



Challenger no.

41

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Challenger 41

A science fiction fanzine for the pure of heart edited by

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The DEMONS in us all ...



They haunt us, perplex us, torment us ... entertain us. They take every shape, come at us from every angle. Demons, in whatever form, are everywhere, and this *Challenger's* contents demonstrate that truth.

Sometimes the themes I come up with for *Challenger* are born in real life. Such it was for my Katrina issue (#23), following the hurricane, and my medical one (#35), created with staples in my tummy after my diverticulosis operation. Sometimes my contributors dictate the concentration of the number through the material they gift me – case in point, James Bacon's generous exploration of matters military. And often the cover art I have on hand suggests a theme too strongly to be resisted – Ron Sanders' wonderful cover to "Monsters into the City" (monsters; #39) or Ken Mitcheroney's musical illo of Ripley and the Alien doin' the Bump (music; #27) or Sheryl Birkhead's mutant doggy (#28; who could resist honoring *pets* after that?).

This issue is like that. I stole the cover for *Challenger* no. 41 from a website of Japanese manga art – for no reason aside from the beauty of the figure. (I have no idea who the artist is, but my apologies anyway.) Call her succubus, call her demon, call her Thursday, I built the issue about her. (Rose-Marie juiced up the colors in the image substantially. All hail *la belle*.) Rich Lynch brings us into the story of a one of the best theatrical experiences any of us have ever known, and one of the best *sets* in the history of film. Jim Ivers, speaking of movie horror, focuses on a classic. Personal demons grip Chris Garcia (at the carnival) and Tom McGovern (through a cult). It would be no *Challenger* without Mike Estabrook's verses, which you'll find hither and yon.

Consistent *Chall* pals and heavyweight SFers Greg Benford and Mike Resnick describe demonic encounters – although I met Edward Teller once and he wasn't so scary. I also recently wrote a novelette I intended for these pages, but it was banished from the Contents by *la belle*. Rose-Marie insists that, if I try hard enough, I can *sell* it. It's called "Comely Among the Maidens", so if you see that title above my byline at someplace professional, blame her. In its stead is a quickie piece I wrote *and* transcribed on May 17, 2017, "The Damned Man", a tidbit I've been tumbling over in the rock-polisher of my mind for a while now.

All is not grim. Spaced about these contents are non-demonic pieces designed to relieve the pressure of perdition. My father-in-law, Joe Green, contributes a think piece on the future more optimistic than our present would seem to allow. Here is the second of the charming articles Tom Rasely sent me some time ago on movie SF. Taral Wayne turns to TV for SFnal sustenance. (Anyone else see those recent *Star Treks* with enhanced FX?) And of course there is Rose-Marie. Check out "Robot Rosy" by our great friend Brad Foster, dispelling all demons on our bacover.

Bitte, as Mr. Grumer would say, Enjoy.

GHLIII

My Personal Demon

Chris Garcia



I am one of the most frightened humans who has ever lived. I am scared of just about everything, and always have been. When the rest of the world being paranoia fear factories, I was there to meet them, to greet them with hugs and tin-foil hats. It stands to reason, then, that I

should believe that roller coasters are death-in-waiting; they must be abattoirs housed in amusement parks. Interestingly, this is not the case, largely due to the existence of my own personal demon... well, due to The Demon.

I was 8. We went to Great America about

three times a year, and this was the last time for 1983. My Dad was a guy who loved a good roller coaster, but since it was just me and him this time, he hadn't been able to ride any, and well, he was not happy about it.

The middle of the day in August at Great America would see an exodus, people would flee the heat for indoor shows or leave the park all together. This meant that between 1 and about 4, you could pretty much hop in line and end up with a seat on the first train to pull into the coaster station. The Demon was Great America's best coaster. It had once been The Turn of the Century, but when they added two loop, the first looping coaster in Northern California, it became a must-ride.

And my Pops MUST ride it!

So, when we walked past it after the third hanging cages ride of the day, Pops turned to me and said, in his clear Dad voice (which I'm still trying to master with my own sons) "we can either ride the Demon, or go home."

I did not want to go home. In fact, I wanted to ride Orleans Orbit, a spinning ride that certainly would have made Pops throw up.

"OK," I said, with a certain amount of what have I done? Running through my veins.

The line is made to look like it had been carved from pure basalt, perhaps to give the impression that you were journeying through the depths of Hell itself. That's how it felt, 100-degree heat mingling with 1000% adrenaline pumping through my tiny veins. I was not going to have a good time riding my personal demon, and I knew it. This was how a more thoughtful 8-year-old Chris Garcia would have thought a condemned man walking towards the gallows would feel. Of course, I was not a thoughtful 8-year-old, and was probably thinking about the Banana Splitz, or perhaps the churro place right across from the exit of the ride. I knew there was terror waiting for me, though. So. Much. Terror.

We walked quickly through the line area to the boarding platform. The heat of the day had hastened my execution, it seemed. Pops put us in the front seats, possibly to punish me for something terrible I had done in the dim-dark past. We had to wait for just two trains to come

and go before we were seated, and it seemed like less than a second before the train went click-click-clacking up-up-up the first hill.

My dear ghod is was high. I could see the entire park, the entire City of Santa Clara, the entire State of California, all of it, it seemed to 8-year-old Chris. As we climbed, the haze of Silicon Valley obscured some parts of Downtown San Jose and especially the scant bit of –

Oh

My.

Ghod, we're going down!

My view was forced towards the ground as the track twisted away from the sky and made its drop towards the two loops. I couldn't scream. I couldn't breathe. Since we were in the front, we were moving the slowest down the hill, but it also allowed us full view of what we'd be driven full-force into – the cold cold ground. We bottomed out, and then rocketed up that first loop. I know I must have blacked out for an hour or two, but I came to when we started up the second loop about fifty feet later.

Sheer terror.

There is no other way to describe it. Everything I was feeling at that moment was terror and its cousins utter terror and complete terror. We rocketed around the track, and I could tell that we were slowly after dives through a rocky, mouth-like opening I was sure would sheer my Pop's head off it was so close, and then a few fast turns. Somehow, we all survived. This demon had not conquered us, and now we were within a few short meters of the –

Oh.

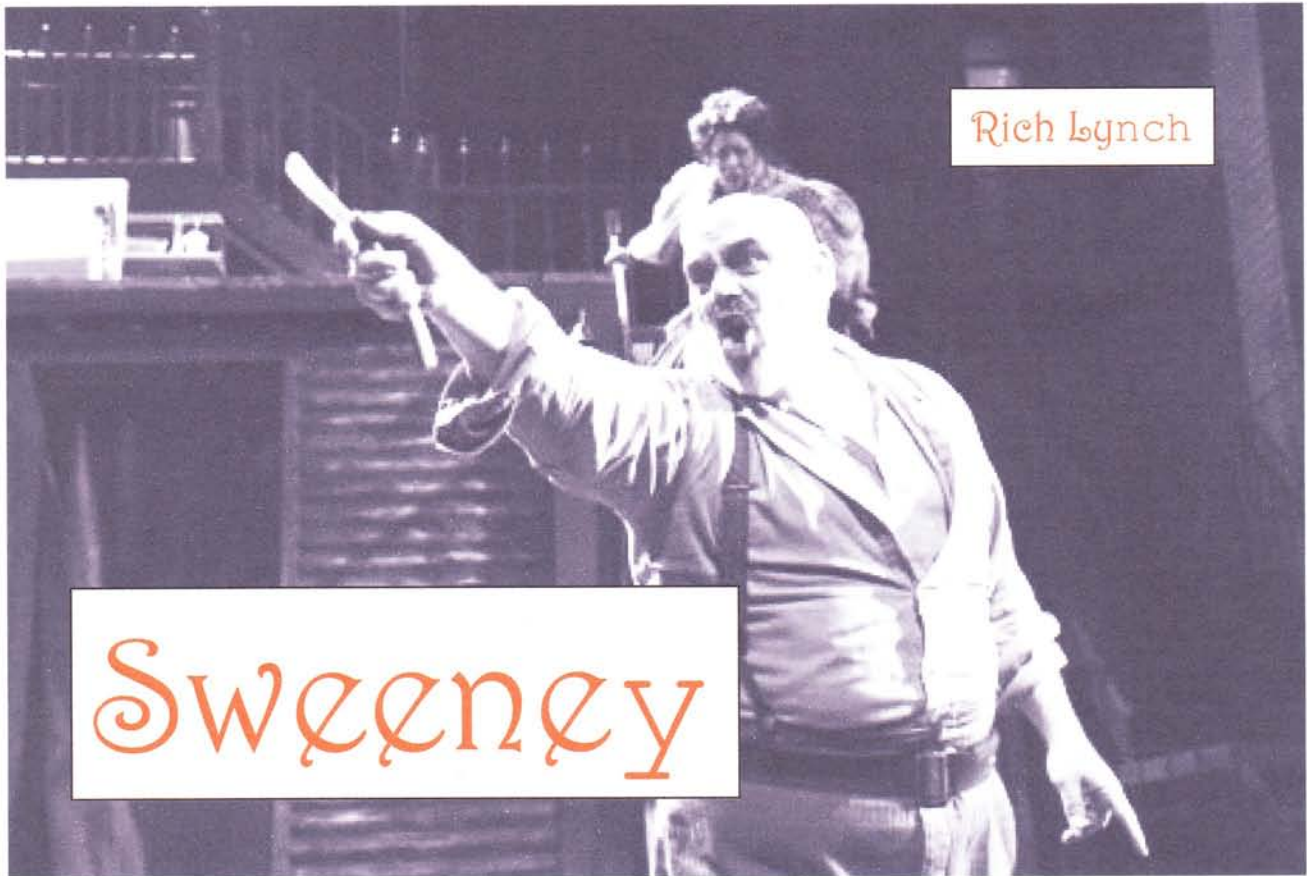
My.

Ghod – A corkscrew.

As if trying to murder me at the last possible moment, as if purposely waiting for me to run to the closet in the final reel so the masked murderer could plunge his knife into me, they twisted the track, inverted us, and

Continued on page 31

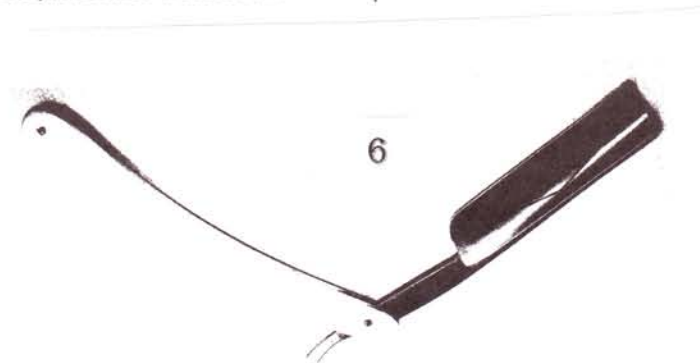
*"Attend the tale of **Sweeney Todd**..."*



Back in 2012, at the Chicago Worldcon, I participated in a discussion panel for which I wasn't even close to being qualified.

I only found that out while I was up there on the dais in front of the audience. The panel was titled "Magical Musicals" and the topic was about use of fantasy-related themes in musical theatre. I had wanted to participate not only because my friend and the convention's Guest of Honor, Mike Resnick, was on the panel, but also because I

have a strong interest and enjoyment of Broadway musicals and I had thought I might have something to add. But as it turned out, I was way, way out of my league. All the other panelists, Resnick included, had immense knowledge of the topic; one of them had even written a quiz book about Broadway musicals. So I tried my best not to embarrass myself, which mostly consisted of letting the other panelists do almost all of the talking.



At the very end of the hour all the panelists were polled on which Broadway musical, of any genre, was their all-time favorite. My answer was *Anything Goes*, mostly because of all that wonderful Cole Porter music and that the stellar performance of show I saw featured the great Sutton Foster as the lead. But three of the other four panelists, Resnick included, were entirely in agreement on their choice: Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

This more than a bit surprised me, not only because with all the musicals to pick from that there could be such near-unanimity, but also on what their preference was. *Sweeney* is a very good show, to be sure, but it wouldn't make it into my top ten. I don't even think it's Sondheim's best musical. (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* leaves everything else by him in the dust. In my opinion, at least.) But that said, I would absolutely go out of my way to see a performance of *Sweeney*. Turns out I didn't have to go very far.

I live in the northwest suburbs of Washington, D.C., and I'm fortunate that there are many high-end regional theatre companies within a relatively short distance. The closest is over in Olney, Maryland, which is about a 25 minute drive. It's been doing Actors' Equity-level productions since 1938 and in its eight decades of existence has staged hundreds of shows. Olney Theatre Center, over the years, has had many big-name movie and theatre stars as featured performers, including Helen Hayes, Tallulah Bankhead, Burl Ives, John Carradine, Carol Channing, Roy

Scheider, Olivia de Havilland, and Ian McKellen. Each OTC season includes no fewer than three musicals, and for 2017 the first of them was *Sweeney Todd*.

The show has been around long enough that we're all probably fairly familiar with the plot. It's based on a serial that appeared way back in the 1840s, in one of Britain's 'penny dreadful' magazines. The main character is a barber who had been falsely convicted of a crime and shipped off to Australia, leaving behind a wife and infant daughter.

Years later he returns and in a psychopathic rage carries out his revenge by killing those who were responsible and while he's at it, many others as well. And in the process, providing a continuing supply of meat for the pie shop of his downstairs landlord, Mrs. Lovett.

No big names were in the cast, but there was no lack of high quality actors. In particular, David Benoit, who played Sweeney, is a powerful baritone who was mesmerizing in the role. Reviews of the show mentioned that he wanted to perform as this character so much that he took a three month leave of absence from his other gig in the national tour of *Phantom of the Opera*.

But in my view, it was the scenic design that was the real star of the show. OTC is continually cash-strapped but it has nevertheless gained a reputation for opulent stage design. The one

for *Sweeney* was done by a Peruvian immigrant, a lady named Milagros Ponce de León who has earned her chops in various productions throughout the middle Atlantic region. It was rich in both detail and functionality, with metal-railing staircases and moveable sets-within-sets –

me trying to look intelligent on the "Magical Musicals" panel



more than enough for an active imagination to transport me to mid-nineteenth century London. As for the show itself, it was certainly entertaining though in a macabre way. There were many good songs and a lot of mayhem, with razor slashing and blood spurting. Often happening all at the same time.

So after finally experiencing a live performance of *Sweeney*, am I

going to elevate it into that upper echelon of musical theatre where Mike Resnick

and others on that Worldcon panel have placed it? No, I'm not ready to do that; I am way too much a fan of musical comedy. But I did like the show a lot, and it changed what had been a

conceptual stage design for OTC's production of *Sweeney Todd*



difficult day for me into a memorable one. And one more thing: after vicariously experiencing what a sharp razor can do in the hands of a crazed and demonic tradesman, I've made a firm decision.

I'm never ever

going to a barbershop for a shave. ☠

&&&

Mike Estabrook

Demonophobia

Fear of Demons

1

Don't like turning out the lights anymore
trying to go to sleep because I don't know
what demons will show themselves demanding
my attention for who knows what
for how long.

2

Next I see the town drunk shuffling along in his slippers
and old coat and he's got on these ridiculous
yellow headphones, off again in his own little world
with its own demons and saints, clouds and rivers,
shadows and gusts of wind and I think, hey that could be me.

"IS *Flash Gordon* My *Father?*"

an argument for watching *Star Wars*
in black & white

© 2001 by

Tom Rasely

*[The black-and-white world of Flash Gordon and Dr. Alexis Zarkoff is based in a much simpler time, and produced on a much smaller budget than ever George Lucas had to work with. So, when we hear Lucas say that Flash Gordon was one of the main inspirations for his space epic, it's time to give those original films another look...and take a fresh look at **Star Wars** as well.]*

"I've got a bad feeling about this." So says just about everybody in the *Star Wars* cast at one time or another. I'm convinced that even Chewie growls it somewhere along the line. And I can just hear people saying "You want me to watch the greatest movie ever made in black and white?? I've got a really bad feeling about this".

Before you dismiss the idea off-hand, let's re-examine those classic cliffhangers that Lucas deemed so important.



---WHO IS THIS GUY "FLASH GORDON"?---

Flash Gordon was a character created by comic strip artist Alex Raymond. A daily strip in black and white, with a Sunday strip in color, was syndicated by King Features. Flash Gordon was a continent-hopping, fun-loving polo player who "gave up his game" to return home, when his father discovered the imminent destruction of the Earth by a collision with the on-rushing planet Mongo. Mongo was being guided towards that end by the evil Emperor Ming. When Flash's plane crashes, he and Dale Arden parachute to the ground where they are greeted by Dr. Alexis Zarkoff who intends to try and save the Earth in his rocket ship. Dale and Flash sign on, and together they defeat Ming...at least, temporarily.

Flash Gordon was played by Olympic swimming star Larry "Buster" Crabbe, who also portrayed Buck Rogers, another comic strip space character, created by Nowlan and Calkins

(originally distributed by the John F. Dille Syndicate).

---A CASE FOR BLACK & WHITE---

Universal Pictures produced three Flash Gordon serials (*Space Soldiers* – 1936, *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* – 1938, and *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* - 1940) and one Buck Rogers serial (1939), each consisting of 12 to 15 short “chapters”. They are all in black and white. Being made during an era when color was still a bit of an expensive novelty (*Wizard of Oz* was made the same year as the Buck Rogers serial), and working under tremendous budgetary constraints, the use of black and white film was not so unusual.

Even later, when some of the great sci-fi space feature films were being made in color (*This Island Earth*, *Forbidden Planet*), many weren't (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Earth Versus the Flying Saucers*). More to the point, many of us saw those color films for the first time on Saturday afternoon Monster Movie Matinees, on black and white television sets.

When you understand that these “colorless” space classics, and especially Flash Gordon, were to become the inspiration for the Star Wars epic, you begin to see the purpose of this experiment.

---DON'T MISS THE NEXT EXCITING CHAPTER---

When viewed as “art”, the Flash Gordon films tend to look a little ridiculous; even when they were new they weren't taken as anything more serious than pre-feature filler at the movie houses; something to draw the crowd of young boys back to the theatre each week. The idea was that you were supposed to forget the exact details of the cliffhanger ending from the previous week so that the narrow escape at the beginning of the new episode wouldn't seem so outlandish. With the advent of video, these serials can now be viewed over and over again, which of course they were never meant to be.

However, watching them over and over again, you also have time to observe more than just a few similarities between them and the *Star Wars* films. Here's a few of the more striking ones:

- 1) In *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* each episode starts off the same way as each Star Wars film: with the now-familiar image of the scrolling story line.
- 2) Both films employ creative use of the “screen wipe” (the transition from one scene to another): it slides side to side, or top to bottom; it swirls; it moves at an angle; it's an expanding circle, or a shrinking circle and so on. For example, in chapter six [+17 minutes] of *Space Soldiers*, Princess Aura (Priscilla Lawson) moves off to our right as a vertical line wipes into the new scene as she exits. Then, just past the ten-minute point in *Star Wars: A New Hope*, C3PO and R2D2 have landed on the planet Tatooine. When they part ways, 3PO saying that his way is “much easier”, R2 heads towards the hills as a new scene is revealed by a horizontal wipe rises.
- 3) We can see similarities between Dr. Alexis Zarkoff and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Each acts as mentor and counselor to a more impetuous, young hero; each holds a vast knowledge of the power that “binds the universe together”. Dr. Zarkoff's adherence to science is just as fervent as Obi-Wan's faith in The Force.
- 4) There is a minimum of females in the serials, just as there are in *Star Wars*. So it's interesting to note that in Flash Gordon, Aura is the daughter of the bad guy Emperor Ming, and a Princess; her counterpart Princess Leia also turns out to be the daughter of the main bad guy Darth Vader. Neither is really a Princess.
- 5) Darth Vader's cape and headpiece define his character visually in the same way that

Ming's cape and cowl do. Both items are signs of their evil power.

- 6) Grand Moff Tarkin and Killer Kane (in **Buck Rogers**) are each illegal Governors of their territories; and both meet with a group of counselors at a round table headed by a throne which signifies that any sign of democracy is only for show.
- 7) A point of comparison could even be made between Prince Barin and Han Solo. Both appear at a point when the efforts of the hero have reached an impasse. Both are more reckless than the hero, and both eventually end up marrying a Princess.
- 8) Flash Gordon (played by Buster Crabbe) was blonde; Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) was blonde. Impressive...most impressive!
- 9) The "mechanical men" (annihilatons) in "Conquers the Universe" are easy to see as the prototypes of the soldier droids in the invading armies on Naboo in **Phantom Menace**. The annihilatons stretch our "disbelief" to the limit.
- 10) Check out the televisor in chapter seven of **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe** (+7½ minutes). It isn't by accident that we see the same swirling visual effect, and hear the exact same grinding sound effect once again in **Phantom Menace** (at eight minutes) as Princess Amadala communicates with the Viceroy.
- 11) Borrowing an effect from **Buck Rogers** serial, Lucas has two suns setting on Tatooine, very similar to the two suns visible on the landscape of Saturn.
- 12) The futuristic cityscape in **Phantom Menace** (at 1:27:30) with its criss-

crossing flying traffic patterns is surely a nod to the view of Killer Kane's city in **Buck Rogers**. Universal lifted that footage from the 1930 Fox musical feature **Just Imagine**, so it really becomes a double entendre.

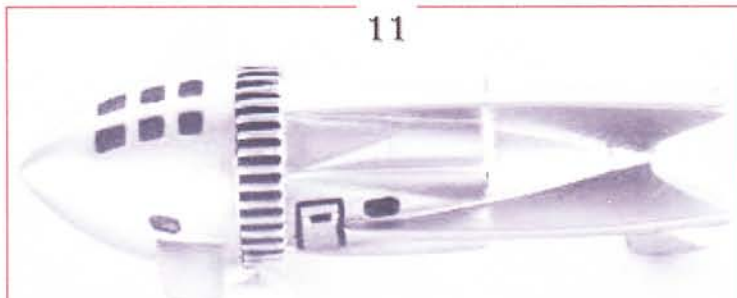
- 13) Then there's the music. According to several Lucas interviews, he had in mind certain classical music segments for each sequence in the film, which John Williams used as a template to create his massive opus soundtrack. **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe** relies heavily on the use of several preexisting classical pieces, most notably Franz Liszt's *Les Preludes*. This is hardly coincidental.

---DO OR DO NOT; THERE IS NO TRY---

Enticed? Great, but be aware while watching **Flash Gordon**: the script is weak, the acting and the sets are a little shaky, the editing is not as tight as it could be, the use of stock and repeated footage can drive you crazy, and the mixture of primitive, futuristic, Roman and Renaissance costuming and characters is often hilarious. Keep in mind though that these serials are over 70 years old. Also remember, you're putting yourself in the place of a young George Lucas, so be ready to willingly suspend your disbelief a little further than usual.

In making this experiment, the recommendation is to view **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe**, because it was the last one produced; and **Star Wars: A New Hope**, because it was the first one produced. This closes the time gap to a mere 47 years between the two films.

Then, go make yourself a bowl of popcorn, adjust your color control all the way to the left, sit back and enjoy the show...in black and white.



Greg's latest novel is *The Berlin Project*, described herein, and is terrific.

INTERVIEW WITH THE OGRE

Gregory Benford

(a portion of this was Published in *Physics Today* 2006)
copyright 2017 Gregory Benford

Job interviews can be harrowing, but few change one's career directions. One early afternoon in summer 1967 a Personnel clerk at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory ushered me into a large, messy office, saying only that "someone" wanted to ask me a few questions.

I was interviewing for what was then, and remains, the best paying postdoctoral position in physics. I was about to become a freshly minted Ph.D., and my advisor had told me to be cautious, and so apply to two positions, not the usual one, my favorite. So I had interviewed at UC Berkeley the day before. I wondered if this "someone" was about a security clearance.

Instead, there sat a distracted Edward Teller behind a messy desk piled high with physics journals.

Though I had never met him, I recognized him immediately. Teller was the co-founder and director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in San Francisco, said to have a near mythological status as the dark heart of weapons research. He was often described as the 'father of the hydrogen bomb' and was perhaps the inspiration for Dr Strangelove, the wheelchair-bound mad scientist prone to Nazi salutes in Stanley Kubrick's 1964 film.

I was finishing my thesis in solid state plasmas at the University of California at San Diego. Nobody had told me that Teller insisted on taking the measure of every postdoc candidate. "We didn't want you to be nervous," one said later. It worked; I was merely terrified.

I was tongue-tied. I worried that Teller might launch into a tirade, or ask me political questions.

