

Tolson, with the help of Hoover's secretary, Helen Gandy, boxed up Hoover's private sex files and Tolson drove away with all of them. The legend would have us think he destroyed those files, however difficult that is to believe...all the riches of the world in one vehicle...photographed in explicit detail, sound recorded, documented far beyond any rational need...just waiting to be opened like Pandora's Box to uncountable profit. Surely all of it still exists...the truth is out there somewhere...hurry the day.

In his book *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and His Secrets*, Curt Gentry catalogues the nature of those secret sex files this way: "...their contents included blackmail material on the patriarch of an American political dynasty, his sons, their wives, and other women; allegations of two homosexual arrests which Hoover leaked to help defeat a witty, urbane Democratic presidential candidate; the surveillance reports on one of America's best-known first ladies and her alleged lovers, both male and female, white and black; the child molestation documentation the director used to control and manipulate one of the Red-baiting protégés; a list of the Bureau's spies in the White House during the eight administrations when Hoover was FBI director; the forbidden fruit of hundreds of illegal wiretaps and bugs, containing, for example, evidence that an attorney general (and later Supreme Court justice) had received payoffs from the Chicago syndicate; as well as celebrity files, with all the unsavory gossip Hoover could amass on some of the biggest names in show business."

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Tolson never returned to his office after Hoover's death, but retired to quiet seclusion. Without Auntie Edgar there seemed to be nothing for him even though all their ill-gotten

gains were now his, as surviving spouse. All that greedily stolen money stacked away earning interest, the illegal gains of a whole life of malevolence and misuse, the tons and tons of antiques crowding out the space, the rows after rows of lined up penises all seeming to somehow salute their departed master, the ultimate evil, The Antifag.

Tolson died on April 14, 1975, three years after his lover. They are still together in death as they were in life, buried as close to each other, in the same cemetery, as they could possibly arrange considering appearances.

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*In memory of Percy Foreman; a toast "to those fucking FBI cocksuckers"...bottoms up, the way Auntie Edgar liked it. Special thanks to Robert Silverberg for help with this memory. Dated July 2002.

J. Edgar Hoover was like a sewer that collected dirt. I now believe he was the worst public servant in our history.

-Attorney General Laurence Silberman

This is my FBI story*

By Robert Silverberg

In 1966, I think, while the Houston trial was going on, the FBI phoned and asked if they could interview me at my house. Yes, I said, and didn't even consult a lawyer, since I knew I was breaking no laws. Come over and let's talk. I was living then in a splendid mansion in the New York suburbs.

Two gentlemen in suits and ties showed up, and I showed them into the baronial library, where I had thoughtfully left a few of my recent children's books on archaeology lying around. Barbara served soft drinks. I was genial, though I let them know that I didn't quite understand why they had come to me. "Are you a writer, Mr. Silverberg?" "Yes," I said. "I used to write some science fiction, and now I write children's books on archaeology and history." Since I happened to have a few nearby, I showed them to them. They leafed through them appreciatively. Then they said, "And do you do any business with a company named Reed Enterprises?"

Since the dummy corporation through which I was getting paid by Hamling was in fact Blake Pharmaceutical, I said, no, I don't do business with Reed Enterprises. (I did know that Reed was another of Bill's phantom companies, but since I didn't get checks from them, I had no reason to answer that I did business with them. And they never did ask me about Blake Pharmaceutical.) Since I wasn't under oath, I suppose I might have lied about them if they had asked me, but they didn't ask, and at this late date I don't know what I might actually have said if the matter had come up. Somehow their research had failed to turn up the name of the company that was actually paying me. (The way it worked at that period, Bill paid Scott's commission to Scott and paid the remainder directly to me, out of the Blake account.)

Since I seemed to be a nice clean-cut young writer with a nice clean-cut wife and a fine majestic house and a fine career writing books for Putnam and Holt and Macmillan, they either decided that they had the wrong Robert Silverberg or that I was a really gifted liar, and, either way, they didn't choose to press the issue. I didn't offer to take them upstairs, where my hundreds of Nightstand books were laid out on my office shelves. Barbara served coffee, they pleasantly bade me farewell, and off they went, having learned not a single useful thing about that nest of evil pornographers in Evanston. In no way had they threatened me or said anything even vaguely unpleasant. They had run into a stone wall and they made no attempt to peer around it.

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*Excerpted from email dated March 13, 2002.

Don't give those fucking FBI cocksuckers the time of day.
--Percy Foreman, July, 1966

The Ultimate Straight Men:

My Adventures With Our FBI!

By Dwain Kaiser

Earl Kemp summed it up well in Memoryhole during a discussion (among other things) about abuses by the government. A request for those to speak up who had, "Personal contact with 'officials' from various 'agencies' of harassing, unusual, or extra-legal nature."

Well, in my case, it was the late middle '60s mid-'70s, a time in my life when I found it hard to accept anything as less than humorous. That's the point in ones life when one discovers how preposterous existence truly is, and before the rock and the hard place flattens one's sense of humor. Earl's comment was, "Roytac didn't even touch the surface about how much fun it was...."

It was a bolt of lightening. Earl was completely right. It was funny at the time; it's just as comical looking back. It could have easily not been, but sometimes we win the roll of the dice and other times we lose. I ended up dealing with authority on the thin edge of buffoonery. And I got away with it.

The FBI is in trouble again, caught cheating on requests for wiretaps and other illegal activity. Will they get away with yet another slap on the wrist from the Justice Department, of course they will. Once again. They've abused power that they haven't been granted, how far can they warp the legal authority the Shrub has granted them? Personally I hope never to discover the answer to that question.

Somehow, fandom is an exception; the America masses have no sense of history. They jump to judge without background, based on self-aiding statements made by the powers in charge. Rather than judging upon discovering the facts (abuses upon abuses upon

abuses, mea culpa, mea culpa), they hear "We won't do it again". What more could one ask for? Give them more power and let them do their job! Scary.

My first run in with the FBI was through the post office. Remember those ads for Soviet SF on the back cover of *Amazing* and other pulps? How could one resist? Somewhere, in a huge warehouse, are hundreds of thousands of confiscated hardbacks of Soviet SF propaganda. Now I could understand more how this would protect us if they had managed to be more effective at it. Half the books reached me, the other half were held up while the P.O. checked to make sure that I "really, truly" wanted those novels. Maybe the Soviets were randomly mailing bad SF (and the books were truly awful) to susceptible teenagers. I signed the forms agreeing to "releasing" these novels and waited. The post office had "lost them," but not to worry, as soon as they're "found" I'll receive them. I'm still waiting. I'll always have a need for doorstops.

Of course the postal problems continued during the late '60s due to drug references in my genzine. Druggie stuff, and therefore "fans were into drugs." Of course my big "drug" piece was a reprint from the '50s, but let's not let facts get in the way of a good, solid, conclusion. I have been told, but couldn't prove it if my life depended upon it, that the police at one

worldcon wanted to do a room search due to "fan drug usage" based upon a report passed on to them from the Post Office in St. Louis (having examined Nimrod "carefully" before delivering it to a St. Louis fan).

Those were "fan" related problems, the freedom to read bad SF and the First Amendment freedom to publish whatever the hell one wanted to. But this was the '60s and it was during Vietnam. More serious problems with government authority were soon to crop up.

I discovered an "interesting" fact volunteering at one of the local anti-war headquarters in L.A. If the Feds had tapped your phone they would go through hell to guarantee that your service wasn't cut off. Including in some cases paying your huge phone bills, in the form of "anon" contribution from a "supporter," in other cases a willingness on the part of the phone company to accept a buck on the hundred with a promise to pay the rest later. And the phones stayed working and the FBI taps remained in place, and the FBI stayed employed listening to those taps.

Of course current records show that during the heyday of the FBI's communist witch hunt up to 1/5 of all members of the Communist Party were connected to the Feds in one form or another. Which was truly wonderful because only about 2/5ths of the American Communists ever had enough money to pay their dues. And only 1/5th always paid their dues on time, and always paid the full amount. Guess which fifth? Party headquarters would have folded across this nation, completely disappearing, if it hadn't been for the FBI. So these headquarters (communist, left-wing, whatever) continued to do whatever they were doing (to this day nobody quite knows, or now even cares), the rents and salaries were paid for their employees, and the FBI stayed employed collecting all that useless data. Now there's a happy ending to that tale.

The "data" they collected on me came in handy during the early '70s while I was working for Service and Hospital Union Local #399. We were located in L.A., but I was in charge of the Las Vegas office during an attempt to organize the Clark County General Hospital. I was picked to run the office because I had lived in Vegas as a teenager, had gone to high school there, and therefore "knew" the town.

Anyone involved in labor as an organizer had FBI run-ins. At the time any minor violence on the picket line (breaking a window for example) was treated as extortion (committing a crime to gain a profit). All of a sudden some union hothead would be facing twenty years in prison for what should have been a misdemeanor and a small fine. There was no love lost between the FBI and Labor (then or now).

Picture this; it's 115 degrees outside my office in the Plumbers Union Hall. In walk two gentlemen dressed alike (sort of a pre-*Men in Black* dressup). Nice suits, but not too nice, plain, with a plain hat on their head, a plain (ugly) tie, black shoes, and I couldn't lie about this, white socks. Now I knew right away who was visiting my office, so I asked (may as well cut to the chase): "What can I do for the FBI today."

