

First Contact

Volume n, Issue 1

September 1997

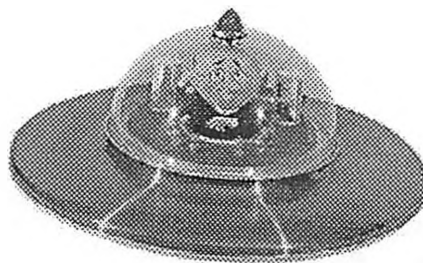
Sixth B5 Series In The Works

I thought I would start with a headline to really grab your attention. Of course it is complete rubbish, but there are so many rabid Babylon 5 fans out there that the least you would do is look twice at the new, infrequent (but more frequent than previously, this year at least) newsletter of the ISFA. You will notice that there have been design changes, well that's because there is a new (temporary) editor and he's using a different software program to create it. If the previous bastard (no names necessary) had given the stuff I asked for I might have been able to reproduce First Contact in the shape you all know and love (artistic license).

So, if this august (or even September) journal is to appear on any sort of regular basis we're going to need submissions. If you're interested in the likes of Babylon 5 or the X-Files or comics or even, as unlikely as it may sound, books, the

editor would love to hear from you - well, actually he'd like an article or review or whatever to fill up some of the blank space. There's an address and email for submissions inside. Check it out.

But that's enough of the moaning, and begging, for the moment. The text box is running out and I'm lost.



Burton to follow up Mars Attacks! despite commercial failure

First indications are that the special effects of Burton's new movie, *Jupiter Attacks!*, will be even tackier than those in his *hommage* to bubble gum cards. A

Starship Troopers Coming Soon

In the distant future, in an even more distant galaxy, Earth warriors known as the Mobile Infantry fight the gigantic alien insects of Klendathu. The story centers on Johnny Rico (Casper Van Dien), a brand new recruit to the military. His troop, just an ordinary cross-section of army personnel, is ordered to kill bug aliens, purely and simply, in as large a volume as possible.

Initial reports on the special effects say that they are extremely well done and the "bugs" will be visually arresting. Directed by Paul Verhoeven and scripted by Edward Neumeier, it is based upon Robert A. Heinlein's famous novel of the same name. *Starship Troopers* is a 95m dollar movie with a running time of 2 hours and 5 minutes (without credits). Release dates are:

USA November 7, 1997

UK November 28, 1997

cience fiction on the Internet

Science Fiction on the Internet

Ten years ago the internet was tantamount to (science) fiction, today it is an essential resource for businesses and private individuals alike. You want to know about science fiction? Check out the net. Go to the Alta Vista search engine and request a search on science fiction. Today (28th August) there are 711,390 hits. Go to Infoseek and the same request throws up a figure of 2,867,842, although this is for the words individually. You want to focus your search a little tighter? Okay. Try an author's name. For instance, Anne McCaffrey will produce 13,616 hits on the Web Crawler engine. You can find anything from web-based, role playing games (known as mushes) to a preview of her latest novel, to a biography, to her personal home page, to a photograph. Like the one on the right, for instance.

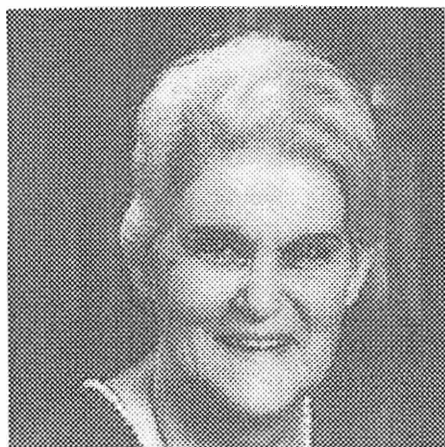
Or you might like to try a search on Isaac Asimov. Alta Vista will present you with a coice of 15,470 documents. How about a list of FAQ's (frequently asked questions for the uninitiated)? Things like:

Just how many books did he write?
Where can I get a list of all Asimov's books?