He was the most daunting job interviewer imaginable, but not because he was an ogre. He was just off-hand intimidating--a famous physicist and Director of the Laboratory, looming large in a central mythology of modern science, the A-bomb. In the next hour no one disturbed us as Teller quizzed me about my thesis in detail. Attentively he turned every facet over and over, spying undiscovered nuances, overlooked difficulties, a calculation a bit askew. I struggled to keep up, questions incoming like bugs splattering on my conceptual windshield. By the time you see the problem, it's too late.

My thesis explored how strong magnetic fields could bind extra electrons to hydrogen-like impurities in indium antimonide--an effect later verified. Teller saw many implications, and soon

stood beside me at the blackboard, dashing out equations.

He was brilliant, leaping ahead of my jittery explanations to see connections I had only vaguely sensed. His mind darted as swiftly as any I had ever encountered. Within minutes I was sweating. The hour lasted days.

To my vast surprise, I apparently passed inspection. At the end, he paused a long moment, then announced "the most important question of all," gesturing for me to sit in the wooden chair beside me. I sank into it with relief, showering chalk from my hands onto his desk. Leaning closer, he said with a sudden scowl, "Will you be willing to work on whatever comes up?"

Unbidden, images from Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove* leaped to mind. He had already asked if I would be willing to work on weapons; this was even more open-ended. But Teller had impressed me as a deep, reflective man. I had grown up deep in the shadow of the Cold War. My father was a career Army officer, I had served in the reserves, and lived with my parents in occupied Japan and Germany. Advanced nations, yes, but the greatest could blunder the most.

It seemed to me that the sheer impossibility of using nuclear weapons was the best, indeed the only, way to avoid strategic conventional war, whose aftermath I had seen in shattered Tokyo and Berlin. So I agreed. There was no *Dr. Strangelove*. Teller just wanted to do physics and have fun. Within a few weeks, I had an offer. For whatever came up.

The Livermore postdoc was the highest paid in the world; Los Alamos was slightly less. The Berkeley postdoc paid half of the Livermore postdoc salary. To my surprise, the same week I got the Livermore postdoc offer, and then the Berkeley, I got a letter from Royal Holloway College outside of London. They had read a paper of mine and offered me a *faculty* position...at one third of the Livermore postdoc money.

I took the Livermore postdoc, of course. The ogre did not scare me at all.

In the next four years at Livermore, first as a postdoc and then as a staff physicist, I had a chance to work with Teller and the other wild talents, like Lowell Wood, who relished the collision of colorful imagination and careful analysis.

I got involved with the theory of tachyons, the theoretically possible particles which can travel faster than light—not the sort of thing one imagines a "weapons lab" doing, but Teller allowed the theorists a wide range. When the tachyon idea popped up in the physics journals, Teller thought they were highly unlikely, and I agreed—but worked on them anyway out of sheer speculative interest. Moving faster than light implies particles can travel backward in time.

Teller invoked a different argument against tachyons, recalling Enrico Fermi's famous question, "Where are they?" Fermi asked why aliens, if they are plentiful in the galaxy, haven't visited us by now. Teller noted that if tachyons existed, "Why haven't they been sent? Where are our messages from the future?"

My quick answer was that nobody had built a tachyon receiver yet. Neat, but perhaps too neat. Surely somehow nature would not disguise such a profound effect. With Bill Newcomb and David Book I published in 1971 a *Physical Review* paper titled "The Tachyonic Antitelephone". We destroyed the existing arguments, which had avoided time-travel paradoxes by re-interpreting tachyonic trajectories moving backward in time as their anti-particles moving forward in time. Without using a single equation we showed that imposing a signal on the tachyons, sending a message, defeated the re-interpretation, so causality problems remained.

Time plays a strange role in physics. Paradoxes are hard to rule out. I later wrote a



novel about this, *Timescape*, which has been in print a quarter of a century, suggesting that fundamental puzzles remain.

This pattern, speculation leading to detailed theory, I encountered often. I even wrote novels about it, a hobby that at times has taken my career, and life, in odd directions.

Ideas blossom from imagination, but they must be tested against reality--that, I learned from Teller, is the essence of science. The received wisdom of science is quite prissy, speaking of how anomalies in data leads theorists to explore models, which are then checked by dutiful experimenters, and so on. Reality is wilder than that.

Much later I began thinking of a remark by Teller, made during one of our swims together at lunch, when he would reveal his missing lower calf, from a disagreement with a streetcar. In his autobiography, *Memoirs*, he takes up the issue of a novel I have coming out from Simon & Schuster in May 2017:

What if we had the atomic bomb a year sooner? The easiest and least expensive method of separating isotopes, a method used throughout the world today, is based on a centrifuge procedure that Harold Urey proposed in 1940. General Groves chose the diffusion method instead. Karl Cohen, Urey's able assistant during that period, believes that Groves's decision delayed the atomic bomb by a year.

If Dr. Cohen is right, atomic bombs of the simple gun design might have become available in the summer of 1944 and, in that case, would surely have been used against the Nazis. Atomic bombs in 1944 might have meant that millions of Jews would not have died, and that Eastern Europe would have been spared more than four decades of Soviet domination.

Teller told me all this in the late 1960s. Many historians now regard this idea as probably so: we could have ended the war with nukes in Europe.

Many years later I met Cohen's daughter, Elisabeth. After my wife Joan's death in 2002 I married Elisabeth and spent many hours with Karl. Now I have a novel appearing, *The Berlin Project*, with Karl as its protagonist.

The cycle of events that my ogre interview began is still not over.

Gregory Benford is a Professor Emeritas of physics at UC Irvine.



Mike Estabrook

My Devils

1
Yes I know I could've become a famous poet
that time I met the Devil at the crossroads. I
could've
made the standard pact with him trading my soul
for poetic perfection. But I squandered my
chance
by choosing the girl instead.

2
Exciting watching the Rio 2016 Olympics
especially
the great champions – Phelps, Ledecky, Biles,
Bolt, Eaton . . .
think how I could've done something exciting
with my life
if only I had had the resources . . . then spot the
Devil
in the corner across the room laughing his ass
off.

3
What will I do who will I be when I can no longer
look after her, care for her, protect and provide
for her?
I'll be nobody that's who doing nothing with my
life
so I can never let that happen, must always be
strong for her
no matter what pact I have to make with the
Devil.



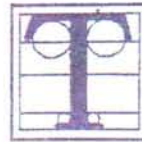
Among our interests on the *Challenger* staff is--how would put it--"outré knowledge." Here Rich Dengrove contributesinsibt into the most outré knowledge of all...black magic. The illustrations, by the way, are "seals", insignia developed fro the various demons called up by way of

THE GRIMOIRES



THE TRIANGLE OF SOLOMON.

by RICHARD A. DENGROVE



hey say "ain't" ain't in the dictionary. It is these days, but another word is

not: Grimoire. While it is listed in a supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, it is omitted by most dictionaries. But grimoires were well known only a couple hundred years ago as manuals for conjuring spirits to do people's bidding. They were known and feared, and sometimes craved. If you wished to gain treasure, seduce a woman or exact revenge against an enemy during the late Middle Ages or Renaissance, you often used a grimoire.

The word grimoire has the same origin as the word grammar, and it shows how far these words have traveled: one gaining connotations of evil and wonder and the other evoking boring days in front of a blackboard in elementary school.

The spirits conjured could be those of the stars and planets, a la Arab star magic. Certainly, most of the spirits conjured were controlled with planetary signs, often inscribed on the metal associated with that particular planet. Or, the spirits conjured could be fairies a la the folklore of Europe. Or elves. Or, the spirits conjured could be angels a la Jewish magic. Raphael or Uriel might be called, but any word ending in "el" was fair game. Or, the

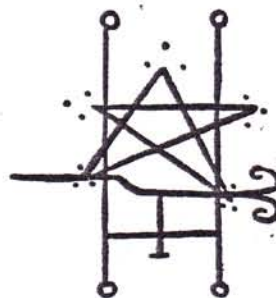
spirits could be elementals: the spirits of the air, water, fire and earth.

Of course, most grimoires used the spirits known as demons or devils. Creatures of Satan summoned by the magician for treasure, seduction, or revenge. So dangerous were they, circles had to be made to protect the magician, and he had to force his demons to sign an agreement, which he used the powers of heaven to implement. If he made one false move, he might lose not only his body, but his soul as well. At least, such was the belief.

Sometimes it is difficult to discern the spirit being conjured. While a famous grimoire, **The Harrowing of Hell**, claims it is conjuring demons, these demons look uneasily like elves. They are little and cute, and include an especially adorable Mephistopheles. Other grimoires conjure guardian angels, such as Lucifer and Satan.

While the magic of Medieval and Renaissance grimoires seems thrown together willy nilly like some mulligan stew, it generally follows the hierarchy set down by the theologians, philosophers and scholars of the time: the demons, spirits of the upper air, are controlled by entities higher than themselves, spiritually, powerwise, and altitudinally. The spirits of the stars ruled the demons as did the spirits of heaven, the Angels and God. This hierarchy is the same as Plato's and Aristotle's with Christian additions and a Christian point of view. There were techniques for the even lower humans to control all of these beings. The grimoires controlled the stars via the magic of the Arabs. And God and the angels via the rites of the Catholic Church and a smattering of lore from the Jewish Cabala.

In addition, these grimoires included some folk magic whose origins are harder to trace. That magic may not belong to a system at all. No system explains why a cock's tongue would chase away demons. None why a cock's crow would do the same. None why a woman would feel pain if her picture or a wax doll of her had been suck with a needle. None why demons would obey an earthly contract, once



THE SEAL OF ASTAROTH.

outside the magician's clutches.

The main influence on grimoires was probably the Catholic exorcism. The essence of the grimoire is the same as the essence of exorcism: to cajole demons into doing your bidding. It is true that exorcism and grimoires have different objectives. The objective of exorcism is to cure the ill, usually the mentally ill, while the objective of the grimoire is usually to gain wealth and power for the adept. But they both threatened demons with God and His angels -- and the saints for good measure -- if the demon or demons did not do their bidding.

Also, like the exorcism, the grimoires demanded that wouldbe magicians be purified for the ceremony. They often required the magician to practice temporary celibacy. Strangely, this didn't differ that much from exorcism; that also required temporary celibacy -- of priests supposedly longterm celibate. Also, the grimoires resembled exorcism in requiring ritual washing and the wearing of certain of special garments, and the need to have all things used consecrated to the purpose of the ritual.

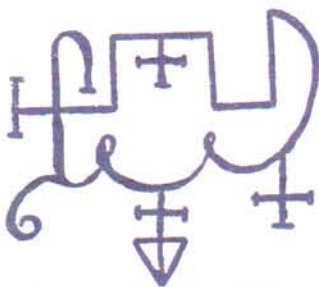
In fact, the grimoires in general borrowed a lot from the Catholic faith. This includes masses, fasts, confessions, psalms, Gospels, and litanies. Also aspersions: some grimoires required the spraying of stolen Holy water and other liquids. Sometimes they required that the Eucharist, the Holy bread and wine, be stolen in order that the grimoire's

ceremony be performed. Sometimes, part of the ceremony took place secretly in a church. Rarely was this for purposes of mocking Christianity, a la Satanism, however; overwhelmingly it was to mobilize the power of the Catholic Church and through it, God, and to force the demons to do the magician's bidding.

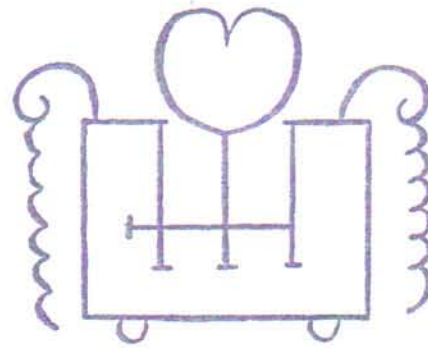


It was the belief in the Middle Ages that a clerical underground existed, which used grimoires and dealt with demons. Certain grimoires, like the 17th Century **The Constitution of Pope Honorius** and the 15th Century **Munich Handbook** basically required a priest to do the ceremony. In the 16th Century, the boastful artist Benvenuto Cellini claimed that he attended a conjuration in the ruins of the Colosseum, conducted by a Sicilian priest. According to court testimony against Gilles de Rais, that powerful 15th century nobleman used an Italian priest, a Father Prelati, to conjure demons. While I regard the trial as notorious, this testimony was among the few credible pieces of evidence presented there. Other trials, at various royal courts, often convicted a friar of doing the actual conjuring for a noblewoman. At all this, the Church did not bat an eye; it had no doubt that such things occurred. On the other hand, a priest caught conjuring demons might find himself on bread and water for life. In fact, the Church probably accused more priests than were actually involved with such activities.

Another ingredient in the grimoire was



THE SEAL OF ANDREALPHUS.



THE SEAL OF VAPULA.

astrological, or astral, magic imported from Arab lands in the 11th, 12th and 13th Centuries. This was still being used many centuries afterward. It fit into the natural hierarchy of the times: stars were more powerful than demons, though less powerful than Angels. In fact, it was often unclear whether the demons were spirits of the stars and planets a la Arab thought, or the spirits of the air above the clouds as the Church would have it. Arab star magic was obtained from books such as the **Picatrix**, which the Spanish King Alfonso the Great had had translated in the 13th Century. Grimoires advised that a spirit be conjured at astrologically propitious times when the right planet was in ascendancy. Incense was often burned during these rituals. As well, medals were made with astrologically correct shapes and materials, and the right signs.

These signs often resembled squiggles. Originally they represented the constellations, and their purpose was the attract the power of the planets and the stars and bring them to bear on the demons. Later, the squiggles lost their astrological meaning. More often than not, they were produced off the top of the magician's head with little rhyme or reason. While there was a Renaissance attempt to re-systematize the squiggles through a technique known as numerical magic squares, it never caught on. The squiggles did, however, resemble something common at the time: the symbols merchants marked their wares with, so that they could be identified no matter what a

porter's native tongue.

Furthermore, the grimoires used the magic of the Jews, especially the names of God and the Angels. The names of God go as far back as the Talmudic (2nd and 3rd centuries). The name possibly pronounced Yahweh goes back even further. Isidore of Seville in the 7th Century introduced ten names of God to Christendom: El, Eloë, Sabboth, Zelioz or Ramathel, Eysel, Adonay, Ya, Tetragrammaton, Saday and Eloym. Other names include Metatron, Agla and Shaddai. But while the Christian magicians knew enough to borrow the names, they were usually ignorant of the Jewish systems for manipulating letters and pronouncing names: e.g., the gematria, temurah, and the notarikon. It is true that, by the 15th Century, some Christian thinkers like Pico Della Mirandola and Reuchlin had learned these systems too, but they were an elite too intellectual to be involved in such trash as grimoires.

Furthermore, the circle in grimoires which was drawn on the ground, and which played a major role in conjuring demons, was of Jewish origin. The historian Josephus records that in the first century a Jewish magician made rain from inside a circle drawn on the ground. Pagans of this era laughed at the need the Jews had for a circle. They did not feel they needed such protection from their gods and their moody messengers, the daemons (from whence the word "demon" came). But the Christians and Jews felt they needed such protection, and the circle became standard.

The Christians, in particular, felt they needed armament against demons; and grimoires like **The Key of Solomon**, and its many progeny, armed their magicians with knives, swords, lancets, and the sacraments of the Church, among many other things.

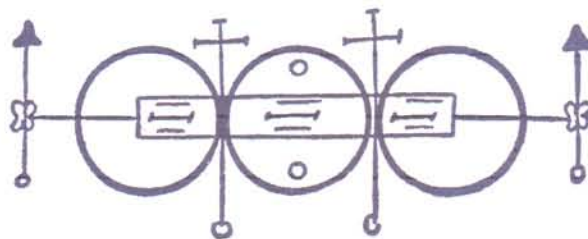
Furthermore, demonic magic is of Jewish origin: the demons are normally demigods the Jews borrowed from the Babylonians, the Canaanites and the Syrians. The Old Testament mentions some of the demons later used, like Ashtoreth, or Astaroth. The Jewish

Testament of Solomon, written between the First and the Fourth centuries, gives the first written account of demonic magic, however: in a tale about King Solomon, it enumerates demons, and gives their true name, their angelic opponents, and other information needed to control them. Many of the demons here were used in other grimoires, e.g. Beelzebub or Beelzeboul, Asmodeus, Azael, Aciel. Also, the Kings of the Directions: Amayon, Gerson, Zymymar, Goap. Kings of the Directions with similar names were still being used in the 17th and 18th Centuries.



However, educated Jewish males, the people who wrote about Jewish magic, did not use demons for the most part. They felt there was no reason why they should use disagreeable demons when they could use pliable angels and a good God to do their bidding. They left demonic magic to women and the ignorant. A few Christian magicians agreed. The 17th Century grimoire, **The Notory Art**, is the most prominent of the grimoires which used angel magic. The **Enchiridion of Pope Leo** goes so far as to use the magic of God himself. On the other hand, most Christian grimoires stuck to demonic magic. The reason was that most Christian magicians doubted that either God or the angels would come if called. Only demons would.

Illogically, the grimoires used angels to cajole the demons into coming.



THE SEAL OF FORNEUS.



Later followers of Plato, the neo-platonists, had some influence. Demons are often elementals, composed of or representing what the world (until the 17th Century) regarded as the four elements: air, fire, water and earth. Neo-platonists of the early Christian era created these spirits, elementals, for each element. Using another system, the 11th Century neo-platonist, Michael Psellos, created the Misophaes, literally the light-haters. These were the lowest demons in his hierarchy, which stretched from those who dwelt in heaven to the misophaes, who dwelt in the deepest depths of the Earth. The misophaes were blind, mute and deaf; and left their human victims blind, mute and deaf.

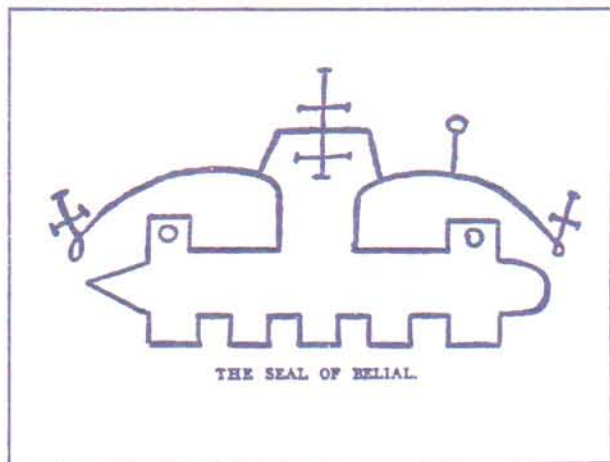
An increase in their status came while they remained a Greek word, a variation of Misophaes -- Mephostopheles, not-lovers-of-light. Under this term they became the sine qua non for the Devil himself, or at least a great prince of Hell. This was done in the original legend of Faust. In the 18th Century, Mephostopheles was transmogrified into Mephistopheles, of Goethe's Faust. And that name has lasted to this day. Some believe this name had a literary origin, others that it originated in the grimoires. I personally favor a literary origin for this demon. "Mephostopheles" appears in the grimoires attributed to Faust, but was not a much-used term. Even Faustian magicians much preferred the demon Aciel, one more closely associated with finding treasure.

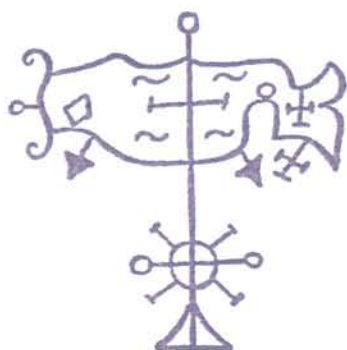
Later, "misophaes" was translated into Latin as lucifuge by an Antonio Venitiana del Rabina, probably in the 18th Century. Antonio's Lucifuge Rofocale also had a high status, Prime Minister of hell. And the lucifuges have been important in ritual magic ever since.

There is another element that is rarely mentioned as an influence, but which plays a great part in the grimoires, the influence of the grimoire writers themselves. These people were educated, but not scholars. They garbled Latin,

botched Greek and Hebrew, and presented an astrology that seems ignorant of the 24-hour day. Also, the writers of grimoires probably made up some of their demons and much of the paraphernalia of magic. Their work would, in turn, be copied by other grimoire writers, who also improvised and botched. I have already told how they made up their astrological and demonological squiggles. Also, the grimoire writers transformed incantations from intelligible languages into an unintelligible mass of gibberish. Christians mistranslated Hebrew, Jews mistranslated Latin. Sometimes, they even failed to copy properly. Waite gave this as the explanation for the completely incomprehensible ending to the *Verus Jesuitarum Libellus*. Also, whole sections of many grimoires were apparently forgotten or misplaced; otherwise, it is difficult to explain their lack of continuity.

What of the people who used the grimoires? Those would be magicians improvised as much as the grimoire writers did. They did this even though the slightest deviation from a grimoire's practice either should have nullified the magic or imperilled his immortal soul. In fact, some foolish 18th Century German practitioners broke every rule in their grimoire. And they succeeded in asphyxiating themselves, more through the agency of charcoal fumes, however, than demons. Cellini's priestly magician, who conjured in the Colosseum, added assafoetida's foul smelling fumes to his ceremony with much





THE SEAL OF CAIM.

more success: he claimed he succeeded in driving off a crowd of unruly demons with it. Improvisation was so much the rule that the 20th century scholar Elizabeth Butler is taken aback when in his account Casanova, the great 18th Century seducer, took care that his ritual accorded with **The Key of Solomon**. She was even more taken aback when he was scared away by a storm, and left the area too quickly to take advantage of a great opportunity for seduction.

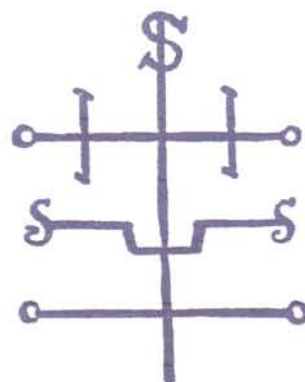


ne influence that was not very great was the influence of Satanism proper. The ritual magicians rarely worshipped the Devil and his minions, as such. Butler can only find one actually Satanic grimoire, the Wittenberg **Hollenzwang**, which dates from the 16th Century. This actually calls for allegiance to the Devil; it did this to exploit Faust's popularity at the time. However, despite its sensationalistic purpose, Butler claims that this grimoire is quite dull.

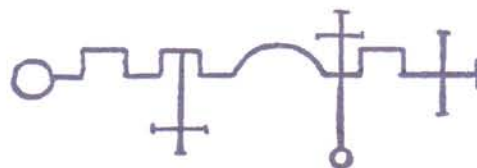
Other grimoires fell far short of this. But, how close of far they came depends on the period. Beginning in the 17th Century some grimoires dared to call their magic black. In fact, one called itself **True Black Magic**. Also, the **Grand Grimoire** instructs the magician in a pact that is somewhat less than one-sided, though quite far from two-sided. In this, it was more daring than older grimoires. God was beginning to lose His grip on men's

imagination then. However, the magicians of the time could not actually bring themselves to worship the Devil. This magicians before 1500 were far more willing to do. Some grimoires then call for actual sacrifices to the demons: e.g., a bat or a bird called a Hoopoe. Given the nature of these grimoires, we have to say the magician then could worship both God and the Devil, just as those in the 18th Century and after could worship neither.

As you can see, the grimoires lasted into the 17th Century. They did not seem affected by the Enlightenment, which weakened the old cosmic hierarchy elsewhere. Then, with fewer strictures, grimoires flourished more than ever, and many older grimoires are best known from their 18th Century editions. Some very innovative grimoires were produced then as well. The story continues into the 19th Century, too, and to this day. In fact, its history afterward has been so rich, colorful and eccentric it deserves a completely separate article.



THE SEAL OF ANDROMALIUS.



THE SEAL OF ZAGAN.

*Jim Ivers is an artist (with a highly employable BFA in painting), former copy editor for Internet World magazine, and alleged writer who resides in Connecticut and regularly fobs off articles to film magazines with questionable standards such as **Scary Monsters**, **We Belong Dead**, and **Exploitation Retrospect**. Oh, and **Challenger**, from time to time.*

Raising Hell:

Curse of the Demon Revisited

Jim Ivers

Call him the Devil, Lucifer, Beelzebub or Old Scratch, they just don't make good films about Satan (or Satanists) anymore. Diabolic dramaturgy got off to a good start with *The Black Cat* (Universal, 1934), *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*, *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (both 1941), and Val Lewton's *The Seventh Victim* (1943). This continued, albeit sporadically, into the seventies with noteworthy efforts such as Hammer's *The Devil's Bride*, *Rosemary's Baby* (both 1968), *Blood on Satan's Claw*, and *The Brotherhood of Satan* (both 1971). Since then, the subgenre has mostly degenerated into B-movie cheese, sleaze, and repellent gore. But in the middle of this cycle a classy black-and-white British film emerged that set a new standard for intelligent, nonexploitive cinematic horror.

