

## HARLAN'S SIDE

The letter that follows arrived at 631 Dauphine Street, New Orleans, La. on January 18, 1979, addressed as you see to me, Guy Lillian III. A few days earlier the sender, Harlan Ellison, had called to tell me

that it was on the way. It was not quite what I had expected.

In my Iguacon conversations with Ellison, devoted mainly to the now, unfortunately, famous Markstein affair, he had promised to let me see his side of the story. I anticipated xeroxes of various correspondence. I received, in addition, the attached 13 page article/letter.

He asked that it be given as wide a play as possible, leaving that distribution up to me...and to George Paczolt, who also received the material. I've decided that the only fair way to handle this very explosive piece was to give it to outlets which had hitherto heard the opposing point of view: Markstein's How I Spent My Summer Vacation. This means running the stuff through the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and shipping it to the contributors to the Iggy distribution of W.O.O.F.. All others mentioned in the letter will also receive a copy.

In his letter, Ellison makes frequent mention of enclosures, several xeroxed sheets included with the letter. I have electrostencilled part of enclosure #3, as it is referred to in the text: the "Time-Wasting, Yellow Journalist" epistle read to the crowd at Iguacon. The other enclosures were:

- (1) A copy of Rally! #38, with the "Ellison Walks Walk" article;
- (2) A copy of Meepers Blue 12, published by Paczolt, with two letters from Ed Zdrojewski;
- (4) Pages 1 & 7 from DNQ 6, published by Victoria Vayne, containing the colophon and a relevant article;
- (5) A letter to Markstein from Henry W. Holmes, Jr., attorney, regarding legal consequences inherent in publishing less than the full text of enclosure #3;
- (6) A letter to Holmes from Linda Steele, Ellison's assistant, accompanying "a Canadian fanzine", apparently DNQ;
- (7) The covers and salient pages from an unnumbered DNQ and Mike Glycer's File 770:6, giving further reactions to the affair;
- (8) Page one of Rally! #39, the words "Prints Only the Truth!" encircled, and an unnumbered page from that zine, printing parts of enclosure #3 -- see text -- and reprinting "Ellison Walks Walk";
- (9) File 770:7 from Glycer, Mike's account of Iggy;
- (10) A contract from New Line Presentations, detailing Ellison's conditions for appearing at the University of South Carolina, 6-16-78, and correspondence dealing with this;
- (11) Letters from Arizona NOW and Iguacon chairman Tim Kyger thanking Ellison for his efforts on their behalfs.

The content of these enclosures is as Ellison describes.

I'm running this material through SPPA and showing it to interested parties because I believe that it is only fair that Ellison have the same opportunity to give his perspective on this matter as Markstein has had. Although I have typed most of what follows, I do not necessarily agree with any of the characterizations in it, and am responsible only for the typographical errors, be there any. This page is GHLIII Press Publication #369, typed for the second time 1-23-79.

Here's Harlan.

NOTE -  
you  
expect  
ALL.



HARLAN ELLISON

3484 COY DRIVE  
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA  
91403 (213) CR. 1-9636

10 January 79

Guy Lillian III  
631 Dauphine Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
70112

George R. Paczolt, Jr.  
1732 Magdalene Way  
Johnstown, Penna.  
15905

Dear George & Guy:

And you'll notice I'm being strictly alphabetical in my addressing of you both...excuse the omnibus letter, same information for both of you...because you've both asked for the same material for your fanzines...and because I figured doing it in tandem like this is a clever way to save my sanity and get me back to some productive writing. You can juxtapose and shuffle and interpolate your own comments so the form of the material is different, if it bothers you that you're getting identical stuff. But this is the only way I can handily get what you've asked for off to you.

Okay. Here we go.

Prior to May of 1978, I had never even heard the name Don Markstein. On or about 28 May I received in the mail an unsolicited fanzine titled Rally! from Markstein. He had mailed it to me clearly because he wanted me to see an item called "Ellison Walks Walk." As we had never communicated with one another previously, and as he had published thirty-seven numbers of the fanzine previously, without ever feeling the need to send me one, it was obvious he was trying to get some response from me. Given the nature of the defamatory item (enclosure #1), what he must have been expecting was one of my angry rejoinders. I cannot conceive of anyone writing such a destructive untruth as that, and then expecting a positive reply.