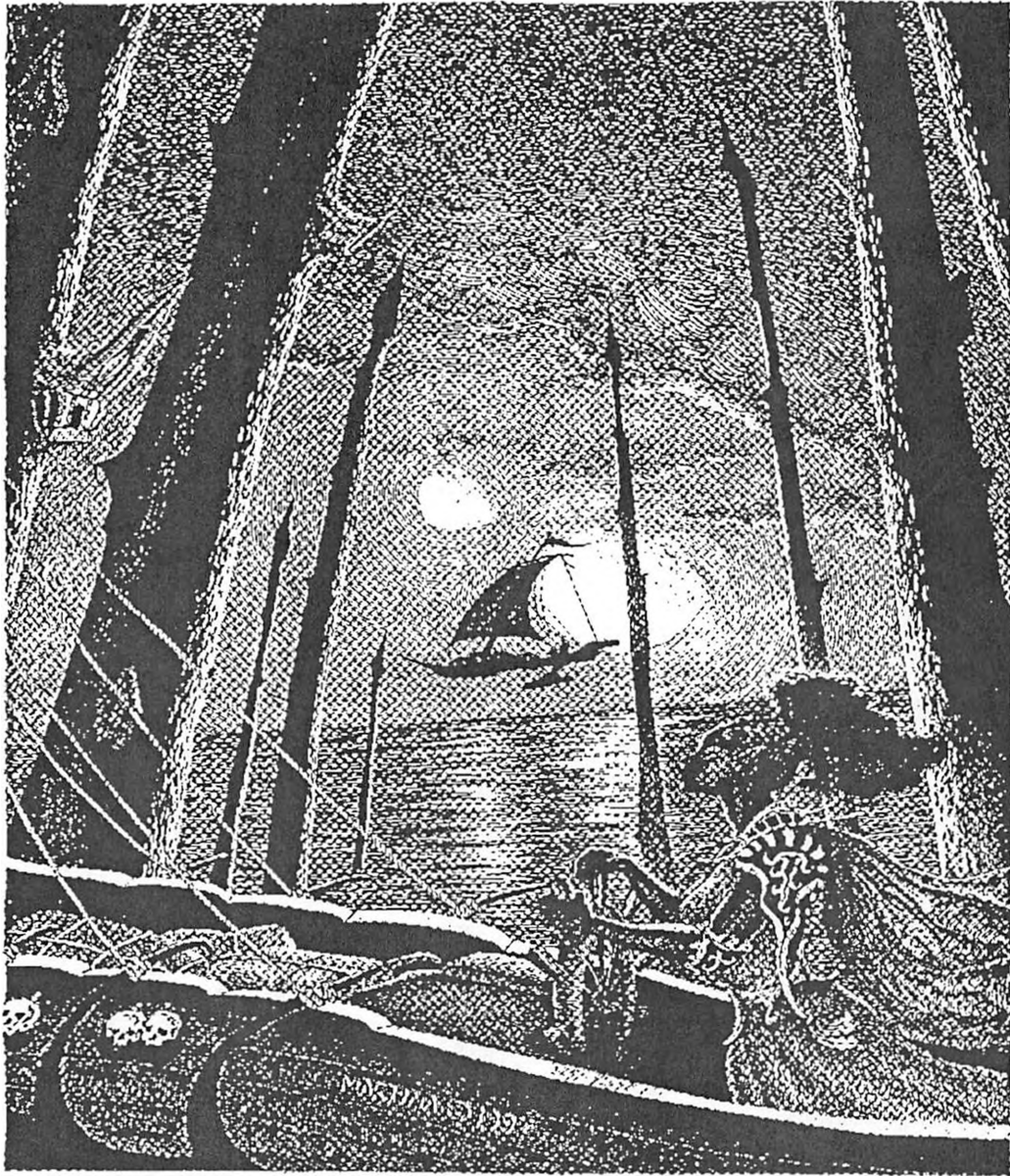
I would like to buy a certain book by Asimov but can't find it. Can you help me?

Is it true he had a fear of flying?
All of these and much much more are answered somewhere on the net. I doubt there is a question about Isaac Asimov, except for intensely personal subjects, that cannot be answered through the medium of the internet. Of course it might take a while.