Whenever professional critics or amateur film buffs compile lists of the 15 or 20 greatest horror



films, *Curse of the Demon* (1957) is usually among them. Besides being a top-flight chiller, the film transcends the not-so-respectable horror genre by virtue of a literate script, fine performances, and artful filmmaking. A finely-crafted work that can be enjoyed by anyone who appreciates the art of cinema, even those with no interest in horror stories. Similar to Hitchcock, director Jacques Tourneur prefers suspense over surprise. The horror elements are understated, relying instead on atmosphere, setting, and character. There are no cheap shock effects or jump-

scares. In some cases we know what's going to happen, we just don't know when, creating a palpable mood of tension and dread.

This study is not so much a review as an appreciation of the work along with some details to place it in context with its time. Plot descriptions will be kept to a minimum to avoid spoiling the story for those who have not yet seen

it. (And I strongly encourage everyone to seek out this gem.)

Principal photography was shot on location in England -- including some eerie scenes of Stonehenge -- by Sabre Film Production, an obscure independent outfit. The high quality seen in every aspect of the production suggests distributor Columbia Pictures also had a hand in funding and co-producing. (Anglo-American collaborations of this kind were common, especially on sci-fi/horror projects, in the fifties and sixties.) The film debuted in London in December 1957 under its original title, *Night of the Demon*. The U.S. print, which premiered in July 1958, had a few minutes trimmed off to quicken the pace and a title change (*Night* replaced by *Curse*) to avoid confusion with the Tennessee Williams drama *Night of the Iguana*. Some theaters screened *Curse of the Demon* as a double feature with Hammer's lurid *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958), although the two films are diametrically opposed in content, tone, and overall style.

The screenplay was adapted from "Casting the Runes", a short story written in 1911 by Montague R. James. On the surface, the narrative is about the existence of witchcraft and demonology in present-day Britain. But in a broader sense it depicts the eternal battle between the visible everyday world and the unseen forces of spiritual corruption and darkness.

American actor Dana Andrews was cast in the lead role, ostensibly to create more box-office appeal in the States. He plays professor John Holden, a scientist and professional debunker of psychics and mystical gurus. It's an ideal part for the stolid, square-jawed thespian. Holden could be related to the cynical police detective Andrews played in Otto Preminger's classic mystery *Laura* (1944). Holden attends a London symposium on paranormal psychology with the intention of exposing devil-cult leader Julian Karswell (Niall McGinnis). He accepts an invitation to stay at Karswell's elegant estate, along with Joanna Harrington (Peggy Cummins), niece of Holden's confidant who was recently electrocuted in a bizarre automobile accident. A number of increasingly strange and menacing supernatural

events take place. While strolling about the grounds, Karswell appears to create a sudden windstorm by sheer force of will. Later he secretly slips a parchment into Holden's papers that might possibly be a death curse. Holden's skepticism finally breaks down as evidence mounts that Harrington was killed by a demon summoned from Hell. This leads to an exciting, nightmarish climax aboard a train.

As with any filmic endeavor, the devil is in the details. This one manages to get everything right. The various story and technical elements mesh together perfectly to sustain an atmosphere that vibrates with supernatural energy. The direction, performances, cinematography, score, and special effects are all above reproach. There is, however, one point of contention that remains somewhat controversial. The original concept, according to director Tourneur, was to suggest rather than show an actual demonic being. He, along with some critics, objected to an animated beast from Hell creature (albeit an effective one) inserted into the film in post-production. The appearance of a horrific winged demon (summoned by Karswell) early in the film and at the climax eliminates the ambiguity built into the narrative. Initially, Karswell is introduced as a possible charlatan who dupes his followers with parlor tricks and psychological suggestion. The added scenes inform us at the start that he is a genuine Satanist with frightening occult powers. The titular demon was also intended as a surprise appearance at the film's climax. This is spoiled by the shamelessly exploitative theater posters done up in the style of a standard drive-in monster shocker.

Portly, balding Niall McGinnis was an inspired choice to play the charming yet sinister Karswell. At first we are disarmed by his genteel manners and impish sense of humor. He appears to be a harmless, old-style English gentleman living in antiquarian splendor in his country home (exterior scenes were filmed at Lufford Hall, Warwickshire). When Holden arrives, Karswell is entertaining children while dressed in clown make-up. The cleverly written conversations between the two men, pitting skeptic vs. mystic, form the core of the drama.

The popular belief that Karswell, a stout, middle-aged, and vindictive failed scholar, was based on notorious occultist Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) has been discredited. The Crowley of 1911, when the story was written, does not resemble Karswell (faithfully reproduced in the film by McGinnis). Karswell appears to be patterned after someone M.R. James actively disliked, Oscar Browning, a Catholic who turned Christian Scientist. Some, myself included, may find this disappointing as Crowley is such a thoroughly fascinating character who's never been properly portrayed on film (probably due to his personality being far too complex and contradictory). Somerset Maugham, a casual acquaintance, used Crowley as the model for the titular villain in *The Magician* (1908), an occult horror novel. The book was made into a movie in 1926. Karloff's devil-worshipping character in the aforementioned *The Black Cat*, another stylish must-see film, is also supposedly inspired by Crowley though any resemblance is superficial at best.

The sophisticated, highly-regarded ghost stories of M.R. James have influenced a wide spectrum of writers, from H.P. Lovecraft to Stephen King. James believed in the classicist tradition where art lies in the concealment of art, a pellucid surface with hidden depths. The terror of the supernatural is conjured up by implication and suggestion, letting the reader fill in the blanks. This is precisely why Jacques Tourneur was the perfect director for this film. Tourneur's *Cat People* (1942) and *The Leopard Man* (1943) in particular contain classic sequences of psychological tension and terror masterfully suggested rather than shown using shadowy compositions, clever camerawork, careful editing, and sound effects. This dark aesthetic would be categorized as film noir in the postwar era. Tourneur himself would go on to create one of the finest examples of film noir cinema with *Out of the Past* (1947) starring Robert Mitchum.

As for historical context, *Curse of the Demon's*

release in late 1957 was an anomaly that appeared without precedent or connection to contemporary trends. Supernatural horror and monster-based gothic chillers had been in stasis since Universal Pictures shut down its horror-film assembly line in 1946. By the early 1950s,

science fiction had captured the escapist entertainment market. Horror carried on as a component of these new Space Age thrillers in the form of hideous aliens, mutants, and giant atomic insects. But stand-alone horror films were rare outside of a few forgettable, stale retreads.

This would change in 1957 due to a gradual shift in popular culture. That summer, vintage horror was given a Technicolor makeover by Hammer and reintroduced as *The Curse of Frankenstein*. The film was a surprise hit that paved the way for a new cycle of reimagined gothic horror chillers. In

the U.S., American International Pictures took a chance with a present-day monster thriller, *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, also a huge hit. In October, Universal packaged and sold its 1930s-40s horror classics to television. This created a new TV-generation of fanatical "monster kids". Sensing a change in the wind, Universal returned to supernatural horror with *The Thing That Couldn't Die* (1958). A new boom in horror features had begun, unwittingly anticipated by *Curse of the Demon*.

In 2009 director Sam Raimi released *Drag Me to Hell*, a highly effective and disturbing horror shocker (very) loosely based on "Casting the Runes". The story concerns a young woman plagued by the terrifying manifestations of a gypsy curse. Another film adaptation of "Casting the Runes" was announced in 2013 by director Joe Dante. This modernized retelling pits a celebrity blogger against Karswell, a successful motivational speaker and self-help guru. Simon Pegg was attached to star, though the film appears to be stuck in limbo, otherwise known as "Development Hell."

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The Building

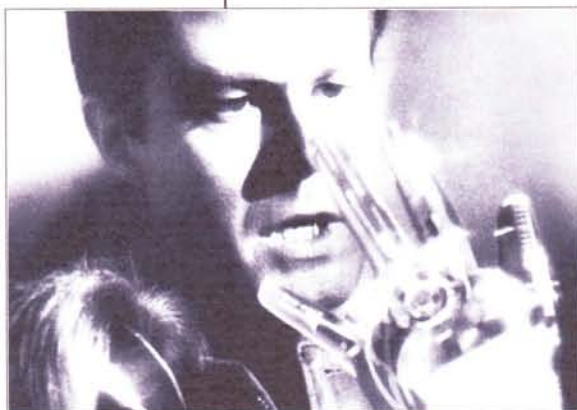
Rich Lynch

There's an old edifice in downtown Los Angeles that's not only an architectural landmark, it's also earned its chops many times over for being the filming location of many cinematic and television productions over the past ¾ of a century. It's the iconic Bradbury Building.

Its construction dates all the back to 1890s, originally intended to be the Trump Tower of its day for Los Angeles gold mining and real estate tycoon Lewis L. Bradbury – a monument to himself. But it wasn't completed until after Bradbury died and has instead led a much more prosaic existence, mostly as an office building. Today it's the home of the LAPD's Internal Affairs Division.

What's iconic about the building is its interior. There are marble and terra cotta tiles on floors and walls, wood paneling, decorative ironwork, and an open "bird cage" elevator. But the dominating feature is the five-story atrium where all these design details are gloriously on display. I was there, briefly, in 1992 as part of a walking tour of downtown Los Angeles and I remember that I was stunned by how wonderful the interior of the building was. But that was not the first time I had ever seen it.

In real life the Bradbury Building might be nothing more than an office building, but there's nothing prosaic about its alternate universe existence as a filming location. Perhaps its most famous moment happened back in 1964, when it was the setting for an episode of *The Outer Limits* which has been

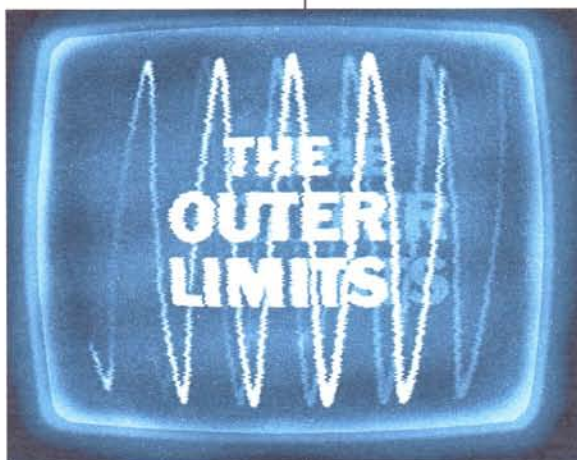


touted by *TV Guide* magazine as one of the 100 greatest television episodes of all time: "Demon with a Glass Hand".

I was fourteen years old when I viewed it on its original airing. Back then, *The Outer Limits* was struggling through its two seasons as a clone of *The Twilight Zone*. It featured more

science fiction and less fantasy than *The Twilight Zone*, but the writing was much more uneven. So much so that only a very few episodes left enough of an impression on me where I can remember anything about them. The best of these was "Demon with a Glass Hand" and there's a reason for that – the teleplay was written by Harlan Ellison.

I don't need to give much of a description about the plot because many if not most of those reading this essay have probably seen the episode (and for those who haven't, you



can find it on both YouTube and Hulu). A man named Trent, played by Robert Culp, wakes up on one of the upper floors of an office building having no memory of the previous several days, and finds that he has a glass hand which seems to be a computer of some kind. But it's incomplete, missing several fingers which are in the possession of alien invaders. The remainder of the teleplay becomes both a quest and a deadly game of hide-and-seek as Trent recovers the missing digits, and in doing so, gains knowledge from the ever-more-powerful computer as to why the aliens are after him.

It all might seem a bit hackneyed by current-day standards, but back in 1964 this was cutting edge stuff for network television. So much so that it won a Writers Guild of America Award, in 1965, for "Outstanding Script for a Television Anthology". Ellison, who has a reputation for disliking productions of his teleplays, was described as being reasonably happy with the episode even though for budgetary reasons the producers cut out several of Ellison's characters from the final version of the script.

There was also one other change the producers made in the script to save money. Originally, the cat-and-mouse chase between Trent and the aliens was supposed to take place across the country, but that was

changed to a single location – the interior of the Bradbury Building. There doesn't seem to be any surviving records as to why that particular interior was selected, but the choice was a good one. The futuristic story amid a retro setting worked very well.

As I mentioned, this was not the only time the Bradbury Building has appeared in television and film. The building's interior



design was particularly good for some of the famous noir mystery movies of the 1950s, including *D.O.A.* and *I, The Jury*, as well as more modern noir-ish movies such as *Chinatown*. And for science fiction enthusiasts, the Bradbury Building was a

cast member, of sorts, in one of the best genre movies of the 1980s, *Blade Runner*.