Having no foreknowledge of the sort of irresponsible person this Markfield has shown himself to be subsequently, I gave him the benefit of the doubt and reasoned that he had received incomplete information about my appearance at Tulane the preceding February. I decided the quickest way to handle the matter--because I was anxious for a correction to get into his next issue, minimizing the damage I knew would be done by the item--I called Markstein in Austin, Texas.

(One aside. I am no stranger to fanzine attacks. It's been going on for over 25 years. Some deserved, some not. That's not the point. I can stand the heat. Usually, I choose to ignore the slams. Other times, if I get my heat up, I respond. My temper is not the most reserved, and I have no difficulty paying the dues for my unabashed replies to what I consider erroneous or damnfool comments made about me. When I say me, I mean me, personally, who I am and how I live. I don't mean me as a writer. My work is open for comment and criticism at all times. I very



seldom respond to critical analysis of my writing, save when it slops over into judgment of me personally, and by use of personal vilification the work is misinterpreted--as with Paul Walker's review of my story "Basilisk" in Galaxy and my letter of reply this month. The salient point, as regards the Markstein matter, is that my veracity and actions were inextricably linked with the ERA. Foolish, I admit; but that's the way people think. If the messenger is suspect, then the message is suspect. Truly, it's insane: no matter what a swine Ralph Nader might be in his personal life, it in no way diminishes the validity of what he's trying to do. But discredit Nader and you partially blemish the causes he fights for. Such was the case with the Markstein slur. Because I had set myself up as a public target, I had to be above reproach. God knows I make as many mistakes as anyone else, but in terms of my involvement with the National Organization for Women and passage of the ERA, I have hewn to a very straight line. Thus, it was incumbent upon me to try and quash this wholly erroneous impression that I was trying to fuck over the Iguanacon and Arizona while serving my own ends by carousing in New Orleans.)

I called Markstein. I was polite. He was extremely rude and worse, he was determined to get me angry. He laughed at my concern and quite freely admitted that he had sent me the fanzine (and had, in fact, run the item) to get me angry so I'd attack him and he would build some stock for himself in fandom. A concept so deranged I could not believe an adult with his wits about him would pursue such a foolish course. I volunteered to send him documentation of my assertion that I had been cleared for that Tulane seminar on American Morality by NOW and that I had not, absolutely, spent any money in Louisiana. He seemed vastly disinterested in running any of the material I offered to send him.

(Second aside. In your Meeper Blue number 12, George, you ran two letters (enclosure #2) from one Ed Zdrojewski, another stranger to me, in which I'm accused of harrassing poor Don Markstein on the charge of my trying to interfere with First Amendment right of speech. Despite your response to his follow-up letter, George, this man maintains his position that I attempt to use "the government" --whatever that means to him, unless he thinks lawyers are all employed by the government--to squelch an honest fanzine editor. I didn't say Markstein couldn't write what he'd written, I only asked for my right of freedom of speech to set out with facts and irrefutable documentation the truth of the matter. That he was reluctant to run such material denies my right of redress, and seems to me to have nothing whatever to do with curtailing anyone's freedom of speech. I can only perceive of Zdrojewski's letters as the opinions of a man either knowingly abetting the mischievous ends of a not-entirely-rational fan or unknowingly permitting himself to be duped to those ends. In either case, this is the first time in my life I've been accused of trying to interfere with someone's right of free speech. You've known me for years, Guy; and you've known me less time, George; but both of you have known me well enough, and read enough of what



I've written for a quarter of a century to verify that I prize personal freedom above all else but courage and ethic. I have been on picket lines, barricades, demonstrations and have even gone to jail to protect First Amendment rights...even for people as despicable as the American Nazi Party and Larry Flynt. I could no more support denial of Markstein's right to publish even the most scurrilous lies, than I could the right of totalitarian governments to silence dissidents. But freedom of speech is hardly equatable with slander and defamation of character; and if someone wishes to indulge in same, then it is concomitantly the right of the defamed to defend himself.)

Finally I managed to get Markstein to agree to look at the material I wanted to send. He was in no way ameliorative or helpful. He sneered and made light of my concern, as I've said. But I wanted to take the most direct, simplest, least problem-filled route to a setting-straight of the matter.

So I sent him the material with a letter that wasn't entirely salutary. On reflection, I see that as a mistake...writing a letter that was anything other than straightforward and fact-filled. (On further reflection, it is now apparent that even had I done so, it wouldn't have altered his manner or his plans to use me for his own ends. But at least I wouldn't have given him even the thin edge of justification he's used to gull people like Zdrojewski.) I've enclosed the letter and the documentation from Tulane as enclosure #3 (follows). It is identical with what he received from me on or about May 31.

