

According to John Carmody's "The TV Column" in the Washington POST for August 1st, "Some of the stories in the new series will be written or conceived by Spielberg, while others may have their origins in the science fiction publication 'Amazing Stories,' which started in 1928. Spielberg has acquired rights to 518 issues of the publication."

My first reaction upon reading these items was, "Oh yeah?" Who sold Spielberg/Universal the television rights to the stories in "518 issues" of AMAZING STORIES? Was it TSR, the current publisher, who stand to gain a shot in the arm from the TV tie-in? Or perhaps AMAZING's sleaziest publisher, Arthur Bernhard, who owned the magazine until selling it to TSR? Just what "rights" does Spielberg really own -- the right to use the title, or presumptive rights to the stories in those "518 issues"?

By sheer coincidence, the September, 1984, issue of AMAZING is, if George Scithers finally straightened out the numbering, #518.

There is of course absolutely no way Spielberg or Universal could have bought legitimate television rights to any of the stories in any of the issues I edited (ten years' worth), because we never bought those rights from the authors. Indeed, I seriously doubt that any of AMAZING's several publishers since 1926 bought television or motion-picture rights. Ziff-Davis (publisher from 1938 to 1965) bought world serial (magazine publication) rights, but did not even buy book rights -- nor did Ultimate (my publisher).

Anyone who represented to Spielberg/Universal that they had television rights to the stories in AMAZING is guilty of fraud, and, speaking as one of AMAZING's many published authors (my first story was published in AMAZING in 1963), I will take to court anyone who tries to sell, or claims to be able to sell television rights to any of the stories I had in AMAZING.

Well, as you can imagine, this news hits me right in the middle of my mixed emotions. On the one hand, this TV series could save AMAZING's bacon -- giving the magazine the promotion it needs to rebuild its circulation. On the other hand, it appears that someone is selling rights he doesn't own -- a situation which could make Sol Cohen's (legal) reprints of fifteen years ago and the storm they caused look like small potatoes indeed. And then there's the actual content of Spielberg's TV show: action-adventure.

Brandon Tartikoff, president of NBC Entertainment, is quoted in the TIMES saying "that some of the stories might involve supernatural elements, 'but not necessarily every week.' He added, 'I would expect that if there was a story like "Raiders of the Lost Ark," it could fit into this show as well as stories that might have turned up on "Twilight Zone."'" That is not science fiction -- not even "sci-fi." If the series is successful and some of that success rubs off on the magazine, will Scithers or TSR feel pressure to change the magazine into a general-fiction, action-adventure magazine, dropping science fiction or reducing it to a small proportion of the overall contents? And, if that's what it takes to "save" AMAZING, is it worth it?

We shall see.

CHUCH HARRIS ON LARRY SHAW: "I liked the fond mention /in #4/ of Larry Pshaw. I met him years and years ago at a long-gone Loncon, hiding behind an immense carved pipe that was more like a wood sculpture than a smoker's requisite. He was really nice to me -- gentle, unassuming, patient and humorous...like a deluxe U.S. edition of Walt Willis.

"He was the second Pro Editor I'd met. The first was John W. Campbell, Jr., who gave me his autograph but not his time (and who can blame him). Larry had all the time in the world for me. And a drink; and a sandwich.

"I wrote werewolf stories then (shuddup, Thomson), and whilst lycanthropy was not exactly his bag, he'd be very pleased to look at the next one... and, no promises, mind...offer a friendly opinion about how to make a first

sale.

"It was no big deal; there must be dozens, hundreds even, of starry-eyed would-bes like me, spread over the years. He didn't just brush me off with a merry word, though; he was encouraging and helpful and I still remember him with affection 30 years later. I hope all goes well for him and Noreen, and that next time I buy the drink and the sandwiches...even though Arf says I haven't been near a cash-desk for 20 years and the last time they got me that far they found my wallet was in my other suit."

THE WEST ENIGMA: The TAFF race is over, and hopefully the shouting will die down soon, allowing us to get on with business. (And speaking of just that, September 15 is the filing deadline for candidates for the next race -- and thus far only the Nielsen Haydens have indicated that they will run, Dan Steffan having decided not to.) But the question of Just How Serious Was He, Anyway? still lingers over D. West's candidacy in the just-concluded election.