The ultimate straight men are FBI agents. No sense of humor. None. Nada. Zilch. They don't believe (or had no idea) how much they stand out from the common folk, so by calling them "FBI" before they introduced themselves shows to them that you had been expecting them to visit. Then, therefore, you're guilty of something.

"How do you know we're FBI," the tallest one asked (shorter than I am, they were never

very tall in those days. Hoover, beloved asshole of crossdressing fame, didn't like to have to look up at his agents.)*

Then the fun begins (Nonstop Fun)...say whatever you like to them, refuse to go along with their bullshit, use them as straight men for whatever warped sense of humor you have, and it will just bounce right off them. The ultimate straight men. An early form of interactive gameplaying before computers. Neat fun if you're not worried about what they think of you, or what they could try to do to you, or what they did to harmless assholes who upset them. I always had very, very, very good lawyers back in my union organizing days. Then, the appearance of FBI agents was just an amusing break in the days work.

My lack of respect always drove them up the wall. The first time they visited my office they wanted a copy of the information we had on everyone we had signed up during our organizing drives in the city. I said no. They acted like they couldn't believe I'd be that disloyal. I said no. They informed me, that it was my duty to do as they say. I said no. I was told that they could get a subpoena, I told them I could burn the records (no great shedders in those days) before they could subpoena them. And what records? Are they sure we even kept any records? And how could I resist, "I don't have to show you no stinkin' records." That sure went over their heads.

Upon a second visit I was told that they "knew all about me." "Ah, very useful," I replied. "I seem to have lost July of last year, can I get a report from you on what I did that month?" I was having fun at least, playing The Game.

Another visit to the office and I acted like they were Mormon Missionaries trying to get me to change my religion, "but I like being a U.U. Jefferson was a U.U., so it's good enough to me. Why do you want me to change it?"

It was wonderful. A live Marx Brothers film with my script. They'd ask me about our organizing drive and I'd ask them, "Why would the FBI want me to change my religion? I have no interesting in becoming a Mormon," followed by, "you are Mormon's, right?" Now the FBI can't lie in those cases, so I'd get (it was just a good guess because of high Mormon FBI membership in Nevada and Utah), "Yes, but we're hear to talk to you about...."

"My religion?" I would butt in with.

And back and forth.

I doubt if these days I would have enough nerve to do a stunt like that, but it was fun back then. And they never got the records. (I won the hospital election by the way, but we never got a contract. I also organized the first M.D. Union formed by the AFL-CIO in the U.S. while staying in Vegas. Those were fun days.)

However, data keeps those FBI paychecks flowing in. Years (hmm...four or five) after Vegas, I answered a knock at the door.

The FBI. Fond memories rushed to my drugged head (waves of Indica smoke drifted out of my living room). "My friends. What can I do for the FBI today?"

Okay, I shouldn't have. Because once again they knew I was guilty of something,

otherwise why would I expect the FBI to come a-calling?

I was no longer working for Service Employees, so the quality of available lawyers was sharply reduced, so I didn't quite play The Game like a madman. (Besides, with the front door open you could smell my house from a block away.) But I had a hard time resisting when I discovered that I was a suspect in a murder investigation. One of the local labor leaders in Vegas (one we had some serious disagreements with while I was organizing in town) was found dead in the desert, buried with one hand out of the sand visible for all to see and to be warned by.

Now that's a mob hit. Even a seven year old in Vegas would have known that. But when I mentioned it was a mob hit, the ol' pencils starting flying. "How did I know that?" I laughed. The ultimate straighten.

They weren't happy over my "it couldn't have happened to a more deserving person" either. I was supposed to be (I guess according to their case study books) all misty eyed over a true SOB getting hit.

We went over the, "We know all about you," routine again. My not being quite so snippy as before, but nothing came of it. I hadn't been out of state for several years, I didn't do the hit on the guy. End of story.

However, the FBI stays out of unemployment lines by keeping records.

Several years later, while friends were trying to get clearances, they were asked about me. What our "relationship" was all about, were we members of any groups together (here fandom got mentioned a few times, I wonder what this "hobbies" FBI file truly looks like), that sort of stuff. Not enough problems to hurt my friends, however.

No jail time, no real hassle...but threats, veiled statements concerning harm, and those nasty vibes about how they're going to get me. Looking back playing The Game was sort of fun, in a scary way. But it wasn't scary at the time, mainly because I wasn't bright enough to be scared. Someone looks after those fools who do truly dumb things with a sense of adventure and jocularly.

I'd sure like to see my police records one of these days...just to see what was recorded. It would make a nice Christmas gift to my grandkids. Don't trust these fools. Don't put the fate of our freedoms in their hands. If you can't laugh, you can't rule. And always remember that just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that they're not out to get you.

The End (For Now!)

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*Not quite what I intended to say. What I wanted to comment on was too rude and crude for even me. Biting my tongue, I won't comment on "eye level" and such other banal crudities.

We want no Gestapo or Secret Police. FBI is tending in that direction. They are dabbling in sex life scandals and plain blackmail when they should be catching criminals. They also have a habit of sneering at local law enforcement officers. This must stop. Cooperation is what we must have.

--Harry S. Truman [memo to J. Edgar Hoover] May 12, 1945

Me And The Kingpin*

By Mike Resnick

A lot of guys have laid claim to the title: Kingpin of Porn. There was Larry Flynt. There was Bill Hamling. There was Milt Luros. There were others.

But there was really only one man who merited the title. His name was Reuben Sturman, and I worked for him for the better part of five years.

I didn't start out with that in mind. I was just a kid, recently married, fresh out of college -- not with a degree or anything rash like that, just with a bunch of freelance sales -- and I needed a job now that I was a husband-in-fact and a father-to-be. It just so happened that there was only one job open in the entire publishing field in Chicago at that time, so I took it -- and found myself editing a couple of yellow tabloids, first *The National Tattler* and then *The National Insider*, as well as some (deservedly) short-lived men's magazines, the entire monthly budget of which couldn't buy me a new suit.

And it was while I was editing these things, circa 1966-1968, that I became aware that we weren't the only salacious publications in the field. There were *tons* of 'em. (*Playboy* was a class act, no matter how much I loathed Hugh Hefner's notion of The Good Life; so were *Rogue* and a couple of others. I never considered *them* to be salacious.) So I started selling to soft core book editors, since we didn't publish any and thus it didn't constitute a conflict of interest, and the book editors whose companies didn't have tabloids or men's magazines started selling to me.

Along the way I met Joe Sturman, younger brother of The Kingpin. Joe was a nice Jewish guy who just wanted to live in wealthy obscurity, join the local Temple, and have a membership to an upscale country club. He was publishing soft core novels when I met him, as well as some tabloids, and he hated it. He couldn't stand seeing his photo, along with his brother's, on the front page of the Cleveland papers every time there was a bust (which was maybe once a month). He hated it when his wife was queried about his business or his kids were teased because of it. His father-in-law owned a nice, respectable, incredibly dull lead foundry, and Joe couldn't wait for the day that the old gentleman retired and left it to him and he could get out of the sex field forever.

I went fulltime freelance in 1968, at which time I was selling Joe a couple of books a month for \$1,000 apiece. He killed his book line three months later, which caused me considerable concern. We were friends by then, so I confided unhappily to him that I had been counting on that money for another year. The next morning he told me to call a California soft core publisher named Dick Sherwin, who knew all about me and told me he'd be happy to buy 24 books from me, at \$1,000 a book, during the next year.

And when the year was out, Joe, who was extricating himself piece by piece from the field, flew me out to Cleveland where he turned over three monthly tabloids to me: *Truth* and

The National Times, both general all-purpose pieces of totally fictitious journalism, and *It's Happening*, the only tabloid aimed specifically at a black audience.

All went smoothly for four or five months, and then the day Joe had been praying for arrived: his father-in-law retired, and he took over the lead biz. Within a week he'd sold out all his soft core holdings to his brother, Reuben.

So I was flown out to Cleveland again to be evaluated by the Kingpin. We hit it off from the start. He was bright -- incredibly bright. Unlike Bill Hamling, who felt the First Amendment was on his side and was happy to present his various cases to the Supreme Court, Ruby (he never liked to be called Reuben) thought he was getting away with murder, and viewed his relationship with the feds and the courts as an exciting game. He loved playing tennis, was a major gambler on any and all sports (and to the day of his death swore that Bobby Riggs threw his match against Billie Jean King), and from time to time admitted that he had put together his empire by luck and by accident.

He'd been a comic book jobber, and when the local distributor got some publications he didn't want to handle -- "muscle books" and early girlie magazines -- Ruby stepped in and distributed them himself.

Thus began the notion of "secondary distributors". Just as the *New York Times* prints all the news that's fit to print and *The National Inquirer* prints the rest, major distributors like Long Island News (in New York) and Charles Levy (in Chicago) would distribute all the magazines and books fit to distribute -- and Ruby, taking a higher commission since no one else would handle them, would distribute the rest.