I received no response to this material. But as he lived in Austin, I called several close friends who also live in Austin, and asked them who this guy was. They were quite candid in telling me that Markstein had made a bad impression on them; they had invited him to one or two parties of Austin fandom and he had been such a lox they'd stopped asking him around.

(Third aside. It's surprising how many people, in so many different cities, Markstein has alienated. I'd never even heard of this bird, but when his name comes up, fans started emerging from the woodwork to tell me what a bum he was. Fans in Austin, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Phoenix and parts less well-known have popped up to say this guy's a wrongo and that I'm not the first person he's defamed and tried to use in this awful fashion. One fan whom I've known for 27 years--whom I've never heard say a badrap about anyone--was discussing various kinds of shotgun loads, on day, and a certian extra-powerful load was suggested to him, and he said, "That's too much power. There isn't anything alive on the planet that needs a blast that big." And then he thought a moment and added, "Except, maybe Don Markstein." Now I don't know who this guy's friends might be--unless the cadre is made up exclusively of people determined to hate me, who ally with him simply because he's out to get me-- but from the vehemence I get when his name is dropped, I'm a little saddened when I note that none of my friends who knew what sort of man he is, bothered to stand up in my defense when all the shit was coming down.)



HARLAN ELLISON

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91403 (213) CR. 1-9636

31 May 78

Mr. Don Markstein  
1508 Ashwood  
Austin, Texas 78722

Dear Time-Wasting, Yellow-Journalist Asshole:

Before you question my ethics, little pea-brain, let's test yours:

Let's see if the following factual material--as opposed to slanted circumstantial information imparted in Rally #38--finds its way into #39 as the "lead story."

1. My commitment to appear at the Direction '78 symposium at Tulane was contracted for on 24 March 1977, a full eight months before my 5 December 77 statement on IguanaCon.

2. My appearance at the prestigious symposium was sanctioned by the National Organization for Women, as was that of Virginia Carter of the Norman Lear tv production company, Tandem. Ms. Carter, in fact, was on the same bill with me. She is the Vice-President of the Western Regional Women's Lobby, Inc. (based in Washington D.C.), treasurer of the California ERA Coalition, and formerly presided over the Los Angeles branch of the National Organization for Women. We sat side-by-side and used both the press conference prior to the symposium, and the symposium itself, as public platforms from which to champion the ratification of the ERA in Louisiana.

3. My living arrangements at "one of the city's finer hotels" was prearranged by the Direction '78 committee and I had nothing to say about it. I was housed at precisely the location at which every other guest of the symposium program was housed. That included Robert Heilbroner, Sen. Charles Mathias, Michael Harrington, George Romney, Virginia Carter, Daniel Schorr, Martin Agronsky, Barry Commoner (one of America's most vocal advocates of the ERA), Ashley Montagu, Gerard K. O'Neill, Vance Packard, Dick Cavett, Mary Calderone, Rollo May and Gay Talese, to name a few more of the people who "wined, dined and wenched" at the Hotel Ponchartrain.

4. I don't drink wine. Nor booze of any kind. If you choose to refer to French mineral water, Perrier, as "wining," then one can assume the liberties you've taken with nomenclature are no less fucked than those you've taken with facts.

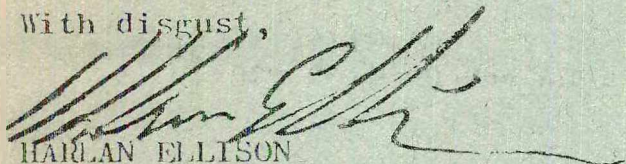
5. I was down with a temperature of 102° during my one-day stay in New Orleans, had ruptured an eardrum when my plane landed, and if you think I was wenching when I felt like death warmed over, your understanding of the human metabolism is as fucked as your understanding of ethical behavior.



In short, like all little pismires of your kind in fandom, you are ready to believe that everyone acts as duplicitously as yourself. You are a wretched little gossip-monger and your asinine fanzine is one with all such sophomoric publications that spread shit in hopes it will fertilize rancor. Unfortunately, this time you got caught with your finger up your nose. Keep probing up there, nitwit: maybe you'll find a piece of brain lodged in the cranium.

