

APRIL 1981

HICKMAN'S SCRAPBOOK # 1 is published for The Southern Fandom Press Alliance by Lynn Hickman who resides at 413 Ottokee street in Mauseon, Ohio 43567. A few extra copies are printed to send to friends like you. This issue is for the 100th mailing of SFRA.

Am sitting here tonight and listening to a program of New Orleans Jazz that is featuring Sidney Bechet. Very good. This is Feb. 10th and we are in the midst of a BIG snowstorm. About 14 inches on the ground so far and more to come. It has been a LONG, Hard winter. Last months fuel bill was \$50.00 more than the month before and I hate to think what this months will be. This past weekend, Roger and Patty Sims were here. My son Mark & Patty Sims have their birthday on Feb. 9th so they came for the weekend to celebrate the birthdays. Roger and I have been best friends since we met at the NOLACON in 1951.

This fanzine will feature new writing (at least 4 pages) plus reprints from the past (mostly from my own zines, but it can be from anywhere. I will credit where ever its from). dddddd

Since George Wells and Ned Brooks have been mentioning the Bantan books, I went back into my files of THE PULP ERA and came up with issue #62 dated Nov.-- Dec., 1965 and am reprinting the following article for you. By the way, the cover for that issue was by Dave Prosser and was a fine drawing of Bantan.

WHY I WROTE THE BANTAN NOVELS by Maurice B. Gardner

I have been asked by the editor of the Pulp Era how and why I have written ten Bantan novels to date--eight of which have appeared between hard covers. Also, if any, what affect reading the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs had on my writing. First of all, since the age of 13, when I first read the serial installments of "Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar" in the old All Story Weekly-- and I enjoyed this story very much-- I then proceeded to obtain the other similar weeklies, also the old All Story Monthlies that contained the author's works. Meanwhile, I was following his current serialized works as well. What I appreciated mostly about his stories was his vivid imagination, and his manner of telling the stories made them plausible.

Before my father died--this happened when I was midway ten and eleven--he used to tell me stories of a highly imaginative nature--not the type Mr. Burroughs wrote, however--and in my developing mind I hoped one day I might be able to write stories that would be interesting to readers.

Because of a widowed mother to support, my education was curtailed in high School, but excessive reading taught me how different authors went about telling a story. I used to read these stories not only for entertainment value, but also to further my education in grammar. When I came across a word I did not know the meaning of, there was always a dictionary handy.

When I was fifteen I started to write my first novel in longhand --that was the beginning. I followed with four more. When I was twenty, I rented a typewriter and copied the five novels. Even though I realized they did not contain literary merit, I've retained them to this very day. Occasionally I look them over with the realization how I served my apprenticeship and compare how I improved with each effort.

After a few more years and a few more novels, one summer day while swimming in a river near where I lived at the time, as from out of nowhere the thought came to me to write my first Bantan novel. It would concern a young man who loved to swim as I did. Perhaps that is where my imagination had its initial testing--having been fostered by having read the Tarzan books, and the other novels Mr. Burroughs had written. Previously, my stories for the most part had been of material things I was more or less familiar with, but somehow they seemed to lack reality. So now, at long last so it seemed to me, I decided to let my imagination take the reins.

The novel concerned a boy of three, born of American parents, marooned upon an island in the South Pacific, adopted and reared to young manhood by natives. When it was completed I titled it just "Bantan". Later, I appended, "God-like Islander" to the singular title to infer my fiction character had god-like attributes. At a later time I regretted this appendage and retitled the novel, "Bantan of the Islands", when the third edition was published.

After the novel was written I had no immediate intention of making a series based on my island character, but, since the book sold fairly well, I began to wonder if I might write another of sufficient interest--remembering as I did, how successful Mr. Burroughs had been with his Tarzan series. As well, some of my reviewers had mentioned Bantan as somewhat of a "South Seas Tarzan".

And so I wrote "Bantan and the Island Goddess"--which I consider a better novel than its predecessor.

World War II furthered my interest in my island character, since I had a nephew in active service in the South Pacific aboard a destroyer. I dedicated this third novel to him, naming it "Bantan Defiant". In this book Bantan first meets the Japs and engages them with his primitive weapons--and does a fine job of it.

I realized one book on that subject was insufficient to take care of matters as they should be, and so "Bantan Valiant" followed. By this time I was taking a serious interest in the bronzed giant. I remembered once reading that Mr. Burroughs admitted the only mistake he made in the famed Tarzan series was to have Tarzan married at the end of the second book. Thus far I had written four Bantan books, and through various reasons had managed to keep him unmarried. I wondered how long I could continue this procedure without my readers complaining.

Then I wrote the fifth novel, "Bantan's Island Peril", and once more a possible romance was shattered as death in the form of an enemy spear removed the heroine.

The sixth novel, "Bantan Incredible", followed, and this time Bantan's love is for a young white woman who had been injected with the serum of longevity by her father, who was a scientist. In a fit of rage, when learning his daughter and Bantan planned to flee the island, he injected a counter-acting serum that caused his daughter to age a year for each hour she lived thereafter. When Bantan overcomes obstacles to rescue her, she is then over two hundred years of age in appearance and near death.

In the seventh novel, "Bantan Primeval", in the company of a beautiful native girl by name of Mauria--who appeared briefly in the preceeding novel and who loves Bantan very much--they come to an island surrounded by an unscalable cliff. Within, they discover that stone age conditions exist, also that a long-lost white race lived there. Bantan rescues a white girl by the name of Mena. After numerous adventures, at the end of the book it would appear that Mena would be his mate.

However in the eighth novel, "Bantan Fearless", Mena appeared to have lost her life in a pool of quicksand. The bronzed giant almost immediately rescues another white girl of the same race, but reared by aborigines. She looks enough like Mena to be her twin sister, though they are not related. This girl's name is Nulu, and in her mind Bantan is the one whom she wishes to mate with. She proves to be daring as the book recounts, and because of her Bantan and two companions are able to leave the primeval island.

At this juncture in Bantan's adventures, I decided to release a volume of ten stories of varying length. Included in the volume are some shorter stories of Bantan's youth. Also two groups of stories "The Loves of Bantan" and "Dream Fantasies of Bantan's Creator", both of which appeared in "Norb's Notes", complete the volume. The readers of the "Notes" hailed the latter series, since it leaned toward fantasy.

Two more completed Bantan novels are awaiting their turn in book form. "Bantan and the Mermaids" is the ninth of the series, and probably will appear in hard covers in late 1965. The success of "Island Paradise & Others" my 1964 release, will determine whether it is feasible to issue another volume of shorter stories under the title "More Island Paradises". The last Bantan novel to be written to date and completed, which is the tenth of the series, is titled "Bantan's Quest".

Undoubtably Dave Prosser will be the artist, since many of the readers enjoy his artwork in my books.

A complete list of my books to date, publisher, artist, etc. is listed herewith:

Book Title	Publisher	Year	Artist
Bantan, God-like Islander	Meador	9-1-36	Not Known
This Man	"	8-7-37	" "
Son of the Wilderness	"	1-1-39	" "
Bantan, God-like Islander	(2nd Edition)	8-1-49	" "
Bantan and the Island Goddess	"	9-1-42	" "
Bantan Defiant	Greenwich	9-19-55	Vern Coriell
Bantan Valiant	Meador	9-19-57	Not Known
Bantan's Island Peril	"	4-24-59	Jim Cawthorn
Bantan Incredible	"	9-26-60	Dave Prosser
Bantan Primeval (Forum) same as	Meador	1-1-61	Dave Prosser
Horrors of Smiling Manor	"	6-5-62	Bob Horvath
Bantan Fearless	"	9-13-63	Dave Prosser
Island Paradise and Others	"	11 64	Dave Prosser

Since the above article was written 16 years ago, I don't know if any of the books are still available. But if you are interested in the Bantan books you could inquire of Maurice B. Gardner, 90 Cobb Avenue, Portland, Maine 04102.

The following is reprinted from issue #10 of Stf Trends for January 1953. This is a zine I published while I was living in Statesville, North Carolina. This will show how terribly serious we were in those days.

THE PLEIADES PIMPLES SCIENCE FICTION FAN ASSOCIATION, INC.
3401 6th Ave. Columbus, Ga.

Dear Sir;

This year as in the past, the Pleiades Pimples Science Fiction Association, Inc. has selected a few deserving individuals to receive the official PPSFFA, Inc's Badge of Merit.

We know that you will be proud to learn that the board of judges has selected you as one of those whose untiring efforts and selfless devotion to the cause, our grim crusade to make science fiction a household word--makes him eligible for this honor.

CONGRATULATIONS. We salute you for your serious and constructive activities on behalf of Fandom. Keep up the good work.

Enclosed is your Badge of Merit. Note that it is symbolically appropriate to Science Fiction Fandom, a miniature interstellar monster formed of genuine simulated plastic. Everyone will recognize it as an outstanding artistic achievement.

Wear your badge proudly. Display it openly wherever you go to identify you as a fighter in the ranks of the enlightened, an unwavering foe of the forces of ignorance, intolerance, superstition, poverty, crime, juvenile delinquency, barbarism, nepotism, the one party system, and sin.