But it's not only world famous names and broad subject matters that can be searched for. Getting a little closer to home, if you try searching for Albedo One you get 41 hits. Not quite as impressive as the good doctor's stats, but you've got to start somewhere. You want details of every issue (up to #11),



including a list of every story and interview? It's there, courtesy of Locus Magazine. Scroll through the list of hits and you'll get to the name Nuala Lyons. Those members of the society who have been around a while will remember Nu fondly as an ex-member who graced us for a few years in the early nineties. She is also a writer and was published by Albedo One, hence the hit. There's also, courtesy once again of those nice people at Locus, an entry for David Murphy's chapbook, listing all the stories and mentioning Morgan Llywelyn's introduction and Paul Sheridan's artwork. All three names provide links to other material but I'll leave it to you to follow them up if you so desire. But not all of the hits are genuine. One relates to a short story, part of "the largest SF erotica series ever written and made publicly available on the internet." Amazing where an innocent net search will lead you. Anyway, that's just a small taster of what's out there. All you've got to do is ask and for the price of a local phone call an entire world of information can be yours. But be careful, there should be a health warning with each Internet account purchased. It is, after all, highly addictive.



Editor's get desperate at times, particularly this one. I needed something to fill a page and this was it - a preview of the cover artwork for Albedo one issue #14, soon to be available in good bookshops everywhere for as little as £2.50. The fiction in this latest issue will feature such well-known authors as:

Brian Stableford

Ian MacDonald

DF Lewis

There is a superb interview with Jeff Noon, author of Vurt, Automated Alice et al, and the opinion piece, Echoes from the Phantom Zone, continues the discussion on publishing begun in issue twelve which has stirred many of you to write to the editors. And of course there are more book reviews than you could shake a stick at

A Lot Of Stuff About Comics That James Bacon Thought Might Interest You

The Superman Madman Hullabaloo.
DC comics by Mike Allred.

Now in its second issue this three part mini series is quite possibly the finest Superman story since Alan Moore was at the helm.

In the first issue Superman and Madman accidentally cross over between worlds both retaining some of their original powers and gaining some from the other, also another six people have benefited from this phenomenon and gained some of Superman's powers.

It's now up to professor Hamilton to sort out the situation. In the mean time Madman is experiencing his new and better powers and Superman is coming to terms with his lesser ones which lead to some interesting storylines.

Mike Allred has done a fantastic job with this crossover, not surprisingly since he actually created Madman.

ownership is always a great incentive to produce high quality stories.

His artwork is, of course, of a very high standard, clean, neat and beautifully coloured.

Preacher Special: The Good Old Boys.
By Garth Ennis and Carlos Ezquerra.

This is probably the weakest Preacher story to date, it must have taken all of an afternoon to write. In saying that compared to the majority of other comics available it would fare well, and actually got 58th position in the top 100 US comic book sales in June.

It's set before any involvement with the Preacher story line and makes Jody and T.C. out to be the 'heroes', when they get involved with a cop and a babe who are on the run from some gang land mobs in the Swamp.

Although Ezquerra's artwork is really good it's a pity the story isn't better.

Still a must for all Preacher fans though.

The Kents. By Ostrander, Truman and Bair.

Quoted as being 'a twelve part saga of truth, justice and the American west' it is anything but.

Clark - Superman - Kent's father finds an old chest buried in his Kansas farm containing letters and journals of the first Kents to come to Kansas.

Apparently the Kents fought for the freedom of black slaves. More than likely after they'd murdered and raped every Navaho in the State.

This pro American 'we aint bigots guys honest' diatribe is the best excuse to use comic paper instead of Andrex ever and it is very overrated by most retailers so far to date.

Aliens Special. By various artists.

This cracking little comic is a reminder of what a descent Aliens comic could actually be like. The first story is a 'Marines' story and the second one is a 'colony' story by none other than Nancy A Collins and in actual fact the first story by Darca Macan has more tension and drama.

Both stories are black and white.

