

This is a Genuine Quicky from Dave Van Arnam, giving you the first few pages of the outline he's sending in for his next book. (The drum on the office mimeo is giving out, accounting for the crummy repro in the margins; were I not a Perfectionist I wd say nothing, but...)

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VOTE STEVE STILES FOR TAFF!!

MULTIMIND -- outline of an sf novel by Dave Van Arnam (only the first part of the outline, as far as space permits...):

It started with a drivelling idiot.

Benjy Tyler was nineteen years old and perfectly obedient. He did whatever was told him, if he understood it.

Thus his body was in excellent shape; he was kept busy at running, weight-lifting, swimming, the simpler sports, all that a well-to-do family could provide in controlled training -- for his body.

His mind was a shambles.

Up through the cerebellum everything functioned perfectly. Beyond that, the defective gene that had kept down the number of folds in both lobes of his cerebrum had simply tricked him out of his human heritage.

Benjy was less than an idiot. Beyond a gurgle that seemed to mean 'yes' and a yip that corresponded to 'no', his ability to communicate was virtually non-existent, linguistically. He knew how to smile, and how to do most of the things he was shown, and how to stop people from trying to make him do things he couldn't do by sitting down on the floor and defecating.

More than that, he didn't understand. He didn't understand about gravity, for instance. The fact that unsupported objects always fell, including himself at times, was far beyond him.

So one day he dropped himself seven feet onto his skull. That took care of the few operable circuits in his cerebrum that heredity had somehow provided him.

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It continued with a multiwave technician, his body wrecked by the back-blast of a mis-tuned transmitter.

Ted Hoffman thought he knew a lot about the multiwave. The multiwave effect had been hypothesized in 1987, with Shaw's General Field Theory of Gravitation, and the first crude transmitter had been constructed in 2013, almost 30 years before the start of this story.

Hoffman used to say that he didn't know what the multiwave was or how it worked, which wasn't so, but that he did know how to make it work, which was so. It was how he made his living.

Not everyone could afford to spend as much time as it took to become a doctor, in order to be a multiwave technician. It was an uncertain field with an uncertain future. For thirty years the scientists and engineers had been modifying the generators, studying the effects, modifying the generators again, in a continuous process that continually threatened to leave the unwary technicians behind.

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The first thing they'd learned they could do with it was to transmit messages at faster-than-light speeds. And so far, that was as far as they'd gotten. It was nice to have, but it didn't signify that much as long as Earthmen were tied to simple interplanetary distances. It was estimated that the propagation of the multiwave in pseudo-gravitic space might allow messages to be transmitted across the lenticular width of the Galaxy in approximately one month. So far, no interstellar messages had been received.

They'd also learned one other thing about the multiwave.

It could kill.

It almost killed Ted Hoffman. It burned away most of his body, smashed through the base of his neck, burned out most of his brain -- except for the right lobe of his cerebrum -- so quickly and painlessly that the lobe was saved. With the autoimmune reaction having been licked completely a decade earlier, and with the advance of microsurgery, it was possible to transplant brains under the right circumstances. Up to now, one lobe was not considered "the right circumstances."

But fortunately Ted Hoffman was left handed...

*

It concluded -- or began -- with a dark-haired girl named Shirley White.

Shirley was rich, spoiled, intelligent, a bad poet, and the owner of an unbelievably expensive private spacecraft.

Part of the time she lived in an impervious crystal dome in modified orbit around Saturn, fixed a thousand miles above the plane of the rings. Part of the time she spent building a red glass castle in Syrtis Major, out of the oxydized sands of Mars.

Part of the time she spent improving her spaceship, hoping some day to set a new speed record from Black Hole, the Mercury pit-city, round trip to Pluto's orbit.

And one day, passing Earth, her secondary ion drive shorted out, killing 30 of the 33 people aboard, and leaving Shirley White with her bank accounts and the left lobe of her brain.

And Shirley White was right handed.

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Well, that's as much as I can fit in here and still have it make continuous sense in excerpt. I sort of like the way I set up the problem. Obviously the two lobes are planted into Benjy's body. Madness ensues. Eventually all reach a working agreement, as it were, with each other. The scientists study them. Eventually they resent this. They get free. Problems of Legal Identity. She can't get her money, he can't get his old job back. The doctors try to get them back. They flee. They manage, by clever ruses (all worked out, I hasten to add), to get a small ship, and get out to Hoffman's multiwave transmitter, a mobile asteroid. They flee with the asteroid. They are chased. Then they figure out how to make the multiwave work as an f-t-l drive. It is the first time in the history of the 7 nearest galaxies that a race has done so. It can only be done by multiminds. Mankind wins the stars...

□□ I have at least a dozen books planned to fit into various periods of this future. I hope to have great fun with it all, and I hope readers do too. □□ I'm also hoping you are the sane...

-- dgv