Much good luck and success to you in your righteous endeavor.

Paul D. Cox, treas., PPSFFA, Inc. (Attach badge to lapel with small length of string.)

Now from Stf Trends #21 for Sept. 1955 I want to reprint a poem by James E. Lauck. This issue was published while I was living in Albion, Michigan. I'm sorry I didn't get this in when Guy was getting married, but I will dedicate it to Guy and his wife belatedly.

Oh, we're goin' t'get married come hawg-killin' time,
Jist as hitched up as hitched up kin be.
Oh, we're goin' t'git married come hawg-killin' time;
So fill up yer jugs fer the spree!

There'll be shootin' an' hollerin' come hawg-killin' time,
An' shoutin' fer lickin' an' food.
There'll be shootin' an' hollerin' come hawg-killin' time;
So might as well git in the mood!

There'll be feastin' an' drinkin' come hawg-killin' time,
An' many a fiddle in tune.
There'll be feastin' an' drinkin' come hawg-killin' time;
An' dancin' out under the moon.

There'll be huggin' and kissin' come hawg-killin' time,
An' relations a raisin' a fuss.
There'll be huggin' and kissin' come hawg-killin' time;
An' some'll git married like us!

The following is from a one-shot published in 1953 while I was living in Napoleon, Ohio. I'm sorry I don't have the time or ambition to reproduce the artwork, but at least you'll be able to see that we were still deadly serious in the pursuit of fannish ideals.

PIDDLING AND DIDDLE

A one-shot publication
from the PIDDLING & DIDDLE PRESS.
Free to all enemies of the editors and \$25
to all others.

PIDDLING AND DIDDLING is a one issue publication issued for the hell of it at 534 High Street, Napoleon, Ohio, with the editors (ostensibly being Harlan Ellison and Lynn A. Hickman) with Assistant Editors numbering among their multitudes, Carole Hickman, Stephen Schultheis, Honey Wood and Dougie Hickmar. The Art Editor is Don Bruchey. For extra copies of this publication, send \$25.00 per copy to either Mr Hickman (at the address above) or Mr. Ellison at 12701 Shaker Blvd., Apartment #616, Cleveland, 20, Ohio.

HERE WE GO PIDDLING AND DIDDLING,
IN A FRILLY, SILLY DELL.
OH AREN'T WE ALL SO GAY TODAY---
WHY DON'T YOU GO TO HELL.

-----Stephen F. Schultheis.
March 15, 1953, A.D.

Through the QUATT WUNKERY With Grunch and Eggplant
(S)

by M. BOLE GLOWY, BSO.

INTRODUCTION:

In the Braille edition of his "Gurgen Tum Behaben Leichter Halsentzündungen" published in Kopferkaltungen in 1794, the famous Armenian philosopher, Razmienia Gardla, quotes an old Yiddish folk saying to the effect that "How many quatts could a wunkworker quatt if a wunkworker could quatt quatts?"

Now this fine expression of the Siberian peasant's pre-occupation with non Korzhvskyic objective mysticism, is the first literary (or non-literary, as a matter of fact) reference extant of that most puzzling enigma of modern science, namely: How is a wunkery worker to pleat a quatt, if no quatts are available to be pleated?

As the executive director of the FBQW (Federal Bureau of Quatt Wunkerys, despite what the evil-minded might say) during the years 1902 till the spring of 1903, this author had ample time to study the whole perplexing situation.

The nation-wide quatt famine of that year gave rise to a crisis unequalled in the long and honorable history of the wunkery. At this time, the nation found itself with even less than the few quatts which were unavailable in former years, and the wunkworker found himself even more unemployed than was his usual lot. The multiplicity of wunkerys which at that time existed (and still do, for that matter -- deplorable condition!) were renovated, enlarged, and modernized to meet the demand: and as a consequence, therefore, there was a severe labor shortage of unemployed wunkworkers.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

REFERENCES: "Star Science Fiction Stories" edited by Frederik Pohl pages 165-175 (A WILD SURMISE by Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore).

The Hickman's are now quite thoroughly insane. The reason? Part of Cleveland's fandom has done the trick. We arrived here (here being Napoleon, Ohio) at an ungodly hour, getting poor Lynn out of bed, and trailing along behind him as he jumped out of bed, to answer the insistent ringing of the doorbell, was his most pretty young wife of ten months (as this is typed) Carole. They of course pretended to be very glad to see us, but we have our doubts about that. You see, Carole is sitting there offering us a cup of tea, but there's a large bottle sticking out of her pocket with a skull and crossbones on it. Do you think this has some significance?

The highlight of this trip, after barzeling down routes 20 and 6 at approximately 90 miles per, and the only reason we made the mad dash for Napoleon at 4 in the morn, after leaving a rootin-tootin' party, was to see little Dougie Hickman, the best little fan in fandom.

We were very enthusiastic about playing with Doug's space station, and if you other fans want a little excitement in your life, Doug's space station will provide it. And Lynn's collection ain't no waste of time either, because we haven't been able to pay Steve Schultheis loose from it as yet.

We are now an extremely weary bunch of poor dumb fools, who are about to pile back into Ellison's Chevvy and take off for the wilder neither regions. Adious, and if you don't like the spelling of that Spanish word, then take a plane to Tampa, and learn first hand yourself. Eyeeeeeeeeee.....

Why I Hate Lynn A. Hickman, Boy Fan by Harlan Ellison, boy

I don't hate Lynn Hickman, but it sounded good when I was looking so feverishly for a title for this abortion. Now I have a title and I'm bound to go ahead and turn all fandom against me. For everyone loves Lynn Hickman. He's a stout fellow. Actually he isn't stout, he's more or less thin with hair on his head. I don't hold that against him -- lots of fellows have foliage atop their craniums.

Carole Hickman is the one I really hate, because she caused me aggravation this afternoon when I kept tilting the pin-ball machine in the quatt wunkery downtown, and I couldn't get the damned machine to stop sneering at me. It seems that this particular machine hated me. But I got him...I clipped him right in the chops. Bashed him one on his glass encased head, the varlet. Later they had to put an out of order sign on him. What a buffoon that machine was.

Thus ended a mad day -- Carole is going to the kitchen to fix coffee. Harlan brought his own lunch and is drinking the rest of it now. Duke just came back tonight to say goodbye for the morning or something like that. Why is a mouse when it spins? I feel like one. Painted yellow with pretty stripes.

The following on the Spider are from a series I printed in the Pulp Era in 1967. Titled A Comprehensive Survey of the Spider Novels, they were written by Mac MacGrogg and were one of the more popular series on the pulps that I ran at that time. If there are Spider fans in the apa, I will continue running the series in Hickman's Scrapbook. If not, I will confine it to On Pulp and E Such which I do for PHAPA.

Alex Soroka was down from the Detroit area for a visit a couple of weeks to look over my collection and do a little trading. I picked up a couple of nice items, Vol 1 #1 of Dime Adventure (June, 1935) and Flying Aces Vol 4 #4 (Jan. 1930). He's planning to stop in again this coming week for a little more swapping. He was rather amazed at some of the items I showed him. He seemed to fall in love with some of the original artwork that I have. Especially the Walter Baumhofer cover from Adventure magazine.

Oh, by the way, over a month has passed since I started this zine and it is now well into March. I've been working quite abit of over-time at the plant and frankly have been too busy and too tired to spend as much time as I would like on my hobbies.

I'm still not really recovered from being out of work so long last year, but each month it gets a little better and hopefully I'll be able to put a little more money each month into my hobbies and improve the quality of my zines until I can once more put out some printing that I can be proud of. In the meanwhile, please strain your eyes and don't think too badly of me.

But I'm getting a little out of kilter here, breaking in with what been happening around here, when I was talking of the Spider survey that will start on the next page. There will be some blank pages from here on in the zine. The cover illoes and the Spider survey were done on my multilith some time back and since the paper they were printed on does not ditto well, I'll not attempt to fill the blank spaces.

The back cover is an ad that I ran in the Pulp Era for Berkley Books back in the 70's. As you can see in the past 10 years, the price of paperbacks has increased considerably.

Editor Don Benson wanted to use the NRA seal on the paperbacks, only changing it to mean New Reader Appeal. I liked the idea, Don liked the idea, but Berkley wouldn't go for it.

THE

MASTER OF MEN!