Now let's see whose ethics are less questionable. Run this response as it was written. Or are you afraid your slanderous inferences will net you the ridicule and loathing they deserve?

With disgust,



HARLAN ELLISON

HE:lms  
enclosure

P.S. Why do I have the feeling that you and that other rabid asshole, Glycer of Sylmar, share similar views and methods? Disabuse me. Convince me you're just an innocent li'l fan, doing his thing. And if, when you compare comments with Glycer, you find that my response to his similarly fucked-up comments about me and the ERA are as go-sit-on-it as mine to yours, be apprised that while you clowns have your little ingroup runs at my tight end, I will be doing my best to reciprocate in kind by ridiculing you before 5000+ fans and/or before millions of disinterested viewers on national television. Never let it be said that I was above using overkill to swat gnats.



In any case, from the Austin fans I learned that Markstein had really gotten off on my calling him, and had told everyone in Austin that not only was he going to pursue the "feud," but that if I was foolish enough to send him a letter he either wouldn't publish it, or would excerpt it in such a way that I'd look guilty of what he'd laid against me. He was openly bragging about it. That's actionable. So I called him a second time and advised him in very clear terms that if he didn't take immediate and appropriate action to retract or correct what he'd said, in the main by publishing my letter in toto, I would seek redress through my attorney and the court.

I could not permit the lie he'd published to stand unchallenged, Mr. Zdrojewski and his like notwithstanding...because I knew very well from almost thirty years associated with fandom, that despite the good and sober and rational people who mostly make up fandom, there is a disproportionate number of misfits, freaks, venal assholes and just plain vicious clowns who dote on gossip and who would fasten on this seemingly juicy tidbit like wolves on a staked-out deer.

Nonetheless, I waited a decent amount of time for Markstein to do the right thing. Clearly, Markstein never related this to the people he's duped into thinking I was attacking him without cause. I waited very nearly a month before taking further action. Finally, during a subsequent call to Austin, I was told that Markstein had, indeed, excerpted my letter in some sort of publication, and was planning to do another of the same kind for distribution at the convention itself. And by that time, too, other fanzines had picked up the story, distorted it even further, rationalized and cobbled-up new reasons why I was a lying, duplicitous thug out to kill fandom, and the word was spreading, the damage was being done. I enclosed copies of these other fms and Rally! in a letter to my attorney. Henry Holmes of the firm of Schiff, Hirsch & Schreiber, and asked him to call me to discuss the least troublesome way to handle what was a growing burden in my daily life. (I was at that time, trying to write the I, Robot script and the Markstein silliness was taking up enormous and valuable amounts of my time.)

I did get in touch with Mike Glyer, here in LA, who had, until that time, been a strong and vocal opponent of my ERA position in re the IguanaCon. He had heard from Markstein, and the story had been spread around the LA SF Society meetings. I told him the truth about the New Orleans matter and he had, in fact, seen the PBS telecast of the evening seminar from the previous February. We talked well, and subsequently (much to my joy) because of an editorial on the ERA in the LA Times, Mike changed his opinion. And I called Canada to speak to the editors of DNQ who had picked up Markstein's lies and run them without checking them out in DNQ 6. Enclosure #4. This was a particularly nasty reprint, because it offered as statement of fact an unsupported assertion that I was "an embarrassment to NOW and the ERA." Where they got that, I don't know, but--as you will see from a later enclosure in this packet--there was not only no truth



to the slur, but the situation was exactly the oppsite...proof to come. Bear with me through this tangled bullshit maze.

Well, I called DNQ and they ran a retraction and update with the facts. Probably too late to do any good, but they at least attempted to rectify their hasty and unchecked publication of the material Markstein had purposely called them to pass along.

What apologists for Markstein seem to always overlook when they attack me for beating on poor little Don, is that I laid back after advising him he published untruths, but Markstein--  
THOUGH HE HAD THE FACTS IN HAND BY THAT TIME--continued to call people and spread the lie, and went forward with running even more material that supported the first slander.

