

WIZ

#12, October 5, 1984, is the Machiavellian Intrigue issue. It deals with the behind-the-scenes wiles of a Nielsen Hayden in regard to its editor. If anyone has letters by NH (or Avedon Carol) which should be brought to the attention of Richard Bergeron, he would be pleased to receive a copy.

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"No Tactic Too Low" (Or All's Fair In Love And Fandom): Dave Langford's Cloud Chamber #30 arrived today (October 2). It contains Dave's first draft impressions on Wiz #11. He says my criticism of Avedon Carol's administration of Taff was an attack on Taff itself. No one has a higher regard for the creative flights of the wordmonger Langford than myself. That regard now has to be sharply limited to his writing rather than his reading. I defy anyone to find anywhere in Wiz #11 any attack on Taff whatsoever -- unless by some bizarre stretch of the imagination the person of Avedon Carol can be construed to be synonymous with the institution itself. Perhaps Dave is still groggy from the effects of Stop Breaking Down #7, in which Greg Pickersgill took the institution to task as a pointless travesty back in August, 1981. Dave can't be writing about anything I said about Taff. I suppose, now, I'll have to spend the rest of my fan life convincing people Langford is a careless reader and/or an imprecise writer. An impossible task.

I also note, in Cloud Chamber, that there are those attempting to shape Dave's impression of the situation in ways which border on the audacious if not the astonishing (I wonder if he's still reeling from the impact of that five page letter I never wrote to him?). I know how loath Patrick Nielsen Hayden is to have his private correspondence quoted in public print, so I was more than passingly amused to see Dave publishing the following bit from a PNH missive:

L'affaire Bergeron grows more and more surreal by the day... The few thousand words fandom at large has seen are nothing. His correspondences with us, Tom Weber, Ted White, and various others are stunning in the width and breadth of their lunacy. In nine years in fandom I've seen nothing like it: literal, clinical paranoia on a truly awesome scale. No fact stops it. No tactic too low. Terry Carr wrote him three pages of dressing down; a week later, I get a letter announcing that Terry "agrees with him completely". Given Avedon's history with the estimable Carr (of which Bergeron is probably ignorant) this is amazing. Get ready for Wiz 12, in which, doubtless, Rob Hansen will be cited as a character witness against Avedon's probity. At this point I wouldn't be surprised.

"Clinical paranoia." A touching phrase, I rave. I trust Patrick will be as quick to trot out his medical qualifications for such a remark as he is to smear a diagnosis across someone who is merely telling the truth as he sees it. I love the way Patrick sets me up, "The few thousand words fandom at large has seen are nothing...width and breadth...truly awesome scale," and makes me sound like a word factory devoted to writing letters attacking Avedon Carol. In point of fact, my last three private letters to White hardly refer to Avedon at all and then only in passing as a point of reference. In point of fact, I was receiving complaints from Patrick Nielsen Hayden and Ted White because I hadn't responded fully enough to their interminable letters on the subject. (Ted even scolded me because he felt I hadn't replied adequately to Patrick's letters -- as if it was any of his damned business! Two of those letters to White are at least a half page in length and the other just about makes it to 3/4s. The letter to Weber runs about 3/4s of a page and the longest paragraph in that deals with my respect for Weber as a writer. Why all this silly exaggeration, Patrick?) I ceased writing to Patrick rather abruptly when I received three replies to my letters to him from other people though he assured me that he viewed them as confidential communications ("Your letters are safe with me" --PNH). Some of those were DNQ letters, tendered to a presumed friend in a spirit of Discovery Proceedings attempting to ascertain the validity of my questions. I began to have the uneasy feeling Patrick might not be a man of his word. A paranoid delusion, obviously. Since Patrick betrays a cavalier attitude to material he concedes was confidential and since he is now a Taff candidate, I think he should forthwith address the question of how he interprets that line on the Taff ballot, "Details of voting will be kept secret," inasmuch as he is on record as deeming the current administrator "exemplary." I damn well think we have a right to know before the voting.

My paranoid delusions know no bounds. I even predicted this bit about the Terry Carr letter. Cesar Ignacio Ramos came by one afternoon and I casually mentioned that I'd written a letter to Patrick in which I'd quoted Terry's comment, "I agree totally with your position on this," with regard to my participation in Taff, which had been called into question by Avedon and Ted White. I said to Cesar, "You know, I have a feeling it's going to get back to Terry very shortly that I've written that he completely supports my position on Avedon and that I've cited that sentence from his letter as proof." Cesar was stunned. "Yeah," I said, "this sort of thing happens all the time in fandom," but I felt shitty about suspecting such a thing of my friend P.

Cesar urged me to write to Terry explaining the situation in advance. I did.