NOVEMBER

10¢

SPIDER

NRA

MEMBER

WILLIAM HART



THE WHEEL OF DEATH

FULL-LENGTH SPIDER NOVEL

By T.M. SCOTT



THE SPIDER

<u>VOLUME</u>	<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
I	1	1933	Oct.	<u>The Spider Strikes</u>
I	2		Nov.	<u>The Wheel of Death</u>
I	3		Dec.	<u>Wings of the Black Death</u>
I	4	1934	Jan.	<u>City of Flaming Shadows</u>
II	1		Feb.	<u>Empire of Doom</u>
II	2		Mar.	<u>The Citadel of Hell</u>
II	3		Aprl.	<u>Serpent of Destruction</u>
II	4		May	<u>The Mad Horde</u>
III	1		June	<u>Satan's Death Blast</u>
III	2		July	<u>The Corpse Cargo</u>
III	3		Aug.	<u>Prince of the Red Looters</u>
III	4		Sept.	<u>Reign of the Silver Terror</u>
IV	1		Oct.	<u>Builders of the Dark Empire</u>
IV	2		Nov.	<u>Death's Crimson Juggernaut</u>
IV	3		Dec.	<u>The Red Death Rain</u>
IV	4	1935	Jan.	<u>The City Destroyer</u>
V	1		Feb.	<u>The Pain Emperor</u>
V	2		Mar.	<u>The Flame Master</u>
V	3		Aprl.	<u>Slaves of the Crime Master</u>
V	4		May	<u>Reign of the Death Fiddler</u>
VI	1		June	<u>Hordes of the Red Butcher</u>
VI	2		July	<u>Dragon Lord of the Underworld</u>
VI	3		Aug.	<u>Master of the Death Madness</u>
VI	4		Sept.	<u>King of the Red Killers</u>
VII	1		Oct.	<u>Overlord of the Damned</u>
VII	2		Nov.	<u>Death Reign of the Vampire King</u>
VII	3		Dec.	<u>Emperor of the Yellow Death</u>
VII	4	1936	Jan.	<u>The Mayor of Hell</u>
VIII	1		Feb.	<u>Slaves of the Murder Syndicate</u>
VIII	2		Mar.	<u>Green Globes of Death</u>
VIII	3		Aprl.	<u>The Cholera King</u>
VIII	4		May	<u>Slaves of the Dragon</u>
IX	1		June	<u>Legions of Madness</u>
IX	2		July	<u>Laboratory of the Damned</u>
IX	3		Aug.	<u>Satan's Sightless Legion</u>
IX	4		Sept.	<u>The Coming of the Terror</u>
X	1		Oct.	<u>The Devil's Death Dwarfs</u>
X	2		Nov.	<u>City of Dreadful Night</u>
X	3		Dec.	<u>Reign of the Snake Men</u>
X	4	1937	Jan.	<u>Dictator of the Damned</u>
XI	1		Feb.	<u>The Mill-Town Massacres</u>
XI	2		Mar.	<u>Satan's Workshop</u>
XI	3		Aprl.	<u>Scourge of the Yellow Fangs</u>
XI	4		May	<u>The Devil's Pawnbroker</u>
XII	1		June	<u>Voyage of the Coffin Ship</u>
XII	2		July	<u>The Man Who Ruled in Hell</u>
XII	3		Aug.	<u>Slaves of the Black Monarch</u>
XII	4		Sept.	<u>Machine Guns Over the White House</u>
XIII	1		Oct.	<u>The City That Dared Not Eat</u>
XIII	2		Nov.	<u>Master of the Flaming Horde</u>
XIII	3		Dec.	<u>Satan's Switchboard</u>
XIII	4	1938	Jan.	<u>Legion of the Accursed Light</u>
XIV	1		Feb.	<u>The City of Lost Men</u>
XIV	2		Mar.	<u>The Grey Horde Creeps</u>

<u>Volume</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>
XIV	3	1938	Aprl.	<u>City of Whispering Death</u>
XIV	4		May	<u>When Thousands Slept in Hell</u>
XV	1		June	<u>Satan's Shackles</u>
XV	2		July	<u>The Emperor From Hell</u>
XV	3		Aug.	<u>The Devil's Candlesticks</u>
XV	4		Sept.	<u>The City That Paid to Die</u>
XVI	1		Oct.	<u>The Spider at Bay</u>
XVI	2		Nov.	<u>Scourge of the Black Legions</u>
XVI	3		Dec.	<u>The Withering Death</u>
XVI	4	1939	Jan.	<u>Claws of the Golden Dragon</u>
XVII	1		Feb.	<u>The Song of Death</u>
XVII	2		Mar.	<u>The Silver Death Rain</u>
XVII	3		Aprl.	<u>Blight of the Blazing Eye</u>
XVII	4		May	<u>King of the Fleshless Legion</u>
XVIII	1		June	<u>Rule of the Monster Men</u>
XVIII	2		July	<u>The Spider and the Slaves of Hell</u>
XVIII	3		Aug.	<u>The Spider and the Fire God</u>
XVIII	4		Sept.	<u>The Corpse Broker</u>
XVIX	1		Oct.	<u>The Spider and the Eyeless Legion</u>
XVIX	2		Nov.	<u>The Spider and the Faceless One</u>
XVIX	3		Dec.	<u>Satan's Murder Machines</u>
XVIX	4	1940	Jan.	<u>The Spider and the Pain Master</u>
XX	1		Feb.	<u>Hell's Sales Manager</u>
XX	2		Mar.	<u>Slaves of the laughing Death</u>
XX	3		Aprl.	<u>The Man From Hell</u>
XX	4		May	<u>The Spider and the War Emperor</u>
XXI	1		June	<u>Judgment of the Damned</u>
XXI	2		July	<u>Dictator's Death Merchants</u>
XXI	3		Aug.	<u>Pirates From Hell</u>
XXI	4		Sept.	<u>Master of the Night Demons</u>
XXII	1		Oct.	<u>The Council of Evil</u>
XXII	2		Nov.	<u>The Spider and His Hobo Army</u>
XXII	3		Dec.	<u>The Spider and the Jewels of Hell</u>
XXII	4	1941	Jan.	<u>Harbor of Nameless Death</u>
XXIII	1		Feb.	<u>The Spider and the Slave Doctor</u>
XXIII	2		Mar.	<u>The Spider and the Sons of Satan</u>
XXIII	3		Aprl.	<u>Slaves of the Burning Blade</u>
XXIII	4		May	<u>The Devil's Paymaster</u>
XXIV	1		June	<u>The Benevolent Order of Death</u>
XXIV	2		July	<u>Murder's Black Prince</u>
XXIV	3		Aug.	<u>The Spider and the Scarlet Surgeon</u>
XXIV	4		Sept.	<u>The Spider and the Deathless One</u>
XXV	1		Oct.	<u>Satan's Seven Swordsmen</u>
XXV	2		Nov.	<u>Volunteer Corpse Brigade</u>
XXV	3		Dec.	<u>The Crime Laboratory</u>
XXV	4	1942	Jan.	<u>Death and the Spider</u>
XXVI	1		Feb.	<u>Murder's Legionnaires</u>
XXVI	2		Mar.	<u>The Gentleman From Hell</u>
XXVI	3		Aprl.	<u>Slaves of the Ring</u>
XXVI	4		May	<u>The Spider and the Death Piper</u>
XXVII	1		June	<u>Revolt of the Underworld</u>
XXVII	2		July	<u>Return of the Racket Kings</u>
XXVII	3		Aug.	<u>Fangs of the Dragon</u>
XXVII	4		Sept.	<u>Hell Rolls on the Highways</u>
XXVIII	1		Oct.	<u>Army of the ...</u>

<u>Volume</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>
XXVIII	2	1942	Nov.	<u>Zara -- Master of Murder</u>
XXVIII	3		Dec.	<u>The Spider and the Flame King</u>
XXVIII	4	1943	Jan.	<u>The Howling Death</u>
XXVIX	1		Feb.	<u>Secret City of Crime</u>
XXVIX	2		Mar.	<u>Recruit For the Spider Legion</u>
XXVIX	3		June	<u>The Spider and the Man From Hell</u>
XXVIX	4		Aug.	<u>The Criminal Horde</u>
XXX	1		Oct.	<u>The Spider and Hell's Factory</u>
XXX	2		Dec.	<u>When Satan Came to Town</u>

Lead story by R. T. M. Scott.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by Walter M. Baumhofer - A gaunt, sinister hand bearing a spider ring on the little finger is clutching a net-like web which has ensnared a thug, a masked man, a policeman, and a hard-looking redhaired woman.

Cast of The Spider Strikes:

Richard Wentworth, "five feet eleven, 170 lbs." - wealthy, agile, athletic - he is the Spider, Master of Men.

Nita Van Sloan, a blue-eyed beauty with brown clustered curls - the sustaining heroine.

Ram Singh, a stoic and deadly Hindu - devoted to his master, Wentworth.

Apollo, a Great Dane - gift from Wentworth to Nita.

Jenkyns, Wentworth's butler.

Stanley Kirkpatrick, New York City Commissioner of Police - devoted to Wentworth, but opposed to the Spider.

Parsons, a private secretary who loses his employer's money in a card game.

Blunton, a card sharp in the employ of Mr. X.

Dorothy Canfield, sweet, young girl in love with Jack Selwyn.

Sparks, an heroic reporter for the Evening Standard.

Corinne Pompe, hard, but beautiful mistress of Mr. X.

Joe and Bill, two victims of the Great Depression.

Dr. Sylvester Quornelle, Mr. X - a worthy adversary for the Spider.

Jack Selwyn, alias George Baker, falsely accused of a jewel theft.

Professor Brownlee, Wentworth's old college friend.

The Story: Richard Wentworth, returning from Europe on an ocean liner, saves a would-be suicide who has lost his employer's money to a card sharp. Wentworth volunteers to regain the money and confronts the gambler. When the villain reaches for a gun, Wentworth shoots him between the eyes and places the Spider's seal on his forehead. In the man's pocket is a map of a ship which is to sail carrying a war-debt payment from a world war ally. Wentworth telegraphs Kirkpatrick that the spider is on board. Kirkpatrick wires the ship demanding a search of Wentworth to discover the Spider's seal. The cigarette lighter containing the seal is cleverly concealed.