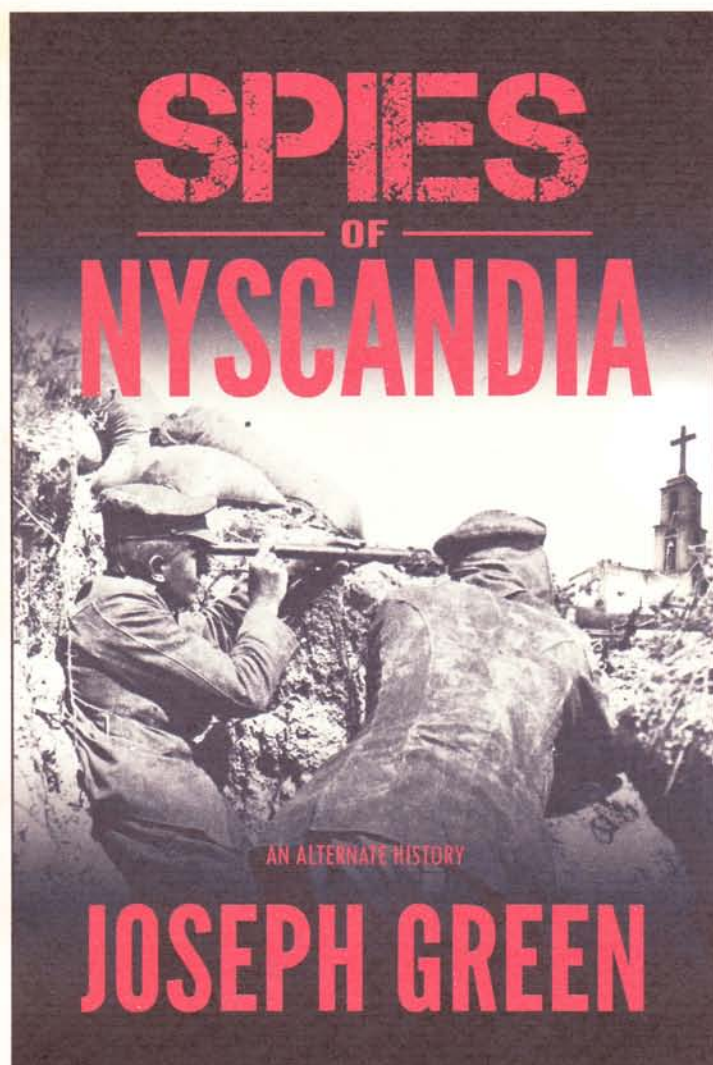
I've viewed "Demon with a Glass Hand" several times in the decades since 1964. It's no longer the gosh-wow experience that it was back then but it still holds up pretty well. But I am fully expecting my next visit to the Bradbury Building, whenever that is, *will* have the same gosh-wow effect on me as when I was last there a quarter of a century ago. I'm very much looking forward to seeing it again – and may it happen soon!

~~~~~

ARTISTES ... Most of the artwork in this *Challenger* was purloined from the internet, but we must credit **Randy Cleary** for the portrait of Spock in "The 50-Year Mission", **Kurt Erichsen** for the roller coaster nightmare atop "My Personal Demon", and **Charlie Williams** for the pic of Greg Benford.



# THE WAR AT HOME BEGINS...



**W**hen Leif Erickson spread the word in the year 1000, Scandinavians left their cold countries in droves to occupy the huge and far more temperate north continent in the new world. By 1900 the nation of Nyscandia (New Scandia) has 200 million largely secular citizens. But the Catholic Church, which dominates Europe as well as the giant New World nations of Aztecland and Incaland, wants this nation of apostates forcibly converted. For twenty years Church leaders sent spies into Nyscandia, setting up a huge network ready to cripple the country with acts of sabotage when open war breaks out.

Johann Kirkwood and his partner Axel Haraldson, agents in the anti-terrorist agency Ansvar, have been rooting out deeply concealed spies in Nyscandia for a decade. But then the long-planned open war breaks out, and all Ansvar agents find themselves in a desperate race to identify the terrorists before they can sabotage vital production facilities and seriously cripple the country.

**THE MIND BEHIND THE EYE** "Here is story telling with a vengeance . . . a rich and eventful tale...liberated, no-taboo approach so sorely needed before the prudery was zapped...when the extraordinary and/or unique comes along, as it does in this book...makes you regret that there is not more."

**Theodore Sturgeon**  
**GALAXY BOOKSHELF**

## **WELCOME TO THE GREENHOUSE**

"My favorite story here is 'Turtle Love', by Joseph Green."

**Karen Burnham**

**CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY** "This book fully deserves five stars, and more. If you can find it, buy it!"

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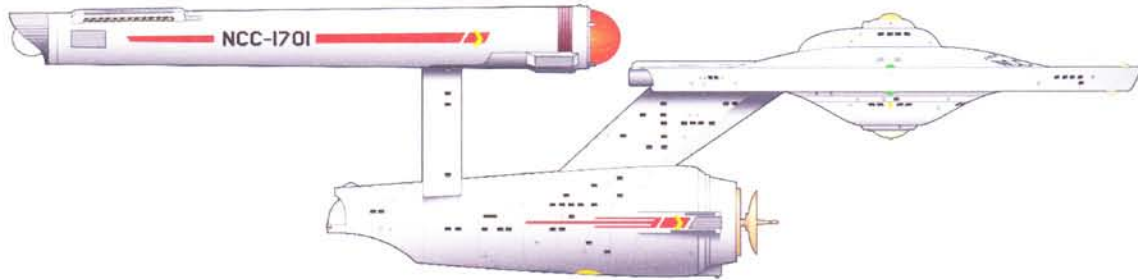


# Its Fifty-Year Mission

Taral Wayne

**F**ifty years of *Star Trek* ... and we're still no closer to a peaceful, democratic world government or warp drives than we were in 1966. What gives? Of course, Gene Rodenberry's iconic future history also predicted a eugenics war in the 1990s, and we managed to give that a miss, so maybe the reality hasn't been *all* bad.

*The Twilight Zone* and anything else that smacked of SF. I also remembered *Science Fiction Theater* and *Men Into Space*, although I had not seen much of them because I had been too young when they first aired. I read science fiction comics like *Magnus Robot Fighter*, *Tales of the Unexpected* and *Space Family Robinson*. Yet, as much as I enjoyed all this, I was aware



Thinking back 50 years, to when I first saw the debut episode of *Star Trek* on Toronto's Channel 9, CTV, is as easy as a subtle gesture of the hand and the quiet word, "engage." I was 15 in 1966, and no stranger to science fiction. I didn't read *much* science fiction, which in those days could be difficult to find. It was never mentioned in English classes, except for one Bradbury story we were led to think of as "literature," and almost none could be found in the school library. There was little in the public library in Toronto, either, and a search of paperback racks in the neighborhood convenience stores only occasionally turned up a *Stars My Destination* or *Childhood's End* among the dominating presence of English armchair mysteries, Hollywood whodunnits, war stories, Bennett Cerf collections and middle-brow literature such as Pearl Buck and Grace Metalious. Yet, although I had not discovered science fiction as a genre, I had an appetite for it. I called it "space stuff."

Television was more generous in giving up its genre treasures, so that by 1966 I was a regular viewer of *Lost in Space*, *Fireball XL-5*,

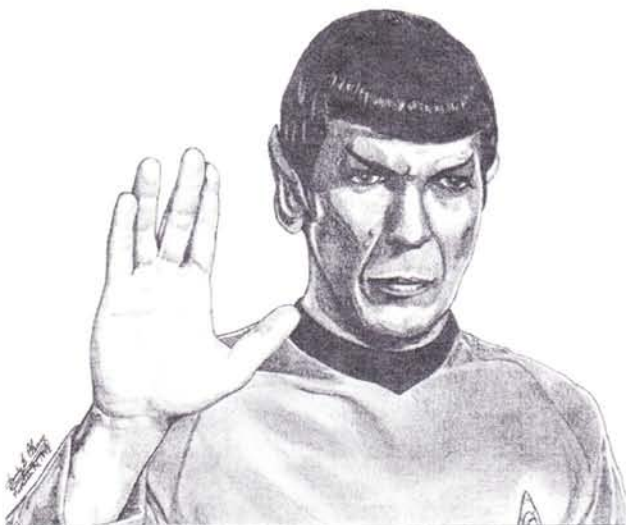
that most media SF was either not truly SF, was aimed at younger children or was hopelessly stodgy. I was more than ready for something better.

Something better came in the form of regular promotional spots on TV, all through the summer of 1966. An odd-looking object that looked a bit like a folding camp stool of some sort grew larger on the screen, until it tilted its saucer-like main structure toward the viewer so that you could see inside. The mat job was horrible, but didn't detract at all from the sense of wonder as you saw people inside, dressed in colourful, casual uniforms, bustling about the business of running whatever marvelous sort of contraption this was. Then the title *STAR TREK* appeared over everything, accompanied with the swell of an exciting fanfare!

Then *SPACE... THE FINAL FRONTIER... THESE ARE THE VOYAGES OF THE STARSHIP... ENTERPRISE!*

*Nobody* had ever heard those words before I did, watching that spot on TV. *NOBODY!* Now, fifty years later, you *cannot* imagine the excitement I felt.





Then again, maybe I'm imagining all this, and William Shatner never said those words until the first episode aired on September 6<sup>th</sup>. It doesn't matter. The promos had me well-primed to hear them, in any case. I probably had all my rocket models and maybe some of my SF paperbacks spread out around me as I sat on the floor and tuned in to CTV, which was premiering *Star Trek* in Canada. That's right ... I saw it two whole days before all you American readers. And heard the "Final Frontier" speech *years* before millions and millions of mere rerun Trekkies. Eat your hearts out.

The first episode aired, unfortunately, was "The Man Trap." Not a bad episode but disappointingly conventional, revolving around an alien monster that masquerades as human but sucks our blood. It harked back to all those 1950's SF films, half of which were "monster movies," and are – for the most part – deservedly forgotten. The second and third episodes, "Charlie X" and "Where No Man Has Gone Before," would have been much stronger openers, but apparently the network was too nervous to start with anything that might be too novel for the audience.

I watched *Star Trek* religiously, every week, for three years. I bought the paperback collections that James Blish adapted from the scripts – going so far as skipping lunch so that I had the money to buy them. Seventy-five cents was a lot more money in 1967 than it sounds like today. I bought the AMT model kits of the *Enterprise* and the Klingon *Bird of Prey*, for likely \$1.95 each. One or two other kits appeared over the next few years, but there was

surprisingly little media tie-in in those days. I drew the line with the comic books, which seemed execrably drawn to me. The gush of toys, games, t-shirts, action figures, bubblegum cards, desktop displays, sheets and pillowcases, candy bars, Christmas ornaments, coffee cups, cufflinks and all the rest of that ~~shit~~ stuff all came later, along with *Star Trek* on the big screen and its own humongous fandom.

In all that time I missed only one episode, "Plato's Stepchildren," which I somehow missed in rerun for years and years and *years*...

There were no *Star Trek* conventions. There was no organized fandom, separate from science fiction fandom. At SF cons, opinion was divided between fans who thought *Star Trek* didn't count as real science fiction, and those who embraced it. Those who denounced *Trek* argued that all the ideas were borrowed from the written genre, and the action and visual spectacle showed it to be clearly related to other television adventure shows like *Gunsmoke* or *12 O'Clock High*. Advocates simply excused the television values as an inextricable part of the medium.

NBC made its fatal mistake in 1968, by nearly canceling the show. A massive fan-based write-in movement convinced the executives of the network to reverse their decision at the last minute ... but the third season was uneven at best, and ratings remained poor ... if not worse, due to a bad time slot and slashed budgets. It was only a rumour that "Who will rid me of this troublesome program?" was heard through the half-closed door of the NBC president's office.

And then it was all over.

At least until Paramount acquired the rights from Desilu and made the first, overblown movie a few years later.

As for me, despite my love affair with the original series, I let *Star Trek* go gracefully, and was never tempted to become a Trekkie. For one thing, the animated series sucked. I saw it premiered at Torcon II, in 1973, and there was no way to overlook the third-rate animation, nor that Larry Storch provided virtually every voice that was not from the original cast. (Which meant that everyone sounded like Corporal Agarn from *F Troop* to me). For another, I was deeply into science fiction fandom by then, and saw no reason to narrow my horizons from ALL of Science Fiction to just one television show ...



which some stubborn fans still argued wasn't really SF...

The movies, when they began to make them, weren't all that hot, either ... most of them. The Blish paperback adaptations gave way to Alan Dean Foster adaptations, then original novels by upcoming Trek fans-wanna-be-writers, and finally to literally tons of tie-in material. I sold off most of the paperbacks, and vowed not to get caught up in this madness. In one respect, I failed. I was a sucker for the starship models ... and later starship replicas ... and today I have an embarrassingly large assortment of Galaxy class starships, Birds of Prey, Warbirds, D'deridex class Romulan cruisers, D'7s, Ferengi Mauraders, Cardassian what-in-hell class ships, etc.

Otherwise, *Star Trek* was dead in the water to me. The endless stream of mediocre large-budget movies was something I could wait to appear as "previously viewed" copies at the video store before ever seeing. (Same with that mindless upstart, *Star Wars*, come to think of it).

But eventually it came 1987 and a new iteration of *Star Trek* began in *The Next Generation*, followed by *Deep Space Nine* in 1993. I was skeptical at first. None of these people looked like the adventurous, ethnic stereotypes I remembered from The Original Series! Why is that guy painted like a mime? How come the captain is an old, bald guy? Who is the woman with the horrible hair, and why is she allowed to wear lavender pajamas? Why is the *Enterprise* so fat? Yet the moment the NCC-1701D swelled into view, spreading out like the Andromeda galaxy in the main viewscreen, I was hooked ... and felt the old excitement of the Original Series rise again.

A number of my friends had gotten together at writer, Robert Charles Wilson's place, to watch the two-hour-long opening episode, "Encounter at Farpoint." It gave us much to talk about, after. Clearly, this iteration of *Star Trek* was a work in progress – in fact, many of the first season episodes were awkward. Yet here was science fiction television about *ideas* again, with strong, versatile characters and a vision of the future that had recaptured an unconventional space. I loved it!

Now that's all over with, too. I never grew particularly fond of *Voyager*, for reasons I'm not entirely able to explain. *Enterprise* was

worse still – the least Trekkish of all *Treks*. We have been given three new movies in the Abramaverse, which stand up *reasonably* well to *some other* space opera franchise ... but shat all over everything that came before, essentially saying that none of it happened, and now a new bunch of directors are going to tell us how the *right* way to do *Trek*, without any ideas that might distract viewers with serious thought. Like *Star Wars*, in other words. Exciting, yes. Occasionally amusing. But I haven't much interest in them.

I haven't yet seen the new offering, *Star Trek: Discovery*, of course, but take note of the fact that it takes place in the "past," rather than the "present" established by the last of the *Next Generation* movies ... much less in *Star Trek's* future. That's *two Treks* in a row that were set in the "past." I interpret this trend as a malaise of society in general, which no longer views the future with optimism. Moreover, the series will show on Netflix ... yet another service I no intention of installing and paying for monthly if I want to see this current iteration of *Trek*. I'm not willing to buy into a future of a near-infinite number of pay-for-use services and apps, in which you possess nothing yourself – not even the cyberspace in which you store your personal files. I'm sure Spock would have said, "That is not logical," and Data said, "Would it not be greatly to your disadvantage to continue paying for a thing over and over?"

Or maybe it's just that it isn't just *Star Trek* that's fifty: I'm fifty years older, myself.

Never mind. I bought *TOS* and *TNG* on DVD, and can watch them for the next 50 years without tiring of them. I want to buy *DS9*, too, and if *Discovery* is any good, then I may buy that on DVD as well. After all, it's the *future* that's coming, and anything might happen there. I might even learn to love *Star Trek* for a *third* time!





*Larry Montgomery is one of the founding fan editors of the South, becoming active in the earliest years of the 1960s. He is among the gentlest and most decent of men, so you'll understand why his personal demons include becoming*

# "Almost a Killer"

*Larry Montgomery*

**F**or the military I have it Made. Air-conditioned work place and barracks. Comfortable light-weight light tan uniform. Things cushy and easy. Working with a building size mainframe computer. Keeping the B-52 bombers flying to drop conventional bombs on Viet Nam and Cambodia.

Except for a few farmers most of Okinawa's native inhabitants make their living off the military in some fashion. The dollar is the medium of exchange and the Okinawans speak English.

Except, they long for autonomy and want to revert to Japanese control. For some two years they have been protesting in the street. For the most part peaceful protests. This changes in

the spring of 1970 and the protests turn violent. Protestors invade into military locations, damaging Uncle Sam's property and assaulting military personnel.

Quiet summer morning at work on the computer when an AP Captain – AP = Air Police, the Air Force version of Army MPs – herds us out the door down to another building. Okinawan protesters are threatening to break into the gates of Kadena Air Force Base. Everyone is rounded up to defend the base. Inside the other building are stacks and stacks of rifles, mostly M-16 semi-automatic rifles used by the Army in the rice paddies of Viet Nam.

We are ordered to grab a gun and line up outside. I reach over and grab an M-16. I think

better of it and move to another row, and pick up an M-14 sniper rifle with scope. I wore an Air Force Marksman ribbon on my uniform earned shooting an M-14. I had my own shotgun at age eight. I knew guns. The AP Captain marches us to within fifty yards of the main gate. We halt and wait.

Several thousand Okinawan protesters overwhelm the security at the main gate and stream into the base and head our way. We are the second line of defense. The AP Captain tells

us that we cannot allow the protesters to gain full entry into the base and we will open fire if necessary.

I swallow and wipe summer sweat off my brow. I joined the Air Force to keep out of combat and the last thing I want to do is shoot someone to death. Present Arms

order is given and I shoulder the familiar M-14, adjust the sight and see what appears to be a horde of Asian folk charging the line of geeks like me.

Open Fire order is given. Shots ring out and several protesters fall. I have the chest of a middle-aged Okinawan male in my sights. I hesitate, my heart pounding. I can't kill this man. He is not trying to physically harm me. He is thirty yards away and running towards me. I lower my sight as more gunshots ring out and more protesters fall. I have his right knee in my sights. I squeeze off a round and he falls.

The protesters are retreating. Threat averted. Roughly ten protesters are down





including my guy with a blown-off right knee. I think to myself he will limp the rest of his life.

The ten wounded protesters are carried to the infirmary for medical treatment. We are marched back, rack our weapons and march back to work.

My heart is still pounding in my chest, heavy perspiration. Adrenaline still pumping in my veins. Scores of different scenarios run through my mind. If the protester had been

closer would I have killed him? Thank God things ended as they did. For years afterward I would wake up with "possible killer" on my mind and heart.

There was not even a mention in *Stars and Stripes*. Eighteen months later in 1971 with me out of the military and stateside the U.S. granted the protesters' wishes and Okinawa reverted to Japanese control. But our military bases stayed.

### MY PERSONAL DEMON (cont. from p. 5)

drove us faster towards the finish. I had no idea how I survived. Perhaps I was the Chosen One allowed to live through the un-livethroughable to tell the tale, to put on a sandwich board and walk the paths of Great America proclaiming the death trap that was The Demon to all that would listen. That was the only logical reason I had made it. The Good Lord had taken me in his hands and saved my precious tiny soul... and the bigger soul that was my Pops.

And we pulled into the station.

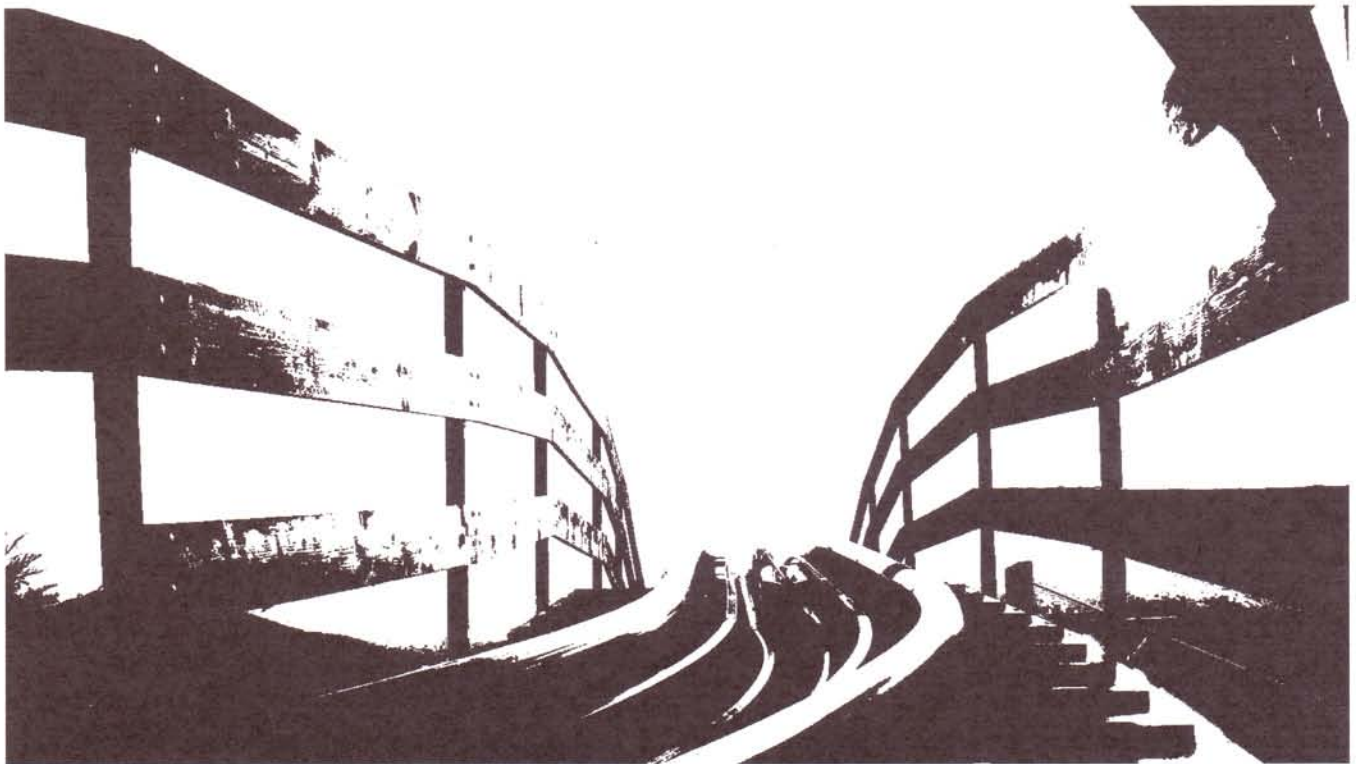
And the lap bar flung up. And I say there for a second, until my Pops reached under my arms, lifted as if I was nothing and put me down on terra firma. I stood there for a second as my Dad made his way for the exit, heading towards the churro place.

Beat.

Beat.

"Hey Pops, can we go on again!"

And ever since, I've been a coaster junky.





*Mike had an incredible 2016 and is on track in 2017, selling story after story after story. This one appeared in somewhat different form in **Something Magic This Way Comes**, 2008.*

## VISITORS' NIGHT AT JOEY CHICAGO'S

Mike Resnick

So I'm sitting there in Joey Chicago's 3-Star Tavern, nursing an Old Peculiar, and dopping out the odds if Belmont comes up muddy after the rain we're expecting, when an annoying high-pitched voice says: "Gimme a bourbon martini and make it snappy!"

"Ain't no such animal," says Joey. There's a pause, and then he says, "Ain't no such animal as you, neither."

"Watch your mouth, Mac," says the voice, "or I just might put my fist in it."

I look up, and what should I see but an ugly little demon, maybe 15 inches high, standing on the bar, paws on hips, glaring at Joey.

"Harry," says Joey to me, "where the hell has Big-Hearted Milton gone to?"

"He's in the john," I say. "He's hexing a rasslin' match. He says he thinks better in there."

"Well, you tell him if he wants me to keep paying him for protection, he'd better get his ass out here."

"What about my drink, Mac?" snaps the demon.

"Keep your shirt on," says Joey. "I'm working on it."

"I ain't got no shirt," says the demon.

"Harry," says Joey, "are you gonna get Milton or are you going to spend all night listening to me argue with this disgusting little critter?"

"Keep a civil tongue in your head!" says the disgusting little critter. "I get mighty ugly when I'm riled."

"You ain't so good-looking even when you're not riled," says Joey as I walk into the men's room. Milton is sitting there on the floor,

fully dressed, mumbling some spell at a pentagram he's drawn on the floor.

"Come out to the bar," I say. "Your urgent assistance is required."

"In a minute," says Big-Hearted Milton. He mutters one last spell and then stands up. "Okay. Now Rikki Tikki Tavi is going to beat Monstro Ligriv in straight falls tomorrow night at the Garden. I figure we should clean up, because everyone knows it's Monstro's turn to win."

"We'll worry about that later," I say.

"Harry the Book isn't interested a sporting event?" he says, arching an eyebrow. "You gonna start taking bets on the stock market, perhaps maybe?"

"Just pay attention, Milton," I said.

"There's some kind of strange creature in the bar, demanding a bourbon martini, and Joey Chicago wants you to make it go away."

Milton's face goes white as a sheet, and he has trouble catching his breath. "A bourbon martini?" he repeats. "Is this a redhead named Thelma?"

"No, it's an ugly demon from some mystic world."

Milton relaxes visibly. "Okay, no problem," he says. Then: "You're *sure* it's not a Thelma?"

"I'm sure," I say. "Now come on. I'm the guy who convinced Joey to hire you for protection, so if you don't vanish this demon, or at least turn it into something friendly with a bankroll to bet, it'll reflect badly on me."

"Why do you care?" asks Milton.

"I'm using the third booth in the bar as my temporary office."



"They evicted you *again*?" he says, though since this is the fifth time in three years I don't know why he looks so surprised.

"A temporary setback," I say with dignity. I make a face. "The Boston Geldings haven't beaten the point spread in two years. How the hell could I know they were going to get hot against the Syracuse Ridglings?"

"You could have asked," says Milton, looking very self-important.

"You could emerge from the damned bathroom more than once a day," I shoot back.

Then we are in the tavern, and Milton takes a look at the little demon, which is sitting cross-legged on the bar, munching on a pretzel.

"About time," says Joey Chicago. "Make him vanish, Milton. When I wouldn't serve him, he went around spitting in all my customers' drinks."

"I don't see any customers," replies Milton, looking around.

"Would *you* stay if someone kept spitting in *your* drink?" demands Joey. "Just make the little bastard vanish."

"Piece of cake," says Milton. "Where does he come from?"

"How the hell do I know?" says Joey.

"I can't send him back if I don't know where to send him," said Milton. He turns to the demon. "Excuse me, kind sir, but what realm do you reside in?"

"I'll never tell!" snaps the demon.

"Well, so much for sending him back," said Milton with a shrug.

"You mean I'm stuck with him?" demands Joey. "I want my protection money back. First thing in the morning I'm hiring Morris the Mage."

"No, you're not stuck with him," says Big-Hearted Milton, who has never offered a refund since T. Rex was a pup. "I just said I couldn't send him back."

"You're going to take him home with you?"

"So he can spit on *my* chopped liver and in *my* matzo ball soup?" says Milton. "Don't be silly."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I can't send him home," says Milton, "but I can encourage him to go home on his own power."

"How?" asks Joey curiously.

"Like this," says Milton, snapping his fingers.

Nothing happens.

"What's Morris the Mage's phone number?" says Joey disgustedly.

"Oh, ye of little faith," mutters Milton. He mumbles something that wouldn't make any sense even if he was saying it clearly. Then he snaps his fingers again, and suddenly there is a very bright blue *something*, about the size of a bulldog, but with scaly skin, three-inch claws on its front feet, two rows of razor-sharp teeth, bloodshot little eyes, and halitosis. It is standing on the floor, and suddenly it sees the demon on the bar. It flaps wings I didn't even know it had, flies up to the bar about ten feet from the creature, gives a high-pitched hum that sounds more ominous than a growl, and begins approaching it.

"Omygod omygod omygod!" shrieks the demon.

The blue thing launches itself through the air, and the demon vanishes about a fifth of a second before it reaches him. (Okay, so maybe it was a quarter of a second, or a half, but bookies who hang out at the track measure everything in fifths of a second, so don't hassle me, okay?)

"Well, that's that," says Milton. "One problem presented, one problem solved. I'm going back to the men's room."

"Uh . . . Milton," says Joey, pointing to the blue thing, and we see that it has just downed a bottle of vodka and is going after Joey's bottle of '73 Dom Perignon, which is the only bottle he has ever owned and is just for show. Joey tries to shoo it away, and it just snarls at him.

"Milton," says Joey nervously, "thank it and send it on its way."

"It's not that easy," says Milton, frowning.

"Why the hell not?" demands Joey.

"Bringing them here is easy; sending them away isn't."

"What are you talking about?" says Joey.

"A spell's a spell."

"Some are more complex than others," says Milton.

"I *knew* I should have hired a union wizard!"

"Do you know what they cost?" says Milton.



"Less than this *momser* is going to drink before I get rid of him, I'll bet," snaps Joey.

"I'll get rid of him," says Milton. "I just can't send him back to where he came from."

"I don't care where you send him," says Joey. "Hell, send him to visit my ex-wife and the bastard that *yenta* ran off with!"

Milton rolls up his sleeves. "Stand back, everyone!" he says.

"What do you mean, 'everyone'?" says Joey. "Except for Harry the Book, who's running his business out of the third booth here, everyone's long gone."

"Silence, mortal!" says Milton.

"You're as mortal as I am," says Joey, "and if you don't vanish this beast pretty damned fast, I'm gonna give you one hell of a kick in your most mortal part!"

"All right, all right," says Milton. He turns to me. "Harry, how much would you say it weighs?"

"Maybe 45 pounds," I tell him.

"Mammal, reptile, or dragon?" he asks.

"Yes," I say.

He frowns. "Okay," he says. "Here goes!"

He mumbles something that almost rhymes, but it is in no language I have ever heard and makes even less sense than French, and then his eyes roll back in his head and his arms stick out straight ahead of him and he goes into a kind of swami trance, and suddenly we hear an ominous and portentous *gulp!*, and we look at the bar, and there is this thing that looks kind of like a leather gorilla, except that it's got an extra pair of arms and a third eye right in the middle of its forehead, and it is chewing and making crunching noises, and a few blue scales kind of dribble out of its mouth.

"Man, that was *good!*" he growls. "I haven't eaten in 253 years, give or take an afternoon." He looks at Joey's stock. "What have you got on tap?"

"Old Peculiar and Old Washensox," says Joey in kind of trembling tones.

"I'll have a keg of each!" says the leather gorilla. "By Merlin, it feels good to be free again!"

"Uh . . . Milton . . ." says Joey.

"You said get rid of it, I got rid of it," says Milton defensively.

"Milton," I say, "I know you're not a betting man, but I'll offer you seventeen trillion

to one that I know what Joey's going to ask for next."

The gorilla gets tired of waiting, so he climbs down behind the bar, lifts a five-gallon keg, and chug-a-lugs it. "I could get to like this place," he says.

"Make me an offer," mutters Joey.

The leather gorilla belches. It is so loud that six glasses shatter. Then he turns to Milton. "I intuit that you're the one who brought me here."

Milton tries to answer, but he's shaking so badly nothing comes out, and he just nods weakly.

"You conjured me to kill the Spedunker, right?"

"The blue thing with the wings and scales," said Joey.

"Yeah, a Spedunker." Suddenly the gorilla grins. "Now I'll bet you're trying to figure out how to get rid of me."

"I would never do such a thing," says Milton. "Honor bright and pinky to the sky, the thought never crossed my mind."

"Your nose just grew seven inches," notes the gorilla.

Milton's hand goes to his nose. It is the same almost-shapeless blob as usual.

The gorilla throws back his head and laughs. Three mice who have been attracted to all the strange new smells faint dead away. "I was just pulling your leg," he says. "Or maybe I should say I was pulling your nose!" He laughs at his own joke, and two of the overhead lightbulbs burst.

"Now that you've had a snack and a little something to wash it down with," says Milton hopefully, "maybe you'd like to go home and take a nap?"

"Go back to that tiny cave where I was imprisoned for millennia?" demands the gorilla angrily. "*Never!*"

"Harry," says Joey, "go find the phone book and look up Morris the Mage's number."

"Relax," says the gorilla. "I find you even more distasteful that you find me. I'm off to explore this strange new world. Where's the nearest whorehouse?"

"For gorillas?" I say. "I don't think there are any."



"Yes there are!" says Milton quickly.  
"There are three of them in Brooklyn."

The gorilla turns to Joey. "Loan me a fiver," he says. "I came out without my wallet." He frowns. "In fact, I came out without my pants."

Joey opens the cash register and gives him a ten-spot. "You'll want to visit a Brooklyn bar when you're done," he says hopefully.

"Thanks, fella," says the gorilla, grabbing the sawbuck. "You're okay."

He lumbers to the door, starts to walk out, and bounces back to the middle of the tavern.

"What's going on?" he demands, looking right at Milton.

"I should have thought of it," says Milton, frowning. "The spell brings you here, but it doesn't let you leave. You're just here to eat the Spedunker."

"I ate the Spedunker," snarls the gorilla. "Now I've got urgent business in Brooklyn."

Milton starts backing away from him. "I don't know a spell to let you out," he says. "All I know is how to bring you here."

"Well, you'd better think of something fast," says the gorilla, slowly approaching him. "Because I'm getting hungry again."

"Gorillas are vegetarians," says Milton.

"So they'll penalize me fifteen yards," says the gorilla.

Milton screams a spell at the top of his voice, and before the gorilla knows it there is a seven-ton gryphon in the bar.

"Oh, shit!" says the gorilla, and vanishes just before the gryphon can reach him.