The comic also includes, which in my opinion is a waste of space, a three page 'Aliens: Havoc' preview which has a different Artist for each page and another three page preview of 'Aliens: Alchemy.'

It's a pity they didn't squeeze in another short story into this space.

Dicks #2 by Garth Ennis and John McCrea

Although this is the second issue of

Dicks it is the first original 'for a few troubles more' story starring Dougie and Ivor a pair of East Belfast (Prods) layabouts. The story has our enterprising heroes starting their own Private Investigator company and as soon as the white Starsky and Hutch stripes are dry on Dougie's ancient Ford Escort, they get embroiled with the UVF.

What the Yanks make of all the shenanigans is beyond me, but the story is classic Ennis, particularly the brutality and cruelty of the school yard flash back scenes. The artwork could be cleaner, but apart from that it is a hundred times better than the first issue, which was essentially a reprint.

Sergio Aragones' Louder than Words.

This is the first issue of a six issue Dark Horse mini series and it really is not worth the cover price, don't get me wrong the cartoons are excellent really funny and classic gag stuff, but there are so few.

Aragones stuff has appeared all over, particularly in Mad magazine, but six issues will set me back about £15 and for that much it is pretty easy to pick up quite large cartoon treasuries.

If though as you wander around the Forbidden Planet and you have about a minute to spare, pick it up and read through, or watch through as the case may be. Worth it for free.

The Savage Dragon / Marshal Law. By Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill

The comic starts with The Savage Dragon 25 years in the future in the Hell called San Futuro, which happens to be the stomping ground of Marshall Law. The two of them buddy up to try and catch a murderer, with the marshal using his usual style and panache when

dealing with fellow super heroes. Its great to see the return of Marshall Law, nothing beats a comic that pisses all over the good old values that most superheroes stand for. I really enjoyed this comic and O'Neils artwork is superb in black and white, portraying the violence with enough vividness to please all Marshall Law fans. Even though this is just a two parter it is well worth picking up.

- ♦ NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS...
...It looks like there will be a Judge Dredd / Predator cross over later this year, with covers by Brian Bolland and Dermot Power, published by Dark Horse and Fleetway.
- ♦ The next instalment of Sin City by Frank Miller will be released in Graphic Novel form, its called Family Values and is a sure hit.
- ♦ True Faith, by Ennis and Pleece is going to be re-released as a graphic novel by DC, it originally appeared in Crisis and when it was released by Fleetway as a graphic novel it was withdrawn as a number were sent to the Grand Synod in London, whose members raised objections and had it essentially censored. Not too surprising as the story is about burning churches to the ground.
- ♦ A comic/poster called Shit the dog from Wagner, Grant and Bisley could prove to be actually funny, the lows Bisley has reached to make a few bucks, next he'll be working for verotikexpensivcrap
- ♦ And for all those Xena fans, Topps are due to bring out a comic called Xena: Warrior Princess, this could also turn out to be a short term investment, if you remember the prices people would pay for X files comics about six months after they were released but before the drug mixed with the ink wore off that induced those hallucinations which gave people the impression that the comic was actually good.

Book Reviews

SPROUT MASK REPLICA by ROBERT RANKIN.

This is Robert Rankin's autobiography and I don't believe one word of it. Autobiographies are usually boring and trivial, not this book though its packed with laughs and excitement, so it can't be true.

In true Rankin form the style is unique and brilliant, the book is peppered with poems and rhymes, some more subtle than others. Some of the chapters and anecdotes are wonderful and appear to be just a string of tall and weird tales, yet everything is linked together in an amazing and chaotic way, and that is also the plot.

The young Rankin appears to have a power, every time he does something it causes an effect elsewhere, along the lines of the Chaos Butterfly Theory. He sets out unaware of the scale of his power but thanks to The Ministry of Serendipity, who try to manipulate him, he realises his full potential and tries to make the world a better place for all, but there are others who want to harness his ability and on the way there are many other stories to be told, and some of these hilariously funny others just confounded me with their brilliance and imagination. On the way we encounter many strange folk some of whom have been in previous books including Barry the guardian sprout and some of the regulars from the

flying swan.