Paul Skelton writes, "I think you are at least partly right about D's reluctant TAFF candidacy. The problem is, nobody knows him. Not him. Everyone 'knows' the D. West Myth Figure. He (and his friends/enemies/acquaintances) have worked so hard putting over this larger-than-life creation that they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams/sickest fantasies, as borne out by the disparity between the US and UK votes. The UK votes, presumably cast by people who know the man behind the mask, were fairly close, whereas the US voters who know only the myth and not the man, reacted on that basis and came down heavily in favour of Rob. A classic case, this, of being hoist on one's own petard. If one spends so much time and effort building an image of seedy, shabby disreputability one can hardly complain when people whose only exposure is to the image recoil from it in a mixture of disgust and distaste.

"I have this problem myself. I have only met D fleetingly and my impressions were right in line with your quoted 'recent attendee of a British con.' In fact I have almost no 'impressions' of D. West-the-person at all, and hence I too tend to react to the Myth Figure. I have to keep reminding myself of this fact because I out-and-out dislike this D-construct and I don't want to do anything so stupid as to allow this dislike to spill over onto the man himself.

"I think that this inability to isolate the real D. West is the greatest single factor behind my statement in a recent SFD, that I did not have any respect for his opinions. Simply put, I don't know whether or not they are his opinions. Are they the opinions of D-the-man or D-the-bogeyman? I cannot concern myself with the opinions of a figment of someone's imagination, not at least as a basis for making value-judgments (although as entertainment, certainly). We are at a further remove from reality. Can I rely on Don West's idea of what D would think upon a particular topic? The whole philosophy is wrapped in gauzy layers of dissembling until one is never quite sure exactly what one can discern within." Or, in other words, if you get a reputation for playing games, people will be unable to tell when you're playing a game and when you're not.

Avedon Carol observes, "I knew before I went to Britain that a lot of people were going to want to know what West was like, and I tried hard to accomodate them. I spent lots of time sitting on the arm of the chair he sat playing dominoes in, trying to engage him in conversation. Mostly in vain. In desperation, I tried the 'So, you're into leather?' gambit, hoping for at least a little Aliester Crowley-type response (you know, they accuse you of being a beast, so you come back with sarcastic reports of being an even bigger beast), like maybe, 'Yes, but only with fifteen-year-old boys in high heels.' But he just said, 'No.' I didn't have much to report when people breathlessly asked for the real scoop on the man. Of course, a

lot of these people really did seem to expect him to be not very nice, so I did have to emphasize that he was really a nice guy. This is the truth. Don West is really a sweet, shy guy who also happens to be (as no one should have to be told) one hell of a brilliantly witty, pyrotechnical writer when he wants to be. His writing we have all seen for ourselves. Anyone who wants to believe he's a terrible person has their own problems."

To which, Chuch Harris adds: "Yes, perhaps D should stand for the next TAFF. My main worry is that he'll be so disenchanted after the communal slugging that he'll quit fandom and all that lovely style will be lost forever. I had a note from him yesterday pointing out that there was no personal animus in his stuff. I think, like Willis in his prime, D writes just for the sheer joy of it. I'd hate to see all that talent walk away from us."

"He still has some copies of FANZINES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE. They are \$25 each. They are worth double...and will cost double too if you leave it much longer. (D West, 48 Norman St., Bingley, West Yorks, England BD16 4JT)"

I've seen Avedon's copy, which is impressively fat and hand-bound with stitching, and I faunch for the arrival of mine, which is reputed to be making its way across the Atlantic on a tramp steamer with stops along the way....

While typing the above material I experienced a sudden flash, and a fantasy entered my head full-blown and ghastly in its details. I'll spare you the details, but consider this Alternate World Event: West wins TAFF and goes to LA. There he encounters the Fan Guest of Honor, Richard H. Eney, a man whose last activity in fandom was to try to have a man reputed to be a pederast barred from the 1964 Worldcon. Someone has told Eney about the West Myth...the fifteen-year-old boys and all the rest. I will leave the rest to your imaginations, but perhaps it's just as well West isn't coming over this time....