Well, you can figure what comes next. Milton summons a dragon to scare the gryphon away, and then he calls up a poisonous hydra-headed chimera to frighten the dragon, and then he magics up a kraken to eat the chimera, and after two hours have passed I feel like I have watched the same movie fourteen times in a row.

"What now?" says Joey in disgusted tones as we watch the latest arrival, a creature that looks like a refugee from a movie with actors named Boris or Bela or Basil or something else beginning with a B. The creature is considering which of Joey's bar stock to sample, and Milton decides to give it one last try, and he mutters and mumbles and goes into his swami again, and suddenly a trunk reaches out and holds the

creature high above the floor, and it curses and cries and says that it has a wife and three kids and a mortgage and it hasn't sent in its insurance check yet, and the elephant loosens its hold for a second and the creature disappears in a cloud of gray smoke, which is very fitting because it was obsolete long before Technicolor movies hit the scene.

I am wondering what Milton is going to conjure to get rid of the elephant, who is so big that he is stuck half in and half out of the tavern, when one of the mice that fainted wakes up and squeaks a couple of times, and the elephant takes one look and trumpets in terror and backs out into the street, taking half of the front wall with him, and the last time I see of him he is making a bee-line for Third Avenue, which is not going to help him much because that is Casey Callahan's beat and he doesn't allow anything to speed down his street, not even elephants.

"Well, that's that," says Milton.

"No," says Joey. "Pay me for all my bar stock and fix my walls and buy me a new bottle of '73 Dom and *then* that'll be that."

"Don't be so ungrateful," says Milton with dignity. "You asked me to solve a problem. I solved it."

"It's like solving a fist fight by turning it into World War VII!" snaps Joey. "Now, are you going to make restitution for damages or not?"

"I'm tapped out at the moment," says Milton, "but . . ."

"No buts!" snaps Joey. "Get out of my establishment."

"I thought we were friends!" says Milton in hurt tones.

"You got it absolutely right," says Joey. "We *were* friends!"

"Okay," says Milton. "If that's the way you're going to be, give me one for the road and I'm out of here."

"Where's your money?" demands Joey.

"Put it on my tab," says Milton.

"We're mortal enemies," says Joey. "You ain't got no tab!"

"Hey, Mac," says a voice. "Is this guy bothering you?"

We turn to see the little demon who started the whole thing.

"You betcha," says Joey. "Make him go away."



The demon chants something in French or some other alien tongue, makes a mystic sign in the air, and *whoosh!*, Milton is gone (though he later turns up in a house of excellent repute in Brooklyn.)

"I'll have a tall one," says the demon.

"You got it," says Joey, drawing one from what remains of the tap. "By the way, I'm really sorry we hassled you before. You looking for work?"

The demon shrugs. "Doing what?"  
"Protection," says Joey. "Keeping the riff-raff out of my establishment."

"Sure, why not?" He extends a wiry little three-fingered hand. "By the way, my name's Louie."

"Louie," says Joey Chicago, "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

er er er

**Mike Estabrook**

## **Satanophobia**

*Fear of Satan*

1

Aggressive renal carcinoma spreading more rapidly than expected. So what can I do besides fly down visit him asap? "You can't do anything. Knowing Kerry I bet he just wants to get it over with as soon as possible" the Devil whispers at me.

2

I'm a senior now, retired, career done, family grown and gone. But have I accomplished everything I've wanted to? Not sure honestly. So pick something and do it, moron, the Devil hisses in my ear having lost his patience with me again.

3

As the music overwhelms me, I realize I missed my calling of being a musician at least then I would've had a more fulfilled life following my passion and all that. "Such a pity that ship sailed such a long, long time ago" the Devil perched on my shoulder spits into my ear.

4

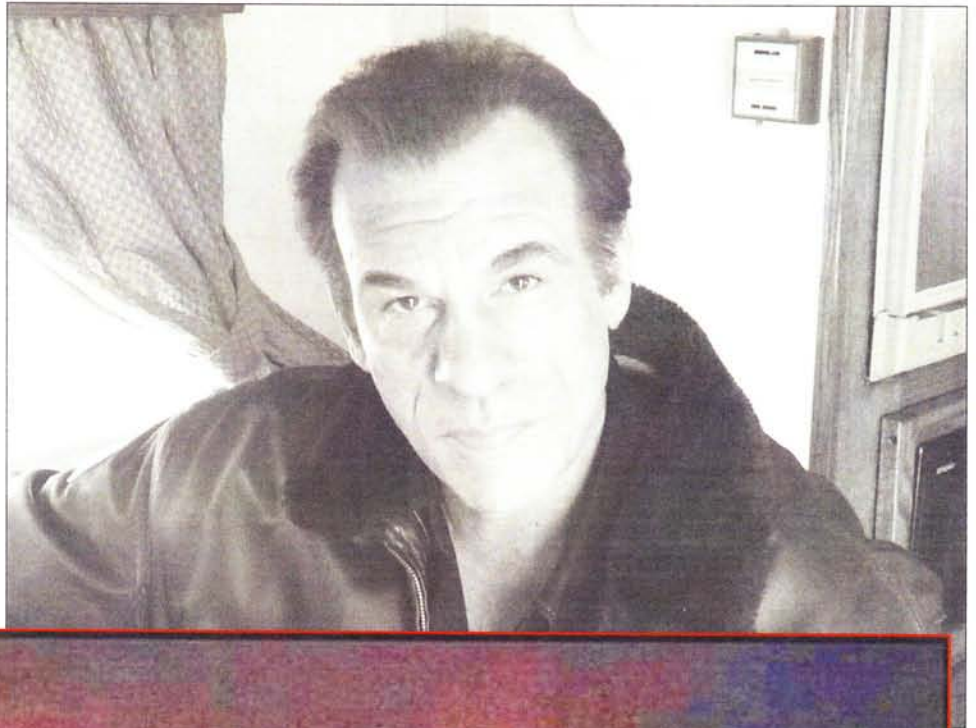
And I did pursue her, wanted her more than air would've jumped off the roof for her, even sold my soul to the Devil for her. Although today she's kind about it tells me I've never had anything to worry about, she's always been my girl. Damn Devil's got it covered from all angles.



# GUESS WHO?

This gent is the late **Clay Tanner**, a Hollywood player who had a long career in TV shows like *McHale's Navy*, *The Fugitive*, *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke* and the great "Architects of Fear" episode of *The Outer Limits*. He was also in films – *Hello, Dolly*, *Lady Sings the Blues*, *The Nutty Professor* and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

Here he is in his most famous role. Shame: he never got to say a line.



Say hello to Daddy from  
*Rosemary's Baby*!



# The Challenger Tribute

by Rose-Marie Lillian



*Colonnades Beach Hotel*  
PALM BEACH SHORES, SINGER ISLAND, FLORIDA



BOX 12677, PALM BEACH SHORES, FLORIDA 33460 • PHONE 407-844-7227

I know what you're thinking, but no, this is not Morticia Addams. This is Patrice Milton Green, well-known Florida fan.

The sketch is by Frank Kelly Freas, back when Kelly used to sketch as a way of relaxing at cons, and to brush up on character creation for his Hugo-winning SF&F art. Obviously he couldn't resist Patrice, because who could?

If you look closely, you can see it was sketched on stationery from the old Colonnades Beach Hotel on Singer Island. (For those of you not familiar with Florida geography, that's about ninety minutes north of Miami.)

That encounter occurred at Palm Beach Con I, a mixed-media convention thrown by ahead-of-their-time co-chairs John Ellis and Rick Coy, long before mixing it up was cool.

In addition to charming the artist guest of honor Kelly, Patrice also chatted up media guests of honor George Takei and Noel Neil, and science fiction writer guest of honor Joseph Green, my dad.

It was Patrice's first convention, and it may have been her best—a year later she got her own personal science fiction writer out of it, and he got a smart, kind, funny exotic beauty. They have been together happily ever since.

(It's been quite nice for me as well, because I got an amazing friend and two new sisters out of the deal. Like I said, who can resist Patrice?)

We all went on to attend the justly famous MidAmeriCon in 1976. A few years later Patrice and Papa decided to expand their horizons, literally, and booked passage for Seacon in Brighton, England. From there they toured Scotland, Greece and Switzerland. (I couldn't join them, so I've been appropriately envious ever since.)

My father was then working at Kennedy Space Center, eventually for NASA. Patrice decided to apply to one of the contractors there and lo and behold,

went on to have a career in human resources at that very special place where science fiction starts to meet real science.

After retiring, although still a fan, Patrice decided to pursue another love, a budding love—genealogy. Science fiction looks at where we're going, while genealogy looks at where we've been. Genealogy as recreation bears many parallels to fandom: to name just a few, they hold cons, they read extensively, they travel, they organize locally, they're computer-literate, they get to know one another—and sometimes become fast friends. A plus is that they sometimes discover long-lost relatives. Now that's something that even fandom can't lay a claim to.

Fandom, the world of genealogy or Kennedy Space Center, Patrice tends to find a happy home wherever she is because, you know, who can resist her? (If you happen to meet her one day don't say I didn't warn you.)



**I**t is a good bet that many of the ethical principles operating today will still be around in the year 2100, and be much more widely observed. The reason is simple; they derive from the basic nature of the human being. But these principles will be expressed in forms and attitudes sometimes quite different from those prevalent today.

In the most profound sense, any system of ethics is an attempt to resolve the old, old dichotomy between Man the Individual and Man the Social Animal. (And henceforth, "Man" will be referred to as "HP", for Human Person. The word "Man" includes both sexes in accepted English usage, but grates on the heightened consciousness of the modern female.) As an individual, each HP competes with others to improve his own position in society. But the individuals must also cooperate, or the society cannot function. This competition/cooperation is the driving force behind most human progress.

In his book *Thank You for Being Late* (highly recommended) Thomas L. Friedman, journalist and deep thinker, explores the impact of the three major forces now reshaping societies world-wide the speed of technology advancement, globalization, and climate change. All three seem to be rushing toward an uncertain future (and interacting with each other in unpredictable ways) with exponential speed, much faster than most citizens of the world can grasp, much less follow and remain cognizant. The world is far more connected today than ever in the past, and the "global village," considered a dream only a few years ago, is fast becoming a reality.

But at this early stage the ethics of the very different societies, and the individuals living in them, is undergoing only slow change. Major advancements in societal ethics seem to occur by generations, few adults having epiphanies that compel a radical change of views. Yet major changes do occur, even if slowed by the need for an older generation to die off. A new, better educated and connected generation does not necessarily absorb and internalize the beliefs of their parents (although some individuals obviously do). You can find abundant examples of this in most nations and major societies still functioning well today.

# Ethics in the Year 2100

*Joseph Green*

But one constant will remain with us. In 2100 as today, not everyone will behave ethically. Until we discover the magic shaping influence that instills ethics in children and produces ethical adults, the thieves, outlaws, killers and con artists will still exist, and continue to prey on the rest of us.

Despite doom-sayers, selfish opportunists and fanatic believers in this or that dogma or religion, the steady march of civilization as a whole is toward progress in achieving a peaceful and prosperous world. In societies that function well few people go hungry, or lack shelter. Most individuals perform their daily jobs without much thought as to how their function benefits the other members of a cooperative society. Nevertheless the overall thrust is toward a better life for everyone in that individual's group/society/nation.

One fact of which we can be certain is that the typical HP of 2100 will be a well-educated person. Universal education will be the key to understanding the flood of information that will inundate him daily. He will realize that a lack of rain in the American Midwest may drive up the price of his bread a year later. He will be aware that funding the Mars Colony for another year will mean putting off starting the giant dam United Africa wants to construct on the Blue Nile. In a world where referendums are held almost daily on important social goals, he will vote as an aware, educated, concerned citizen.



And the HP of 2100 will vote his ethical convictions. He will vote from knowledge, from a good understanding of the complex issues involved, rather than from short-sighted, selfish personal interests. This means he will frequently vote for the project he thinks will most benefit the world as a whole, even though another worthwhile idea that might mean more to him personally is competing for the same funds. In short, his social consciousness will often be strong enough to overcome his desire for advancement as an individual.

Our HP will be aware that when a society progresses as a whole, every individual within



that society benefits – and that very often this is the *only* way a person can obtain certain advantages. No one HP can build a giant network of super-highways, establish a world-wide jet transport system, or build a pipeline across Alaska.

Our typical HP of 2100 will have a fair understanding of how the entire world operates, but be a professional worker in only one area. Most professions will be too complex to allow mastering more than one in a useful working lifetime. He will choose his career field somewhere along the way during his formal education, as most people do now. But the choice will be an ethical one, in that the future HP will be more concerned with performing work he likes

than in simply earning money. He will know that people work best together when their goals are clearly defined and fervently believed in. Unlike today, when far too many people hate their jobs, he will enjoy his work.

The HP at work will be a self-determined individual, always seeking to advance himself, but not at the cost of his group. He will constantly balance his personal interest and the group interests, making the ethical choices most likely to advance both.

If this seems unduly idealistic, consider: One of today's convictions not likely to change is that "Man's reach should exceed his grasp." *Homo sapiens* is the only species we know of which consciously and continually seeks self-improvement. This desire for expansion of personal horizons, for individual and social growth, seems to be a strong human drive. In the past it has often manifested itself in social climbing, in domination of others, and as war. The HP of 2100 will express this drive by seeking to enhance his own potential, then using his increased capabilities for the good of his society – as well as for his own personal advancement.

In a world where humanity will have solved most of the problems confronting us today, such as energy shortages, wars of conquest or ideology, racial prejudice and intolerance, etc., one major problem will probably still be with us. That will be the shortness of the human life span. (And if this problem too has been solved, the ethics of a race of immortals will be so different from those practiced today that the subject is beyond the scope of this article.)

Our educated, aware HP of the future may decide to work with one of the scientific teams striving to extend human life. Perhaps a large segment of the scientific establishment of 2100 will be engaged in this greatest of all struggles, in "the moral equivalent of war." The desire to live is certainly a basis of nature, even though an HP can overcome it and commit suicide. (And persons old and ill sometimes seem to simply give up the struggle. Would they, if still healthy and active, stop caring about living at *any* age?) Here is an obvious example where the welfare of the individual and that of the group – in fact, all humanity – coincide. Society as a whole would support research teams trying to increase the lifespan of such individuals.



There are many, many other ways in which the ethical HP of 2100 will differ from the Man of today. We can see the slow emergence of the ethics of the future in several small starts being made now. One is population control. HPs of the future will not overbreed, being well aware that an optimum number exists for any given area, and to exceed it is to lower the quality of life for everyone living there.

Another small start is that more and more people now constantly play the game we are playing here, predicting the future. "Most likely" scenarios, such as those now practiced by war departments, will be common in all occupations. Computers, of course, will be the technological mainstay of such projections. These forecasted futures will serve as a constant guiding force in decision-making. It will be considered highly unethical for any person or group to start a large project without careful forecasts of the effect it will have on the environment, the people directly involved, and the rest of society. We can see this beginning today in the Environmental Quality studies the US Government now requires before starting most major projects.

In the scientific world, the steadily growing emphasis on teamwork noticeable today is likely to accelerate in the future. Nobel prizes in science are now commonly shared by more than one person, a recognition that in today's world it is often an accumulation of new discoveries, rather than a single brilliant insight, that leads to important new knowledge. The lone inventor, the backyard tinkerer who produces a revolutionary new discovery, is rapidly becoming extinct. Though inventiveness and originality will count as much as ever in 2100, the contributions of the individuals will go to the team, and the team as a whole will receive the credit.

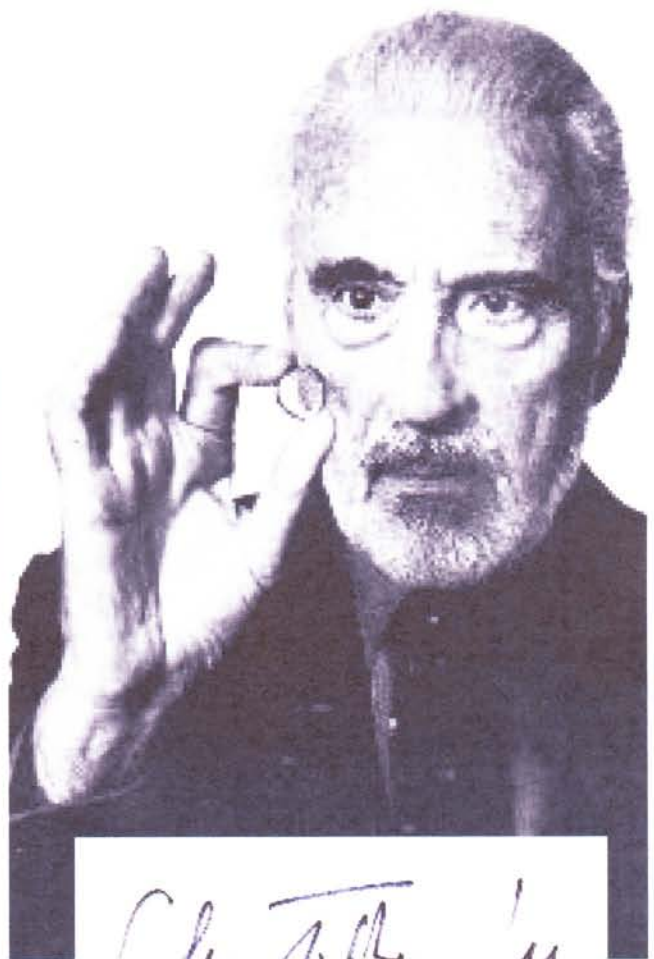
Most of the extremes that now exist in the individual/society dichotomy will no longer be around in 2100. Communism, where the individual hardly matters and the society is all, will go the way of laissez-faire capitalism, where the individual was supreme regardless of the harm he did to others. Communism will be looked on as a temporary aberration, an extreme of social consciousness that resulted in a stifling, restrictive form of government. It will be an historical example of a time when one side of HP's dual nature, the social, grew dominant at

the expense of the other, the individual. Our HP will be well aware that it is the interaction between an autonomous person and his society which produces energy and dynamic change.


In the final analysis, the old dichotomy between society and the individual will go on as before. The primary change will be that the educated, conscious HP of 2100 will make his choices with heightened awareness of the social consequences. They will be ethical decisions. Each HP will see himself within the context of humanity as a whole, will live in a true global village, and be well aware that what benefits or hurts humanity will help or harm him as well.

Then one of the oldest and least accepted verities of human history, that an HP is his brother's keeper, will become true at last.

*er&er*





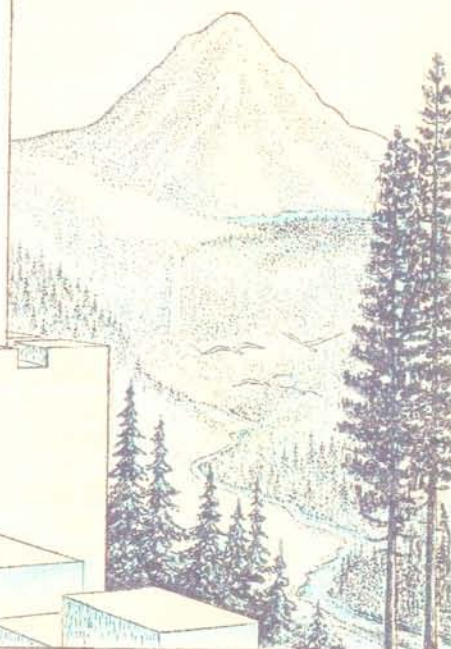


# The WATCHTOWER

*Announcing*  
JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Jewels  
and  
Binoculars**



"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12



### *In the Beginning...*

**M**y parents had a wide age difference between them; when they were married, my father was 31, my mother, 17. Nine months later, I appeared, and within hours after that, my mother died, leaving me to be raised by my father and his parents. My mother had been both a Christian and a Sunday School teacher; my father was not particularly religious, nor were my paternal grandparents, though they did claim to believe in God. The result was that I was raised pretty much without religion in the house. Now, I was taught that there was a God, that the Bible was God's Book, and that I would go to heaven when I died if I was good. Sometimes I would try to read the Bible, but I'd start with Genesis 1, and end up giving up somewhere around where the "begats" kicked in. I can't say I knew much about who Jesus was until I got older. I was also told that if I was not good, the Devil might come around some night while I was sleeping, spear me with his pitchfork, and carry me off to Hell. Nice stuff to tell a little kid.

I think that my mother's premature death was probably the biggest tragedy of my life. She was a born-again Christian, a Methodist, and a Sunday School teacher. She was also, from everything I can gather, a normal young woman – a girl, really; she died 4 days before what would have been her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. I think she would have been a healthy influence on my life, had she lived, and that she would have provided enough training in the Bible and religion so that I wouldn't have felt a big spiritual emptiness as I entered one of the most impressionable periods of life. Also, I think she would have taught me enough of the Bible that the JW's wouldn't so easily have pulled the wool over my eyes.

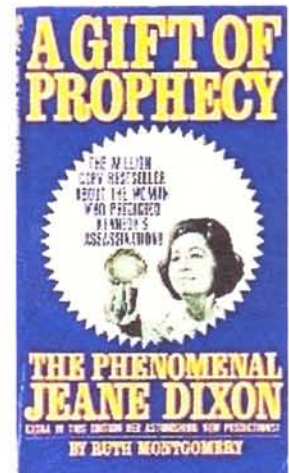
And when the time came for normal teenage rebellion, I'd probably have rebelled by sowing wild oats like a normal kid instead of by becoming a cult zombie. Not that everything I would have done in that case would be something I'd be proud of now, but, frankly, I think that direction is mentally healthier than being a JW.

I'm sure I'd have grown out of it after a few years, as most people do when maturity strikes.

### *Awakening to Spiritual Ideas*

Anyway, by the time I was 12 or so, I had been in a church perhaps three times, a different church each time. By that time, I had also decided that there was probably no God, and no life beyond the present one. However, about that time, I happened to read the best-selling book, *A Gift of Prophecy*. It was the story of Jeane Dixon, and how she had supposedly predicted, among other things, the assassination of President Kennedy. I was very impressed by her apparent ability to foretell the future, and reading this book was more or less the "cure" for my incipient atheism, because it got me believing that there were forces in the universe greater than mankind, even if I didn't understand at the time what those forces were. I started to become curious about religion and the Bible, and to think about ultimate truths. I didn't really know where to look for answers, though.

Then, when I was 13, one Sunday morning I happened to be watching television, and a program called *It Is Written*, starring a pastor named George Vandeman. I don't remember the topic of the show, but at the end, a book called *A Day to Remember* was offered free, and a phone number was given to request it. The Seventh-day Adventist church sponsored the program and the book. Now, while it's true that they have many unorthodox beliefs, and that many Christians consider them a cult, I do think that there are at least some real Christian believers in that church. The people I knew in that church seemed to really understand who Jesus is, and have a genuine love for him.





I took a Bible course from the Adventists called *Bible in the Hand*, and while it taught me some things that I later came to disagree with, the sections on salvation presented the Jesus of the Bible, his death and resurrection, and salvation through faith in Him. I remember one of the lessons concluding with an invitation to accept Jesus in prayer, and I remember praying that prayer, asking Jesus to be my Lord and Savior. There was a lot I didn't understand at that time, but I did understand that I was asking to have my sins forgiven, and to give my life to the Lord.

### ***That Knock on the Door (So to Speak)***

Well, I continued studying, and began attending the SDA church, and I enjoyed my association with them. They were decent people, had a lot of activities for young people, and I felt as though I was learning a lot about the Bible. One day, as I was sitting in the living room watching TV, a woman stopped in to see my grandmother. I had seen her there several times before. My grandmother was polite and chatted for a while, and the woman, who was really a sweet older lady named Harriet, always left her with some little magazines that first caught my attention because they were almost the same size and shape as comic books. I loved comic books, so anything in even a similar format immediately caught my eye. In retrospect, they were about as spiritually wholesome as comic books, too, but I didn't know that at the time. I overheard Harriet telling my grandmother how Jesus had already returned invisibly in 1914. Now I, just having completed the 12-week *Bible in the Hand* course, and thus being a master theologian, knew that that was just wrong! So, I walked out into the kitchen and entered the discussion, figuring I could straighten out this poor, misguided lady. Well, you can guess what happened – she 'straightened me out'. She was far better prepared than I was for such a discussion, and I ended up confused and frustrated.

Harriet wanted to leave a book for me to read, and in those days, the normal 'starter' literature would have been the book, *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* That was essentially a JW systematic theology of over 400 pages. I guess she didn't have a copy of that, though,

because what she left was something that affected me more profoundly, something I never again in 30 years as a Witness saw left as an initial placement: she left me with a copy of *"Make Sure of All Things – Hold Fast to What Is Fine."* That book was a field service guide for Witnesses – not intended for distribution to the public; it was a quick reference book to be used when knocking on doors if someone asked a difficult question. It had all of the proof texts that the JWs use arranged by topic under subject headings. Rather than read a bunch of rhetoric that might or might not have influenced me, with my relatively logical mind, I was extremely impressed by the *"Make Sure"* book, where everything was logically arranged, and every single doctrine seemed to have scriptural backing. For most people, it would have been a terrible choice as an initial placement; for me, it was the perfect book to leave.

The following week, Harriet returned for a follow-up visit, and she brought a young guy named Joe with her. Joe, at the time, was what the JWs called a "pioneer" – that is to say, a person who devoted 100 hours a month to the door-knocking work on a volunteer basis. He was 18; I was 14 at the time. Harriet wanted him to take over and start a Bible study program with me. Remember, though, that JW Bible study programs are not really studies in the Bible; they are studies in Watchtower literature using the Bible for backup. Texts are often quoted out of context or twisted to make them say something they do not. The real study is in the book, not the Bible. And, as such, they qualify more as indoctrination sessions than actual Bible studies.

Anyway, after a few preliminary Q&A type discussions, Joe and I got into the regular study program, using the aforementioned *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* I was still steeped in the teachings I had learned from the SDA church, so the first few months of our studies were rather fiery. We argued a lot, but eventually I had to admit that Joe knew his Scriptures a lot better than I did. Unfortunately, I took that to mean that his beliefs must be correct, as I had never learned any proper methods of Bible study or interpretation.



Now, there's only one thing you really have to believe in order to be a JW, and that is the idea that the JW organization speaks for God. It claims to be God's only channel of communication to mankind in our time. All other religions are of the devil; there's no substantial difference between a Baptist, a Buddhist and a Satanist. Anybody who isn't part of the JW organization is under Satan's control and is destined to be destroyed at Armageddon, unless they become JWs before then.

### ***Making the Commitment***

Eventually, Joe managed to convince me that the JW organization had the truth; after all, who else was proclaiming God's name around the earth as they were. After a few years of teenage waffling and ongoing "Bible study," I got baptized as a JW on July 11, 1969, at Orchard Beach, NY. The baptism was a feature of a 7-day convention at Yankee Stadium. Almost 3000 of us (2972, to be exact) were herded into rented school buses and driven across the Bronx in bumper-to-bumper traffic, standing room only on the buses, in sweltering heat. I think I would have jumped into the water after that even if I hadn't planned on being baptized.

The decision to become a JW was a costly one. I was 17 at the time of my baptism and had just graduated high school. My father had finally remarried and because of my association with the JW's, I was not permitted to live with him and my new stepmother. Rather, I continued to live with my grandparents. I had to give up my high school sweetheart, since relationships with non-JWs were frowned upon. And, since JWs don't celebrate any holidays or birthdays, I grew further and further from my family because of not seeing them on the usual occasions when families get together.

Attending college was also strongly discouraged among Witnesses at that time (and, in fact, still is). After all, the *Awake* magazine of 5/22/1969 had said this about getting a secular education:

*"If you are a young person, you also need to face the fact that you will never grow old in this present system of things. Why*

*not? Because all the evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecy indicates that this corrupt system is due to end in a few years. Of the generation that observed the beginning of the 'last days' in 1914, Jesus foretold: 'This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.' Therefore, as a young person, you will never fulfill any career that this system offers. If you are in high school and thinking about a college education, it means at least four, perhaps even six or eight more years to graduate into a specialized career. But where will this system of things be by that time? It will be well on the way towards its finish, if not actually gone! This is why parents who base their lives on God's prophetic Word find it much more practical to direct their young ones into trades that do not require such long periods of additional schooling... True, those who do not understand where we are in the stream of time from God's viewpoint will call this impractical. But which is really practical: preparing yourself for a position in this world that soon will pass away? Or working toward surviving this system's end and enjoying eternal life in God's righteous new order?"* (Emphasis added)



So, in addition to all the other things I gave up, college was out of the question. But the sacrifices seemed worth it, if it meant that I could spend my life in God's service.

### ***Deeper Involvement***

My next goal was to become a "pioneer". Among Jehovah's Witnesses at that time, a pioneer was someone who devoted 100 hours per month as a volunteer in the preaching and teaching work. There was no payment or stipend for doing this