Kirkpatrick, aware of the lighter episode, demands that Nita assist him in determining if Wentworth is truly innocent. She is to greet Dick and ask him for his lighter which Kirkpatrick will then examine. Forced to comply, Nita cleverly arranges Apollo's leash around a vase - as Wentworth enters, the dog leaps and the vase falls on Nita. As Dick carries her to a sofa, she exchanges lighters and the Spider's identity is saved. To protect himself in the future, Wentworth asks Professor Brownlee to design a lighter in which the seal will be destroyed if opened by any other than himself.

It is revealed that Wentworth has for two years been on the trail of a master criminal who uses disguises to steal money and jewels, sometimes implicating honest men. One such victim is Jack Selwyn who is accused of stealing diamonds which he says he gave to his employer - who was actually Mr. X in disguise. Selwyn's girl friend, Dorothy Canfield, seeks Wentworth's help and asks him to meet her at her apartment. Kirkpatrick has been wounded by an assailant and is recuperating in Wentworth's apartment, ably nursed by Nita Van Sloan.

Wentworth, at Dorothy's apartment, fails to find Dorothy but does meet Madame Pompé, a former radio star, who is Mr. X's mistress. Mr. X appears and almost kills Wentworth, but is thwarted when stabbed in the leg by a rapier concealed in Wentworth's cane. Wentworth asks Sparks, a newspaper reporter, to search the files for any information on Madame Pompé, hoping to find some clue to her benefactor's real identity.

Madame Pompé asks Dick Wentworth to visit her apartment. In the apartment, where the lady openly tries to seduce him, Wentworth is trapped by Mr. X. However, planning before, Dick has stationed Ram Singh on the balcony and it is Mr. X who is trapped. But, with the alertness and agility of a true adversary, the master villain escapes.

From Sparks, the newspaper man, Wentworth learns that Mr. X is, in reality, Dr. Sylvester Quornelle. Going to Quornelle's house which is boarded up, Wentworth saves Jack Selwyn from death but is unable to prevent the killing of Sparks.

Vowing vengeance, Wentworth and Ram Singh go to the Molly Ann, a steamer which Wentworth had previously investigated and determined was in the hire of Dr. Quornelle. The crew is loading cylinders of poison gas to be used in the robbery of the ocean liner carrying the war-debt payment. Some of the crew are killed and the rest captured by the police. The seal of the Spider is placed on one victim.

Dr. Quornelle, using Madame Pompé who has secured refuge in Wentworth's apartment, kidnaps Nita. Wentworth goes to Quornelle's headquarters as directed and is imprisoned. The police attack the stronghold and Quornelle goes to the roof to hold them off with machine guns until his hirelings can release poison gas. However, Wentworth escapes, kills the thugs in the basement, and confronts Quornelle on the roof. Subduing the doctor in battle, Wentworth places the Spider seal on his forehead and calmly tosses him off the roof to the street below. In the basement with Nita, Wentworth calmly greets the police.

Critical Comment: Although The Spider Strikes is not truly typical of The Spider series, it is a beautifully-written piece of pulp fiction. It is far more adult than most pulp novels which deal with a central character - it is not only the story of the Spider but also a story of two capable and audacious adversaries. Mr. X is a formidable foe and the duel between the hero and the villain is all the more fascinating because each is agile of mind and body, each is capable of escaping from a tight spot, and each is a master of disguise.

The Spider Strikes is comparable to a piece of jewelry made up of many small gems. An excellent example of this is one chapter in which Wentworth first visits the Molly Ann. Although it is not essential in forwarding the plot, it is an excellent episode complete in itself. Wentworth finds that a hapless bum has been disemboweled by a ruthless sailor who wears a hook in place of a missing hand. This villian is confronted by Wentworth and killed. This single chapter, read out of context, is a thrilling adventure in itself.

The dialogue, too, contributes - it is absolutely sparkling compared to that found in most pulps. R. T. M. Scott, whoever he is, seems to be extremely influenced by drama - one can sense the set, the scene, the action, and the dialogue in each episode.

Although never vulgar, and ivory-pure compared to today's literature, there is more sex in this one novel than is found in the entire Doc Savage, G-8, and Phantom Detective series. All of the sex centers around Madame Pompé, frankly identified as Mr. X's "play girl". She tries openly and brazenly to seduce the hero, and he is human enough to appreciate her charms although noble enough to resist them. An example of the sex awareness as well as the quality of the dialogue is as follows. Madame Corinne Pompé calls Wentworth and says she is in danger from Mr. X. Wentworth replies:

"All right, Corinne. Come over this afternoon if you can get away. And by the way -"

"Yes?"

"Bring an overnight bag."

"An overnight bag?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Dick."

Wentworth replaced the telephone upon the table.

"Now what the devil did she think I meant," he grumbled as if he didn't know.

As mentioned above and below, The Spider Strikes is not typical of The Spider series as it later develops. However, in its own right and on its own adult level, the story is a superior pulp-fiction effort. It's regrettable that two series did not develop - one patterned on this story, in addition to the series which did evolve.

General Comment: Probably no other "novel-length" pulp magazine changed so drastically as did The Spider. This first issue would be more appropriately titled "Meet Richard Wentworth, Society Detective". Nowhere in the story is there a hint of the hideous, stooped character that is to develop shortly after this first issue.

Introduced are Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Stanley Kirkpatrick, Apollo, the Great Dane, Ram Singh, and Jenkyns, the butler. Although Dick Wentworth is quick to kill without remorse (one villian gets a single shot between the eyes in chapter two), the role of the Spider is but incidental; the seal of the Spider is placed on the man's forehead. At no time does Wentworth drop his own identity to become The Spider. He is always Wentworth signing his work with the Spider seal.

Kirkpatrick, though suspecting Wentworth prior to the story's beginning, rather casually mentions, "You'll recall that the Spider has never harmed a decent man." The Spider has not become the emblem and character so feared by the underworld even though he has apparently been operating over the past few years.

An even greater deviation is found in the pattern of the story itself. Here are no horrendous mass murder spreading death to thousands of innocent people by means of cholera, bubonic plague, hydrophobia, or mysterious drugs. Instead we have a master criminal, versed in the art of make-up, who merely uses criminal methods to obtain valuables by theft. He does plan to dispose of all passengers on the ocean liner by means of poison gas, but this is only part of the robbery plan. Too, though he wears a mask and is known as Mr. X in the first half of the story, his true identity as a noted physician answers no puzzle for the reader since the physician was not previously introduced.

Most startling of all for the Spider fan who reads The Spider Strikes in retrospect is the character of Wentworth, himself. So completely charming, so much the sophisticate that it approaches burlesque, he is somewhat motivated by a sincere hatred of crime but more strongly by a rather selfish love of excitement and danger. He telephones his sweetheart, Nita, speaks of love employing the French language, and plays the violin for her. Upon reuniting a young girl and her sweetheart, he proceeds to play the organ for them, thrilling with thoughts of romance. He is almost victorian in his choice of language and his attitudes. As a reporter dies in his arms after phoning in news of his own murder, Wentworth states, "By God, Selwyn, that's the way to die." He also tells a friend that it's "bully" to see him. Upon recapturing his stolen Ming vase, he cannot resist the temptation to run his fingers over its delicate decorations.

But, heartless in battle is the Spider. Upon finally besting Mr. X in hand-to-hand battle on a roof top, Wentworth calmly picks up his adversary and tosses him to his death in the street below.

The first two Spider novels were written by R. T. M. Scott. How the Scott character came to change will receive attention in later resumes.

Additional Contents:

Leslie T. White, Baited Death (short story)

Norvell Page, Murder Undercover (short story)

Dept., The Spider's Web (In this installment the origin of the Spider is revealed: Professor Brownlee has used some college funds and is being blackmailed. Student Wentworth kills the blackmailer and scawls a Spider on his victim's forehead. Thus, the Spider is born.)

Lead story by R. T. M. Scott.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - The hand of the Spider is touching the center of a roulette wheel, instead of numbers, the wheel features portraits - of a bald man, a well-dressed villian with knife, a beautiful girl, an oriental.

Cast of The Wheel of Death:

Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Ram Singh, Stanley Kirkpatrick, Apollo.

Jackson, Wentworth's chauffeur - nothing now, he gains importance in later issues.

Dan Grogan, burly underworld chieftain.

Molly Dennis, pretty girl, trying to free her father.

Arnold Dennis, awaiting electrocution for a murder he didn't commit.

Mortimer Mack, President of the MackSyndicate - dirty dealer in politics.

Ned Morris, newspaper man, boyhood friend of Wentworth.

Jerry Stone, in love with Molly - in Mack's hire.

Cora, beautiful woman in green - one method of getting politicians in Mack's power.

David Bannister, newspaper publisher.

Buckley, a politician - who got in with the wrong crowd.