I tried my best to locate a photograph of Reuben Sturman to use with this article, but I couldn't. I did discover that he was partial to wearing disguises and did everything he could to make sure no one photographed him. In real life he affected a Fu Manchu mustache and, especially when appearing in trials, Groucho glasses.
--Earl Kemp

I saw a television show about the history of porn that featured quite a bit of Reuben, including interviews with him. There were many shots of him wearing a big cowboy hat, dark glasses, and a dust filter mask over his mouth and nose as he walked between car and courthouse.
--Robert Speray, email, July 2002

By the time I went to work for him, Ruby, under various corporate veils, owned 59 of the 65 secondary distribution agencies in the USA, and -- again under corporate veils -- owned more than 600 adult bookstores, the kind where (back then; I have no idea what they're like today) you paid a dollar to enter and browse, and got it refunded if you purchased something.

Ruby also owned some printing plants. What did this mean? Well, when I edited the Insider, our break-even point was something like 41%. In other words, if we sold 41% of our 300,000+ print run, we broke even. I had it up in the 70's for a couple of years (my record was 77% of a 410,000 print run one week in early 1966), but no one could sustain that without going totally legit or totally hardcore -- they wouldn't give me the budget for the former, and I refused to do the latter -- and by the time I left the Insider was back in the high 40's, pretty much where it was when I had taken it over.

But with Ruby's tabloids, it was a whole different story -- he owned the national distributorship, the local distributorship, the printing plant and the stores. Our break-even point was, so help me, 9% -- and since he did own the stores and the distributorships, no rival tabloid was even displayed before we'd sold out at least half of our print run.

(Does this sound familiar to Resnick readers? It should. I based Solomon Moody Moore, the sort-of-protagonist porn kingpin of my 1984 science fiction novel, *The Branch*, on Ruby.)



Anyway, I found that I was surrounded by millionaires. Ruby paid handsomely for what he wanted. We had an immediate conflict, because I wouldn't give him what he wanted. (No, it had nothing to do with hardcore..., which I also wouldn't give him.)

If you worked for Ruby, you were paid far better than anyone else in the field would pay you for the same job...but there was a stipulation, mentioned once and never again, and never written down -- and that was that of all the hundreds of people in the organization, the writers, the editors, the distributors, the comptrollers, the office managers, the stock boys, everyone was expected to take the fall before Ruby went to prison. Your family would be well-taken-care-of, your job would be waiting for you when you got out, it was understood that almost no one would ever be locked away for more than 18 months with good behavior and better lawyers -- but that was the deal. If you wanted to be a young millionaire, you agreed to take the fall.

I didn't -- and I never got to be a young millionaire. He never considered firing me and hiring someone who would take the fall. That wasn't the way Ruby worked. But while others were making half a million a year or more, I was making maybe \$75,000 to \$100,000 -- which was great pay for a kid in his 20s who was still learning how to write and edit, but paltry compared to what I could have been making had I agreed to his terms.

Ruby had a huge Christmas party every year in Cleveland. (Why Cleveland? Well, he grew up there -- and more to the point, Ohio, at that time, didn't have extradition treaties with other states except for capital crimes...so as long as he didn't distribute his products in Ohio, he couldn't be arrested or "deported".) The party lasted two or three days. During the course of it, each employee had a meeting with Ruby. They never lasted as much as five minutes. If your division -- be it tabloids, smut movies, peep shows, bookstores, whatever - - had made as much or more than Ruby thought it should during the year, you were re-

pped for another year. If not, you were fired. Simple as that.

We all feared those Christmas parties, yet I only knew two or three people who got fired in the five years I packaged tabloids for him.



I actually dummied the covers for the *Insider* and the *Tattler*. *The Truth* and *It's Happening* covers were done two years before I took them over.

Chicago attorney Elmer Gertz recalls that when the tabloid *The National Tattler* is tried on obscenity charges in the mid-Sixties, he manipulates a key witness—an elderly woman—into admitting that she thinks Jane Mansfield's breasts are obscene. The courtroom erupts in peals of laughter. This scene brings down the house, and later, acquittal.
--Stephen J. Gertz, June 2002

When it became obvious the tabs were making money -- *lots* of money, once Ruby finished paying off his brother with their profits -- it came time for a raise. Ruby didn't want to give me any more money, but he wanted to reward me somehow, and finally he hit on the perfect solution: he gave me the classified ads in the backs of the papers. You know, the ones that read: "Oversexed leather-loving lady wants to meet middle-aged man for French, Greek, golden showers, s&m. No freaks." *That* kind of ad. The man answering the ad would write a letter, put it in an envelope, seal it, put our code on it, and send it, along with a dollar bill, to a post office box I had rented.

The next year he gave me Doc Johnson, a fictional black man in a Elijah Muhammad hat who published a 32-page book, with a 3-digit number after every name, color, city, state, whatever, that I could think of. Doc sold his book (out of a different post office box) to numbers players, and I got a free half-page ad in each issue of each tabloid.

While I refused to do hardcore or play fast and loose with any laws that didn't stop the rest

of the crew -- or Ruby himself. One of the staff's favorite stories concerned the day that Ruby was coming home from Europe with a suitcase full of hardcore porn movies featuring farm animals and teenaged girls, movies that would be duplicated and sold in all his stores. The British authorities had been tipped, and as he stopped at Heathrow to transfer planes, they converged on him and asked him what he had in his bag.

"Home movies," said Ruby calmly.

They screened a couple of his home movies, threw him out of the country, and told him that neither he nor any member of his family would ever be allowed into Britain again.

Ruby's headquarters was a large, nondescript office building -- the lower floor was a warehouse -- at 2075 East 65th Street. It probably hasn't existed for years now. I would be flown to Cleveland twice a year on average, and I learned after a couple of trips never to tell the cabbies where they were taking me until we were more than halfway there and it was financially unfeasible for them to drop me at a corner without being paid. Otherwise they would refuse to let me into their cabs at the airport. Evidently -- once there I never left the building except to go home, so I am reporting this as second-hand information -- it was in one of the worst and most dangerous areas of Cleveland. Ruby chose it expressly for that reason -- not for the low rent, but because he could hire an abundance of inexpensive, cop-hating lookouts in case of a bust.

Usually he had ample warning of a raid. Once he didn't, and at the last second he dove head-first into a chute to the warehouse, slid down into an open truck, and escaped under a pile of obscene magazines.

He was also a realist. I remember one morning I had just flown in, and he told me that Greenleaf's Bill Hamling and his editor, Earl Kemp, were going to jail. I asked why, since they hadn't even been busted yet. He showed me their latest -- an *illustrated* edition of the President's Commission's Report on Obscenity.

"But it's legal," I said. "Anyone can publish it. The government doesn't copyright anything it prints."

"They won't get them on obscenity," said Ruby. "But they'll get them on something -- maybe a postal violation."

He was adamant -- you simply couldn't illustrate that report while Nixon was in office...and sure enough, he turned out to be right.

Ruby had a girlfriend, and when the tabloids went semi-monthly and he added a fourth title -- *Swing* -- she became my assistant editor, which really meant co-packager, since every photo belonged to one of Reuben's companies and every article was house-written (i.e., Resnick-written).

At that point it was raining money, and I decided that if we could keep it up for a year I could finally get the hell out of the field -- I wasn't ashamed of it but I found it distasteful

and it took up so much of my time that I wasn't getting much serious writing done.

We came close. I think it lasted ten months. The girlfriend discovered a younger version of Ruby -- his son, who had recently entered the business, and left Ruby for him. Ruby's gentle way of retaliating was to sell the tabloids to a friend in Chicago who was so cheap that neither I nor the ex-girlfriend could afford to work for him.

In a way I was relieved. I'd have liked a month or two more of that phenomenal cash flow, but it was time -- long past time, really -- to get out of the field, and from that day in early 1976 to this, I have never written under a pseudonym again.



This is a 1975 photo. From left to right: me, Champion Nostalgix Silverlock, and Champion Nostalgix The Gray Lensman. Ruby and I parted ways about 8 months after this picture was taken.

I totally lost touch with Ruby. I exchanged holiday cards with Joe for a few years -- he was the Sturman I always considered a friend -- and then one day I heard that the feds had finally gotten Ruby the same way they got Al Capone: for tax evasion. I never understood why. It was all a game to him. He was worth well over \$100 million, had invested in a number of shopping malls, indeed had more invested in legit businesses than in pornography. How much better could he be living by not reporting a few million dollars of income? (But the feds were the opponents, and therefore the rules of the game made it mandatory that he lie to the IRS.)

Then came the most bizarre incident of all. It made all the papers, even the *Wall Street Journal*. Ruby, who was maybe 70 and serving so many consecutive terms that he was never going to get out, sued his lawyer.

Why?

Because, claimed Ruby, the lawyer had told him they could buy one of the jurors, Ruby gave him half a million to do it, and the lawyer pocketed the money.

You ready for the wild part? Ruby won his suit!

Oh, he didn't get released -- he was guilty as, you should pardon the expression -- sin. But his lawyer wound up just down the cellblock from him.

Then I heard that he'd developed Alzheimer's, and shortly thereafter he died of a stroke.

Do I regret working for him?

Well, I'd rather have been a bestseller at 23, but thanks to Ruby I had a large, lovely house on 5 acres in my mid-20s, we took trips all over the country, we were able to breed and extensively exhibit our show collies, I was able to buy my 7-year-old daughter a horse, and the whole time I worked for him I never had to worry about paying my bills.

Or going to jail, for that matter.