Late in June, after waiting for Markstein to respond, after waiting for the matter to get adjusted in a sane and sensible fashion--as would have been done by any responsible fanzine editor concerned about dealing with the truth--when I discovered from the Austin sources that Markstein was excerpting my letter, I had my attorney call him. Even then I was not trying to "sic the government" on Markstein, as Zdrojewski put it. I was trying to let the idiot know I took this very seriously and was trying to let him off the hook if only he would act in a decent manner. Well, he was rude to my attorney, laughed at the whole idea of being sued, said he didn't have a job so there wasn't anything to sue for, and in essence told him to fuck off. Henry Holmes called me, furious at the rude treatment he'd received, and it was then AND ONLY THEN after trying every ameliorative channel to getting Markstein to behave rationally, that Holmes sent him a registered letter, advising him he was treading deep water. Two letters were sent out. One to Austin, registered, to the address on Rally!; the other, regular mail, to another address we had for him. I'm a little fuzzy on the specifics of that mailing, after all this time, but there were two letters, one of which Markstein actually received, because he made reference to it later. But he wouldn't pick up the registered one, which was returned unclaimed to my attorney. Nonetheless, he had spoken to Holmes and had received a letter. So he knew damned well it was a serious matter to me.

(Third and a Half aside. Let me tell you about Henry Holmes and Gunther Schiff. They are my attorneys. Two years ago, when I finally decided to sue ABC-TV and Paramount Studios for ripping-off Brillo from me and Ben Bova, I was advised to forget it by my then-attorney, considered one of the best in Hollywood. Said there was no chance, forget it. I didn't give up. Like the Romanoffs, I have a long memory for good and evil. And so I was led, by stages, to Henry Holmes, a bright, young, tough attorney who was about to join the Gunther Schiff office. I took the case to Henry and he analyzed it, did some casebook study, and he told me that not only did we have a strong case, but he'd win it for me. I pulled the case from the first lawyer and gave it to Henry. He took it with him to the Schiff office. I don't suppose this kind of reputation gets filtered out to the boonies where Markstein lives, but if you merely mention Gunther Schiff's name in Hollywood, the most arrogant studio heads turn white. He is



to attorneys as Kong is to monkeys. He recently won an \$11 million out-of-court settlement from Universal Studios for Mario Puzo on the Earthquake litigation. That's eleven million and they made an out-of-court settlement. Do you have any idea what they must have thought Gunther could tag them for if they went to trial? Henry and Gunther not only represent me and Puzo, they also represent Frank Herbert, Robert Redford, Erica Jong, and hundreds of other heavyweights who can afford the best. For Henry and Gunther, taking on Don Markstein would be like stepping on a gnat. And these are the people that arrogant little pipsqueak Markstein was fucking with. George, your friend who feels I was taking undue advantage of poor li'l Donnie had no idea what Markstein was messing with. It is eloquent proof that I was trying to settle this nastiness without trouble that I didn't turn Holmes and Schiff loose on Markstein from the git-go. We went through channels, tried every way to get him to cease and desist, to retract and stop futzing around. It is, additionally, eloquent testimony to Markstein's stupidity or determination to use me for a moronic purpose that he did not run for cover at once. Not even the arrogant manipulators at ABC and Paramount think they can fuck around with Schiff and Holmes: after only one day of depositions, they tried to settle my \$3 million suit against them with an out-of-court settlement for \$200,000...which we advised them to shove up their nose. Markstein is playing with mean people when he takes on this kind of troop.)

Even then, even in the face of evidence that he had not reported the real facts, even in the face of impending action, Markstein was obsessed with "making a name in fandom" (as he put it to many fans, who called me to report his remarks and said they'd be glad to come to court to testify if I sued the guy) and he went forward with defaming me.

I enclose as item #5 a Xerox of Henry Holmes' letter. As you can see, it's dated 23 June, a full month after I'd first contacted Markstein about retracting what he'd published.

Markstein then showed up in Phoenix, hanging around the convention committee for what purpose no one was able to fathom. But he spread a great deal of seditious crap among the kids working their tails off to ready the con. Now understand: there was a lot of heat coming down on them about me and what I was supposed to be doing to ruin the con and fandom in general. Tim Kyger and Bill Patterson and the rest of the committee knew damned well that I never had the intention of lousing up the convention, that I was honestly and determinedly trying to serve both ends--my ethical commitments and my moral obligation to serve the convention that was honoring me--but they had extra problems because of my stand. They were willing to put up with the additional hassles because I was their guest and they were foursquare behind permitting me to handle their Guest of Honorship any way I saw fit.

First, he insinuated himself into their midst. When I talked to Bill and Tim--which I did virtually every day from July till the convention actually started, I blew my stack. "What the fuck is he doing there?" I demanded. Well, he was gofering, they said; he seems to be a nice chap. Are you sure he understands what the problem is? Why don't you talk to him...explain to him.