Some of the anecdotes look like they are from the journals of Charles Fort, others appear to be urban legends in the making. He also answers many important and to millions puzzling questions such as what exactly is going on at Mornington Crescent tube station (the one with a cross through it, I checked).

He also plays with the book itself surprising the reader in new ways, we have all read a piece saying 'this is the end' and then in the next paragraph saying 'no it's not', and Rankin does the same, but when I see the rest of the page blank I expect it to be the end, and its this expectancy that makes each twist in the tail so much more fun.

But Rankin is best known for his humour and this is the outstanding aspect of this book, it pleads and begs to be laughed at and it succeeds in the most brilliant ways possible and its a damn fine read too.

Reviewer's Rating:

A +

JAMES BACON.

Submissions to:

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Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.
Email: bobn@iol.ie

FINAL DIAGNOSIS

by James White, Tor Books.

James White has been writing Science Fiction since 1953 and his stories have always been a total joy to read.

Final Diagnosis takes us to Sector General, the hospital in the middle of the universe that caters for all ailments from all around the galaxy, a multi species E.R. in every sense with the hospital staff also made up of a variety of species. Of course with the requirements of so many including Chlorine breathers and beings who live in an environment of super heated steam the hospital is an extensive structure of great magnitude.

Mr. White has devised a four letter code to describe every detail of a species, this not only makes classification easier but also new species can be described in seconds.

Through the years stories of the hospital have been told from a great variety of view points: Doctors, Nurses and even a chef, but now for the first time the view point is that of an earth human patient.

Patient Hewitt has an unknown ailment and what is worse is that it appears to be psychologically related, yet nearly all the doctors he has seen have been very sceptical

about his case history, which could hold the answer to his problems.

Which rapidly becomes a problem of huge proportions as the unheard happens, an ailment is transmitted from one species to another.

Mr. White is a brilliant story teller. All his tales are of humanity and how we tick, not in a difficult complicated way but in a gentle reassuring fashion that brings the best out some of his characters who are deep and interesting, which in the world of nano-cyber-techie is a rare read indeed. For a final recommendation I would like to quote another man of discerning taste Mr. Isaac Asimov who said 'I don't read much science fiction but I do read James White '.

Reviewer's Rating

A

JAMES BACON.

Rankin Celibacy Scandal Rocks Fandom

Well known sprout-type and humourous author, Robert Rankin, was rumoured to be in line for 'the treatment' by a certain un-named scandal sheet. Two gutter hacks were recently despatched to Brentford with orders to 'dig up the dirt on laughing boy'. But their dastardly mission was unsuccessful. They interviewed two publicans who have not barred him from their premises for anti-social behaviour and extracted exclusives from four different women who have never slept with him.

A source close to the troubled writer was heard to mumble into his beer last Tuesday, "Fine example for young fans he turned out to be. Some hellraiser." Disillusioned, he claimed to be "taking up knitting."

The author himself was not available for comment, though our intrepid staff will be confronting him at the forthcoming Eurocon science fiction convention, if he dares show his face. Sprout bods have refused to confirm his attendance.

HOLLYWOOD ROBOT'S WIVES

By Robert Neilson

The body lay unmoving in the centre of the priceless Persian rug. Even before she turned on the light Dr Susan Calvoni knew that her husband was dead; snuffed out like a blind match seller on a freeway. The murdering bastards. Why did they have to mutilate his body so thoroughly? Why now? Why here? That rug was irreplaceable.

But rugs and stains were the least of her problems. She cursed the day she'd married Tony. Her friends had all advised her against it. Anyone with half a brain, positronic or otherwise, could have foreseen disaster. What had an eminent roboticist and a mob-backed Hollywood producer got in common? It had been a true attraction of opposites.

Tony had been fascinated by her intellect and desired her as a prestigious object to be hung on his arm, to be shown off to his associates like a piece of expensive jewellery. Tony De Milo's wife had brains which, by association, meant that Tony must have also, else why would she have married him?