Regret it? Hell, no. Here I am, three decades later, still telling stories about him.

- - -

*The tabloid covers were all taken from *Sleazy Business: A Pictorial History of Exploitation Tabloids, 1959-1974*, by Alan Betrock, published by Shake Books in 1996.

People should be taught what is, not what should be. All my humor is based on destruction and despair. If the whole world were tranquil, without disease and violence, I'd be standing in the headline -- right back of J. Edgar Hoover.

--Lenny Bruce

[Over the last few years, Stephen J. Gertz has been researching a monumental project. His *An Amazing Kingdom of Thrills; American Pulp Erotica 1966-1973* has now been completed and will be published shortly. It incorporates the fruits of hundreds of interviews with actual participants in the era, much digging through dusty and distasteful archives, and a startling surprise or two. Of his efforts with this book, Carolyn See said, "Gertz has combined extraordinary original scholarship with the zany sensibility of Akbar del Piombo in this account of what the cognoscenti recognize as the golden age of American Pornography." I am pleased to present the following excerpt from Gertz' excellent book. -Earl Kemp]

Earthlings, Beware!

A Galaxy of Porn In San Diego

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By Stephen J. Gertz

They start out in Chicago as science fiction fan-geeks and grow to become giants in the science fiction world, William L. Hamling writing for and eventually publishing sci-fi magazines, Earl Kemp publishing and ultimately becoming a Hugo Award-winning editor. In the cosmos of porn, they become a constellation unto themselves, the Gemini of the business, the terrible twins, both obstreperous defenders of the First Amendment, pleased to be thorns in the side of the government, ever proud of their roots in science fiction, prouder still that they almost single-handedly provide a generation of would-be and struggling science fiction (and other genre) writers with the means for food, shelter, and clothing. And Hamling, founder and publisher of Phenix [sic] Publications, Ltd. aka Greenleaf Publications, and Kemp, his V.P. and Editorial Director, True Believers in the struggle against censorship, make First Amendment history on more than one occasion, becoming, as Kemp will state with no little satisfaction, "national nuisances."

Born into a strong Irish-Catholic family on the North side of Chicago in 1921, Hamling, devout in his religion - an altar boy in youth - will have his faith tested while serving in the military during World War II.

"...in the Army, Hamling's perception changed; it was there that he saw the Church, in deference to the war, becoming less celestial, more nationalistic and permissive...Catholic soldiers could eat meat on Fridays, could miss Mass, could avoid the weekly exhortations of their confessors. Bishops blessed bombers; the officers of the Church were allied with the generals - indeed, the generals outranked the clergymen, who, frocked in the drab khaki clothing of chaplains, saluted the stars; and when tons of pinup magazines were transported by the military up to the front as substitute stimulants for the womanless warriors, the Church, once so strict and censorial, was silent, and in its silence was complicitous"



Stardust Vol. 1 No. 1, courtesy Ron Brown collection. William Hamling produced this surprisingly professional fanzine while in his teens. Notice the cover design flashforwarding to *Imagination* of a decade later. Dated March 1940.

Though he understands the necessity of practical compromise between the Church's ministers and the military, by war's end his religious fervor has considerably cooled and Hamling is "no longer dominated by his early conditioning, his narrow view of sin, his guilt about unsanctified sex."

Upon his discharge, Hamling, a science fiction fan from youth with a nascent ambition to become a writer before the war's onset, now pursues his dream. His first writing effort is "War with Jupiter," a co-written short story published by the classic science fiction pulp magazine *Amazing Stories*. He publishes amateur fanzines, *Stardust* and *Ad Astra* [with Mark Reinsberg and Mel Korshak]. Shortly thereafter, he becomes an editor at Ziff-Davis, the Chicago-based publisher of *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, and other pulp mag titles that easily describe Hamling's future porn work. When Ziff-Davis moves to New York, he stays behind and with another Z-D staff editor, Hugh Hefner, works on *Modern Man*, "a small little magazine" published by George van Rosen that soon inspires Hefner to launch a magazine of his own. Hamling, a man one did not have a relationship with so much as weather a relationship with, according to a former employee, is not temperamentally suited to work for others, and, striking out on his own, in 1951 starts the sci-fi magazine *Imagination*. He sharpens its focus from the industry standard blend of fantasy and sci-fi to strict science-fiction adventure stories and does so well he launches a companion mag, *Imaginative Tales*, a book-length, single story per issue magazine. He's working out of the basement of his home on Greenleaf Street in Evanston, Illinois; the magazines are issued by Greenleaf Publications. Kemp and Hamling meet in 1952 and become friends



This is the cover for *Imagination* No. 1, dated October 1950. It features a fantastic painting by Hannes Bok. The magazine was secretly edited and published by William Hamling but, because he had not officially separated from Ziff-Davis, he had his friend Ray Palmer, who had already left the company, front it for him. That is why Hamling's name does not appear on the magazine nor is there an editorial credit. -Earl Kemp

I

"Hamling [is] caught in the small world of science-fiction publishing, but [does] not want to escape as long as he [can] make money doing what he [likes]." He surfs the wave of the genre's enormous popularity of the time but by the mid-'fifties the wave is crashing, leaving many science fiction magazines flotsam on the shore. Now, Hamling has always understood the public's appetite for sex and violence; violence, to one degree or another, is a staple of science fiction. Sex, of course, is taboo. But the cultural climate is changing for the better.





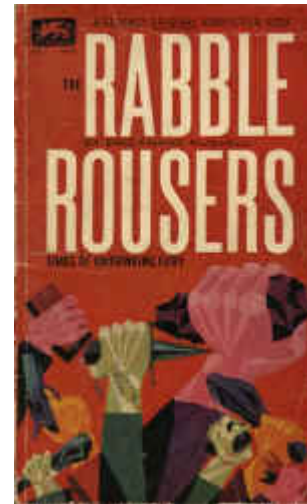
In 1955, Hamling, his small science fiction empire entering a black hole, moves out of his basement on Greenleaf Street to legit offices and publishes *Rogue*, a "gentleman's" magazine. His wife, Frances, a strong-willed widow whom he marries in 1948 adopting her four young children, is associate publisher. Calling upon his friends in the science fiction world, he's got writers like Robert Bloch, a close friend of and mentor to Earl Kemp and the author of *Psycho*, as columnists. He also solicits articles from the likes of Graham Greene, Alberto Moravia, and Philip Wylie. It's a fairly popular magazine within a year selling upwards of 300,000 copies a month with many fans, among whom is comedian Lenny Bruce, who becomes a regular contributor of Letters to the Editor: "...I particularly liked Alfred Bester (who wrote a column on Broadway). [Nat] Hentof is always good, and Harlan's [Ellison] thing was a gas.

BUT...What is it with your quote beautiful girls unquote? I've seen fags swingier-looking than your center chick. Where is it you get these Woolworth waitresses?"

Rogue does okay but could do a lot better: at the time *Rogue*, *Playboy*, and the many other men's mag start-ups are limited to newsstand sales; deemed obscene, they are on the Post Office's Black List, enjoined from offering subscriptions. Hamling, a stereotypical over-achiever, in stature and attitude a bantam rooster in a chicken pen, doesn't enjoy being told what he can and can't do. He offers subscriptions anyway, the Post Office seizes every copy they can get their hands on, and Hamling sues the government for an injunction. Hefner has also sued for injunction. In 1957, the case winds up in the Supreme Court, where it is placed on the docket ahead of *Playboy's* suit, though Hefner filed earlier. Hamling theorizes that "by that time *Playboy* had already made its image in the culture and the marketplace and the government undoubtedly presumed that they would have a better chance of victory attacking *Rogue*. So we went to court. We beat the government! It was a landmark decision, second class mailing privileges were granted, and the magazine [and others of its ilk, including *Playboy*] was declared not obscene" under the Roth decision guidelines. But legal expenses - around \$13,000 - have put a dent in the company's balance sheet.

Soft-core paperbacks - an extension of Hamling's periodicals business - have always been a part of Hamling's activities. Now, in 1959, they assume a primary role to generate cash. His imprints are, naturally, written by up and coming and established sci-fi, mystery, and romance writers, not the least of whom are Robert Silverberg ("Don Elliott," "Loren Beachamp," "David Challon," "V.S. Clark, "Mark Ryan"), Marion Zimmer Bradley ("Brian Morley," "Dee O'Brien," "Marlene Longman," "Morgan Ives," "Miriam Gardner"), Evan Hunter aka Ed McBain ("Dean Hudson") and Harlan Ellison, who writes *Sex Gang* (Nightstand, 1959, NB-1503) under the pseudonym Paul Merchant. (It is rumored that Ellison, disowning his past, will, when handed a copy for autograph, destroy the book). Ellison also works as an editor for Hamling's imprints, not the least of which is Regency Books, a superior line devoted to non-sexual literature featuring titles by Robert Bloch, early Ellison, T.V. *Dragnet's* Jack Webb, B. Traven, Philip Jose Farmer, Lester del Rey, and many others including the first edition of great noir novelist Jim Thompson's *The Grifters*.