work; you had to work part time to support yourself while putting in the hours as a volunteer. Pioneers are regarded as being specially blessed by Jehovah and the position carries considerable prestige in the congregation. With much effort, I was finally appointed a "regular" pioneer in 1972 and a ministerial servant (much like a deacon in a church) shortly thereafter.

Interestingly, my appointment as a pioneer didn't represent the first time I had applied for the position. My first application, in 1970, was rejected by the local elders because of some unacceptable habits I had developed. No, not that. The problem had to do with the material I enjoyed as entertainment; it seems that reading comic books and listening to current music by groups like the Beatles and others (I hadn't quite developed into a full-fledged Dylan freak by this point) was simply unacceptable for one who was to hold such an exalted position in the congregation. I didn't give those things up, either - my appointment finally went through in 1972 after a change in the elder body of the congregation. There were so many problems being caused by the elders in the congregation that the Watchtower Society sent in a special representative to clean things up. Elders were removed and others appointed because of harshness and legalism that had been going on (not that there was really anything unusual about that in the JW org).

Around 1970, also, I had to register for the draft. I had to do a bunch of paperwork for my draft board, as the draft was very much active when I registered, and the Vietnam War was ongoing. They denied me a ministerial exemption because I wasn't a pioneer, but granted conscientious objector status, which wouldn't have kept me out of trouble, had the call come. Lots of JW guys went to jail with CO status. Ultimately, I pulled a 356 (out of 365) in the draft lottery, and they were only calling people up to 120 or so. So I didn't have to worry about it.

## Various Experiences

One of my early jobs, around 1971, was as a Fuller Brush Man. On one occasion, over my protests, the car group I was assigned to for the door-to-door work was taken to an area that was part of my sales territory. Though I didn't want to cross territory like that between the JW work and my job, I was told that I "shouldn't be ashamed of the truth," and was basically guilted into working the area. Sure enough, I got stuck working some of my brush customers' homes. I remember this one lady saw me at the door and said, "Hey, come on in!" thinking she was going to get the latest bargains in household goods. I stammered something about "calling today as one of Jehovah's Witnesses." Her face went cold, and she said, "No, I'm not interested in that!" and indicated the direction of the door. I was mortified, and to make matters worse, I lost a

good customer, because there was no way I was going back to her house after that!

On another occasion in the door-to-door work, I was almost attacked by a bunch of geese that were guarding a farmhouse. The geese were very sneaky, they ignored us as we were

approaching and let me and my companion get up to the door without a problem. No one was home (or at least no one answered the door), and when we turned to leave, the geese had surrounded us and were moving in for the kill (so to speak). As we retreated to the car they started to peck at our feet and legs. We finally managed to duck and dodge between and around them and get back to the car essentially unharmed. I'll take a good, old-fashioned pit bull any day.

JWs are very big on conventions (which, in my early days as a JW, were referred to as "assemblies"). Back in the day, JWs used to have two of these 3-day events a year, in which a "circuit" made up of a dozen congregations or so would gather, usually at a rented facility like a





public or school auditorium, for a specially prepared program. Nowadays they have gotten away from using public facilities and have built Watchtower-owned "Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Halls" for these functions, and the number of these assemblies has been reduced to one two-day assembly, plus a single day gathering each year. And in case the name makes you wonder, no, "Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Halls" are not where they manufacture them. There is also one much larger district (or, occasionally international) convention, usually during the summer in the US, that involves several circuits getting together at a large facility like a baseball stadium or a civic center. For the most part, they still use public facilities for these larger gatherings. The 1969 international convention at which I was baptized was held at the old Yankee Stadium, and about 125,000 attended.

Now, I told you all that about the conventions to provide a context for this: I had served as an attendant (basically an usher, you would help people find seats, take a count of attendance and stuff like that) at a number of these circuit assemblies. At some point, it occurred to me that I had been running around so much "attending," that I had been missing out on the "fine spiritual food" being provided (I gag thinking of it now, but back then I thought it was important). So I decided that at this one particular assembly I would not volunteer, but would focus on paying attention to the program. Well, as soon as I walked in the door, the guy in charge of the attendants was all over me, telling me where my station was going to be, and would I report there now, please. I politely informed him that I thought it would be in my better spiritual interests not to volunteer this time. He continued

to argue with me, growing more and more hostile, until he finally said firmly that I should go and take my assigned position. I said, "No, as I told you, I'm not going to volunteer for this assembly." He snapped back, "Fine! Jehovah only wants willing workers!" and walked away. He didn't speak to me for the rest of that assembly, or very much ever again. I did volunteer again in other capacities at future assemblies, but I made sure to stay away from any department he was involved in.

In 1973, JWs got some "new light" from the organization about smoking. As of that time, it was declared an offense for which one could be disfellowshipped. Previously, it had been discouraged, but not handled in a judicial manner. Those who were smokers were given six

months to clean up their act and stop smoking; after that, any who had not quit were to be disfellowshipped. There were at least 4 or 5 smokers in the congregation I was in back in 1973; I don't think that any were disfellowshipped, they all quit smoking. One of them — unknown to anyone else in the congregation — was one of the elders. He kept it hidden, and nobody knew about it, until one day when he was caught in the act by

another JW who worked for the same company he did. He ended up being privately reproved and removed from his position. No great loss, he was a judgmental jerk. I had been in his midweek study group until he was removed — he was the conductor and I was his assistant. Just before the book study, I got a call from the Congregation Servant (basically the term for the lead elder at that time), who asked me to conduct the study that night and *do not* call on Brother R--- for prayer or reading. Well, Brother R--- and his family did show up for the study group, and when I called the meeting to order with him sitting

## WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO 1975?

**W**HAT about all this talk concerning the year 1975? Lively discussions, some based on speculation, have burst into flame during recent months among serious students of the Bible. Their interest has been kindled by the belief that 1975 will mark the end of 6,000 years of human history since Adam's creation. The nearness of such an important date indeed fires the imagination and presents unlimited possibilities for discussion.

\*But wait! How do we know their calculations are correct? What basis is there for saying Adam was created nearly 5,993 years ago? Does the one Book that can be implicitly trusted for its truthful historical accuracy, namely, the Inspired Word of Jehovah, the Holy Bible, give support and credence to such a conclusion?

1. 2. (a) What has sparked special interest in the year 1975, and with what results? (b) What questions arise?

\*In the marginal references of the Protestant Authorized or King James Version, and in the footnotes of certain editions of the Catholic Douay version, the date of man's creation is said to be 4004 B.C.E. This marginal date, however, is no part of the inspired text of the Holy Scriptures, since it was first suggested more than fifteen centuries after the last Bible writer died, and was not added to any edition of the Bible until 1761 C.E. It is an insertion based upon the conclusions of an Irish prelate, the Anglian Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656). Ussher's chronology was only one of the many sincere efforts made during the past centuries to determine the time of Adam's creation. A hundred years ago when a count was taken, no less than 140 different timetables had been published by se-

3. Is the date for Adam's creation as found in some copies of the Bible, part of the inspired Scriptures, and do all agree on the date?



there saying nothing, there were a lot of double-takes. A couple of the other men in the group had been the ones affected by the smoking policy, and after the meeting, one of them walked up to Brother R---, clapped him on the back, shook his hand, and said, "Welcome to the bottom of the heap!"

### ***Falling from Grace***

1973 also brought a snag for me personally. I became involved in some dishonest conduct, namely, fudging on my pioneer hours, which, ironically, as I've learned since my departure from the JW's is almost universal among pioneers. But at the time, I was totally convinced that the organization and its rules were directly from God, so I submitted to their judicial process over the issue, and was given a "public reproof." This is an action taken by the JW organization against members who have sinned but who are deemed by the elders to be repentant for their actions. It is a lesser punishment than disfellowshipping, which involves being removed from the congregation and shunned completely by all members, even one's closest friends and family. Public reproof is less severe. It consisted, back then, of removal from all positions and "privileges" (things such as answering in participatory meetings, leading congregational prayer, giving talks, etc.), along with having one's name announced before the congregation as having engaged in "conduct unbecoming a Christian."

After this happened, I saw the other side of their love. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that one of the evidences that they are God's people is that they have "love among themselves" (according to the Gospel of John 13:35). After my reproof, however, the congregation became very cold toward me. Where I once had been the golden boy in the congregation and felt that I had many friends, I now felt like the idiot over in the corner

that everyone ignored, even though there was no formal shunning being carried out. In retrospect, this may have been my earliest clue that the JW's were not what they claimed to be.

### ***The 1975 Debacle***

Not very many JW's today are aware that it was strongly hinted by the leadership that Armageddon might come by 1975. Some of the leaders were specific in speeches, but *Watchtower* print articles were evasive, so it is hard today to pin down the false prophecy. JW's today try to minimize the enthusiasm that existed for Armageddon in 1975, but I was there and we all thought it was coming. A Witness at that time didn't dare to suggest that the chronology might

be in error. The likely reaction to such a suggestion would have been a cold stare, as if something vile had been said. I had personal friends who sold businesses or possessions and attempted to use the proceeds to live till Armageddon came. In one case a friend who had been 20% owner of a rubbish removal company sold off his share to his partners in order to have enough money to pioneer until 1975, by which time Armageddon would certainly have been here. Instead of owning the company, he ended up driving a rubbish truck to make a living after 1975 passed without incident. An internal

Watchtower publication, *Kingdom Ministry*, suggested in 1974 that it was a fine idea that some were selling their homes and businesses in order to do more in God's service – preaching and distributing WT literature from house to house – in the short time remaining. Obviously, nothing happened.

Years later, I discovered that the JW organization had a long history of such false prophecies and this eventually became one of the major factors in my leaving. Some of the other factors were the lack of love in the congregations. In particular the





elders, who should have been tender shepherds of the flock, were very harsh and judgmental. There was even a "spy system" of sorts, under which people were expected to inform on others for a variety of large and small infractions of JW rules.

I also had occasional questions about the teachings, but these did not become serious until later. As it turned out, a couple with whom I was conducting a "Bible study," trying to bring them into the JW fold, contacted some Christian ex-Witnesses who supplied them with a very difficult list of questions that I now felt obligated to attempt to answer. This process would probably have had me out of the organization within a few years, except that I was forced to put this exploration on hold for a while.

### ***Marriage and Other Adult Things***

Being a JW with all their moral strictures and no-dating policies for teenagers (dating is viewed as courtship for those who are contemplating marriage, not as recreation) had made it difficult for me to develop normal relationships with young women. I was introduced to a young Witness woman by mutual friends and we were married in 1978. In 1979, our daughter, Erin, was born. I continued to study and question teachings, but not at the previous rate because of the demands of married life and parenthood. I was also appointed as a ministerial servant again in a new congregation. At times, I expressed doubts to my wife, but she did not want to hear. JWs are taught not to listen to arguments or read any literature opposed to the organization's teachings, and she was faithful to the organization in that way. As a result, my doubts continued to grow, but I suppressed them in the interest of keeping the family together. However, my doubts about the organization were a growing source of conflicts over the years and eventually led to my wife divorcing me. On a few occasions, the elders got involved to try to "help" me with my doubts, but the bottom line was always to keep quiet about them or risk being disfellowshipped. That's pretty much the standard response if someone questions the organization or its teachings: if the elders can't answer the questions (and generally they can't),

the doubter is simply told to shut up or face being shunned. One time, a visiting elder actually accused me of hiding some secret sin and trying to distract attention from it with my doubts about the organization. It was simply inconceivable to him that anyone could sincerely question the teachings of the organization.

This next bit might be a little TMI for some, but it effectively illustrates the high control within the JW organization, I think. The Watchtower went through a phase around the early 1970s in which they attempted to make extensive rules about sexual conduct, even within marriage. For example, among JWs, the only ground for divorce that frees one to remarry is adultery. This is actually a semi-biblical position, though I think a case can also be made for abandonment based on 1 Corinthians 7. In any event, prior to 1972, the concept of adultery was defined very narrowly; it referred to male/female sex outside the marriage union, carried out by a married person. The result of this definition was that, for example, a woman whose husband had sex with another man, or, for that matter, with a goat, was not seen as free to divorce and remarry, and she herself would be disfellowshipped for adultery if she did so. Of course, the husband in that scenario would also be subject to disfellowshipping. Then, in 1972, God changed His mind. A study of the Greek word *porneia* led the JW leaders to conclude that any sort of sexual immorality outside the marriage union could be counted as adultery freeing the innocent spouse to divorce and remarry.

Also in late 1972, the JW leaders also took it upon themselves to regulate sexual conduct within marriage. They concluded that things like oral and anal sex by married couples were too close for comfort to homosexual practices, and that they were "grossly unclean." While elders were told not to pry into the intimate matters of married couples, if it came to the attention of the elders that a couple was engaging in these practices, they could be disfellowshipped. This was pretty controversial for several years, even in an organization where people are used to shutting up and doing what they are told. But, in 1978 – coincidentally just weeks before my first marriage – God again modified his position. In



the new material, oral and anal sex practices were still seen as undesirable, the requirement of disfellowshipping was removed (at least until 1983, when it was changed back again – sort of. The organization's position on the topic remains muddy to this day). The *Watchtower* article that presented the new position was actually rather ambiguous in its wording, and there was some discussion as to what they were really trying to say. This was true in my congregation as well as pretty much everywhere else in the organization.

In 1979, when the topic became an issue for me, my wife and I had just moved to the congregation she had originally been a part of, having by then been married about a year. At a friend's house where several younger couples were present, all JW's, the topic came up. Unknown to me, the interpretation that the local elders in this new (to me) congregation had placed upon the WT article was that oral sex was still strictly prohibited and considered a gross perversion; the only change was that the elders were no longer being asked to investigate and disfellowship people for this horrible sin. Several of those present expressed this view; I disagreed. To me, the article clearly established sexual practices in marriage as a matter for individual conscience, and nobody's business except the couple's.

Of course, I was promptly reported to the elders as "advocating oral sex." This led to any number of heated discussions on several occasions.

On one occasion, at a meeting, where I had been pre-scheduled to lead the opening prayer, the presiding overseer approached me during the song as I was preparing to walk to the platform, and asked if I was "clean" enough to ask Jehovah's blessing on behalf of the congregation. I responded that my conscience was completely clear, and, to his credit, he accepted that without pushing the matter further. I went to the platform, a bit shaken, and asked the prayer. Of course, had he done that a few years later, I'd

have told him to get someone else and walked out of the Hall, but I wasn't quite at such an independent stage at that time.

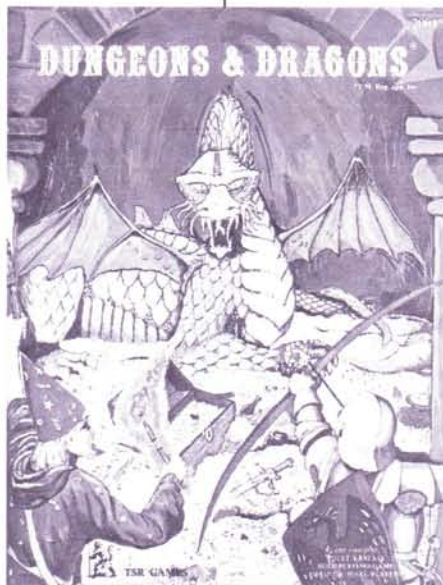
This particular controversy caused me some problems in the new congregation, but in addition to that, the elders from my old congregation sort of backstabbed me as well. Remember, I had been serving as a ministerial servant in my old congregation, and the expectation was that I would be appointed to the same position in the new one. The policy was that the old congregation had to write a letter of recommendation to the new one to say whether I should be reappointed in the new congregation. Though nothing about my conduct had ever been questioned in the old congregation, their letter was not very positive. It referenced my having gone to R-rated movies and other minor infractions (I honestly don't remember what all of them were). Between that and the oral sex

controversy, the elders decided that they would not recommend me to be reappointed as a ministerial servant. And after dealing with them to that point, that was fine with me. I never had the least interest in any position of authority within the congregation after that.

### ***Fandom and Hypocrisy***

Somewhere in 1979 or so, I was assigned by my then-employer, American Linen Supply Co. (now known as AmeriPride Services), to a route that took me up Park Avenue in Worcester, MA every Thursday.

Since I was new to the area, I had been looking for a good place to buy my weekly fix of comic books, and here was a nice little comic and SF shop located right along my route – and on a day when I had time to kill, since my route only took about 5 hours to do correctly. So I got to know the proprietor, who was, of course, Bob Jennings (some of you may have heard of him), pretty well. Within a year or so of my starting to hang around at Bob's store, he had coaxed me onto the SFPA waiting list, and I had also gotten involved with





occasionally playing Dungeons and Dragons at the store after hours.

If you've read this far, you can probably figure out that once D&D got to be very popular, the JW leadership would have something to say about it. What they concluded, from the *Awake* magazine of 3/22/1982, was, "Dungeons and Dragons is permeated by the ideas of Satan the Devil, who has always championed greed, violence and demonism." In short, it was out of bounds for good JWs.

When the articles about D&D came out, I obediently stopped playing, and one day, put my basic set (yes, the original one) out to sell at a yard sale. One of the guys from the local congregation, a self-righteous pioneer and ministerial servant (we'll call him Brother Extra-Righteous), stopped by the yard sale, and was horrified that I was selling such a demonic object. The only proper way to deal with it was to destroy it, burn it or something like that, so that it didn't bring its demons into anyone else's house. I disagreed, saying that it was only a game, and that it didn't need to be treated as some sort of occult paraphernalia, it was just better that we, as 'Christians', not play the game. While we were arguing, some kid came by and bought the game, for 5 bucks, as I recall. Brother Extra-Righteous left in a huff.

After that, for years, Brother Extra-Righteous inserted D&D into every conversation I had with him, how wrong it was, how "real Christians" would never play such a game. He would say something about it to others, too, if I was present. Understand that: he *never, ever*, failed to bring up D&D at any time that he and I were in the



same place at the same time.

Eventually, my family and I moved to another congregation, and didn't see him so much anymore. Just the

same, several years after the original incident, we decided to revisit our old congregation (where he still attended) one week for a Sunday meeting. Sure enough, without any corresponding information in the Watchtower article being studied, Brother Extra-Righteous managed to insert some remarks about D&D into his comment during the Watchtower Study. An elder, whom I had previously complained to about this idiot (and who was really a good guy), took him aside after the meeting and read him the riot act.

After that, Brother Extra-Righteous never mentioned D&D in my presence again. But I don't think that the counsel from the elder that day was the reason. I think it had more to do with the fact that, shortly after this last incident, Brother Extra-Righteous was disfellowshipped for sexually molesting his two pre-teen daughters on an ongoing basis over a period of years.

### ***Cracks in the Watchtower***

As I mentioned earlier, before my marriage, I had encountered questions that would eventually contribute to my leaving the JW organization. Obviously, when some Christian ex-JWs had come to a local church in my area back in 1977, it would have been forbidden for me to go and hear what they had to say. But I couldn't stop the people I was trying to convert from going, and they did so. They came back with a list of questions about the JW organization and its teachings that I simply couldn't answer, which created the need for me to do research in order to provide answers. At that time, I was still convinced that JWs had the truth, and that if all the facts were known, it would become clear that the questions were without merit. While my research efforts were slowed down by my marriage and the birth of my daughter, with the ensuing responsibilities, I never stopped digging. This created conflict in my marriage, and, worse, I was finding that the more I dug into things like the history of the organization with its many false prophecies, the doctrinal issues, the legalism and other things, the worse the picture got. Another factor that weighed heavy was the subliminal images that were appearing in the JW



publications. I went into some detail about that in *Jewels and Binoculars* 29.

My marriage was also not a good one, even though it lasted for 23 years. There was a lot of conflict over my doubts about the organization, but that wasn't the only source of conflict. It seemed that we couldn't get along very well in any situation; fights were common. She was (and still is) a fully believing JW who would never question the organization about anything. She often didn't behave as a good JW would behave, though. There was definitely one face for the Kingdom Hall and another at home. Especially during the later years of our marriage, she became rather detached from reality and often violent. There were times when I was punched, kicked, had things thrown at me, had a desk telephone smashed down onto my nose, been hit with a chair leg swung like a baseball bat etc. I am not a violent person, but on the rare occasion that I laid a hand on her (in my own defense or that of my daughter), she would run to the elders and cry abuse. One time I raised my arm to block the swing of her fist - she got a bruise from hitting my arm with hers, and told everyone how violent I was. The elders were never interested in what she did to me, only in what I had done to her. On one occasion, I was again threatened with judicial action if any further incidents occurred - as if I was the one instigating them.

### ***Watch out for Demons!***

Many JWs also have an intense fear of the demonic, and my wife was at the extreme end of that. She often claimed that demons were harassing her, invisibly, of course. They would "bother" her in her bed at night, or she would get feelings of their presence. She was convinced that she was being followed around by a group of witches/Satanists/whatever who wanted to get her into their coven because she was a JW, one of God's true people, and that would be a great triumph for them. Every time a car stopped outside the house, it was "them" checking up on her. You know those telemarketer auto-dialed calls where, if a salesperson isn't available when you pick up the phone, it clicks once or twice, and then hangs up on you? That was the witches casting spells on her over the phone. These were

high-tech Satanists, though - they had night-vision goggles and all kinds of techno-equipment to spy on her, even when she was inside the house. We'd be sitting watching TV, and she'd suddenly look up and say, "They're outside now." You'd look out the window and see nothing, but of course that only proved that they were hiding and spying on you with their fancy gadgets.



*"Frank just up and exploded.  
I hope I never get that burned  
out."*

And she was totally paranoid about used items, as many Witnesses are. Forget about yard sales, couldn't go to those. One time I found a copy of *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry* (an internal manual that is provided only to baptized Witnesses or candidates for baptism) in a used bookstore. She got all exercised about me buying it. She reasoned that since that book was only distributed to Witnesses, the person who willingly gave up their copy must have been an ex-JW apostate, and thus it was probably demonized. I suggested that it might have come from the estate of a faithful JW who had died, but whose relatives weren't "in the truth". That calmed her a bit, but it continued to bother her, and eventually I had to get one of the elders to tell her that he thought it was extremely unlikely that one of the Watchtower Society's books could become demonized.

### ***The Tower Crumbles***



Eventually, it all caught up to me. The things I have mentioned, such as the lack of love in the organization, the endless rules and the history of false prophecy created enough cognitive dissonance that I had to admit – at least to myself – that Jehovah’s Witnesses did not have the truth. To make matters worse, I had been studying the Bible at least to some degree apart from the “explanations” offered in the Watchtower publications and became convinced of the deity of Jesus Christ. This is a completely unacceptable position for a JW and I could have been disfellowshipped simply for holding that belief. Obviously, I didn’t make an issue of it with other JWs.

In retrospect, I can see that I was, in effect, suffering from what you might call an extreme and prolonged case of burnout. A great deal was demanded from each member, largely without recognition or reward. Every task that was given within the organization was not offered or requested, and certainly not appreciated, as would usually be the case in a church. Rather, if one was “asked” to handle some task in the congregation, it was to be viewed as a privilege from God, not to be rejected by any right-thinking person. If you were asked to clean the toilets, you were supposed to be happy that God had so honored you. Refusal would be a sign of a bad attitude.