Susan had fallen for his Mediterranean looks, impossibly perfect teeth and an expanse of chest hair that could have hidden a division of Gurkhas. Why did women allow hormones to have a say in such an important decision? And why had she allowed her hormones to affect her judgement when he asked her to invest her money in his current movie project?

No, that was being unfair to herself. It had been an extremely good business proposition, and still could be. If Tony were alive. Without him, the project, and every cent she had in the world, was history. With that in mind, her next move was obvious. Get rid of the body. Only the murderers knew he was dead and they weren't going to say anything.

Disposing of the remains of her dead husband was simple, compared to her next task. There were certain public appearances that Tony just had to make. She considered disguising herself to look like him. Tony had been one of the finest make-up artists in Hollywood before he moved up into management and it had given him infinite pleasure to teach her the tricks of the trade. Susan had picked it up so quickly and so well that in the end Tony had huffily claimed she could teach him. To her husband, intellect was fine in its place but capability in a woman was like tits on a bull.

Disguising her voice to sound like his could be achieved with electronic help which merely left the eight inch disparity in their heights. And high heels just wasn't going to be convincing. This would take considerably more thought and she did her best thinking in bed. She mixed herself a Martini and reached for her little black book.

The answer when it came to her was so simple that she almost dismissed it. Why use Tony's specialty to recreate him, why not her own? She would build a robot double. Sure, such an undertaking would require a couple of quantum leaps in the science of robotics, but if she couldn't do it, who the hell could. Her own lab in the basement was stocked with most of what she would need in terms of technology, though there were one or two items that American Robots Inc could have helped with. She wished that when she had resigned from the company she had not been so graphic in her description of the surgical procedures her former boss should employ in order to insert a positronic brain where the sun don't shine. That was a bridge that had surely been burned in style.

Never a woman to worry over circumstances she no longer controlled, Dr Susan Calvoni announced that her husband, Tony De Milo, had been called away to Europe on business and set to work building his replacement. She reckoned it would be a couple of months before anyone smelled a rat and instituted an investigation into his whereabouts; two months in which she would have to transform one of the low-grade domestic robots which ran the house into... Into what? She hardly dared speak the word, even though no-one could possibly hear. It had taken the public years to accept humanoid robots even in their current obviously metallic form. What would happen if her android were to be unmasked? Would there be a future for robotics at all?

The justification for her risk was the current state of the industry. In the three years she had been inactive there had not been a single step forward made, not so much as the beginnings of a shuffle. The survival of robotics depended on the survival of Susan Calvoni and if Tony's deal fell through not only would she be broke but she would also inherit the debts he had accrued in getting the project started in the first place. Nobody defaulted on the people who had financed her husband. Nobody alive, that is.

Altering a domestic robot so that it resembled her husband was the easy part of her task and achieved within a fortnight. That left her six weeks to reprogram its delicate positronic brain so that it thought and acted like him also. For that she was going to need help. Trustworthy help. Not that there was anything anyone could teach her about the workings of the positronic brain. No, what she needed was advice on the workings of Hollywood. She had known after a week of marriage to Tony that if she lived to be older than Lazarus Long she would still never understand movie people. When Tony spoke to them it was like he was using a foreign language. But who could she trust? Tony was the only

Hollywood person she really knew, apart from Ted and Constantine, but ex-lovers could be such a pain. They'd been fine as dalliance but now that Tony was gone they might actually expect some sort of commitment from her.

When it came to cases there was really only one choice: Tony's secretary, Millie Friedmont. He'd been banging her for years and Millie would probably miss the stupid bastard more than she herself would. And considering Millie's unswerving devotion to her boss she probably deserved to know the truth anyway.

Millie looked like the generic Hollywood bubble-headed bimbo: legs that went on for ever, oceans of blonde hair, teeth that could make you snow-blind and breasts that had cost twenty-five thousand dollars in surgery. Each. But beneath her unfortunate appearance lurked a mind as sharp as a pimp's suit. And it held more of what Tony knew than Tony's ever had.