SMALL CONS: Used to be, small regional or local cons consisted of hardcore fans. I recall an early Disclave, for example, where all the con-attendees were sitting in one motel room listening to Ajay Budrys tell stories. These days a "small" con has hundreds of attendees, most of whom go home at night, or mill around the hotel corridors in costumes.

Matthew Moore and I dropped by the local (Silver Spring, Maryland) Unicon (sponsored by the U. of Maryland's SF club) on a recent Friday night and were stunned by the absense of familiar faces. When we discovered Steve and Elaine Stiles we fell upon them with cries of gratitude. (Matthew: "Thank ghod! The funniest man in the world is here -- we're saved, Ted!") None of us had a room at the hotel, nor did we know anyone who did, so we commandeered an empty meeting room, turning down the lights to one soft spot shining on the speakers' table, turning up the syrupy muzak sound system, and commenced to Get Sercon. Steve and I sat at the speakers' table, while Matthew and Elaine supplied the audience.

Periodically the door to the room would open and a face would peer uneasily in. Then that happened, without slipping a gear Steve would begin muttering, "Sam Moskowitz...Sam Moskowitz..." and I would say, "Hyperspace, hyperbole, hyperbole, Arthur C. Clarke..." and quickly the face would withdraw and the door close. That pretty well proved that most Unicon attendees weren't into skiffy or fandom, didn't it?

More recently I was "toastmaster" at Mysticon 3, in Roanoke, Virginia -- about 230 miles south and west of here. I agreed because Karl Edward Wagner was to be the Guest of Honor, and I always enjoy Karl and Barbara's company. ("Just think, Ted," Avedon remarked when I told her about the con, "you could have driven to New York instead." New York City is about 250 miles in the opposite direction.) It was a very small con -- perhaps seventy in attendance, 17 (including guests of the con) at the banquet (but the food at the banquet was excellent -- the best I've ever had at a banquet) --

and the only others there whom I knew, beside the Wagners, were the Gillilands and Jerry Page (I was introduced to the Other Pro in attendance, John Madox Roberts, who was subbing for Charles Sheffield). The con was held in a Thrifty Inn, and it certainly was: the entire bathroom was fibreglass. I'd never seen a toilet with a plastic tank before. The "consuite" was next door to the "main program room," both being ordinary-sized Thrifty Inn rooms, with a connecting door. The art show was in another room, spread out on the bed. "Thank ghod you're here -- we're saved, Barbara," was Karl's greeting, but actually we had a pretty good time, in a low-rent sort of way, that weekend.

The thing is, the con chairman, a nice young man named Shawn Tickle who drank a good deal of 151-proof rum that weekend, confessed to us that neither he nor the rest of the Mysticon committee had ever attended a convention outside the Roanoke area. And he told us that the other big con in the area, the Rovacon, is run by a high school teacher, in a high school. He and his friends were D&D types, into role-playing games, who had discovered fandom -- or what they know of it -- through the Rovacon. Shawn is head of the Golden Dragon Society; the Rovacon is (or was) put on by the Nelson Bond Society (Bond lives in Roanoke but refuses to attend local conventions for some inexplicable reason). What really surprised me, given all this fannish isolation (we're not talking fanzine fans here, although one area-fan, Curt Phillips, puts out a little sheet called THE VIZIGRAPH), was the fact that the Golden Dragon Society are Roscoites, and even have a stuffed-toy beaver, although they've yet to find a proper-sized propellor-beanie for it (but they're looking). I felt almost as if I was Margaret Mead or someone like that, stumbling upon a tribe of cultural innocents who have recreated society. What really impressed me, considering where they were coming from and what they had to work with, was how well they'd done at reinventing fandom. I told Shawn and his friend Doug (a teenaged giant who wore a leather tunic and could pass for a barbarian man-mountain) they should try attending some other regional cons, like Disclave and Balticon, just for the experience.

REALITY AND OTHER DELUSIONS: The hot summer had really produced a thick growth of unmown grass around Wally "The Snake" Mind's abode when I visited him recently. It was perverse of me, but Avedon was over visiting that afternoon, so I took her along for her first meeting with Wally.