I bloody well couldn't believe my ears. Here were my friends, for chrissakes, who were being taken in by that slippery ooze! I screamed and yowled and then quieted down and they put him on the phone...and the fucker taunted me when they were out of earshot, assuring me that he was going to make me look like a fool, that I couldn't win, because if I sued him I wouldn't collect anything but he'd be the poor little martyr senselessly attacked by the ruthless egomaniacal little giant, Ellison. Then he dropped the phone.

Needles to say, I was so insane with rage I wanted to hop a plane to Phoenix and kill the sonofabitch. Patterson came back on the phone after a while and said he couldn't understand why I was raving and screaming so much, that Markstein seemed a pleasant enough chap. He said Markstein explained away all the goings-on by asserting he hadn't seen the evidence from Tulane. I went into hysterics. "If that's so, then how the hell can he be excerpting my letter for Rally! because the documentation was stapled to the bloody letter!?" Well, Bill opined as how that seemed reasonable, but maybe something had gone wrong.

So at that late stage, I was being called to question by even the people who were instrumental in getting me into this goddam mess in the first place. I was damned near out of my mind. Can you imagine how clear my mind was for writing the script? Jeezus, it was the low point. But I said I'd send him the documentation so he, Patterson, could see it for himself.

As it turned out, it didn't much matter, because Markstein was running a fifth column number on the con committee itself. He was reporting to fanzine editors all over the country about every smallest fuckup or glitch the committee was fighting before the con began. He narked on every internicine flareup, the people who quit, the financial arrangements, the things that didn't come through--all the usual crap every con committee goes through. But he was badmouthing them so effectively, there was enormous trepidation all over the country as to whether the Phoenix fans could even pull off a convention. Clearly, this guy is a force for evil, with no honor and no compunctions about lying and causing trouble.

Well, they caught on to him and ordered him to stay away from the committee and its activities. Patterson and Kyger called when they discovered his rottenness, and they apologized for doubting what I'd said about him. They now understood how I could be driven to the point of murder against such a creep.

(Fourth aside. The time-sequence on some of this is mixed up, Some fanzine comments come before other things happened, some Markstein antics are here reported only second-hand, but the general flow is as set down here.)

Now we come to early August. The phone calls and rotten letters stirred up by Markstein's initiation of this slanderous crap is starting to get really heavy. People calling me hypocrite, others indulging in that lunatic fannish penchant for hypotheizing every kind of crazy possibility "my unethical actions" will bring into being (fans are the least pragmatic group I've ever seen;



worse than right-wingers who fear Commie takeovers), others vowing they'll "get me" for destroying the convention. And of course the fanzine remarks, led off by DNQ as seen in enclosure #4. My assistant, Linda, sent a copy of it to Henry Holmes, as verification that Markstein was clearly in a position to be sued because of the spread of the original lies. Enclosure #6.

Henry wanted to make it a larger suit, including half a dozen different fanzines and their editors. He is a friend. He was pissed. Not only because he could see I was being unreasonably jerked around and being driven nuts and wasting time I desperately need to spend on the script, but because Markstein personally offended his sense of honor and justice. Markstein was acting like a man with a death-wish, and I was going closer and closer to an act of violence I knew I'd regret. I don't think the fool ever realized how close he was to serious harm. Thank god I had Linda around here to quiet me down when I'd get loonie. But I never got crazy enough that I wanted to drag in the other fmz editors who'd chosen to believe the worst about me rather than doing what decent, responsible editors do: check the facts. It was one more lesson in the irresponsibility and sophomorphism of so many fans...but I saw them as fools, as children who weren't responsible for their actions. And I told Henry to back off with all but Markstein.

Then the "retractions" began to appear around the 20th of August, just around the time everyone was leaving for the con, guaranteeing that many would miss the items and I'd have to put up with even more shit at the Phoenix bash. I sighed. But two of the retractions deserve note and I enclose them as #7...Taral's item in DNQ 7 and Mike Glyer's piece in File 770 #6.