Hamling is taking no chances. Though the sex books are soft-core and legal, in the late 1950's-early 60's, if you want to attend the Mid-West Pornographer's Ball, you wear a mask to the party. All the Hamling imprints at the time, while ostensibly published by Greenleaf, are, in reality, published by Blake Pharmaceuticals, an Illinois shell corporation (alive but dormant and wholly inactive) that Hamling has bought for dimes as a shield. Those who consider pornography to be a dangerous drug will no doubt see the Blake Pharmaceuticals connection as evidentiary support but should find comfort in Blake Pharmaceuticals' efforts at quality control. Hamling reveres good storytelling ability. It is, in fact an absolute requirement.



Cover scan of *The Rabble Rousers* by Eric Frank Russell RB317, 1963 (cover design by George Suyeoka), courtesy Dave Locke collection.

Hamling loves writers, knows what he wants, and is generous. He's known to his staff as "the fastest check writer in the West." He distributes through Ray Kirk's Chicago-based All-States News Co. With titles like *Born For Sin*, *Sin Girls*, *Sin Camp*, *Isle of Sin*, *Sin Cruise*, and *The Sinful Ones*, the books fly off the shelves. Kemp joins Hamling in 1961 as an apprentice editor, eventually inheriting Harlan Ellison's job in charge of all editorial affairs for Blake Pharmaceuticals. And Kemp begins tapping "the grandfather of all porn mills...the original science fiction mill operated by the Scott Meredith Literary Agency," which had switched to soft porn when the sci-fi market dried up. It's an agent's wet dream.

But it's a nightmare for Hamling when later in 1961 Attorney General William M. Ferguson of the state of Kansas brings an action against his Nightstand imprint and asks that 1,715 copies of 31 Nightstand titles be destroyed in accordance with Kansas law. Fighting it to the Kansas State Supreme Court, Hamling loses, but in 1964 wins on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, thanks to the efforts of his attorney, Stanley Fleishman.

Hamling, a fighter, willing to accept punishment in the early and middle rounds while going the distance to a winning decision, is now two for two with the Supremes. But not a fan of governmental authority at all.

By now, Hamling, Kemp, and their allied imprints are at the top of the business, the number-one publishers of soft-core porn books in the nation. Milton Luros' operation is one primarily of magazines with books on the side; Hamling's books with magazines a sideline and he's the most prolific DB publisher in the U.S.

But Hamling's receiving way too much attention. With offices located at 1236 Sherman Ave. in Evanston, a suburb of Chicago, the city of Chicago is becoming downright inhospitable. He has to make routine payments to Chicago organized crime to remain in business, not goombah organized crime but its mirror image, that other organized crime group, local police and public officials. Chicago is an anything goes kinda town - as long as you remain somewhat discreet. It's the center of American moral hypocrisy, a town where cosmopolitan life collides head on with midwestern moral values. It's the city whose

Chicago Tribune drops its best-seller list when *Tropic of Cancer* makes an appearance, replacing it with a reviewer's choice list, then an "Among the Best Sellers" feature to avoid the appearance of endorsing Miller's erotic masterpiece, and the home of the Great Chicago Fire of 1957 when the Post Office consigns sacks of allegedly obscene material to the flames. Hamling is fed up with the parade of palms seeking grease. Time to move.

In 1964, Hamling hired Shirley Wright, a bookkeeper, to find office space in San Diego. She finds it at 5839 Mission Gorge Road, a new building in an industrial park that also houses doctors and lawyers, hires personnel, and sets up the bookkeeping for Reed Enterprises, Inc.

Folding *Rogue* in Chicago in 1965, Hamling follows soon afterward. Hamling has decided to make a fresh start; the company is reorganized as Phenix Publishers, Ltd., and he sets up his own distribution arm, Reed Enterprises, Inc., no longer able to tolerate the chronic shafting he reportedly receives from All-States that is, apparently, standard operating procedure for periodicals distributors. Greenleaf Classics, Inc. is a subsidiary. He also sets up a mail-order division, Library Services, Inc.

At first unwilling to make the move, Kemp eventually joins Hamling in 1965. Robert Bonfils, their art director, no relation to the famed French illustrator of the early 20th century, makes the journey west as well. Saul Simkin's Offset Paperback Manufacture in Phoenix, AZ will handle all printing activities. And, in contrast to the Chicago years when Hamling and Kemp routinely use all sorts of subterfuge to camouflage their activities, in the aftermath of the 1966 Supreme Court obscenity decisions they're going to be as upfront and in your face as possible. With Stanley Fleishman as house counsel and two Supreme Court victories under their belt, What Me Worry? But the government hasn't forgotten them.

Their phones are tapped. "At times there are as many as half a dozen COMPETING agencies bugging the lines," Kemp recalls. "At times we could get nothing but police radio calls on our phones. I remember going out to a pay phone and calling the cops and demanding that they release at least one phone line for business purposes. 'Don't you have any shame?'" They don't. The Post Office is a daily nightmare. They routinely seize incoming and outgoing mail, opening it, copying it, diverting it, analyzing it, and, on occasion, delivering it - late. A Post Office inspector has the right to suppress material simply by notifying the "offender" that what he is mailing is illegal. And who judges what's illegal?

Why, the Post Office, of course. "It was necessary for us to travel as far as one hundred miles to mail routine business mail and even then we could only use the same Post Office a couple of times," Kemp remembers.

But with all the aggravation, these are good times. Hamling and Kemp set up Greenleaf Classics, Inc., their prestige line of erotic paperbacks, in Chicago in early 1965; *Candy*, GC-101, is the imprint's first title and a million copies are reportedly sold. But now they're in sunny California. They've hired Harry Bremner, a veteran art director, as design director. Bremer handles the overall layouts for the books, cover design framing, and so on, often providing distinct title lettering, some entire covers, but generally Robert Bonfils provides the actual artwork. There's competitive tension between Bonfils and Bremner but it appears to have only helped the end product. Using original artwork, Greenleaf Classics' covers are very stylish, not at all salacious, and suitable for display in any mainstream

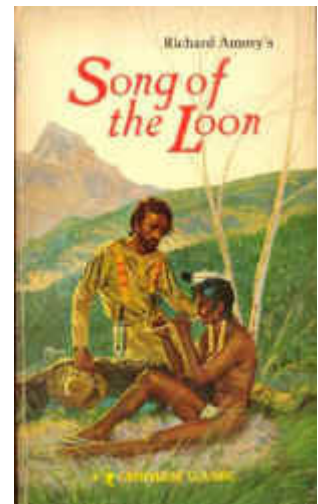
bookstore. Kemp's got agents and booksellers in Europe scouting material for reprint. And then there are European junkets that Kemp and friends go on, hard-partying their way across the continent, with occasional stops during their transcontinental conga-line for book buying. They do not photo-reprint the material; they actually spend money for resetting the type. But they're not dependent upon common reprints for success. Though they publish their share of Olympia Press titles, they make an effort to find material others haven't reprinted, or refuse to, plus a ton of original work, many of which are undiscovered gems.



Greenleaf issues a number of excellent original erotic novels by Linda DuBriel under her "D. Barry Linder" pseudonym as well as under her true name, and a handful of witty, very nicely written books by "Sebastian Gray," true identity unknown as of this writing. They publish "Richard Amory's" (Richard Love) lyric Loon Songs Trilogy, *Song of the Loon*, *Song of Aaron*, and *Listen, The Loon Sings*, which puts explicit gay erotica back in the saddle again after being dormant for over thirty years. So much for Marvin Miller declaring that "the homosexual novel isn't what it's cracked up to be." The Loon Songs trilogy sells so well - each title in the trilogy selling upward of 100K copies, whopping best-sellers, that, according to Greenleaf Managing Editor Peter Cooper it goes through several printings, though, as with the majority of porn publishers, subsequent printings from the first not identified as such - that Greenleaf commissions George Davies to write a parody of it,

Fruit of the Loon by Ricardo Armory.

One estimate declares that 30% of the gay male population in the U.S. purchased a copy of the first Amory Loon book. Cooper's sales figures are more reliable, and the 30% of the gay male population estimate may reflect the book's actual readership with sold copies passed amongst friends. Greenleaf, in fact, "soon became the major gay paperback publisher" during the era, ultimately devoting an entire imprint, Pleasure Readers, to the sub-genre. Greenleaf's got their stable of hungry sci-fi and other genre authors with manuscripts, along with an assortment of porn-mills offering a steady supply. At their height, Greenleaf and its allied imprints are reportedly issuing close to five hundred books a year. With industry sales averaging 40,000 copies for each title, that's twenty million books sold annually. The books costing an average \$1.95, that calculates to just under \$40,000,000 annually in gross retail sales. That does not include sales of Phenix's magazines. They continue to be the most prolific publishers of pulp erotica.



From July 11 through September 4, 1966 Hamling is tried in Houston, Texas on a 25-count indictment of Interstate Transportation of Obscene Materials, though, naturally, he escapes conviction: Stanley Fleishman routinely assigns a local, high-priced legal ace to chair the defense team when clients are in trouble in other states. Here, in Houston, he hires famed, flamboyant Texas attorney Percy Foreman who has an incredible record for gaining acquittals for clients with gossamer-thin possibilities; he's the go-to guy for the very rich

and very guilty. (In a celebrated case from the mid-60s, Foreman defends Candy Mosler, a sexy Florida socialite with a young stud lover, who offs her extremely wealthy husband and with Foreman's able assistance gets away with it and all of sugar daddy's loot, too; she may have actually had a little left over after Foreman, notorious for accepting cars, real estate, jewels, any and all personal property, took his fee).