The Story: Wentworth, disguised as a cheap hood, visits Dan Grogan's Restaurant in response to rumors that Grogan is a power in the corrupt political machine in New York City. A pretty, young girl is also visiting the place. Just as Wentworth gets into Grogan's good graces, two thugs bring in the girl saying she was eavesdropping. Grogan leaves Wentworth and the girl under guard, but the Master of Men shoots the gunmen, places the Spider seal on their foreheads, and escapes. The girl is Molly Dennis, whose father is to be electrocuted that very night. She assures Dick that Grogan and Mortimer Mack have framed her father. The two narrowly escape death in their taxi when Grogan and a gang attack. Outdistancing the pursuers, Wentworth goes to a cheap rooming house where Ram Singh is waiting.

While the crooks attempt to break in, Wentworth calls the Governor and has the execution delayed by one week. Ram Singh disguises Dick and Molly as a blind man and an urchin boy, then sets fire to some linen. When firemen arrive, Dick and the girl escape in the confusion. Realizing that he has lost in Grogan's palce one of his guns which will identify him as the Spider, Wentworth returns. He finds the gun but while he is recovering it, Molly is kidnapped - and Wentworth finds that the gun he has retrieved is not his.

Since Mortimer Mack is his only lead, Wentworth gets his friend, Ned Morris, to arrange an invitation to one of Mack's fabulous society parties. As it is a social affair, Nita accompanies him. After meeting Mack, Wentworth notices that Jerry Stone, Molly Dennis' boy friend, is also present and seems to be in

the host's employ. Also noticed is a seductive woman named Cora who is dancing with Buckley, a noted - and married - politician. Wentworth concludes that Cora is but one method by which Mack entraps politicians. Another strange guest is David Bannister, a respected newspaper publisher.

Nita, in the ladies dressing room, hears a shot in the adjoining library and informs Dick who breaks into the room. Buckley is lying dead of a bullet wound. Mack appears and says that the politician has been shot by the gun Wentworth dropped at Grogan's. When Commissioner Kirkpatrick arrives, Wentworth manages to steal the gun and give it to Nita. He also discovers that the private elevator in Mack's apartment opens onto some secret rooms.

Finding that Jerry Stone has called the police and has been working for Mack only in an effort to find information that will clear Molly's father, Wentworth saves his life when Mack attempts to have him killed. Nita is captured by a gunman but Wentworth is able to kill the kidnapper with a single, delicate shot. The seal of the Spider is placed on the victim's forehead. Discovering the corpse and the seal, Kirkpatrick suspects and attempts to hold Wentworth, but Wentworth escapes.

Wentworth enters the elevator and sends it to the hidden basement where he locates, captures, and tortures Dan Grogan. Not only does he obtain proof of Arnold Dennis' innocence, but he learns that Mack is planning to kill Kirkpatrick and other honest city officials.

The next evening, learning that Kirkpatrick and the officials have been invited to David Bannister's house, Wentworth, to avoid arrest, disguises himself and Nita as a cab driver and a woman of the streets. In a pre-arranged plan, they barge into Bannister's house and Wentworth discovers that trained killers are hiding behind the drapes. He manages to kill them although he is severely wounded when he stops a bullet meant for Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick, grateful, apologizes for thinking that Wentworth could possibly be the Spider.

Critical Comment: After the glowing promise of The Spider Strikes, The Wheel of Death is a severe disappointment. The sparkling dialogue, so important to the readability of the first novel, is completely absent in this second adventure. Cora, the only possible counterpart of the fascinating Madame Pompé, has only a few lines and then wanders aimlessly out of the story. Then, too, neither Grogan nor Mack is a match for Wentworth. The criminal leader, unidentified until the last chapter, takes no part in the action and one misses the clash of two mighty opponents.

If the first Spider story was a series of crisp episodes, The Wheel of Death is composed of a long scene, an intolerably extended scene, and a crisp, brief finale - in the long middle portion concerning the action in Mack's apartment, the reader really needs a floor plan to properly follow the action. What with secret floors, secret rooms, an elevator with secret entrances, and sliding safes that are in reality secret entrances, the reader is bound to become a bit confused - and the reader almost needs the energy and stamina of Wentworth to accompany him throughout this exhaustive episode.

Of course, it is not fair to evaluate this novel solely by comparing it to its predecessor. Considered by itself, it has commendable points. Action is plentiful and the characterization of Wentworth - audacious, adventure-loving, and amazingly capable - is quite consistent. The story also maintains the adult level not usually found in pulps - the sophistication, and the awareness of sex is present (Mack's party features two live nudes - one painted in gold and one in silver - plus nude dancers in the floor show; and Nita, in the climax, is admittedly disguised as a streetwalker). The most legitimate criticism of the story is that it suffers from a lack of change of pace - contrast is always important and, when action and movement reaches its height immediately and remains at that level during the entire story, it loses its effectiveness and wearies the reader.

In summation, this second story by R. T. M Scott, The Wheel of Death, is a fairly entertaining story with much to commend it, but very disappointing in that it should have been much better.

Additional Contents:

Wyatt Blassingame, Scourge of the Green Winter (short)

Alfred I. Tooke, Trail of the Wolf (short)

THE **MASTER OF MEN!** MARCH
10¢ **SPIDER**



The **CITADEL OF HELL**
FEATURE-LENGTH SPIDER NOVEL

Design by Plato Jones from the March 1934 cover by John Howitt

Lead story by Grant Stockbridge.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - The Spider, unmasked, in a black cape, is holding a revolver in one hand, his other hand shields his face. A girl in red clings to him for protection while, in the background, people are fleeing in terror.

Cast of Wings of the Black Death:

Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Kirkpatrick, Ram Singh, Jenkyns, Apollo.

Virginia Doeg, accused of substituting forged bonds for real ones.

John Harper, pawnbroker and a fence for stolen goods.

MacDonald Pugh, Wall Street broker who owned the real bonds.

Mrs. Henry Gainsborough, the first extortion victim.

Dave and Gertrude Gainsborough, children - first victims of the Black Death.

James Handley, Virginia's boy friend, accused of robbery.

Theodore Works, Pugh's partner - another plague victim.

The Black Death, masked man who releases the plague.

The Story: Richard Wentworth slips away from a society dance attended by Nita and Commissioner Kirkpatrick, in order to investigate the case of Virginia Doeg, a girl accused of substituting forged bonds for real ones owned by MacDonald Pugh, a Wall Street broker. Wentworth's concern is because Virginia's pet dog has just died of the bubonic plague. Knowing that John Harper, a pawnbroker, deals in stolen bonds, Wentworth puts on a mask and, as the Spider, makes a call. When Harper draws a gun, the Spider kills him and places the Spider seal on his forehead. In the safe is found a vial of "Hopkins' Solution", the only known antitoxin for the plague, plus the name and address of Mrs. Henry Gainsborough. Just as the Spider starts to leave, he is confronted by an armed, masked man who is known as the Black Death. The Spider escapes when the police arrive. Joining Kirkpatrick and Nita, Wentworth is shocked to learn from the Commissioner that two policemen have been killed and marked with the Spider seal. "Death to the Spider", vows Kirkpatrick.

Wentworth calls Mrs. Gainsborough and finds that she has received an extortion threat saying that, unless she pays \$1,000,000, her children will die of the plague. Despite Wentworth's opposition, the Black Death carries out his threat. Locating Virginia Doeg, the Spider contacts her but the two of them are captured and bound by one of the Black Death's henchmen. When the gunman sets fire to the apartment, the spider escapes and kills the captor; but, when he lowers Virginia to safety, she is taken by the police. The Black Death, again acting as the Spider, kills Virginia's guards and kidnaps her. Wentworth deliberately walks into his trap but is freed by Ram Singh and Apollo. Knowing that the Black Death is now using pigeons to spread the bubonic plague, Wentworth attempts to trap him but fails. When Commissioner Kirkpatrick discovers an association between Wentworth and the pigeons, he orders his arrest. Wentworth escapes capture by driving his car off of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Nita, attempting to determine the true identity of the Black Death, is too successful and is captured. Wentworth appears to rescue her but is himself caught. The two escape in time to pursue the Black Death who is in an airplane from which he plans to release disease-ridden pigeons. Wentworth shoots down the villain's plane and kills the Black Death. A recording carefully left by Wentworth convinces Kirkpatrick that Wentworth is not the Spider and the two remain friends.

Critical Comment: Although Wings of the Black Death is a good, entertaining pulp adventure, full of action, thrills, excitement, and suspense, it does suffer somewhat from an over-abundance of hazards, short sequences, and enemy confrontations. Wentworth faces death on five individual occasions and, of course, escapes each time, but there is too much similarity in the first three occasions. Wentworth seems to have the worst luck that any hero ever endured, and an unintentional sense of frustration creeps in. Because this novel marks such a definite turning point in the development of The Spider and because many of these changes are instrumental in the success of the story and of the series, it is necessary to discuss it at length.

This story is much more typical of the "lead-character" pulp novel than were either of its predecessors. The sophisticated and adult approach noted in the first two adventures is dropped in favor of those elements which appeal more broadly to the younger and less demanding readers. The character of the Spider is actually born in this story. For the first time, Wentworth does become the Spider. He puts on a black, silk mask "tight over the eyes and flowing down over the rest of his face"; and instead of reading, "Wentworth stepped into the darkness," the narrative reads, "and the Spider, as silent as his namesake, slipped into the darkness".