Just before I left for the convention, I got a call from someone who knows Markstein rather well, someone I'd never met or written to, who had no reason to jump to my aid against Markstein, who advised me that Markstein was going to set up a table with the next issue of Rally! in which there were excerpts from my letter that made me look even worse (if that was possible) than the original item had managed to do. When I asked him why he was telling me this he said he had finally come to realize that Markstein was using him and others like him, against me, to (again that stupid phrase) "make a name for himself in fandom". The ethical sterility of someone's potentially damaging something as important as the ERA fight merely for the piddling end of "making a name in fandom" did not then, and does not now, fail to horrify and sadden me.

All the way to Phoenix, driving that Winnebago, I thought about virtually nothing but what I was going to do about Markstein. If I killed him, that would make for terrific fanzine material, but it would have a less than beneficial effect on my future. But I couldn't simply let him get away with it. That would lend credence to his original statements and to his "martyrdom". But as I drove, I thought. And finally, I came up with what I thought would be a workable solution.



When I got to Phoenix, the whirlwind struck and I was busy from morning to night. We parked the night in an empty lot where we didn't have to pay, and the next morning we moved to the street outside the Hyatt. For the first couple of hours the con committee put nickels in our meter till the Vice-Mayor, Joy Carter, could have the meters hooded. Thereafter, and for the duration of the convention we spent no money even parking on the street. I was determined to hold to the letter of my commitment, not even to buy a candy bar, not to give aid and comfort of any kind to the swine who would seek some silly infraction that would (in their warped view) invalidate my actions.

I was also conscious of a need to both serve the Arizona NOW/ERA forces and to be the best goddam Guest of Honor any convention had ever had.

Well, Guy, you were there and you know how well I did. I'm sorry you weren't there, George, because if you had been, you'd have known how inaccurate and misleading were the letters from Zdrojewski that you published. I made my evening presentation --a speech, reading, audience rap--and gently segued into a rundown and analysis of the Markstein matter. At one point, one of Markstein's friends leaped up in the audience and called me a liar, saying he needed to see proof of all this. So Linda went to the Winnebago and pulled out the Markstein file with all the documentation, and I read it line for line. It silenced the Markstein plant in the audience, and when I got finished telling them how crazy Markstein had driven me, someone stood up and said Markstein had a table set up in the dealer's room, selling Rally! behind a sign that said I AM THE MAN HARLAN ELLISON HAS THREATENED TO KILL. When the audience heard that, they went nuts and many people started out of the room to find him.

At that point I knew Markstein had been defused, and I didn't have to do him any personal harm, I didn't even have to sue him. I shouted for them to stop, that by their anger and their support of me they had defanged the fool, and that lynching the mother would only make him a hero. Everyone laughed, the room settled down, and that was the end of Don Markstein as far as I was concerned.

Later, someone handed me a copy of the Rally! Markstein was pushing at the convention. It is enclosure #8. If you compare what he published with enclosure #3, my original letter, you'll see the depths of this man's perfidy.

(The excerpts as published in Rally! #39: "Dear Time-Wasting, Yellow Journalist Asshole: Before you question my ethics, little pea-brain, let's test yours ... In short, like all little pismires of your kind in fandom ... wretched little gossip-monger ... asinine fanzine ... slanderous inferences ... fucked-up comments ... while you clowns have your little ingroup runs at my tight end, I will be doing my best to reciprocate in kind by ridiculing you before 5000+ fans and/or before millions disinterested viewers on national television.")

Subsequently, I visited the dealer's room one morning. As I'd never even seen Markstein and didn't know what he looked like, it took a fan's unsolicited direction to discover who he was. I saw him at his table, and though I never went near him, I was in the



area and he saw me circling around looking at goods on nearby tables. Then I turned around and poof! he and his goods were gone. He'd folded his tent and stolen away. So much for courage.

I haven't seen any reports of the convention save for Mike Glycer's item in File 770 #7, which I'm enclosing as #9. which reported my activities in brief but pointed out that I spent only an unavoidable \$5 to get us over the line from Arizona's last gas station to Blythe, California where we filled up the Winnebago's tank.

The Rally! #39 piece is especially virulent not only because he reprints the same piece that defamed me from #38, but because he continues to aver that I spent money in New Orleans when he knows goddamned well that I was there one night, was driven in by friends from the airport to the hotel, went to speak, stayed in the hotel where everyone else was put up under a block booking, and planed out the next day without spending a cent. All that aside, NOW's interest in having me--as well as Ms. Virginia Carter--do this gig was to push for ERA ratification in Louisiana through the news media that were covering the Tulane seminar. (Not to mention that speaking out against TV in such a prestigious forum does good things in and of itself.)