Stanley Fleishman

Kemp, amazingly, is not part of the indictment; he is, in fact, subpoenaed by the prosecution as a potential witness. "The FBI tried a couple of times to rehearse me in a script they had prepared for my testimony," Kemp recalls. "I asked Percy how to handle it. He said, 'Don't give the FBI cocksuckers the time of day!' And Percy really meant it. They never called on me to testify." The jury hangs, a mistrial is declared, and when it's all over the judge tells the prosecutor, "Don't you ever bring a case like this before this court again."

That Percy Foreman, well-known for his unquenchable thirst for spirits - "One hell of an alcoholic, he reeked from a block away and he wobbled and he stumbled

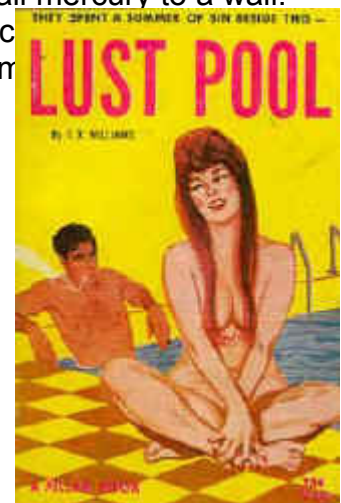


Percy Foreman

but he was hell on wheels in the courtroom," Kemp recalls - gets everybody off despite being thoroughly soused throughout the trial, is both testament to his ability and the prosecution's lame case, the lame case being a year in the making by the Justice Department against books that had been published prior to the Supreme Court's *Fanny Hill* ruling. By now, 1966, these books are innocence itself, softcore at a time when the core has considerably hardened. That the jury can't make up its mind is testament to the confusing, subjective nature of federal obscenity statutes, confusion which Stanley Fleishman will exploit time and time again to the utter frustration of judges and prosecutors who feel that there's nothing confusing about obscenity law at all, it's elemental. It's elemental, all right, like mercury, and trying to objectively define obscenity is like trying to nail mercury to a wall. Federal prosecutors do not file for immediate retrial of the Houston case until 1971 that they decide to finally drop the charges. The trial costs Hamling fees.

A year later, Hamling will shell out another \$100,000 for legal services. As publisher of *Lust Pool* and *Shame Agent*, he assumes responsibility for Robert Redrup's legal woes in New York State through the U.S. Supreme Court. Legal scholars consider this decision to be the virtual end of book censorship in America, and Hamling couldn't be happier.

"Hamling was ecstatic. As he saw it, the courtroom battle that had



begun more than thirty years before in the case of *United States v. One Book Called Ulysses*, resulting in a victory for the literary elite, had now ended in 1967 with a triumph for the man in the street."

Hamling is now three for three with the U.S. Supreme Court.

The business has been sweet for Hamling. A millionaire several times over, he has homes in Palm Springs, Julian, and Coronado. He occupies the penthouse suite in Reed/Phenix/Greenleaf's offices. As Brian Kirby reports for the L. A. Free Press, "to call it lavish would do it an injustice. His desk is as large as my office. A painting that looks like a Miro hangs behind Hamling." Kirby - an industry veteran who knows most of its major personalities, is clear-eyed, without illusions and nobody's fool - vouches for Hamling's sincerity vis-à-vis his business, and legal struggles. "When he speaks it is bold and impassioned. This is a man who believes strongly in what he does."

Another of Hamling's strong beliefs is that staff should dress professionally, white shirt and tie, none of this hippy-dippy jeans, peasant shirt, and beads nonsense around his office, no flamboyant bell-bottomed Carnaby Street crap around here. And so the ukase is issued to all employees, no exceptions. Well, one.

The Earl of Pornography

Don't tell Earl Kemp what to do. He and Hamling are both strong-willed individuals; that they survive their relationship is due to a mutual, abiding respect for each other's abilities and beliefs, if not personalities. Kemp is a wiry man of medium height possessed of Southern gentility, quiet intelligence and fierce conviction expressed with gentle yet firm intensity. He is not shy in expressing himself. His belief in the First Amendment is bedrock fundamental; it runs in his veins, vents from his pores. He's a rational anti-authoritarian, is counterculture before there is a counterculture. Henry Miller is an idol; William S. Burroughs a god; he's a major fan of The Doors' Jim Morrison; he corresponds with esteemed scholar of erotica and sexual folklore, Gershon Legman; and reveres Barney Rosset, whose courage in publishing Henry Miller, de Sade, *The Story of O*, etc. is an inspiration.

Born in 1929 in Crossett, Arkansas, in the early '50's he migrates to Chicago and works in a print shop learning the basics of typesetting and book composition. A science-fiction fanatic from youth, he soon falls in with members of the University of Chicago's Science-Fiction Club and though not a student, immediately becomes the group's intellectual center of gravity, its "guiding genius" according to George W. Price, a fellow member. At the time, science-fiction is the bastard stepchild of literature with virtually no venue for serious criticism or analysis. Kemp changes all that. With others from the University of Chicago's Science-Fiction Club, he establishes *Advent:Publishers* to remedy the situation. Like the original *Crawdaddy* magazine published by Paul Williams in the mid-'60s which was the first publication to take an intellectual approach to rock n' roll and treat it seriously as a legitimate genre of music, *Advent:Publishers* does just that with Science-Fiction literature, providing intelligent, thoughtful literary criticism to a genre at the time generally dismissed out of hand. Kemp/*Advent's* first publication is a collection of critical essays by Damon Knight, *In Search of Wonder*. In 1961, Kemp wins an editing Hugo Award for one of his sci-fi fanzines, *Who Killed Science Fiction?* When the bottom drops out of the Sci-fi market, he joins friend, fellow Chicagoan and science-fiction fan Hamling in 1961 to assist with

Hamling's burgeoning soft-porn operation. He, like everybody else in science fiction, needs the money.

But while certainly sexually experienced, he's utterly unfamiliar with the world of pornography and the more exotic sexual behaviors encountered therein. This won't do. "No one would believe that I knew absolutely nothing about the subject area and had never even encountered any. I was actively trying to locate some stag films (they would be my first) and researching the history of pornography while taking voice lessons calculated to teach me how to say the word 'fuck' aloud while blushing copiously on the inside." Being the type of individual who believes that anything worth doing is worth doing well - even porn - he's going to make sure that the books are as well-written as possible and possess credible sexual veracity. "When I took on the crown of King of Pornography [there are many concurrent Kings of Pornography during the era, the media apparently loath to rate any of the nobility in the business with lower than absolute sovereign status; it's Huey Long's dream come true, "every man a king." There are no Dukes, Princes, Counts, Barons. Only one Earl. *The Earl.*] "My first charge to myself was to become the world's foremost authority on what sex really was as interpreted by most people. Toward that charge, my first task was an around-the-world tour of sin cities." He throws himself into the work. His intimate studies take him to Hamburg, Amsterdam, and other urban hotbeds of fleshpot activity. He's a fast learner, on the cutting edge of the American sexual awakening of the 1960s.

Though more of the Beat Generation of the '50's than the generation of the Sixties, he's right at home with the Counterculture. During the era, he lets his hair grow to his shoulders and sports a mephistophelean goatee. He is involved in the culture of the Sixties in all its manifestations, has little use for maintaining the status quo, and proudly subverts it through his work in the porn-lit trade by breaking down the barriers to personal pleasure and sexual fulfillment. Very much against the war in Viet Nam, he travels there in 1967 on a press card from Art Kunkin's Los Angeles *Free Press* to scope out the situation himself. Very much into the Sexual Revolution here and abroad, in 1969 he travels to Copenhagen, Denmark and participates in the Kutschinsky sexual behavior and pornography study then underway which leads to the repeal of all obscenity laws in that nation. As Hamling's Vice-President and Editorial Director, he can indulge himself when it suits him. "After the Porno Factory moved to California and when I was boss, one of my biggest thrills was posing for the covers of some of our books. And, later, when we began to use lots of photographs, I enjoyed that as well...[memory fuzzy, he can't, unfortunately, recall which covers]. The cover artists who worked for us quickly learned of my addiction...I had Robert Bonfils, our in-house Art Director, do a wraparound painting [both front and rear covers as single composition] for the cover of *Song of Aaron* by Richard Amory [Richard Love] an exceptionally good novel I singled out for special handling. It shows two cowboys in the middle of forever (two hills over from Corfu Creek, stopping, dismounting, and stretching. I posed for both cowboys in this painting."

Kemp also writes, using the pseudonyms "Christine Hernandez," "Erik Dahl," "Jon Hanlon," and "Steve Maier."