"Shit, you're real!" Avedon exclaimed. "I always thought the cover photo on the PONG Annish was a clever fake. But, ummm, you're awfully pink for a snake...."

"Sheesh, Ted," Wally said, "why'd you bring this Armenian bimbo here?"

"Why not?" I said. "She didn't believe me -- I figured she had to meet you herself."

"A real MCW...." Avedon murmured.

"I heard that!" Wally snapped.

"So, Wally," I interjected, not wanting a fight to start, "what's new in fandom?"

"Listen, White," Wally said, "I was reading your seventh issue, where you dropped in this quote from Richard Bergeron about me, something about how our conversations are 'coy and arch' or like that. What was he talking about, anyway?"

"Well, I don't have a copy of the letter I'd written him, but I think it had to do with Cesar Ignacio Ramos. Ramos had sent in a PONG Poll Ballot, and Bergeron said 'I trust you tabulated Cesar's ballot. He'll be truly pissed if you don't.' I'd compared his signature on his Ballot with Bergeron's on his Ballot, and while they weren't identical by any means, they weren't so different that one person couldn't have signed them. So I really still had no idea whether or not Cesar was a hoax. And it occurs to me that

Bergeron is clever enough to pull a double-hoax -- if Cesar is real, it might strike them as a fine joke for Bergeron to forge his signature on that Ballot...."

"Frankly," Avedon said, "I've never been as sure as some of my friends are that Cesar's a hoax. In fact, I always thought Bergeron had been in fandom long enough to know how to create a hoax fan if he wanted to, and this -- "

"Cesar speaking only through Bergeron, you mean," I said.

"Right. That's a dumb way to bring off a hoax, since that's the first thing anybody would think of. But, you know, the whole gag about Cesar being a hoax is even better if he's real."

"Hey!" Wally shouted. "You're not answering my question!"

"Which was that?"

"Me. What did Bergeron say about me?"

"He wants his egoboo," Avedon said.

"More like negoboo," I said. "But, okay." I dug into my back pocket and pulled out the folded sheets of blue paper.

"Think he'll ever run out of those extra pages from WARHOON 28?" Wally sneered. On the flip side of the sheet was a blown up Lee Hoffman cartoon of Larry Shaw.

"I kinda like them," I said. "Here it is:

"All your conversations with Wally have struck me as coy and arch ("kittenish prose") and the sort of thing I guess you thought I was doing with the "character" Cesar Ignacio Ramos. There's a big difference, though. Cesar actually exists and actually says everything I quote. In fact, at times I think I should keep a notebook to jot down his amazing cracks. I've always found Wally a turn-off -- except graphically (I loved the PONG cover and Dan's marvelous cartoons featuring Wally). But as a literary device I find the concept cloying, too cute for words, and vaguely masturbatory (no, I'm not referring to the coy imagery in the last instalment). I also found Archy the Cockroach similarly cloying. (I mention that so you'll see my prejudice in this matter isn't limited to your use of Wally. It's just the way I react to this sort of device. There's a columnist for the San Juan STAR who will occasionally do an instalment of her column as a dialogue between herself and her cat. I fro wup.)"

"Hey," Wally said, swelling with anger, "I'm real! What'she really saying about me?"

"Well, Wally," Avedon said. "Looks like we've got something in common."

"Yeah," Wally expostulated. "He doesn't like either of us."

"So what're we going to do about it?" Avedon asked.

"I think we better put our heads together," Wally said. "We need some privacy." He shot me an unfriendly look. "We don't need him around -- he's still one of Bergeron's friends, at least for now."

Avedon leaned over and picked Wally up. The last thing I heard was her saying to Wally, "You know, you're kinda cute...." I haven't seen either of them since then, but I'm thinking of going over tomorrow with a lawn mower.

AND NOW ARE THINGS DOWN UNDER? In #5 I told Joy Hibbert, "I have made my Fan GoHship dependent upon Australian fans cleaning up their acts and I am quite confident that by August, 1985 all Aussie fanzines will look exactly like this one."