I have done similar gigs in unratified states. I recently went to Columbia, South Carolina to speak, where my lecture was contingent on their setting up an ERA seminar in conjunction with the local ERA forces. This kind of guerrilla activity is very high on NOW's list of worthwhile efforts. Where better to speak out for the ERA than in the very states that have refused to ratify? Evidence of this is enclosure #10.

I find it less than amusing that Markstein's rag trumpets the slogan RALLY PRINTS ONLY THE TRUTH on the front page of issue #39. I leave it to you guys, after reading all this material, to comment on that one.

Which brings us to the present. There have been, apparently, a number of fanzines--such as Janus, which I haven't seen--that have reported on my IguanaCon activities and have given me good marks. But still the rumors persist. One rumor has it that I actually had a secret room rented in the Adams and that I sneaked in and out to sleep there. Another says I was eating meals in restaurants on the sly. I'm not even going to bother answering such nonsense. Too many people saw me crawl out of that fucking sweatbox of a Winnebago every morning, shaving gear in hand, trudging in to the Hyatt to use the con committee's shower so I wouldn't stink. Even Bob Silverberg shook his head in disbelief the morning we "had breakfast together." I got my usual paper cup of coffee from the con committee pot in the paymaster's office, and sat with Bob as he ate breakfast in the atrium coffee shop. "Have a piece of bagel and lox," he said. "No thanks," I said. "I can't." "Go ahead," he said, "it's paid for ...you aren't spending any money; it's my breakfast." I shook my head. I couldn't do it. "I know it doesn't put any money into Arizona coffers," I said, "but what if some schmuck like Markstein comes by and sees me eating it?" He smiled and shook his head in bemusement. I was holding to the letter of what I said I'd do.



I suppose the only possible "infraction," if the assassins are pressed beyond the point of rationality, is that I fell asleep in the Berkly-Putnam suite during a party, and woke up very late. (There wasn't much possibility of sleeping in the Winnebago, with the heat around 120°, and I was pretty bushed by the night of the Berkly-Putnam party.) And I just dozed off, sitting on the bed with friends, rapping. They didn't wake me, and I came to around three in the morning...at which time I crawled back to the Winnebago for the rest of my night's "sleep." But I don't think that can truly be called "sneaking." Just exhaustion. In any case, it should be mentioned for all the assholes who choose to believe everyone is as cowardly and disingenuous as themselves, that no one really has the courage of his convictions to suffer unpleasant days and nights in support of a good cause...that when one has pulled off a number like the one at Phoenix, the feeling of being a hero is heady beyond belief...and worth a thousand years of pain and angst from slugs and moles and vampires.

That leaves only one point to be reconciled.

All the bad publicity from slobs like Markstein that preceded the convention, all the remarks such as the ones in DNQ that said not only would I mess up the convention but that I was an embarrassment to NOW and the ERA forces, that I would do them harm as well as the IguanaCon needs to be put to rest. In vindication of my actions and in testament to what I tried to do at Phoenix, I offer enclosure #11, the final items in this much-too-long compendium of horrors. I don't know if you guys are going to actually reproduce any of these documents or just allude to them and verify that you've seen them, but if you can, reproduce these two items. One is a letter of thanks from Arizona NOW/ERA thanking me for the money I raised for them--close to \$2500--which helped them in the Arizona primary elections, to get into office the first woman-oriented state legislators in Arizona's history. The other is a letter from the convention's chairman, Tim Kyger. I think it speaks for itself.

Now that it's over, now that I've said my goodbyes to fandom and need never again suffer the time-waste and pain of freaks like Markstein, I can say I'm glad I did it, that I'd do it again if I had it to do over. But it wasn't easy, and it wasn't wonderful, and it only made me hate some aspects of sf and fandom more than 25 years of dealing with the Marksteins of the world had done. I hope you'll circulate fandom widely with this material, Guy and George. Particularly the women who publish DNQ. And I hope no one else is foolish enough ever to be gulled by Markstein.

If all this serves any purpose, let it be to alert fans that there will always be fools and monsters in their midst, that people like Markstein and his kind can corrupt the wonderful world of fanzine publishing. It's a small community, and it cannot long survive if people like Markstein are permitted to run loose hurting and corrupting.

Thanks for asking to see all this. I think it covers the subject as completely as anyone could wish.

All best,



HARLAN ELLISON