There was constant pressure to perform. We were taught that God expected the very best from us at all times both in terms of quality and quantity. There may be nothing wrong with taking your family for a picnic on a Sunday afternoon, but wouldn’t God be more pleased if you put in a few hours of field service (door knocking) first, then enjoyed a shorter picnic? Meeting parts were often devoted to the need to “do more” and to increase one’s service. Ideally, a member who did everything that he or she was supposed to would find it necessary to devote all of his time and energy to the organization, and many members lived at a lower standard so as to work part time, since a full-time job didn’t leave them enough time and energy to

meet the demands. There was no way to please or to appease the leadership, unless you were in the right clique. Change from within was unheard of, and disagreement was not tolerated.

Personal conflicts were also nearly impossible to resolve, since there was a great deal of focus upon making the organization look good. It didn’t matter whether you had personal problems or were hurting inside; you were supposed to put on a happy face at all times so that outsiders didn’t get the wrong idea (which was actually the right idea). You could always approach the elders for help, of course, but their focus was almost always upon a judicial response to administer discipline for some sin rather than to help in any positive way. This characteristic of the group has become an issue in recent years with regard to incidents of child sexual abuse, often perpetrated by elders or ministerial servants. The policy of the organization has been to handle such matters internally rather than report them to the authorities, in order to maintain the positive image they want to project. (For more on this issue of child sexual abuse among JWs, check out [www.silentlambs.org](http://www.silentlambs.org)).

Showing that you had problems was a sign of spiritual weakness, and might bring “reproach upon Jehovah’s organization.” After all, we were regularly told that we were the “happiest people on earth” – a claim belied by the great prevalence of psychosomatic illness and antidepressant use. But hearing the claim repeated incessantly, you were led to believe that the problem was with you, not with the organization. You actually believed that you were the only unhappy one and wondered what you were doing wrong. And when it did become apparent that others, too, were unhappy, the tendency was to blame it on Satan bringing great pressure to bear on God’s people. Any explanation would do, as long as the attention was focused away from the spiritual pressure-cooker that was the cult environment. Many, many of the JWs I knew were on antidepressants, including me – Zoloft was a





good friend for about 15 years. I've never needed it in the 15 years since I got out of the group.

You can imagine the personal level of discouragement that prevails when you have to live long-term in such an environment. Your thinking becomes skewed, so that you view that atmosphere as the normal state of things; you assume that any discontent you feel is the result of your own flaws. It took literally years for me to break away from that sort of thinking and to realize that the problem wasn't with me, but with the JW organization.

### ***Final Years in the JW Organization***

In 1994, my wife and I were in a fairly serious auto accident that ended up with both of us in ambulances being brought to the hospital. It turned out that our injuries were not severe, though painful, and we were both released from the ER that night. In the aftermath of the accident, we were allowed to seek massage therapy under the medical coverage, and both of us did so. After many months of therapy, my wife told me that she had been "molested" by the therapist over a period of several months. Apparently her massages had turned sexual, though, as far as I can discern, there was no actual penetration. By this time, she had stopped seeing the therapist, and was now trying to justify her actions. Understand, this hadn't happened just once; she went back week after week for therapy with this sort of activity going on each time.

She tried reporting the guy to the police, but they weren't interested, for obvious reasons – if she wasn't consenting to what happened, why did she keep going back? Her claim was that the therapist was a witch or a Satanist and that he had both drugged her and put spells upon her. In particular, she speculated that he might have been somehow forcing her to take the drug Ecstasy without her knowledge (though at the time she was working as a school bus driver, faced regular drug testing, and always came up

clean). Therefore, by her reasoning, her actions were involuntary, and as a result there was no adultery. The police, of course, wouldn't buy an explanation like that, but the elders in our congregation at that time did, and took no action against her.

This incident agitated her demon-phobia, too. Suddenly she saw the therapist following her around everywhere. He was a witch, after all, and they still wanted her in their coven, because she was such a significant prize. If she saw a guy with a beard looking at her, it was the therapist wearing a fake beard. If someone followed her too close in traffic, it was him again, probably casting spells on her.

By this time, I was mentally out of the JW thing. There was no doubt in my mind that they had nothing to offer, that they fully qualified as false prophets and false teachers. And the lunacy at

home was more than I could bear. One day around 1995, I drove my car to a lonely mountainside and had a talk with Jesus, telling Him that I wanted to serve Him with my life, but that I needed His help in bringing that about. It took a while, but He came through.



Also in 1995, another bit of "new light" came along. For at least 50 years, the *Watchtower* had taught that the generation of people who were alive in 1914,

when Jesus had returned to earth invisibly, would still be alive when Armageddon came. This was based on Jesus' words at Matthew 24:33-4: "So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." In 1995, a series of *Watchtower* articles was presented in which the prophecy about the generation was detached from the 1914 date, then over 80 years in the past. While they still insisted that Armageddon was very near, there was no longer any specific date-related prophecy that would lock it into a specific time frame. That was about the final straw for me. I remember tossing the magazine



across the room when I read it. Ironically, the reason that I found it so infuriating was, not that my hopes had been dashed, but because I knew it had to be coming at some point. Too much time had passed for the prophecy to be believed any more. It simply became another in the long list of JW failed prophecies.

### ***End of My First Marriage and a New Life***

JW's consider "endangerment of spirituality" as a valid, scriptural ground for marital separation. My interest in learning about the Bible apart from JW interpretations, researching their history and learning all the negative stuff about them, and having non-Watchtower literature about the Bible created a great deal of conflict. In 2000, after 23 years of marriage, she moved out of the house and filed for divorce. For purposes of meeting the JW requirements for divorce, she actually admitted to the sexual unfaithfulness she had committed a few years earlier – except now she didn't blame the therapist for drugging or bewitching her. She had learned that her actions with the therapist constituted *porneia* under the organization's definition, and that constituted grounds for divorce within the organization. So she confessed her "adultery" to me and to the elders. The elders in her congregation (a different congregation from the one where this issue was originally raised – we had moved to another state due to my employment) also bought this explanation, had three judicial meetings with her, and again took no action. After all, I had gained something of a reputation as an apostate, so any right-thinking JW could see why it was important that she disentangle herself from me.

Without going into detail, I was plundered financially in the divorce, and, in fact, I'm still paying weekly alimony 15 years later. Two weeks after my wife moved out of the house, I was at a conference at a retreat center on a mountainside in Pennsylvania called "Witnesses Now for Jesus." It is an annual event for ex-Jehovah's Witnesses who have become Christians and for those in ministry to cultic groups. It is extremely uplifting, a "mountain top" experience in more ways than one and has become an important event on my calendar every year since.

Just before Christmas of 2000 (the first Christmas I would celebrate in over 30 years), my father passed away. The mood in the family was somber, and I was invited to a family gathering at my cousin's home on New Year's Day of 2001. My uncle brought a big box of old family pictures going back generations. One picture was of me with the high school sweetheart I had given up over 30 years earlier to become a JW. We were dressed up for my senior prom. I had seen her name on the web site, Classmates.com and I went home that night and sent her an e-mail. It turned out that she had been widowed a few years before. We met for dinner a few weeks later and ultimately ended up marrying in October of 2001. My marriage to Pat has been the happiest time of my life.

### ***Shunning Via Rumor***

One other incident I should probably tell you about happened a few weeks before my marriage to Pat. My daughter's best friend Amanda was getting married, and despite my trepidation, Amanda had begged me to show up and to dance a dance with her. So I couldn't say no. My trepidation was twofold; first, my ex-wife was going to be there, and after our messy divorce only six months prior, I had no desire to be anywhere near where she was. Second, I knew that she had been spreading lies about me among all our old friends. Even though our divorce was based upon *her* adultery, since she was still an active JW (having merely gotten her wrist slapped by the elders) and since I had abandoned the group, it was very easy for her to convince everyone that I was the guilty party. In fact, from what I have heard, she was spreading rumors that I was gay (I'm not), that I had a girlfriend when we were together (I didn't), and that I was an apostate (well, maybe that one).

The wedding was on the town common in Sturbridge, MA, and that went pretty well. Amanda was raised in a JW home, but was never baptized, and her fiancé was a non-Witness, so the wedding could not, of course, be held at the Kingdom Hall. A judge married them at a public location, so a number of people from the local congregation did show up, despite the dire warnings of impropriety that I understand were



circulated by certain elders. My ex-wife sat up front with her parents, so I sat in the back. I did notice that several of my former friends seemed to be avoiding my glance, and that the rows immediately around me had failed to fill in, but I didn't think too much of it at that point. After the ceremony, I went through the receiving line, congratulated everyone, walked directly to my car and left. I then drove around for an hour so that I wouldn't have to hang out among that crowd for an unnecessary length of time.

When I arrived at the reception hall, the wedding party was already lining up outside. My daughter was in the wedding, and I got a smile from her by remarking that I had cut it a bit too close (she knew how I felt about the whole thing). I snuck by, and walked into the hall. Of course, my ex had sat right at the first table inside the entrance, so you couldn't walk into or out of the place without practically tripping over her. Sitting with her were her parents, who were wonderful people, and her brother and his companion, along with one of her friends. I walked past them without saying anything, and went to the other end of the hall to drop my card on the gift table. Coming back, I went through again, because I was looking for a men's room. My ex's brother smiled and waved, and I returned the greeting quietly. But just then, my ex's father saw me and called me over to the table. I had not seen them since before the divorce began, so I went over, quickly said hello, gave my ex-mother-in-law a kiss, and walked away again. I could see my ex-wife fuming as I did so.

Meanwhile, I had begun to notice that most of the JW's who were present were ignoring me. In a few cases, persons who had been good friends caught my eye, and then averted their gaze. Now, remember, I had *not been* disfellowshipped or formally disassociated myself from the congregation (which results in the same

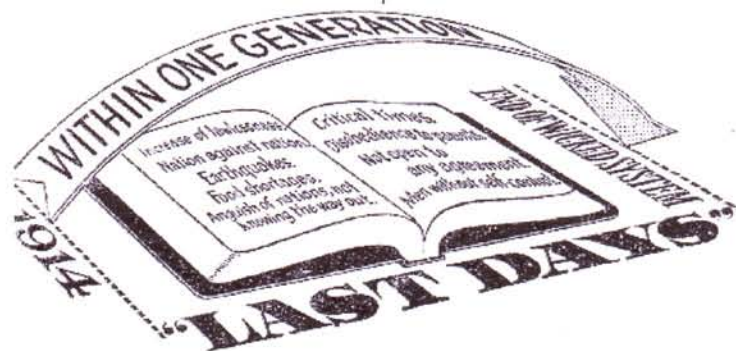
shunning as a disfellowshipping). Either these people had heard the lies that my ex was spreading around, or they just assumed that, because we had gotten divorced, and she was still a JW and I wasn't going to the Kingdom Hall anymore, that I must have been the guilty party and was probably disfellowshipped. Alternately, I guess they might have heard that I was an apostate, probably from my ex as well.

Things were getting uncomfortable at this point; seating was tight, and since the Witnesses seemed to be shunning me, I had no desire to sit with any of them. Under ordinary circumstances

I would have left, but I had promised Amanda that I'd dance with her at her wedding. I hung around the bar, strategically positioning myself so as to be behind a post where there was no direct line of sight to my ex.

During this time, her brother came over, bought me a drink, and chatted with me for a few minutes. It was good seeing him again. As I was lined up at the bar, another JW, one whom I had driven to work with for several years after I got him a job where I worked, was right in front of me in line, but failed to acknowledge my existence. So after all this, I went looking for a seat, because after what seemed like an eternity, the wedding party was ready to come in. I found a table with only two couples at it, neither of whom I knew, and asked if it was ok to sit there. They said sure, I sat, and the procession started.

As the wedding party was entering, I glanced over to the table where my ex had been, and noticed that my former brother-in-law, who had bought me the drink, was now sitting alone with his companion. I wasn't sure what that meant, but after the procession was over, my daughter came over and said, "You can go sit with Uncle B---, Mom left." So I did. It seems my ex had thrown a hissy fit and stomped out of the reception. Why? Because I was there, and her family, which I had been part of for 23 years, and none of whom had





seen me in over a year, was paying attention to me. She called her brother a "traitor", complained about 'being a victim,' and made her parents (who had been invited to the wedding and had presumably brought a gift) leave without even having a meal.

After my ex left, I continued to chat with my former brother-in-law and his friend. My daughter came over several times to see how I was doing, and on at least one occasion, she noticed that I was becoming increasingly agitated because of my former friends ignoring me. I think at that point she said something to someone, because the guy who had ignored me earlier at the bar came over and we chatted for a while. After that, my daughter came back and said that nobody was talking to me because many of the people there thought I was disfellowshipped. I growled, "I wonder where they got that idea?" and my daughter said, "Yeah, I wonder..." Obviously, my ex-wife had been at work again.

As the evening progressed, a few others trickled over to say hello, but many continued to ignore me. It astounded me at the time how ready these people were to shun, even on the basis of unconfirmed rumor. And the thing is, it was mostly the more marginal Witnesses who were there. Not a single elder had attended, and the word had been spread in the local congregation that it was improper to attend because Amanda was marrying a "worldly" man. So the Witnesses who attended were largely the ones who didn't much care what the organization said, but were prepared to do what they wanted to. Just the same, ignoring a former close friend on the basis of unfounded rumor seemed to come easily to many of them. I really thought that they *liked* to shun people, that it gives them a sense of individual power and superiority.

After an excruciatingly long time, the "official" dances were over, and general dancing began. On

the first such dance, the beautiful little bride walked over to me and said, "May I have this dance?" I said, "You certainly may," and proceeded to fulfill my promise to her. When it was over, I kissed Amanda, told her to be happy, congratulated her and the groom, hugged my daughter and shook my son-in-law's hand, bid goodbye to my ex-brother-in-law and his friend, and left for home, angry and frustrated about an organization that teaches people to act in such an unloving and inhumane manner, and even more disturbed that I had allowed myself to be a part of such an organization for nearly 30 years.

By the time I got home, I had thoughts of consuming large quantities of Southern Comfort, something I have very rarely done, but was in the perfect mood for at the time. Fortunately, no sooner had I gotten home than my then fiancée,

now my wife, Pat, the most wonderful woman in the world, called and talked me down. She reminded me that I was letting my ex and the cultists win by allowing myself to get so upset. I thank God that I have her; she's so much smarter and more levelheaded than I am.



### ***"The Freedom of the Sons of God"***

And that's really the happy ending to this story. That weekend's events were a glitch, a blip on the radar screen, upsetting though they were. On October 7, 2001 I married the most wonderful woman in the world, my high school sweetheart rediscovered after more than 30 years, and left my JW life as no more than a bad memory. Occasionally, I wish that I had married Pat the first time when we were young; when I express that to her, she reminds me that I have a terrific daughter, whom I wouldn't trade for anything, and I realize that she's right. The past is the past; no one can change it. We've come to where we are because of where we've been, and all we can do is go forward from here.



"I'll let you in my dreams if you'll let me in yours. *I said that.*" – Bob Dylan

# YOU'LL SEE ME IN MY DREAMS

GHLIII

**A**nd where do private demons come forth? In your dreams, of course. I've always been blessed with a vivid nocturnal imagination, and intricate, detailed dreams. Here are some.



My earliest remembered dream was of a man-sized humanoid cat standing in a garage. Unless it was the little boy in a movie electrocuting himself reaching behind his chair and hitting a wall socket, while my father watched and sniffled. *Yih.*

Of course I've dreamed of fandom – usually I'm awaiting the Hugo ceremony. As in real life, I find myself admiring the

weird and elaborate bases. Like everyone else on Earth I sometimes dream I'm going into a test I haven't studied for (really happened!), having a new job (a yuppie business position I know nothing about – *never* happened), being naked in court (seldom), typical anxiety stuff. Several times in recent months I've found myself in high school or college again, but not as a teenager or young buck – as the old man I am, hoping to secure another diploma or degree. I decide that I have enough sheepskin and split.

I often dream I'm in New Orleans. Usually in my dreams the city is a ruin; the bridges are blocked with demolished cars and trucks, the homes are shabby, gray with blight, and I must drive or walk through slums to get home. Puzzling, and unfair to the burg I love above all others. I used to dream that I was being forced to move into a squalid, rundown ruin or a place – but those nightmares have faded.

On many nighttime trips I visit New York City or San Francisco, complete to the mortar between bricks and the colors on comics and books for

sale in newsstands. Niagara Falls used to feature often, but occasionally the Taj Mahal or the White House or Australia show up. (Do they mine *blue slate* anywhere in Oz? I dreamed once that they did – a possible reference to the *red slate* of Prince Edward Island.)

Sometimes I'm waiting to take a plane ride – which you should know scares me to death. Sometimes I'm on a train. Once I was driving with my family through Canada – God knows why – and my ten-year-old brother (who just turned 60 in the waking world) pointed out the outside of a museum. I could see through the tall windows to the huge murals and paintings on the walls beyond – and their colors. I told you my *traums* were detailed!

All of the following are genuine GHLIII dreams of the past few months. If you're wondering, I often write them down in my diary in the morning. By all means, psychoanalyze away. In *italics* below I give my own interpretations – and those of my psychotherapist.

I am at a legal conference where lawyers are presenting academic papers. Physical copies of the presentations are given to us, stapled in the corner but confusingly collated. Many of the attorneys know each other but I'm not familiar with any of them. I don't feel lonely or threatened, however. *Shrink: I am preparing myself to move on to a new phase of life.* Three years+ after my last active days as a lawyer, I'd say that it's about time.



I'm a BNF at a club meeting. I go around picking up fanzines lying about in stacks. A girl hands me a legal sheet covered in type, with x'ed out words and blotchy printing. I ask if it's her first fanzine and she says yes. I turn to former SFPAn Alan Hutchinson, an ingenious artist, and joke that between us we've done 2,000 of the things.

An almost complete Kinsey Millhone adventure, with Rosy as Kinsey and me as a sidekick. A real estate salesman has been shot. Rosy's client is an older real estate lady accompanied by a tall black guy, her assistant. He has a sister, another real estate agent, who turns out to be the killer – and who shoots him in the gut (just like a Dick Tracy villainess I remember). We chase the bad girl off a roof.

I'm getting a Worldcon bid together in New Orleans. There's a good young group gathered. Among them is Brad Pitt. He complains that I embarrassed him when I introduced him, but he's still my second-in-command. Second vice-chair is a former girlfriend who might be NOLA's late, lovely and much beloved Candy Baines. We go out to win the Worldcon, or in my case, wake up. A few weeks later, I dream I'm hosting a *Star Wars* premiere on behalf of the bid. The theatre is a real trash heap, and we find when we arrive that tickets are \$10.25 – New York prices in a New Orleans dump! I make a speech promising discounts on Nolacon memberships to all who attend. Some people hiss. "Why don't you go ahead and *fart*?" I demand, to applause.

I am a drama student at a university. I have a mad crush on a brunette girl. I answer the door at our class. It's the famous character actor Robert Middleton. *Note: Middleton was big and bald but good-looking nonetheless. Yay team.* I'm quite excited. Other actors from a film being made nearby come in and take our seats – we students must sit along the sides of the classroom. A young woman in costume declines to shake hands. I pull a ceiling-hanging veil loose so we can see better.

This masterpiece begins at a convention. In addition to my New Orleans crew Michelle Pfeiffer is there. Michelle isn't the staggering beauty I once worshipped; she looks morbidly

obese. Joel Thingvall – a real fan, though I've never met him – is there and he invites us all to come to his house.

Next thing I know we're pulling up to his house, which is a sprawling old place off a road in the desert. No grass, no trees, although there's a thick forest nearby. The driveway is dirt and small stones. We go in. John Guidry, a friendly guy, is one of us. Thingvall lives in the front room of three. The furniture is old but I'm relieved, the place seems clean. There are young people around, including college age girls. I get the feeling it's an artist's colony of some sort that puts on plays. I look into the next room; the walls are old brick with lots of plumbing fixtures and pipes against the walls. I wonder if it's a kitchen under construction.

I'm suspicious of the commune as I go exploring. It's obviously a cult we won't be able to leave. I've lost my shoes and walk nervously, as the floor is dirt and spotted with hunks of shaved metal such as fall from lathes. I wander into a lunchroom, where I see Annie and Justin Winston sitting with Pfeiffer. I talk to Justin. Remembering a great line from an old movie, *The Most Dangerous Game*, I say something innocuous which ends with DANGER. We stand against the wall to watch some sort of play or performance and Justin is snatched into an adjacent garage through a metal door. Cannibals! I go outside and see him running for the woods and shout at him to run faster, but he seems to dive into the ground, like a mole.

I jump up and steal some ill-fitting shoes, and take off overland. I try to use a cellphone but there's no signal. Across the highway is a convenience store that seems closed.

I head across the road to a slum. The houses are ruins, abandoned, very close together. I know I'm being chased by Thingvall, a teenaged blonde girl and a goon from the commune so I get up on the roofs. I make it as far as a very tall chain link fence; they corner me as I stand atop it near a spot where the fence is split. Looking the other way, I see that the fence slopes into an inhabited suburb, but I know they can chase me there. The blonde girl, who is quite young, shouts "You know I'm going to kill you!"

Suddenly three guys in weird conical costumes – man-sized drills – appear and impale the people pursuing me. *My shrink howled at*



this. I enter a house I believe is empty through a window and find a cellphone. The residents appear – Chinese collegiates. They'll help me. I call cops. I hear commotion outside; the commune members are trying to get inside. I can't really see them. With relief I note that the building is made of brick. Awake!

*I must point out that I have nothing against Thingvall. We're Friends on FB!*

I'm discarding old clothes in a sinkhole, like the terrifying chasm in *The Lovely Bones*. I go through the stuff as my old jeans and shirts go down the slot into the depths. No teddy bears; nothing I'll miss. I spot a dumpster waiting to be emptied. It's full of notebooks: old stories of mine my father is throwing out. I pull the damaged papers away, intending to rewrite them. *Just as I intend to do in real life. My dad never groused about my writing. Why am I faulting GHL Jr.?*

Sometimes I have sexy dreams. I meet an impossibly endowed young lady. Referring to her mammalia she warns me, "Don't mess with *Milky* and *Hitler*!" "Which one is Hitler?" I ask. She says, "The one with the moustache."

I wake up laughing.

*Shrink: You're a very strange man, Guy. (No she didn't.)*

And sometimes I have nightmares. Recollections of the basement at Charity Hospital, which I had to visit on the job but always with my face averted from the autopsies going on there. Rows of dead people, some in pieces, others only ragged bones. I try to avoid looking but I know they're there.

It's been blessed years since those images haunted me. But recently, and I don't know why, I dreamt I was visiting my late mother, who in the dream lives in a theatre. The place is worn down and from the lobby you can enter other businesses. My mother complains that one is making a lot of noise and I volunteer to complain.

I go up a stairwell whose walls are painted black. The joint is a brothel. There's an office and beyond it an extremely grungy set of rooms, set off by cardboard walls with flimsy black curtains for doors. *I remember the cardboard coffins in which bodies are cremated.* I'm seeking the manager but the whores come out. Some women can barely sit up. They're all battered, filthy,

decayed, and one has no face. Blank like a sock. A line of males lies in a ragged row in one room, naked, bloodied and unmoving. Customers? Male prostitutes?

I find the manager. He's a gangster surrounded by other hoods, like him, Iranian. *I'd just seen the potboiler **London Has Fallen**.* He says to complain to the building owner, a man named *Anderson*. There's violence. *Shaken, I escape to the real world. Horrible. This one even upsets my shrink. What the hell?*

But things resolve themselves in dreams, too. I'm watching an old TV show from my childhood. I know the show will climax with the revelation of the protagonist's real face, too horrible to stand. It terrified me as a child. *This reflects real life – the hideous face on the wall from **One Step Beyond** I wrote about in **Spartacus**, and Harry Townes' face-in-the-mirror from "The Cheaters" on **Thriller**.* At first I hold my fingers in front of my eyes, just as I did in the Charity Hospital dreams and in the weird bordello, but I think, c'mon, I'm a grownup, and lower my hand.

*Yeesh!* The dude's face is indeed ghastly – pouched cheeks pocked with hundreds of holes, pop eyes, a pitifully receded cleft chin.

Suddenly he's no longer just on the television but a real man. He wears a bandage from corrective surgery on his cheek. I talk to him. We're going to go someplace together.

*Shrink: the hideous face is **you** – as a child, who thinks that because other people are unhappy there must be something horribly wrong with him. An adult now, you know better; you're in therapy to befriend that child and **heal** him.*

*That I like.*





# The CHORUS LINES

**David B. Williams**  
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**Whitestown, IN 46075**

Greg Benford wrote an interesting proposal about terraforming Mars in the most recent *Challenger*. Like in all good SF, everything he suggests is theoretically achievable. But the price tag would be astronomical and the labors like nothing we have seen since the Pyramids were erected. Does anyone believe that the peoples of Earth would support such an enterprise and the confiscatory taxes needed to fund it?