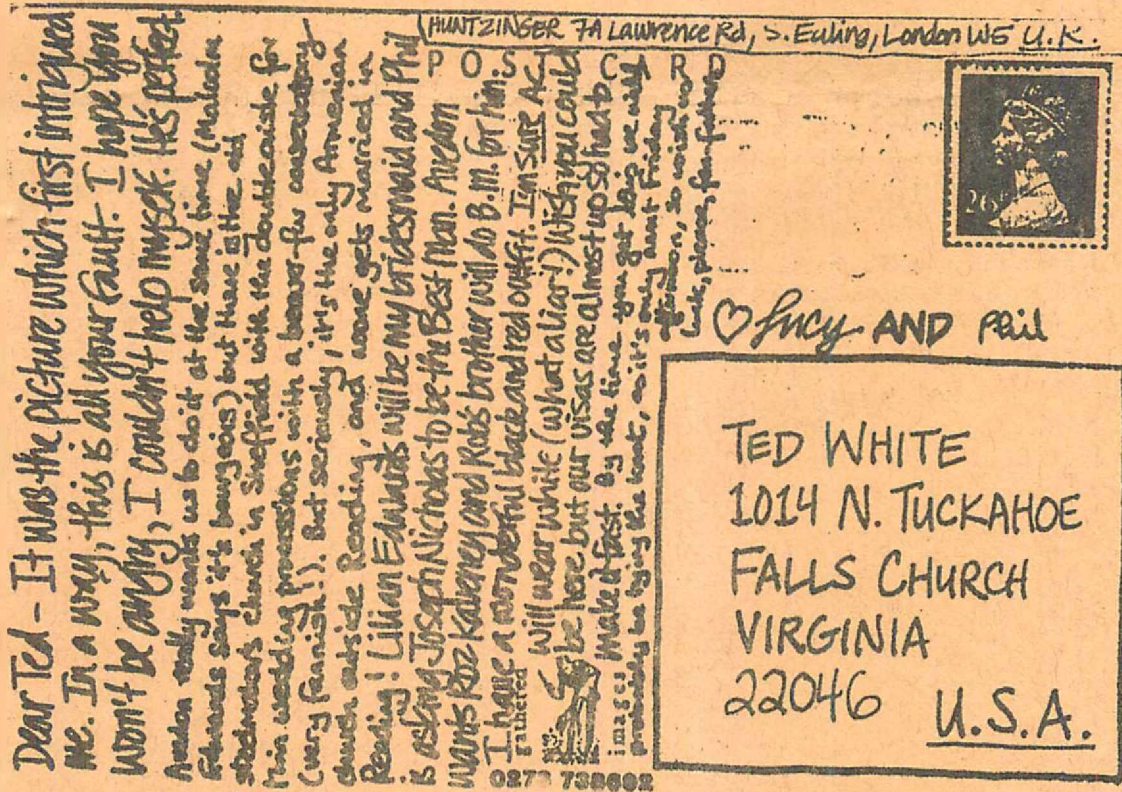
Apparently Eric Lindsay missed my Manifesto on the subject (it was in SIKANDER #8), and he apologizes, "Oops, sorry, I hadn't realised that I'd have to clean up my act, and do proper fanzines." You blew it again, Eric. Nobody said anything about "proper" fanzines.

Marc Ortlieb asks that I send over "a couple of hundred reams of that funny fuzzy paper," of the sort I use here, "in order to improve the overall

aesthetics of my fanzine." No problem, Marc; I've sent them out. Allow for about twelve months shipping time, and don't worry about the cost. I've sent the bill to the concom. "Naturally," he adds, "I took your comments about Australian fanzine fandom cleaning up its act deeply to heart, and ... here then is my solemn promise, which of course you knew was coming when you wrote that comment to Joy Hibbert." Thanks, Marc. You know this means a lot to me.

SECRET MARRIAGES REVEALED!

Here's a pocsared from Lucy Huntzinger and that Good Looking Fellow, Phil Palmer, whose autographed picture still sits on my mantel next to my Hugo....