And now, I'm going to explain and demonstrate in public just how this sort of scam is worked. In Wiz #11, I dealt in some detail with the question of my participation in Taff. Terry Carr's copy was accompanied with a note which read in part:

Terry: I am informed that you took part in a conversation in a hotel room at Lunacon in which my participation in Taff was the subject of conversation between yourself, Avedon Carol, Ted White, P&T NH, Dan Steffan, Moshe Feder, and Larry Carm-

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ody. I am inquiring about the substance of this conversation and your position in it.

Terry replied with a letter of comment on Wiz #11, which was critical of my stance on Avedon, but was hardly "three pages of dressing-down" (as Patrick dresses it up), since it also covered such matters as Tom Perry's letter in Wiz #10, Terry's plans for Innuendo, the festering Ramos Taff candidacy, etc, etc, and the following:

Afraid I can't tell you anything about the conversation about your participation in Taff in which I took part at Lunacon -- not because it's DNQ, but rather DNR: Do Not Remember. Really; I just can't recall a jot about it, even the fact that it apparently happened and I was there. (If someone told you so, why shouldheesh have lied?) I can say what my reaction would surely have been had anyone claimed that you shouldn't have voted if you weren't going to actually meet the Taff winner: I'd have said that had nothing to do with anything, that Taff voting has always been open to any reasonably accredited fan and that wanting to meet someone (or not) was only one of various criteria for Taff voting, others being, for instance, recognition of the fan's contributions to fandom, and/or wanting to read the Taff trip report heesh might write. In other words, I agree totally with your position on this. (I can't guarantee that I did say any of the above, though, since in groups I don't always Speak Up, and anyhow I have some doubt that anyone made the key triggering statement.) /Later, in his "three pages of dressing-down," Terry adds:/ But by way of relieving the longwinded criticism of you in this letter, let me repeat that I do agree with you about the propriety and reasonableness of your supporting and voting in Taff elections. I also agree with you, at least provisionally, that Taff administrators shouldn't let any partisanship they may have become a factor in an election over which they're presiding.

The "longwinded criticism" to which Terry alludes is the typical fair-minded commentary I've come to expect from him over the years. I plan on including it in the next issue of Wiz. On 28 August 1984, I wrote to Patrick Nielsen Hayden. Patrick had raised the subject of Ted White's friendship and I replied with a reference to his questioning my participation in Taff:

It was Ted White who said my voice in Taff was irrelevant. This wonderful friend of mine. It was Ted White who said, "What does he care? He won't be meeting the Taff winner!" is about the way it is usually expressed. And I've heard this remark from both Dan and Terry Carr, among others." Terry Carr wrote to me on August 18th, "I agree totally with your position on this." Totally. I like that word. Terry Carr uses words well.

This was my only reference to Terry Carr's letter. And it is in reference to the question of my participation in Taff. I certainly did not cite it as a response to the broad range of my criticism of Avedon Carol. "This is amazing." Or maybe not. PNH is playing a game at the expense of Langford's perception of me. Why? Taking Cesar's advice, I wrote to Terry on the same day (28 August 84):

Thank you for your letter of Aug 18 in reply to my inquiry enclosed with Wiz #11. My quiry to you was made as a result of a letter from Ted White written around the time of Lunacon, I think, in which he told me, "You have arbitrarily opted out of in-person fanac, thus, your opinions on in-person-fanac like conventions, Taff, Duff, etc., are irrelevant. That is, sure, you can have any opinions you like, but your opinion on who should win Taff is irrelevant to the Taff race, even as your opinion on who should host an upcoming Worldcon is irrelevant. Indeed, as a non-participant, your opinion has no weight and ought to be ignored. The arrogance is yours: the belief that although you will have no share in the consequences, you should be able to advocate or help determine the outcome of a (any) Taff race. In recent (in person) discussion with various fans I've encountered some resentment of your promotion of West for Taff: 'What does he care? He won't be meeting the Taff winner!' is about the way it is usually expressed. And I've heard this remark from both Dan and Terry Carr."

Naturally, I am in disagreement with this sentiment -- and said so in the last Wiz. The above position is attributed to Dan Steffan, Avedon Carol, and Ted White as participants in the Lunacon hotel room discussion. It is attributed to them by Patrick Nielsen Hayden. Patrick didn't recall your position, which was why I was asking. I can well believe that you wouldn't recall -- I imagine one was pleasantly and mildly stoned in such a situation and such Earth shattering considerations as whether or not Bergeron should have a voice in Taff would be easily forgotten.

Incidentally, I've just written to Patrick and quoted your line, "I agree totally with your position on this," in regard to my participation in fan funds. I let you know this in the event that the grapevine passes back to you some distortion of what I said. OK?

"No tactic too low."

Why do I have to anticipate Patrick Nielsen Hayden's every move? Why does he feel he has to misrepresent my reference to Terry's letter in my letter to him? How many people has he spread this fabrication to? And why? Why? Why does he feel he needs to misrepresent the 'panoramic' scope of my brief letters to Ted White -- the essential point of which were that I preferred to deal with White in public? Why?

To what point?

I think fandom has a right to expect higher ethical standards of a Taff candidate.

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