Down Sexico Way

In the sleepy village of Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico the native citizens are probably unaware that in their midst is a den of smutsters. Kemp has bought a house there, and has turned Ajijic

into a sort of South of the Border porn-Yaddo, a dirty-book writer's colony. He commutes between Ajijic and his home in El Cajon outside of San Diego. He's invited only the chosen, those writers with the talent and/or discipline to crank 'em out. Kemp's a fanatic for storytelling ability; if you can write or tell a good one and you're an interesting, fun to be around person, you're in. Gallons of tequila, good Mexican pot, and lines of coke fuel the festivities. Write yourself to exhaustion, then it's party time! Many of Kemp's writer friends buy homes there; they're earning a comfortable living and stretch it to the max by setting up residence in Ajijic. Jerry Murray ("Ray Masters," "Ray Majors", "Sonny Barker," "Jeff Maxwell," "Maude Jenkins," "Ralph Basura," "Lance Boil," "Joyce Morrissey," the esteemed sexologists "Drs. Lance and Jill Boyle," "Murray Montague," and - somebody had to - "Sam Diego"); James "Jim" Brown ("Jim Dobbs"); Peggy Winter ("Marguerite D'Hiver," "Marta Summer"); Les Gladson ("Lee Gardner," "Kyle Roxbury," "Genevieve St. John"); Vivien Kern ("Vivien Blaine"); Christian Davies ("Christian Davidson"); Norma Erickson ("Erika Norman"); John Kimbro ("Kym Allison"); Thom Racina ("Teryl Andrews"); George Davies ("Lance Lester," "Ricardo Armory"); Joe Hansen ("James Colton"); Rosemary Whiteside ("Rose Willing"); Lee Florin ("Lisa Fanchon," "Matt Harding"); Harold Harding ("Gene Evans"); Samuel Dodson ("Marcus Miller") and others are members of this group.



Twenty-five miles away, Donald H. Gilmore, Ph.D, aka "Douglas H. Gamlin" and probably "Dale Gordon," and his wife Betty have established their own writer's colony/porn-mill in Guadalajara. Gilmore's Ph.D is strictly diploma-mill but he's a serious student and researcher of sex and erotica and his non-fiction work is among the best in the genre during the era. His

four-volume *Sex In Comics* remains the best reference on Tijuana Bibles, with valuable information not found anywhere else, including the story of "the three gals," whose entrepreneurial efforts at creating, printing, and distributing sex comics in the late 1930's are singular for the trade and a major, if well-nigh unknown, feminist declaration of independence. The artistic quality of their comics becomes a strong influence during their time, and will later be a great influence upon counterculture cartoonist, R. Crumb. Gilmore and his stable move their work through Greenleaf.

These are halcyon times for all involved.

Back in the States, Sci-Fi writer Mike Resnick, who claims to have written porn under 150 pseudonyms, contributes to Greenleaf's catalogue in a big way. Beginning as strictly a writer for other publishers, he soon becomes a subcontractor, hiring others to write, collecting \$1000 from the publishers and paying his stable of writers \$500. At first he edits their work himself but soon hires a trusted assistant to perform that function for \$50 per manuscript and a typist to type the edited manuscripts for the same fee. He collects \$400 per book as a middleman two or three times a week in addition to what he is earning with his own writing. Nice money for a kid in his mid-20's. He wants to get involved with Greenleaf but Greenleaf's a problem. Kemp, due to the avalanche of manuscripts he routinely receives, cuts fees to \$600 to stem the tide, and this throws Resnick's formula out the window. Resnick is resourceful; he sees the shift to illustrated photo-porn and negotiates with a skin-flick publicity photographer for 100 stills at \$400. The standard, approximately 200pp page porn book will now only require 100pp of text so he cuts his writer's fees for "novelization" of the stills to \$250, his editor and typist fees to \$25 each. He

sells Kemp on the plan, who ponies up \$1200 per photo-illustrated manuscript. Text-only books sell at \$1.95; Kemp and Hamling charge \$3.95 for the photo-illustrated books. Resnick supplies Greenleaf with twenty books within two months; receiving \$450 each after expenses, Resnick clears \$9000. "It felt like stealing," he recalls.

The shift toward photo-illustrated porn is due to unsolicited market research: bags of fan-mail clamoring for visuals. It is unclear whether Phenix/Greenleaf is the first publisher of the era to insert explicit photos into erotic books during the era (this is nothing new) but they are certainly in at the beginning. "Earl decided to resurrect the format for Greenleaf as an experiment," photographer Gary Sohler states. And in the beginning, in contrast to soon afterward throughout the industry, the photographs actually have something to do with the text. Resnick novelizes sets of pre-existing photos, but Kemp has something else in mind. Acting as Justice of the Piece, he weds Jerry Murray, one of his top writers and a man with a vivid, deeply bent imagination married to a keen, deeply bent sense of humor, to Gary Sohler, who is an extremely successful, respected photographer and the top contract-packer of high-quality stroke mags for Hamling/Kemp (he's learned an awful lot working for Milton Luross), pulling in over \$100,000 a year in 'Sixties dollars, in an unholy but wholly productive and uproarious alliance.

"After an initial meeting in Earl's office in San Diego, Jerry and I agree to take the ball and run with it," Sohler recalls. In contrast to Resnick's \$1200 per book, Kemp pays Murray and Sohler \$2000. "Jerry already has a story ready in galleys and we figure we'll go ahead and try to illustrate it. I haven't read the story yet, so Jerry and I agree that he'll write up a 'shopping list' of models, props and backgrounds, send it to me and then I'll arrange the shoot whereupon he'll drive up to L. A. to act as technical consultant and story supervisor - meaning he'll get to ogle and drool on the models officially and get paid for it. His 'shopping list' for that first book of ours looks like this: 'MODELS: 3 male midgets; 2 young guys, one very hairy, one no body hair, both well hung; 1 uncircumcised old man with one leg; 1 one guy with a dick like a bullfighter's sword; 2 ravishing blondes who will perform anilingus; 1 old hag with tattoos and no teeth; 1 guy who looks like Benito Mussolini. PROPS: 1 WWI tank; 1 baseball bat; 1 bullfighter's suit of lights; 1 30 foot Saguaro cactus; 1 full set medieval 'Inquisition grade' torture instruments; 1 bowl of hot tomato soup; 1 WWI Fokker biplane; 1 London ca. 1800's gas street lamp; 30 feet of manila rope; 1 large cucumber. BACKGROUNDS: The Taj Mahal; the inside of Ernest Hemingway's boat; the Hollywood Bowl; typical Japanese Geisha bedroom; Madrid bullfighter's 'ready room;' an Istanbul jail cell; a Napoleonic-era French walk-in closet; Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun's Berlin bunker; a typical middle-class San Fernando Valley living room.'

"When I calculate the budget for this at around \$300,000 [1969 dollars] I call Jerry and reluctantly inform him that we have to scale back a bit. After much haggling, we settle on the two chicks who'll suck assholes, one well-hung guy, the baseball bat, and the Valley living room. The result is a smashing success and we go on to do several more illustrated paperbacks."

Murray recalls that he and Sohler become so efficient in planning and fast in execution that they are, for awhile, doing two book shoots a day - at \$2000 a pop each, expenses paid. Their books are issued under the pseudonyms "Wash Johnson" and "Thurlow Mortensen and F.P. 'Jack' Pril."

"In time," Sohler remembers, "Earl even lets us do a remote location shoot in Baja at a

beautiful place called Guadalupe Hot Springs - but only because he's never talked to Milt Lueros and doesn't know about my history of travel expense budget abuse."

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Long before corporate America realizes that the mass market in the U. S. is really an illusion created by the narrowness of a three network-only television universe, porn publishers - Greenleaf in particular - understand that we are a nation of individuals gathered together in sub-groups sharing similar interests. In the initial post-1966 wave of sex publishing, because of the sheer novelty, everything sells. Prior to the advent of cable with its endless number of channels, the Big-Three television networks use the "push-marketing" model: if you promote it and air it, people will watch. The Nielson ratings tell them what people are watching, not what they want to watch. But Greenleaf and the other publishers have excellent market research for which they spend not one dime: bags of mail from readers who tell them exactly what they want to read. While they don't create it, porn publishing is the first American industry to fully exploit what is now commonly called "niche-marketing," targeting special-interest groups of readers and supplying them with what they want. In short, they turn the standard marketing model on end. "Pull-marketing" is their method: offer the reader what they want and they will be drawn to you. And so Greenleaf has imprints to cater to every sexual taste. This isn't exactly rocket science. An individual interested in wife-swapping stories will not necessarily respond to S/M-themed material; the S/M enthusiast isn't likely to be interested in straight teen-sex romps, etc. What they're doing with their books is exactly what they've been doing with their skin-mags. It's the periodicals business, books merely an extension of their magazines. They are absolutely dependent upon being acutely sensitive to the secret sexual wants and desires of their readers.

Porn publishers, more so than sex researchers, psychologists and psychiatrists, understand the human sexual psyche with singular perspicacity; this, ultimately, may be the greatest redeeming social value they provide. And they're successful. Greenleaf issues around 30-40 - sometimes more - titles a month. Everything sells. By the early 1970's, Greenleaf, according to Kemp, is number five in number of titles released annually, right behind mainstream paperback publisher Bantam Books. The downside is that Greenleaf and all the other porn publishers who niche-market are not in the business of promoting individual writer's careers. It's the imprint, the individual line that gets all the attention. This drives some editors crazy.

With Greenleaf's books and magazines (the magazines - and there are at least thirty different titles - all copyrighted under Greenleaf parent Phenix Publications, Ltd.) Reed Enterprises, Hamling's distribution arm, is spewing an enormous amount of hot lava but porn distribution is a volcano in constant eruption that requires a enormous supply of molten rock from deep within the earth's bowels - once you set up a distribution infrastructure you've gotta keep the pipeline full at all times; distribution is a demanding mistress. Hamling, like Milton Lueros, distributes other publisher's lines, not the least of which is Liverpool Library Press, a one-imprint publisher established in 1967 that initially operates out of Tiburon in Northern California.