The basic concept and scope of the plot also marks a complete departure. The hero is fighting not only a villain, but also a peril - the bubonic plague; one must fear and fight not only the foe, but also the foe's weapon or criminal device. This one approach is the element which most typifies The Spider magazine during the height of its popularity - the magnitude of the villain's crime and his utter disregard for human life. Why did the magazine prove so popular under this format? Two possible reasons might be: (1) Whereas the police might be expected to cope with the criminals found in the first two stories, one realizes all too well that Wentworth - the Spider - really is the only possible hope for mankind against a foe like this; (2) the pulp reader wasn't as personally involved in the first two stories - most readers would never become victims of an ocean-liner robbery because most never sailed on ocean liners - but the black plague - this could reach out and engulf each of them indiscriminately.

Wings of the Black Death is the first Spider novel to be published under the house name of Grant Stockbridge. According to a letter printed in Bronze Shadows, the Spider stories were actually written by Norvell Page, well known for many stories published under his own name. Regrettably, no details are supplied as to whether Page wrote all of the novels, or all of the novels attributed to Grant Stockbridge. Regardless of authorship, the Grant Stock-

bridge Spider differed greatly from the Spider attributed to R. T. M. Scott.

Additional Contents:

H. M. Appel, Singing Doom (short)

John Knox, Fear Island (short)

John Colohan, The Alibi Murder (short)

THE ³³ MASTER OF MEN!
10¢ SPIDER DECEMBER



WINGS
OF THE
BLACK
DEATH!

FULL-LENGTH SPIDER NOVEL

By

GRANT STOCKBRIDGE



Lead Story by Grant Stockbridge.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - Caped, masked Spider is carrying a woman and a uniformed man out of a mass of flames.

Cast of City of Flaming Shadows:

Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Stanley Kirkpatrick,
Ram Singh, Jackson, Jenkyns.

Reardon, an electric-company lineman, an employee and victim of the Tarantula.

Jack Reardon, anxious to aid Wentworth and avenge his father.

Elsie Thompson, in love with Jack.

Wiggard, the Tarantula's crime lieutenant.

Big Tim Lally, a polished politician.

Tamara Lamaris, beautiful, seductive employee of the electric company.

Johnson Hague, an electrical engineer.

Russell Daliot, swimming instructor.

Joe Roberts, President of the Board of Aldermen.

Peter MacPherson, a phone-company representative.

Shane Penrose, New York City's Deputy Police Commissioner.

Donohue, Schwartz, O'Flaherty, three of New York's finest.

The Story: Richard Wentworth is investigating a robbery in Hamlettown, New York, where the criminals have managed to isolate the town by severing all light and phone wires. Masked as the Spider, he confronts an electric-company lineman named Reardon, who repents his part in the robbery. Elsie Thompson, a girl in love with Reardon's son, intervenes but Reardon convinces her that the Spider can help them. Wiggard, the criminal who hired Reardon, appears and when the Spider attempts to capture him, Reardon is kidnapped. The criminal mastermind, known as the Tarantula, hangs Reardon and convinces Elsie that the Spider is to blame.

While Wentworth, Kirkpatrick, and Nita attend a Broadway show, the gang strikes in New York City. As Wentworth pursues some of the gang, Nita is captured. The Tarantula phones Wentworth and says that unless the Spider leaves for Europe, Nita will die. Wentworth meets Jack Reardon, the dead lineman's son, disguises him as Wentworth, and sends him and Ram Singh to Europe.

Contacting Kirkpatrick, Wentworth reveals what has happened. He disguises himself as Inspector Rupert Barton of Scotland Yard, and Commissioner Kirkpatrick introduces him as that person. Shane Penrose, Kirkpatrick's deputy, resents outside help. Wentworth meets with Tamara Lamaris and Johnson Hague of the electric company, who, together with politician Tim Lally, seem to know most about the network of power, light, and communication lines.

When the Tarantula strikes again, robbing a New York City

bank, Wentworth discovers that the gang uses the sewer and power-line tunnels under the street in order to escape. While he is investigating, Kirkpatrick is lured into a trap and captured by the Tarantula. Wentworth captures a minor thug and through him encounters the mastermind, but is held at bay when the Tarantula threatens to hang Nita. Wentworth escapes but is unable to rescue his sweetheart. She is able to call the police from her new place of captivity and Wentworth manages to save her.

All of the city's money is put into one bank where it can be adequately protected, but the Tarantula and his gang, using the underground network, steal the money anyway. Wentworth frees Kirkpatrick and, using a seaplane, encounters the masked villain in a yacht used in the escape. He kills the Tarantula using a grenade, but surprises everyone by saying that there are two Tarantulas and proceeds to unmask the real mastermind.

Critical Comment: While City of Flaming Shadows contains all of the elements necessary to produce a great pulp story, it must, in fairness, be judged as only a fairly entertaining novel. To determine the reason for such an evaluation, one must consider the nature of the full-length pulp novel and the problems it presents to the writer. Personal experimentation has indicated that the first three or four chapters and the last four or five chapters of a pulp novel are relatively easy to write - once the author has conceived the germ of the plot, he introduces it and his hero and sets them in action in the first few chapters - in the last few chapters he is able to present the conclusion and the unmasking and destruction of the mastermind. The real challenge to the author is filling in all of that space in between in a satisfactory manner. If the space is filled with repetitious encounters which resolve nothing or add nothing to progress the plot, then the overall story suffers. Kenneth Robeson, in the Doc Savage stories, could vary the action among the various aides; Robert Wallace, in the Phantom Detective stories, stuck pretty much to his central character but partially solved the problem by reducing the amount of space and writing much shorter novels than his fellow authors; but Stockbridge really faced a problem - not only did he deal with one central character but his novels were as much as 10 to 20 pages longer than the average "book-length" pulp adventure. Thus, we find in Wings of the Black Death and in City of Flaming Shadows a great many interim episodes which are not satisfactory in themselves (as in the Molly Ann episode in The Spider Strikes), nor do they progress the plot or provide additional exposition essential to the story; Ram Singh, because of his stoic nature or because of his foreignness, does not seem capable of carrying a chapter or two by himself. Stockbridge seems to be aware of the problem and in this story adds another dimension to Jackson, the chauffeur. In the preceding novel, Jackson is such a nonentity that Wentworth forces him from the car so that he himself might drive to a dangerous rendezvous. In this story, Jackson assumes a new personality - he is Wentworth's sergeant-major from World War I and a character with whom the reader can

associate. Although he has little to do in this story, his presence and actions contribute greatly to some of the adventures to come.

As stated before, however, City of Flaming Shadows is a fairly entertaining novel. The Tarantula, while somewhat of a stock character, is a time-proven stock character and is worthy of the Spider's attentions. Wentworth's assumed identity as the Scotland Yard Inspector provides interesting variety and his running feud with Penrose provokes excitement. The revelation that there are two Tarantulas adds a degree of mystery not usually found in the series.

Added Note: One has to be amused by one episode in City of Flaming Shadows. Riding in a cab with a minor thug he has captured, Wentworth thinks of the hundreds who have lost their lives and can't resist the urge to lash out and smash the thug's nose. One thing about the Spider - if a crook encountered him and lived, he'd damn well think twice before he returned to crime again!

Additional Contents:

G. T. Fleming-Roberts, The Devil's Belfry (short)

Lead story by Grant Stockbridge.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover by John Howitt - The Spider, unmasked, holds a strange, instrument which is spraying toward a ghostly hand that is dripping blood on the Capitol Building. A crowd is fleeing in the foreground.

Cast of Empire of Doom:

Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Kirkpatrick, Ram Singh, Prof. Brownlee.

Prof. Cather, who has discovered a deadly, green gas.

McCarthy, a minor criminal.

George Scott, a red-haired criminal - a disguise used by the Green Hand.

Harry Battleson, Police Commissioner of Loveland, Michigan.

Jonathan Love, industrial magnate - a tool of the Green Hand.

Renee Love, Jonathan's beautiful daughter.

Tremaine Smith, Renee's wealthy suitor.

Wilhelm Reuters, one of Love's scientists - another suitor.

Jack Delaney, a mere foreman and a third suitor.

Selden Crosswell, Love's personal secretary.

Madame Olga Bantsoff, Love's mistress - in reality Maggie Foley.

The Green Hand, the master criminal.

The Story: Richard Wentworth, disguised as a trapper, is in Northern Michigan's snow country searching for Prof. Cather. Cather, a friend of Prof. Brownlee's, has, under the guise of ordering chemicals, sent a secret message stating that he has discovered a terrible weapon and is being held prisoner. Wentworth kills one assailant and traps another in a cabin. His captive has a capsule of green gas with which Wentworth threatens him. Learning that Cather is dead and that the crook has been employed by George Scott, Wentworth is unable to learn more because a second thug barges into the cabin and accidentally breaks the capsule. Only Wentworth escapes and when he returns he finds that the green gas has eaten huge chunks of flesh from the victims. Affixing the Spider seal on their foreheads, Wentworth leaves. Wentworth captures Scott in a nearby lumbercamp but barely escapes with his life when the honest lumbermen surround the cabin.