MORE REACTIONS: to my Lunacon report are coming in. Steve Stiles says that Elaine and I arrived at that Lunacon con suite party some twenty minutes before you did. Like you, we didn't have badges and were expecting to pick them up there. Like you, we were barred for lack of badges. Catch 22. But I found the guard easy to intimidate ("I'm a guest of this con, this is my wife, and we are going in!"), leaving him in a cloud of dust as we simply brushed past him." Well, if I hadn't been so exhausted from the drive and so irritated by the discovery that my "overflow" hotel "across the street" was miles away and hard to get back from, I might have done only that. It was in fact an eerie sensation to watch my hand empty a cup of Coke over the guard's head as if someone else was doing it, and perhaps that is a sign of how Out Of It I really was at that point. I try not to make a practice of such behavior. Steve adds, "The fannish con within the larger media con has become so common, and so easy to enjoy, that I no longer worry about the larger implications, as typified by Curtis Clemmer."

Speaking of whom, Arthur Hlavaty comments, "I found your comments on guests of honor particularly interesting. I don't know Curtis Clemmer at all, so I don't know if this applies to him, but if concons are starting to

SILLY NAME-CALLING

I HAVE NOT read Ross Terrill's *The White-Boned Demon*, and have no idea whether or not it is "a trivial and silly book." I do not remember Carolyn Kizer's May 27th review of the book, although I did read it—I read everything in *Book World*—so I don't know if in fact it was "as silly" as Terrill claims in his letter in response to it [in *Book World*, Letters column, July 22].

However, my impression is that Terrill and Kizer were made for one another. I was brought up short by Terrill's "Happily, no reviewer has so far been as dumb in missing it as Kizer." The word "dumb" in that sentence stands out like, well, a sore thumb and totally betrays Terrill's auctorial dignity.

But Kizer out-dumbs Terrill with this pithy observation: "If you're getting shot at from all sides, you must be doing something right." That is a sentence which rewards contemplation. Does Ms. Kizer think that two letters, one from the outraged author and one from a presumably innocent bystander (who will be a bystander not much longer), constitute shots "from all sides"? And . . . does she *really* think that "if you're getting shot at from all sides, you must be doing something right"? Was that vindicating thought one of the last to occur to Custer?

No, it appears to me that Kizer has matched silliness with silliness—which, taken as entertainment, has in fact enlivened an otherwise dull Sunday evening for me. Bravo to all.

Ted White
Falls Church, Va.

pick GoHs merely for their service as gofers and such, then I'm kind of ambivalent about it. On the one hand, such people are necessary to the running of a con, and I think it's really very nice to honor them. But then my nasty elitist sentiments come out and I wonder what such a person would do in lieu of a GoH speech: sit up on a stage and stuff envelopes?"

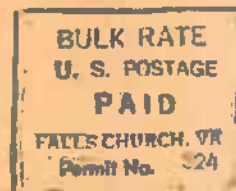
David Stever knows Clemmer, and "I loved what you did to the dork who was badge-checking at the door to the consuite. We have that sort of dork out here /Minneapolis/St. Paul/; can I name names? One 'Joel Halpern' is one of the worst, and I have taken to not wearing a badge that I do have, so I can be challenged. I love finding back stairs so that I can use them to avoid checkpoints where they will check for my badge. These people piss me off; don't apologise -- it is OK to be proud of what you did." Well, I am torn between arrogance and humility.... But, moving on to Curtis Clemmer, David says, "You don't say if the 'con-soldier' (nice phrase -- mind if we abscond with it?) ever pointed out Curt for you, but he is a buddy of Teresa Minambres, from Chicago, and he is a Dorsai, as well as an ex-soldier, of what I would assume to be our army. I

have run into him for a long time, and he raised my hackles at last year's Wilcon, at the Stopas' house, when he pissed off the entire breakfast crew, led by Carmody, Chu, Wesson, and myself. Ask Carmody for his opinion of this pompous ass. He no more deserves to be a fan guest at Lunacon than anyone that Minicon has had in the last four years, or any one of a hundred other 'fan guests' who have been honored in the last five years."

The inset letter above was published in the Washington POST's Sunday BOOK WORLD section on August 5, 1984, and is presented here because I often lose loose clippings in the general clutter (I've spared you my more mundane letters to the editor which have appeared in the POST, however).

"Cows? Arrrgh, caows!" --Norman G. Wansborough in LAST & FIRST FEN

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