After a simultaneous break with Hamling in late 1970-early 1971 (each principal with their own reason for abandoning Hamling, though it appears that Hamling's lack of nobility, demanding personality, and poor interpersonal skills provide the underlying basis) Kemp, Reed Enterprises boss Ed Hayes, and Hamling Corporate Secretary and accounts receivables executive Shirley Wright all walked into Hamling's office together and resigned at the same time.

But all good things come to an end, and in 1971 Hamling, Kemp, Shirley Wright (the two having already departed Greenleaf) and Hamling financial lieutenant David Thomas (recruited from Bank of America) are indicted in a case based on a book released in November of 1970 that will doom Greenleaf, imprison and embitter Hamling, incarcerate Kemp, ruin Wright's life, hit Richard Nixon upside the head, and bring the absurdity of obscenity law into sharp focus.

TO BE CONTINUED IN e/6, JANUARY 2003....



A random sampling of the Greenleaf magazines as pictured in *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*.

Just the minute the FBI begins making recommendations on what should be done with its information, it becomes a Gestapo.

--J. Edgar Hoover, Look, June 14, 1956

[When William Rotsler died he left behind an incredible legacy and uncountable personal-friend mourners. His legacy included thousands of pieces of recognizable artwork that will decorate the science fiction landscape for decades yet to come, along with his thoughts, his quotes, his concerns, and his grasp of all things significant to mankind. Noteworthy among that final legacy was Rotsler's fanzine *Masque*. He had produced 15 issues that he had never sent on to his waiting admirers. Paul Turner recognized and salvaged the pieces of those posthumous issues. Bill Warren undertook the task of completing them. Dwain Kaiser gave me some of them. Marty Cantor accepted the challenge of fulfilling the resurrection project. I now am the proud owner of 14 of those 15 issues of *Masque*. They are quite a challenge, as a group, reading them, absorbing the essential things that made William Rotsler the man we know and love. And, because of obvious personal interest, I became quite enamored with William Rotsler's I. -Earl Kemp]

"I Only Have I's For You"

Realigning William Rotsler's I Candy for I

By Earl Kemp

William Rotsler stole my I in the 1980s. He kept it close and polished it and embellished it and cherished it. And all the while neither of us knew he had even done it.

Rotsler was known for the company he kept, especially for show...his "eye candy" that he decorated a number of conventions and major gatherings with, much to the delight of his eagerly horny friends...always a thoroughly delightful eyeful of feminine beauty. A few of them could even converse. There are photographs scattered all over fandom captioned "William Rotsler and Eye Candy," and every one of them shows a different delight.

As I began reading through the first issue of the resurrected *Masque*, right away I was grabbed by an I. It was a wonderful I because it was me. Exactly. Even though Rotsler was trying to give the impression that I was himself...I was his I. I liked what he had done to I so much

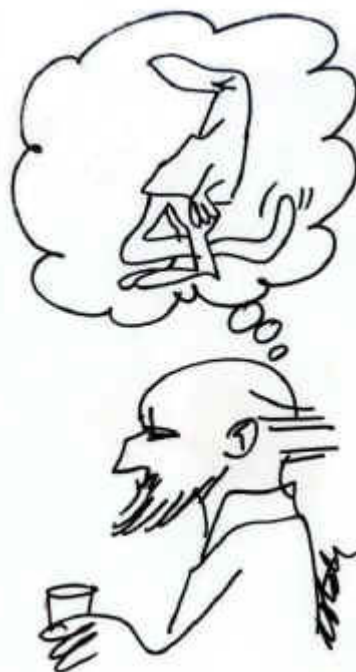
I marked it with the intention of picking the I up and using it as an illustration for I.

It was a natural.

William Rotsler, somehow, two decades before I needed them, knew I would, so he whipped out an I for my I.

Then, as I read further into the issue, and the issue after that, and more and more I's surfaced, I began to feel alarmed. How was it possible that Rotsler could so accurately capture me and still pretend he wasn't doing that? There were ten or more I's by that time. Perhaps he knew something that I didn't...that I would need many more I's for my I than I had ever suspected.

And a now and then me, an us, a them....the uncanniness...a stolen ego....



"Single Line Portrait of Earl Kemp's Fannish Ego" by William Rotsler. Dated September 1982.

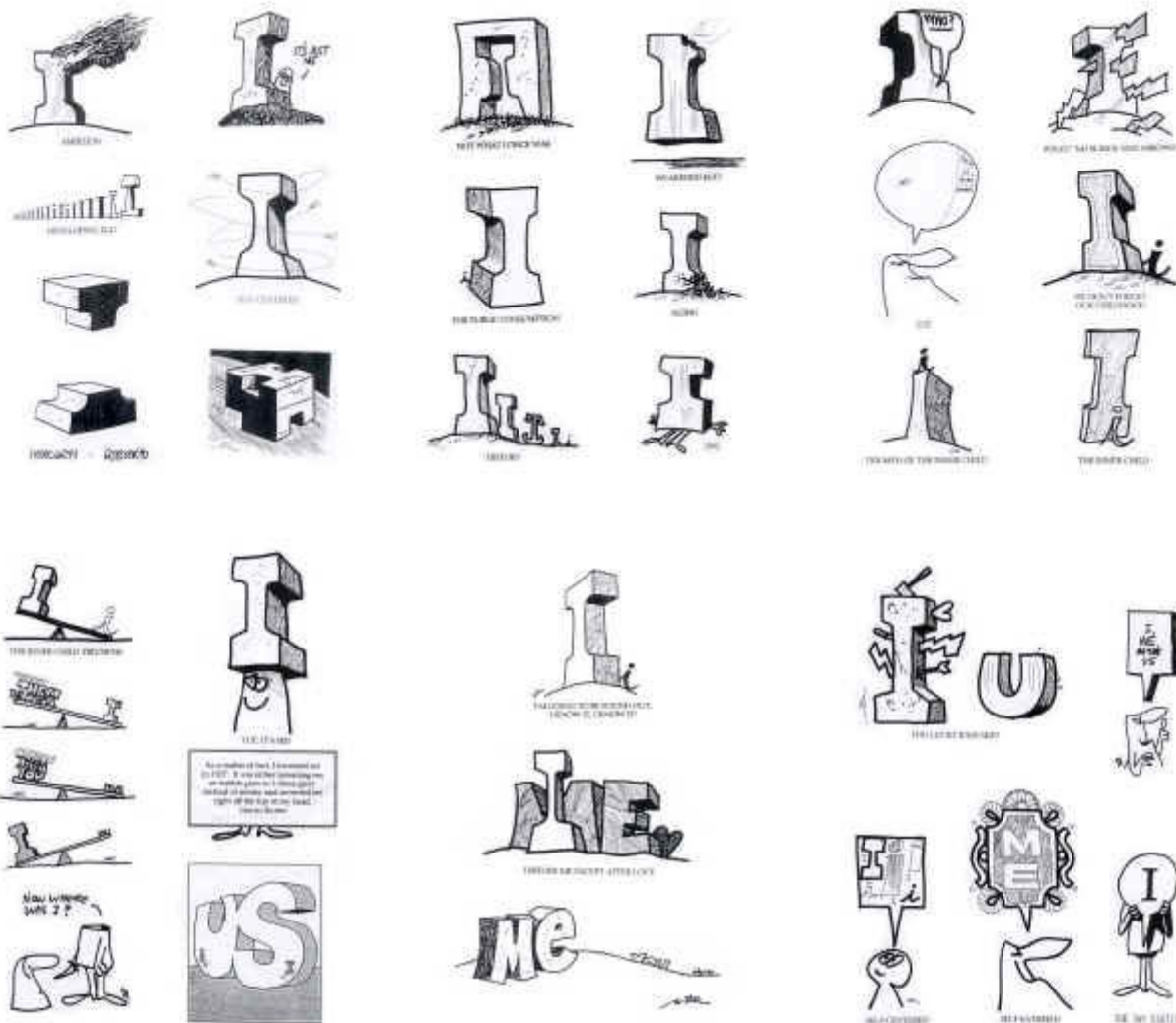
Finally I realized the meaning of it all and why all those I's had all cascaded in upon me all at the same time. Fate decreed that I pull a Rotsler on Rotsler since he pulled a me on his I.

One of Rotsler's biggest claims to fame, and most enjoyable endeavor, was his limitless quotebook. He snipped everything he really liked and agreed with and pasted it down for posterity.

It fell upon me to build a quotebook of Rotsler's I's, rather than to use them as filler I's for I, and present them all here at once. Naturally this is not a complete quotebook of Rotsler's I's. I know there are many more I's as there are many more I's of me and many more I's of Rotsler. [Please email missing jpeg I's to earlkemp@citlink.net thanks.]

And these I's are definitely I candy for I and for me.

First, these are Rotsler's I's. Second, they are my I's...and any other ego-impaired Rotsler lovers I's who recognize themselves here.



I never think of myself as "having done a lot." I've just been amusing myself for a few decades....
--William Rotsler, March 24, 1984