When Susan gave her the low-down, Millie was immediately aware of the knock-on effect her boss's death would have on the movie they had in pre-production. The star, whose contract had more escape clauses than an arms limitation treaty, would withdraw. Which meant the director was out. Which meant the backers would take a powder. Which meant the up-front capitalization was lost. Which meant some very nasty people would come looking for Tony's heirs to make restitution for his debt to them. And when they came looking, innocent bystander status would mean nothing. If you worked for Tony, you had a piece of their money. They would accept a piece of you in return. Nothing personal, it just wouldn't do for people to get the idea they were a soft touch. As a matter of self-preservation Millie knew she had only two choices: get out of Hollywood, preferably out of the country, or help Susan. And she liked Hollywood. What the hell, she figured, if things didn't work out she could always sell out the Calvoni bitch to the mob.

So Susan and Millie put their heads together and molded the robot lookalike's positronic pathways into a facsimile of Tony's thought processes. It wasn't perfect, the laws of robotics would not permit that, but it was a damn fine effort, Susan thought.

"Final test," Millie said, as they stood in the basement lab admiring the new Tony.

Susan didn't even hear, she was too caught up in watching the robot strut about the room in exactly the jumpy, impatient manner Tony had used whenever she brought him down here. That wasn't something she had specifically programmed into him, which delighted her. It was, she considered, proof positive that the machine could act independently of them with real hope of success.

Millie took the robot Tony by the hand and led him towards the stairs.

"Where are you taking him?" Susan asked.

"I'm the Hollywood expert, right?" Millie said.

"Right."

"If he's gonna fool anyone there's a few specialized tests that'll have to be done. And for that we'll need privacy."

Susan shrugged. She still had work to do and if Tony Mark II was anything like the original she'd be better off with him out of the way. "Sure, go ahead. I'll be here if you need me."

Millie grinned. "I think we'll be okay on our own."

The tests Millie planned self-aborted almost before they'd begun. What was Susan Calvoni trying to pull. The first time he went out of the house he would be unmasked as a fake. And a crappy fake at that.

She stormed into the basement lab, shoving her hair back from her face. "What kind of jerks do you think you're dealing with?" she fumed.

Susan looked up from her work, confused. "I'm sorry?"

"He's not finished."

"Not finished? How?"

"There's parts missing," Millie said.

Susan was dumbfounded. Tony Mark II was her most perfect creation, the nearest thing to human a robot could be.

"Parts?" she echoed emptily.

"Parts," Millie yelled, her face flushed with anger. "Parts. Part." A pause. "He's got no dick."

"But robots don't have..." she pronounced the word with distaste, "... dicks."

"This one better. You know Tony. Everyone knows Tony. If he's not banging every starlet on the lot and half the secretaries..."

The truth of Millie's statement was unavoidable. Susan had ignored her husband's reputation while he was alive in order to preserve their marriage but there was no reason to continue now.

"You'd better get building," Millie said. "Tony can't stay incognito much longer."

Susan gave the problem some thought. Hydraulically operated, that should present no problems. It would need to be connected to the positronic brain. Easy enough. Programming the sex drive might have been a problem in a different subject, but Tony's motto had been 'any port in a storm'. And the storm was always blowing.

A week saw Tony II's new apparatus designed, built and fitted. Millie was suitably impressed when he proudly displayed it to her.

She whistled, admiring the workmanship. "A perfect match," she said to Susan. "You got a photographic memory, or what?"

"Is he ready for his public now?"

A broad smile animated Millie's bimbo features. "He'll have to be road tested first."
Susan's grin topped it. "That's already taken care of. And if I might say, he passed with flying colours."

Millie arranged power breakfasts, business lunches and endless meetings over cocktails and dinner for the new Tony. He pressed the right flesh, kissed the correct cheeks (and asses) and generally made a good impression on everyone he dealt with. But Millie was still unhappy with his performance.

"It's just not Tony," she told Susan. "Not completely. Oh, he's good enough to fool them for a while but if anybody has repeated meetings with him, frankly they're going to notice."

"So what is it, Millie?" Susan said. "What have we done wrong?"

"I can't put my finger on it. He's just different. More focused or channeled or something. Less easily distracted."

"Girls?" Susan asked.