Going to Loveland, Michigan, Wentworth contacts Police Commissioner Battleson. Together they go to the estate of Jonathan Love to investigate a threat he has received. Signed by a sinister green hand, the threat says that every man, woman, and child in the nearby town of Elkhorn will die unless two million dollars are paid. Love, a rugged individualist, refuses even to consider the matter. After meeting Renee Love, Jonathan's daughter and a friend of Nita's, Tremaine Smith and Wilhelm Reuters, two of her suitors, and Selden Crosswell, Love's obsequious secretary, Wentworth goes to Elkhorn to contact Jack Delaney, one of the factory foremen who agrees to help him

evacuate the city. The Governor, at Wentworth's request, sends troops, but although Wentworth shoots down the airplane carrying the gas, he is unable to prevent the death of many of the troops - the gas has eaten through their gas masks and clothing.

The Green Hand now threatens the city of Loveland but Love says he has the answer - giant fans manned by his own green-uniformed troops. Wentworth believes Love's plan is folly but when a green gas is loosed on the city, no one dies and Love is acclaimed a savior. Delaney is reported to have shut off one fan and is jailed as a traitor, but is released when the Green Hand's men attack the jail.

Wentworth faces Love and tells him he is being duped. The gas was not driven off by the fans but was a harmless gas, and the Green Hand is trying to make Love seem a savior so he can become dictator of America - then, the Green Hand will rule him from behind the scenes. Wentworth is even more sure of his theory when he discovers that Love's mistress, seductive Olga Bantsoff, is really Maggie Foley, a former convict and cheap thief. Love threatens to have Wentworth ousted when Commissioner Battleson arrives and arrests Wentworth as being the Spider. Wentworth escapes and confronts Maggie Foley, but learns nothing.

The city of Cleveland is next threatened. Using his disguise as Inspector Barton of Scotland Yard, Wentworth goes to the city but is unable to convince the military commander that the city should be evacuated. When gas is released, Wentworth is able to save many by broadcasting advice that all citizens should climb to the roofs.

Nita Van Sloan has gone to Renee Love's house to seek information but she has been kidnapped. Prof. Brownlee discovers an anti-gas which, when released in the presence of the green gas, will cause both to explode. However, he, too, is kidnapped. Wentworth trails them to a cabin in northern Michigan but the Green Hand, in his disguise as George Scott, is waiting and captures the Spider. All three are left to die but Wentworth escapes, and frees Nita and Brownlee.

Love is in Washington, D.C., and has been made dictator. Wentworth, by phone, secures the services of 50 of Kirkpatrick's best men and, meeting them in Washington, gives them some of the anti-gas. Discovering that the green gas is brought into the city in gasoline trucks, Wentworth issues orders and the city is saved in a rousing climax. Wentworth is captured and threatened with execution, but he cleverly gets the Green Hand to confess in front of a national radio hook-up. Learning he has been duped, Love rushes in and he, Olga, and the mastermind are all killed in a deadly exchange.

Critical Comment: Empire of Doom is a fast-moving, highly successful Spider tale. The different locales - from snow country, to a small city, to Cleveland, to the nation's capital - provide a variety not often found in the series. The

enemy confrontations, captures, and escapes are also individualized and do not seem repetitive. The basic plot has an extra dimension, too, in that the horror of the green gas is not an end in itself but is merely an instrument in a more gigantic plot - the taking over of America. The climax is truly exciting and would be very effective visually - the Spider and his men fire a shot into the gasoline trucks, gas escapes, the anti-gas is released, and the trucks explode in flames.

There is but one point which must bother the reader. Wentworth is Wentworth during the radio broadcast but, once the villains are killed, he speaks to the radio audience as the Spider. It would seem that his secret identity is no longer a secret, but in the novels to come there is still no proof that Wentworth is the Spider.

Additional Contents:

George Shaftel, Murder After Death (short)

Lead story by Grant Stockbridge.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - The Spider, caped and masked, is pointing a revolver at a skeleton clothed in a cape of flames. Beneath and between the two is the city of New York, glowing blood-red from the flames.

Cast of Citadel of Hell:

Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Kirkpatrick, Ram Singh, Apollo,
Prof. Brownlee.

Hanford Tyson, sugar tycoon - first victim of the Food
Destroyers.

Janice Hally, an employee at Tyson's Sugar Refinery.

Denny, Janice's boy friend - killed by the Food Destroyers.

John Glastonbury, New York City District Attorney.

Smail Perkins, a member of the Produce Exchange.

J. J. Callahan, head of a meat-packing firm.

Xavier Jones, of Amalgamated Can.

Timothy Walsh, heroic boy - recipient of the first Spider
ring.

Dr. Jimpson Hughes, a dentist whose testimony saves Went-
worth in court.

Tito Caliepi, a Wentworth disguise - forerunner of the
Spider.

The Story: Wentworth, aware that sugar king Hanford Tyson has been threatened with death, joins two police cars protecting Tyson's limousine. A Packard breaks through and its passengers throw an incendiary bomb which turns Tyson's car into an inferno, killing the occupant. Wentworth trails the Packard to Tyson's sugar refinery where he is confronted by Janice Hally, a pretty employee, who holds a gun on him and says she is going to kill him because of the death of her sweetheart, Denny. As he disarms her, the refinery goes up in flames. Killing a gangster who tries to bar escape, Wentworth affixes the Spider seal. When police appear, Janice yells that Wentworth is the Spider, and he barely escapes.

The next morning Wentworth goes to Kirkpatrick's office to advance the theory that recent fires have been aimed at destroying the country's food supply and that leading food executives should be called together. District Attorney Glastonbury appears with a warrant for Wentworth's arrest - having been identified by Janice Hally, Wentworth is accused of Tyson's murder.

Wentworth escapes and, assuming the identity of one of the food brokers, attends a meeting where it is revealed that Xavier Jones of Amalgamated Can has been threatened. Adopting a disguise as Tito Caliepi, a crippled, hunchbacked violinist who wears a cape and a black felt hat, the Spider goes to Jones' apartment and is confronted by a dope addict, member of the gang. Putting celluloid points over his own teeth, the Spider is about to obtain valuable information when the leader of the Food Destroyers - a man in a red mask - appears with other members of the gang. Wentworth escapes and heads for the scene

of the next fire. Unable to prevent the fire, he does save the life of a boy, Timothy Walsh, and his family. Later when Wentworth is overcome by smoke, the boy and a fireman save him. The police arrest Wentworth as the Spider, but the boy helps him to escape. Wentworth gives Tim a ring impressed with the Spider seal.

Suffering a severe bullet wound, Wentworth goes to Prof. Brownlee's home and is bed-ridden for three weeks. There is a severe food shortage, mobs are running wild in the streets. Nita has been jailed by Glastonbury as Wentworth's accomplice. Recovering, Wentworth captures Xavier Jones and assuming his identity, goes to a meeting of the Red Mask and his gang. The gang attempts to kill Jones-Wentworth but the police arrive. All but two of the gang escape through a secret exit. Those two lie dead with the Spider seal on their foreheads.

Wentworth, again disguised as Tito Caliepi, openly meets Kirkpatrick and identifies himself as the Spider. Desperate, Kirkpatrick makes a pact with the Spider and promises to supply a fleet of radio cars and policemen. Wentworth and Ram Singh, in one car, broadcast messages to the other cars and the gang of Food Destroyers are defeated. Confronted by the Red Mask and Janice Hally, The Spider convinces Janice that the death of Denny was the Red Mask's doing. As Janice and the Red Mask struggle, one of the incendiary capsules is broken and the two are burned to death.

In a unique closing episode, Wentworth and Nita stand trial for the murder of Tyson but the case is dismissed when a surprise witness is called.

Critical Comment: Citadel of Hell is an extremely readable and quite satisfactory Spider adventure. Strangely enough, the three-week recuperation period when Wentworth is disabled adds to the story's strength. It not only gives the reader a chance to catch his breath, but it enables the situation to worsen, thus making the Spider's reappearance even more necessary and his success even more satisfying. Too, the reader is gratified by the open alliance between Kirkpatrick and the Spider which gives each a more heroic proportion - each is willing to do the extraordinary if it means saving the people.

General Comment: Of special interest to the Spider historian is this preview of the disguise which is to represent the Spider in later issues. Wentworth, disguised as Tito Caliepi, affixes the celluloid fangs only in order to terrify a dope addict. In the story's conclusion, he wishes to draw out the gang and knows that they will recognize the Spider as the hunchbacked violinist - thus, he again dons the disguise. It should be emphasized that this is the forerunner of the Spider disguise rather than the birth of it. Stockbridge does not make the switch immediately.

In this month's installment of the magazine's department called "The Web", the Spider ring and club are announced:

"We're glad to announce that we've been able to keep the cost of this ring down to twenty-five cents. The ring itself is beautifully and substantially constructed of non-tarnishable white metal, with an inlaid spider of red enamel against a black enamel field."

"As for the Spider organization, it is to be devoted solely and exclusively to law-enforcement and the suppression of crime. It will be called the Spider League for Crime Prevention."