I have a better proposal. We already possess a planet with near-Earthlike qualities. Why not put a fraction of the effort and wealth into terraforming Earth? It's easy to get to (give or take some rush-hour traffic) and improving our own planet is a saleable concept that much of the inhabitants would support, since they would benefit. We could begin my restoring the Amazon rain forest

and cleaning the toxic wastes, acid, and plastic crap out of the oceans. Everyone likes air. Then we might consider re-greening the Sahara, which could also reduce the numbers of those pesky hurricanes and provide more space for the burgeoning population. The Sahara has been green before, it can be green again.

Then, we could get more science-fictiony and consider melting the ice off the Antarctic, Greenland, and the other arctic wastelands, again providing more Lebensraum. Nature has done it before, to the benefit of dinosaurs and Vikings, we can do it too.

A less popular proposal might be to eliminate about two thirds of the population. It would be a hard sell, what with so many people not wanting to go to Jesus and the reduction in the number of Congressional districts, but again, Nature has done it before and we could do it too. We have already reduced many other species to near or total extinction, why not take a shot at reducing our own?).

**Rich Dengrove**  
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**Alexandria, VA 22306**

Once again, late, late, late. But my comments on *Challenger* #40 are better late than never – that is, unless you have already mailed out *Challenger* #41. Which might make things a lot more challenging.

I have a reason for saying this. You love putting out zines because of all the





friendships you have acquired from doing so. From the *Barrington Bull* to this *Challenger* #40. I think of you as a friend too. Thus, I want to participate in the back and forth that make *Challenger* the forum it is. Just as you and I like the back and forth that make up the Southern Fandom Press Association.

Of course, other things beside zines have lured men into fandom. John Purcell admits that his wife Valerie rekindled his love of fanzines and conventions; and restarted him on his faanish career. I have to say that Valerie is the type of woman who can do that. At Fencon VIII, I was trapped next to her in a seafood restaurant at Fencon. Trapped as in not being able to get out. As in too many people and tables blocking the way. Not trapped as in wanting to get out. I enjoyed listening to Valerie throughout the meal. In particular I still remember her adventures raising the Texas flag. However, there wasn't much else she said that I didn't find interesting.

Gregory Benford writes about another friend with faanishness written all over it, the Moon. He wants it terraformed so humans can live there. A skiffy idea if there ever was one. The Ancients believed the Moon, often unlike all other heavenly bodies, was inhabitable, and already inhabited. In fact, a few astronomers in the early 20th Century believed it inhabitable and habited. It did not matter that Galileo proved that the Earth had no water. Well, we may yet make it inhabitable and inhabited. If not, we could breed or build men with their own supply of oxygen and water who could eat rocks.

We go from an article on science by Greg Benford to an article on the arts by Jim Ivers, the cinema arts. The art of bad horror films to be precise. He says a lot I was thinking. Jim was definitely right that the special effects in *Journey to the Seventh Planet* (1962) were from hunger. However, I am more favorable toward the film because it dealt in an OK enough manner with the idea of reality. Intrepid, Earth astronauts are being dogged on Uranus by a monster that is controlling their minds, and trying to seduce them with the shades of old girl friends. It could all be sexist except that the lovely ladies

involved are phantoms of the crew members' minds.

Another movie Jim was right about was *The Night of the Lepus* (1972). Yes, the very concept of man eating rabbits turns it into bad cinema. Whatever good the film contained left it when the sheriff told people to watch out for "man eating rabbits." Of course, you have to remember, as Jim pointed out, it had some good actors. Also, the script was OK considering the concept.

Furthermore, Jim was right that the idea behind the movie *Squirm* (1976) was icky: namely, man-eating worms. However, I remembered another feature of the film as well that stuck out as neat, if not great cinema. Someone highlighted it for me. He told me that a Jewish kid succeeded in making his own movie. It struck me that that was the case. It doesn't matter the star's named Dan Scardino, which doesn't sound Jewish.

While I diverge from Jim Ivers' criticisms, however, I outright disagree with Mike Rogers. We are not talking bad cinema here but a good person who feels that he has failed us. It would be a pity if one failure drove someone so decent and intelligent from fandom. What makes things worse is I don't think Mike failed us; just like I don't believe the movies up above failed us. The difference is that while the movie makers probably understood the true worth of their masterpieces, Mike is being too hard on himself.

That a con will be a hit is a "hit or miss" proposition. In particular that DeepSouthCon could go stand-alone, a literary con without gamers, cosplayers, fuzzies and other signs of younger fandom. For many years, it has piggybacked on younger cons. After DeepSouthCon 50, a number of people wished to change that. To be honest, I believed from the first that DeepSouthCon 50 had an advantage another wouldn't: it was a 50th anniversary and, to many, a sentimental number. For that reason a lot of people attended who wouldn't normally have attended a DeepSouthCon.

However, I also believe I was in the minority. Not only was Mike misled but so



was Gary Robe. [Robe, an experienced con chair, put on a "stand-alone" DSC that attracted only 60 people to attend.] I can see why. A lot of older con goers resent being dependent on the younger conventions. While piggybacking insures that there is no possibility of insolvency and the number of young fans insures that both the piggy-backer and the piggybackee will pay less overall, many old-timers crave a standalone convention.

Thus, Mike criticizes himself for not recruiting members, a bad guest of honor, lack of funds, fuzzy goals, too much trust in the hotel, etc. I doubt that. I suspect that his DeepSouthCon in Atlanta would not have succeeded no matter what he did or didn't do. What gives the lie to the above reasons is Mike is a seasoned a con organizer. I find it hard to believe that he didn't do the sensible things to stay afloat, which he ultimately did. No, I believe he was the victim, like so many of us, of nostalgia.

From fandom, we go to bad-dom. Once again, I am talking a *bad* bad movie. From the normally friendly and congenial to the horrifying. Not what necessarily gives us any more fear; but what is so terrible it appeals to our sense of humor or of the weird. In fact, sometimes it gives us a lot of sex, which, as horny adolescents, conventions often don't.

That is particularly true of the movie I am going to comment on, *Queen Kong* (1976) in response to a comment from you, Guy. You wonder why I consider the movie's appeal self-evident. For one thing, it has sex appeal. Somehow the producer had gotten together a town sized population of beauties in bikinis. You can't deny that has appeal to men. The appeal to women is harder to divine. The reaction of women to the movie, however, leads me to believe all that Women's Lib rhetoric continues to have appeal. Thus, both sex appeal and a wisp of feminism make this stinker more than halfway tolerable for many people.

While the movie *Queen Kong* talked about love, Guy, your article on the Vietnam War talked about war. Or, at any rate, anti-war demonstrations. Demonstrators were

reported in the media to savage American soldiers, even if they had been drafted. Their big offense was to chant "How many babies have you killed today?!" I didn't attend too many demonstrations after a while; so I couldn't say nay. You could. In the anti-war demonstration you wrote about, Vietnam vets played a significant role. So anti-war demonstrators didn't necessarily savage the men in uniform.

Less publicized was the attitude of many older patriotic people toward the troops. I noticed this got very little publicity. Ironically, older people, who likely supported the war, looked down on Vietnam Vets. Their reason was they didn't win their war, like these older people believed they did World War II – as if either war was the individual troops' to win or lose personally. On that basis, I heard World War II vets were reluctant to hire Vietnam vets for jobs.

Now, let us go back to fantasy from what was a fairly hard reality in the US. In one article, Tom Rasely reviews movies set on Venus. In reviewing *First Spaceship on Venus* (1962), he mentions the Russian picture *Planet of Storms* (1962); and says the two resemble one another. I am not so certain of that. What concerns me more is he did not mention two American films that ripped off *Planet of Storms*. That included cannibalizing much footage from the film. Then they made all the names and characters American. I am talking about *The Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* (1965) and *The Voyage to the Planet of the Prehistoric Women* (1968). The first replaced the Russian stars with Basil Rathbone and a less than happy Faith Domergue. The last film was directed by Peter Bogdanovich when he was working for Roger Corman and before *The Last Picture Show* marked him as a great director.

From fantasy, let's go back to hard reality. Taral Wayne wrote about cars he had owned. No incredible wealth in owning an ancient Corvette. However, I knew someone who owned a more recent Lexus and kept it in his driveway for all to admire his status. One day it disappeared. He wasn't shy about complaining that ghetto Blacks had stolen it. What finally turned out happened was that



the repo man got it. That someone apparently felt they couldn't foreclose anything on his driveway, but found out they could.

That has spent my wad on this letter. Now I will try to tie it up. How does one sum up a letter on totally different topics? With difficulty. I started out with fandom, went to a terraformed Moon, spent plenty of time with horror and bad movies, and ended up with fast cars. That's enough: if I missed any topics I wrote about, it would be the luck of the draw.

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Thank you for *Challenger* 40. I am so far behind! I will make the attempt to produce something halfway literate for the LOCcol.

Congrats on 40 *Challengers* and 1200 GHLIII Press publications. With such achievements, there should be something silvery and rocket-shaped on your mantel, or at least something with FAAn on it. That may be more of a comment on the awards than anything else.

I have often written in zines that I cannot think of an activity or hobby, other than SF fandom, that has given me the friends and acquaintances that I have. I hope it shall sustain me to the end of my days. Yet, I have also complained aloud that fandom is for the rich, or at least, the richer-than-me. We do not go to Worldcons anymore; they are simply beyond our means. Yes, we did go to England for a wonderful trip, but this was a trip we really wanted to take, and Yvonne scrimped and saved for it. I suspect our travelling days are done. And, the idea of fandom locally seems to be going away, or perhaps, I should say it's leaving us behind. Facebook is a great way to stay in touch with people, but nothing beats the actual social contact, the shaking of hands or the hug. Yvonne and I have embraced steampunk, and there is some community there, too.

As do many, I continue to pray we don't destroy ourselves, and stop devoting so

much money, time, effort and resources to the waging of war. That money could end hunger and poverty, and start projects to not only terraform the moon or Mars, but perhaps terraform our own world, to press the ecological reset button, and eliminate the pollution in our air, land and water.

My sympathies to the DSC people who had to cancel their big regional convention. One local convention here, Polaris, ended its run because it could no longer field a full staff, and they didn't feel good about cancelling some of their in-con activities, like a charitable auction. The remaining conventions in Toronto always have a tough time staffing themselves. People are naturally lazy; they want to go and have a good time, but they do not want to work to stage it. I have chaired several conventions, and I always wanted to make sure that people could do their jobs and had the power to make their own decisions, and they knew that the success of the con rested on their own shoulders. Results were mixed, but I decided some time ago that I was not a good convention chairman. I was best at running a small part of the con, and I did that until we retired from con-running.

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In *Challenger* #40, M. Lee Rogers article "How to Kill A DeepSouthCon" definitely attracted my attention. I'm not involved in running conventions anymore, but I still have a theoretical interest in the subject. Rogers seems to feel he was responsible for the death of DeepSouthCon. It rather sounds like the con suffered from an underdose of attendees.

Westercons went through something like the same process but with different results. Attendance at Westercons had been declining for years, and there was talk of folding the operation entirely. Some suggested that Westercons be combined with some local con in the western region. Most thought that if that was necessary you might



as well just fold the convention rather than create what amounted to a legal fiction. All this discussion actually revived interest in the Westercons, and at last report, membership in Westercons was increasing.

At the moment, there are too many cons, and the number is still increasing. I understand there is a con devoted to a TV show about an outlaw biker gang. Now that I think about it, they probably don't have to rent a hotel. They can just tree a small town.

If cons follow the free market model, new cons will keep crowding into the field until there isn't one dime of profit left to be had. That should discourage some of the purely commercial operators. The fan run cons don't really need profit. They can continue if they more-or-less break even. Of course, the spigot of public enthusiasm can be

turned off in an instant for sometimes unknown reasons. Cons could join marathon dancing and flagpole sitting as strange things Americans used to do.

I actually still like talking about science fiction. I know that's sort of weird considering how long I've been around, but we all have our kinks. I also think cons were more fun when they were smaller. I realize that may be nostalgia in action. Some con runners believe that young people aren't interested in SF, so you have to feature something else to attract them. I point out that I liked science fiction when I was a teenager, but that doesn't seem to count. I think they may doubt I was ever a teenager. Looking at current teenagers, I sometimes doubt that too. Oh well.

ererer

Mike Estabrook

## **Zelophobia**

*Fear of Jealousy*

1  
I don't comprehend the "friends with benefits"  
concept. Simply trying to imagine  
my wife having been with another man ever  
is enough to make me crazy  
but I'm old-fashioned that way.

2  
Trying out for the Senior Class Play's  
romantic lead opposite my girl but coming in  
second  
to the ever-popular handsome hunky Everett  
then having to watch him romancing her  
on-stage from backstage for weeks.

3  
Backing Mr. Popularity track star Donnie  
into a corner of the locker room  
advising him to keep his fucking hands off her  
and stop sending her notes in class  
because she's my girl.

4  
Taking classes in Shotokan Karate  
in case Don the big football star who'd  
become  
her favorite study-buddy decided to get too  
friendly  
because I knew he wouldn't be a match  
for a roundhouse kick to his big football-  
shaped head.

5  
Remember that time she dated another guy  
and I watched from a window above the  
cafeteria  
as they threw snowballs at one another and  
tussled  
in the snow, her giggling like a little girl  
her hair shining in the sun.

6  
He married his high school sweetheart  
40 years ago. Yet whenever  
an old classmate wants  
to "friend" her on Facebook and not him  
his hackles rise wondering about this guy's  
motives.



# The Damned Man

Guy Lillian

When the man came into the office our receptionist was tempted to call Security. He

looked like Hell. He wore an ill-fitting and raggedy corduroy suit, too hot for the late summer. His short collar was grimy, and his tie a hideous shade of orange. Though his narrow face was shaved, the shave had been uneven, with too light a touch for his heavy beard. His dark brown hair was overlong, and a cowlick popped it into a ducktail in back. Worst, she told me later, were his eyes, so tiny and "squinty" she'd thought, at first, that the man was blind.

But the receptionist didn't call for reinforcements, because the man, with shyness and hesitancy, placed a business card upon her desk. "I am Grumer," he said, almost whispering. "I have an appointment."

Linda, our receptionist, picked up the card with the tips of her manicured fingers, as if afraid it was infected. The card was mine, one of many circulated to major banks in Manhattan. **HUBERT VELASQUEZ, Financial Advisor.** Grumer had been referred by such a bank.

Linda called to announce Grumer's arrival. I caught a touch of unease in her voice, and when she escorted him back to our conference room, where I waited, I saw a flash of

comic horror on her face. I would have chided her for it, later, but the slouching figure behind her, gazing out the tall window at lowet Manhattan beyond, gave me a chill, also. His stooped posture matched his ridiculous get-up; his sallow expression made me worry he was on the verge of throwing up. "Mr. Grumer," I said with a smile. "Hubert Velasquez – delighted to meet you! Sit, sit."

He sat, placing his briefcase on the table. He kept his hands – long fingernails, clean but very dark, I noticed – in his lap. Linda asked, "Can I get you something?", a question straight from the New Client Handbook. Grumer lowered his eyes and said, "No, no thank you. I feel a slight queasiness."

I smiled. "That's the building. We're so high we can feel it sway in the wind. We are long used to it but ... some soda water, Linda!"

Our receptionist disappeared and returned quickly with a squat bottle of H<sub>2</sub>O. Grumer took it without looking at her, which was odd, since we'd hired Linda for her epic looks and a man who ignores her is either catastrophically gay or somehow demented. He

opened the bottle and poured its fizzy contents into a glass. "I won't have anything," I told Linda with a slight scowl. Ignoring a boss was a no-no;





*Playboy* looks and all, I wanted her to know that. She blushed and beat it.

When the door closed I noticed something else about Grumer: he smelled bad. Stale, and there was the slightest odor of singed hair on his clothes. I plunged on. "So, Mr. Grumer: are you native to New York?"

The question seemed to startle him. "No, no ... I'm European. I visit New York City every ..." His voice trailed away.

"I thought I'd caught an accent," I said, riding pleasantry as far as it could take me. "Now ... when you called from the bank ..."

"Yes, yes," Grumer said, and reached for his worn briefcase. He undid its snaps and dragged forth a sheaf of papers, messily unarranged, of different sizes, different colors. They smelled wet. He laid them on the table between us.

"These," he said, his eyes on the papers, his interlaced fingers hovering protectively above them, "are what records I have been able to gather. My finances are scattered all over the world. Some accounts are decades old. I would like advice and assistance consolidating them and investing my funds."

The stack of papers was a good three inches high. "Uhh ... may I?" I asked. Grumer nodded, once, and I brought the papers before me. Some of the stock was new, computer printouts, some ancient, handwritten and itchy with foxing. Many languages – mostly German, but some Spanish and French and even Oriental chicken-scratchery. But numbers are numbers, so I could see that the amounts were substantial and I could find the dates. The papers were out of chronological order, so it took a moment to satisfy my curiosity and find the oldest.

My creased brow must have clued in Grumer. "Is there a problem?" he asked.

"We can ... we can have these in foreign languages translated," I said, "but Mr. Grumer, some date back to 1900!"

"Yes," he rejoined.

"Are they inheritances?"

He looked towards me, allowing for the first time his strange, weary gaze to rest on my face. He was silent for a long moment.

"Will that be a difficulty?"

"We'll need proof of claim – proof that these accounts were legitimately left to you

through the original holder's will or your rights as a legatee. It will depend on the laws of the country where the account is based, of course."

Grumer was silent. He looked down at his papers as if they had disappointed him.

"And if a bank or a trust went under due to a war or a recession – that money would be lost, impossible to retrieve."

Grumer said, "What can your firm do?"

I sighed. "Ours is a very substantial institution," I said. "There isn't much in regards to money that we *can't* do – except print it!"

My joke hit Grumer like a mosquito bashing into a brick wall. "How long, then?"

"Well, we will need your information, the names of the original account holders, the –"

"What information about me?"

Grumer's voice had risen, sharpened, those eyes narrowed even further and no longer slack with exhaustion. They speared me with suspicion.

"To start with," I said, suddenly just the slightest bit apprehensive, "basics. We'll need your birth certificate. Your permanent address. And as I've said before, proof of inheritance."

"They did not issue such niceties where and when I was born."

"Where and when was that?" I asked.

Grumer was silent. He looked away, out the window at Manhattan. From our conference room one had a terrific view of the harbor and the Statue of Liberty, and it was a glorious late summer day. He stared for a long minute.

"I will answer you," he said, "but you will think me mad."

"What?"

He straightened in his chair. "You will think me mad ... insane," he repeated. "But I swear on my dear mother's heart that I speak the truth. I was born twice, Mr. Velasquez. Once when I escaped my mother's womb, and once when I escaped from Hell."

I sat there with my mouth open, gawking at Grumer like an idiot. Grumer stared out the window.

"We are very high here," he said.

"Uh-huh. Very."

"I will not discuss my earlier life," Grumer said, "only that it was spent in sordid, degrading



behavior. I caused most bitter harm. My damnation after my violent death was just.

"I cannot recall my 'trial' before the Almighty ... being cursed with Hell burns away the memory of even *Dies Irae*. But I do recall perdition. Forget the imaginings of Dante or Bosch. There is no sense of time or place in Hell. There is no reference to cling to. All that lives there is ceaseless regret, anger, aloneness, and despair. About you flicker the shadows of other damned souls, but you cannot touch them, cannot ... communicate. Even that comfort is forbidden to you.

"For an endless time the fog of damnation surrounded me. Yet ... I escaped. Something about me ... about my *will* ..."

I shook myself and stood, my eyes on the door some thousand miles away. "Mr. Grumer," I said, "I deal in financial advice, not psychiatry. If —"

"Sit," he said. "Please. I mean no harm to you. Sit."

I sat.

"All that I know is that I *refused*."

Somehow, in some way, I said *no* to damnation. And for an instant, for the barest fraction of an instant, *Hell came open*, the world we know was restored — and I went through.

"I stood naked in a field near the spot of my birth. My body shuddered in the sudden chill of life after the constant suffocation of damned death. It was a century after my death. And it was a shade shy of a century ago.

"Mr. Velasquez, I see you think me lunatic — that you want nothing more than to bolt and run, screaming for a straitjacket. But please — hear me out!"

I had no intention of moving an inch. I was terrified ... but enthralled. Maniacs can entice and entertain as well as frighten. I didn't trust my voice not to squeak, so I simply gestured for him to go on.

"I found my ancestral home, managed to insinuate myself in with the descendants of my family by subterfuge. It was a strange world to me but I learned quickly. Thus I survived for a decade or more.

"But this was Europe, and as it always does to Europe, war came, grisly, grinding, muddy and pernicious war — war that drained my country, gutted it, humiliated it beneath the heels

of vengeful victors. My rediscovered family was part of that decimation.

"I only suspected the truth then. But the years that followed convinced me ..."

"I was in Germany, living on the pitiful residuum of my family's wealth. I saw the horrendous inflation, the near civil war, I *was* a National Socialist, carried into true madness like the rest of the fatherland. When the new war came I did not fight. I had other duties, duties that in time sealed in me a crazed but true conviction.

"It was on the edge of a ravine the local people called Babi Yar. We told the Jews to line up over the corpses of the dead, opposite our firing squads of Lithuanians and Bulgarians, so that when they volleyed they would fall in neat rows. Women with small children or babies were told to hold their whelps above their heads so one soldier could aim at the child while another shot the mother. Do you know, Mr. Velasquez, that some women actually obeyed?"

"I sat above the ravine and realized it then and there: *I had not escaped. I had brought Hell with me.*"

"The ceaseless fusillade was but the voice of damnation, mocking my freedom, calling me back. I deserted the SS, fled, stole passage to China, and then to Japan. I rested there in a city untouched by the war. On a lovely blue summer morning in 1945 I was on a boat heading out of Hiroshima ... and Hell erupted.

"I was blind for thirty days, Mr. Velasquez, from the flash. But even before my sight returned I saw what had truly happened."

Grumer reached for his papers, gathering them.

"Wherever I have gone, Hell has followed. Korea, China, Europe again, America — it rained that November morning in Dallas — the Far East. I fled. I'm fleeing now. But I cannot control or stop it. I can only *flee*."

"I've realized that I have had throughout this second life great trouble in finding security. I hoped to find it here. I thought — if I could congeal all my resources into one, in this union of cultures, this 'melting pot' ... but I see that I cannot ..."

Grumer grabbed his papers and shoved them into his briefcase. He snapped it shut, and



stood. He faced me. "Or is there a chance, Mr. Velasquez? Is there a chance?"

My only chance, I told myself, was to get this freak out of here. "Mr. Grumer," I said, "I said something before that was pretty rude. I apologize for mentioning psychiatry. It's clear to me now that in meeting you, I have been given a great privilege. Keep your records for now. Let me discuss this with my associates. Give us a few days and ... uh ... call us, okay?"

A flicker of some dark feeling crossed the old psycho's face. I felt a flicker of something within me, too - pity, maybe. But it was lost in my need to be rid of him. And to mention to building security that he was never, ever to be allowed to cross our threshold again.

"No," he said. "I ... shall be leaving America shortly." That was a relief.

I walked Grumer out to the elevators. He moved with a frustrating slowness, his briefcase

clasped to his sunken chest. At the elevator I reached around him and pressed the down button. "So, Mr. Grumer," I said as brightly as I could, "where's your next port of call?"

"I ... I believe the middle east," he said. The elevator light blinked closer to our three-digit floor, taking sweet forever to get there.

Grumer coughed deeply into a gray handkerchief, and touched his forehead as if dizzy.

"There's that sway again," I said.

"I understand," Grumer nodded. "This is a very tall building."

"These are very tall buildings," I laughed. "Buildings. There are two of them, you know. Twin Towers."

"Buildings," he said with a small smile. "Good day, sir." And the elevator opened and claimed him.

Yb Yb Yb



## A CLOSING WORD ... GHLIII

So that's that. Demons faced and conquered, on we go. On the page following, my *anti-demon* – Rose-Marie, as depicted by our great friend **Brad Foster**. Her "**Inner Robot**" was my birthday gift to her.

Theme possibilities for our next issue swirl into mind. I never did bring forth the issue on the *Fannish Family* I once promised. *Patriotism* suggests itself in this desperately perverse political time. *Money* would be an interesting topic – and nothing could be more fantastical around here. I'll let my readership choose. What would you like to see? That issue may be a trifle later than usual – my next "big" fanzine project is a tribute to the supreme Southern apahack, **Lon Atkins**, and it may consume a lot of time.

One small request: contributors, *please don't format* your articles. Let us do that. If you want a particular illustration or caption, just let us know. You'd make things much easier for us.

One *large* request: contribute! Ideas, articles, poems, illos, LOCs ... *Challenger* begins its 26<sup>th</sup> year in 2018. Join us! Celebrate! Raise Hell!



# ROSY

YOUR  
INNER  
ROBOT  
0175-03101701-C

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