"No, that's not it. When he sees a good looking chick, he goes after her and beds her."

"So he's one hundred percent in that area?"

Millie shook her head. "Not a hundred, no. I can't identify exactly what's different but it's enough to give us away."

"But it could be having an effect on his performance. If the Mark II's deviation from the Tony norm is that small, it could be that the... the dick's not operating quite properly."

"So what do we do?" Millie said.

"I'll have to accompany you to your next few meetings and observe him in operation in the field."

Millie checked her wristwatch. "No time like the present. We've got Smallberg and a bunch of Rambling executives in half an hour."

Susan's cover was that she was a journalist doing a piece on Tony. She sat off to one side of the boardroom where Tony's presentation to Rambling was made, watching his every move. Afterwards Smallberg and his crew were taken to dinner at Tony's favourite Italian restaurant and Susan sat alone, observing her creation. At the end of the night, Tony II winked at her, placed a proprietorial arm around the shoulders of a Smallberg starlet and left for points unknown.

But Susan had the data she needed. It was fortunate she was a trained psychologist, otherwise it could easily have slipped her notice. She retreated to her laboratory to make preparation for Tony II's final addition. Millie arrived a half hour behind her.

"Well?" her ally demanded. "I can tell by the activity in here that you got the answer tonight."

"I don't suppose you've ever closely observed men in general or Tony in particular and how they react to women in social situations."

"Cut the crap, Susan, and get to the point," Millie demanded.

"You watch a man at a party or whatever and when he sees a pretty girl, what happens?" Susan asked.

"His eyes follow her," Millie answered.

"Nothing more?"

"He mentally undresses her?" Millie speculated.

"He wonders what it would be like to go to bed with her."

"Yeah," Millie agreed. "And...?"

Susan's cheeks reddened. "And ping," she said. "His dick reacts."

"So?"

"So Tony's doesn't."

"But it works. I've... I've seen it."

"Sure it works," Susan said. "But only when Tony wants it to."

The look on Millie's face said Eureka! "No mind of it's own."

"Exactly. So I'm building a separate positronic brain for Tony Mark II's dick."

"Brilliant," Millie said in honest admiration. "True genius."

The alterations to the robot were quickly made and immediately it began to act exactly like Tony. More Tony than Tony himself, Millie remarked. The deal came together, possibly better than it would have under the control of the original Tony, and the mob loan was paid off. Everyone was saved. Everyone was happy.

Until Tony announced he was leaving. Hollywood was too small for him. And so were Susan and Millie. He was going to a town more suited to his needs and a business that would more appreciate his talents.

"Goodbye girls," he said. "It's been great. But my country needs me. Washington here I come. And by the way, Susan, the divorce papers are with my lawyer. You'll have them by the end of the day."

Dr Susan Calvoni, ace roboticist and Hollywood wife, was speechless. Robots never acted in such cavalier fashion. But she knew that there was no-one to blame but herself. She had taken her most perfect creation, the most wonderful artefact ever shaped by human hand and turned it into a monster.

One thing to be grateful for, she thought, was that Mark II was so perfectly Tony and therefore had absolutely no aptitude toward engineering or its allied disciplines. Because if he ever learned how to disconnect that second brain not even the presidency would be safe.

Eurocon 1997

GUEST OF HONOUR:

Robert Jordan

SMALL-PRESS GUEST OF HONOUR:

Chris Reed

DATE:

Saturday 25th - Monday 27th OCTOBER 1997

VENUE:

DUBLIN CASTLE, IRELAND

Since 1990, Octocon has been the national Irish Science Fiction Convention.

For the eighth Octocon, we are delighted to announce that it will also be Eurocon, the European annual convention.

All the usual events associated with Octocon will be present - stimulating panel items, a large dealers' room, films, parties, fan rooms, author signings, masquerade, and so on, all wrapped up in a European theme.

For more information about the convention and for details on how to join and help out, or if you have any suggestions for events or panel items, please contact us at:

Eurocon, P.O. Box 5130, Dublin 4, Ireland.

Email: karenb@eicon.com