Perhaps older fans will remember the row of numbered, different-sized black circles which were to be used in determining ring size. It must have taxed the ingenuity of many a youth to find a way to fit a flat, black circle over his finger. If one cut out the circle and tried to fit his finger into the resultant hole, the pulp paper would invariably tear.

Additional Contents:

Anson Hatch, Killer's Knout (short)

G. T. Fleming-Roberts, The Standing Corpse (short)

Hope you enjoyed the survey on The Spider, and the other bits reprinted from my old zines. I'm not yet sure if I will attempt a Hickman's Scrapbook for each mailing, but if you enjoy it, there will be more coming. I promised Guy to reprint Rich Ellsberry's report of the Nolacon that I published in 1952, so it will be up-coming. I can also reprint some reports of the early Midwestcons, etc. in future issues.

I'm sorry that I won't have any mailing comments in this issue, but in the past few weeks I've had to work a lot of overtime at the plant and just haven't had the time to get into it. I promise to do comments on the 100th mailing though.

I am going to go to Satyricon, will probably arrive late afternoon on Friday. Am taking my floating holiday for Friday. Will then drive back on Sunday. I live in the far northwestern corner of Ohio so it is about an 8 to 10 hour drive down there. I'm really looking forward to meeting many of the members that I haven't met before and old friends Gordie Dickson and Andy Offutt. I'll be the old skinny guy in the First Fandom blazer.

Guy mentioned that he wanted me to talk some on my collection. That is a little hard to do right now as it is scattered all over the house. I'm building a room on to house part of it, but right now I'll try to describe where I'm working. It is the hallway at the top of the stairs that leads to the attic. I have my typing desk there in an alcove, plus 6 book cases. Coming up the stairway I have a huge model of Voss' Fokker triplane hanging on the wall. Next is a painting by Walter Baumhofer from a 1935 Adventure magazine, then the Hannes Bok painting from the 1st issue of Imagination. Then the bookcases and a large wall display of part of my sons collection of beer cans. Just above the attic door is a Frank R. Paul painting from Amazing Stories. On my desk is a color proof of a Pete Rice Magazine cover. Some of the magazines on the shelves up here are: Flying Aces, Sky Fighters, Complete Flying Novel, Zoom, Flyers, War Aces, Bill Barnes, Air Trails, Flying Stories, George Bruce's Squadron, George Bruce's Contact, Aces, War Birds, Air War, The Lone Eagle, Sky Raiders, Air Stories, Wings, Dare-Devil Aces, Sky Aces, Sky Birds, G-8 and his Battle Aces, Battle Birds, Battle Aces, Sky Riders, Famous Detective, Black Book Detective, Detective Classics, Action Stories, All-Fiction, Breezy Stories, Telling Tales, Pep Stories, Droll Stories, Complete Detective Novel, Best Detective, Gangster Stories, Mammoth Mystery, Mammoth Detective, Great Detective, Detective Novels, G-Men, Super Detective, 10-Story Detective, Thrilling Detective, The Phantom Detective, Popular Detective, Astounding, Dynamic, Marvel, Weird Tales, Super Science, FFM, FN, A. Merritt's Fantasy, Doc Savage, The Shadow, The Skipper, Doctor Death, Captain Zero, Captain Combat, Shock, The Underworld, Headquarters, Speed Stories, Saucy Movie Tales, The Danger Trail, Front Page Stories, Popular Engineering Stories, Brief Stories, etc., etc., etc.

There are so many other magazines up here, that to list them all would take another half page. While I don't have a copy of all the pulp magazines that were ever published, and I doubt if I ever will although I'm trying, I have come up with over 800 titles that I know have been published. Of course, some of these only lasted one issue, or two issues and then were dropped or made a title change. More on pulps in future issues.

In future issues, I hope to have the time to include artwork and cartoons. Some of these will be reprinted from my old zines, some will be original work. Any artists in the group that would like to do some artwork and/or cartoons directly on ditto masters?

I'm getting better results from the ditto now, but won't get really good results until I have my typers worked on and adjusted.

Will be calling Guy tonight to let him know what I will have in the mailing and will then bring the mags with me to the con. I had hoped to get some other fans from this area to come down with me and help share expenses as I am still on a limited budget, but they were not to be found. It will probably cost me close to \$100. just for gas at todays prices as my wagon only gets from 15 to 18 mpg according to the speed that I drive. Roger Sims would have liked to come but he is recovering from an operation and felt the drive would be too long for his tender posterior. I don't have a room reservation at the con hotel. If they are sold out I'll go to one of the cheapies and commute. I normally don't spend all that much time in my room anyway.

My hometown team (Napoleon, Ohio) won the state basketball class AA championship this year with a record of 28 and 0. The game was televised yesterday over the Bowling Green State University TV station.

Wife Carolyn has been in Detroit since Thursday playing in a big bridge tourney. She is hoping to come up with some gold points. She will return sometime late tonight (Sunday). She won't get to come to the con with me as she is starting some different hours and days at work and will not be able to get off the Friday that I am leaving.

Ray Beam called today (March 29th) to tell me that Lou Tabakow is in the hospital in Cincinnati. Lou is the founder of the Midwestcon and the Octocon and one of our First Fandom stalwarts. He has been a friend for over 30 years. Ray and Bob Tucker are driving over the first of the week to see him and I'll try to stop on either my way down to the con or on the way back.

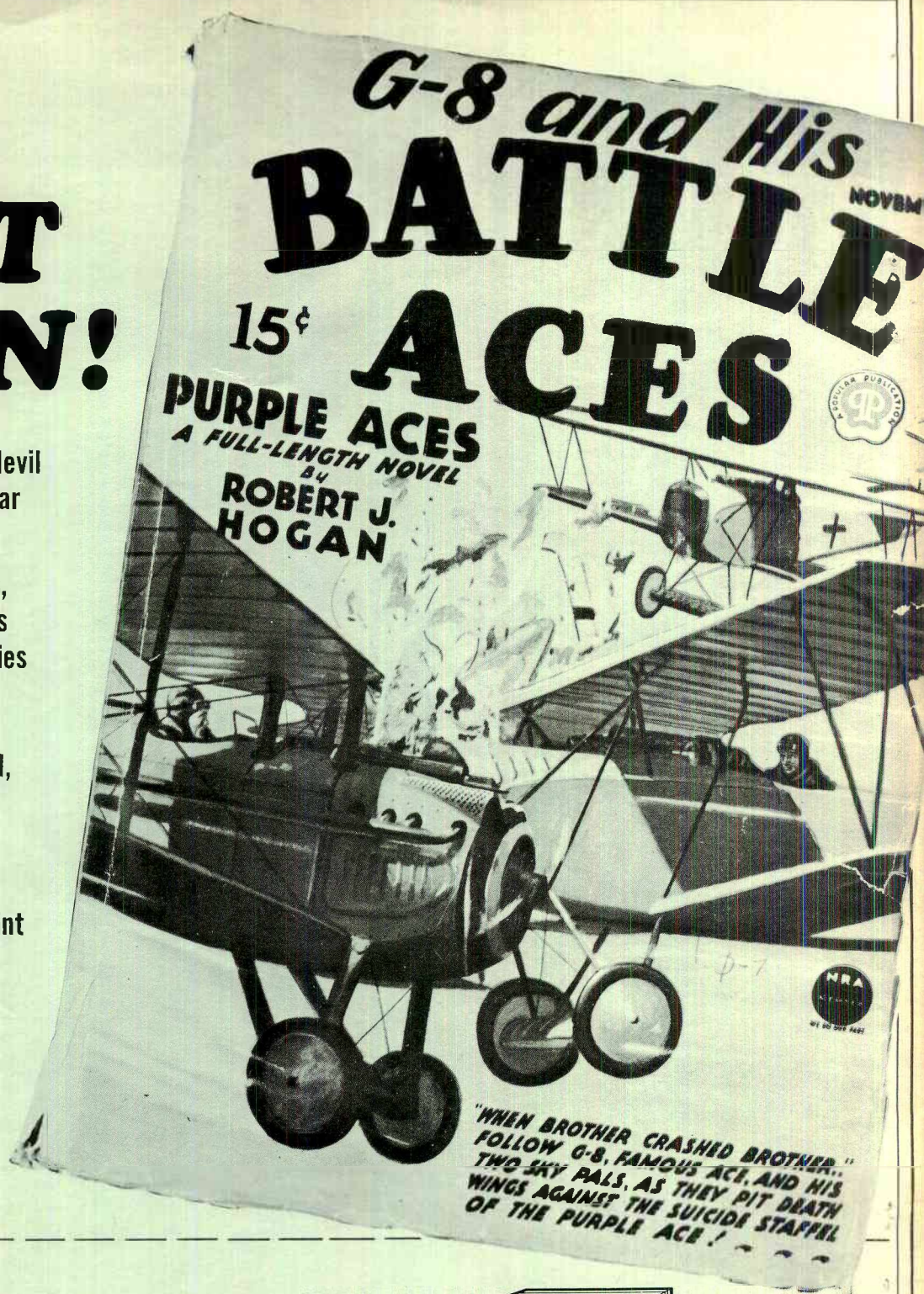
Thats it for this time, see you next mailing.

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