

Kteic



ROMANCE WRITER

A LETTER FROM
GEORGE BARR!!

Dear Bill:

It was good to see you again at OctoCon. I didn't get a chance to tell you how much I appreciated the nametag you gave me. Unfortunately, within five minutes of my putting it on, someone brushed against me and ripped the pin off the back. But I carried it in my pocket and showed it proudly to everyone. You know, I have three nametags by you now. If my memory serves me, that means I probably owe you one now.

((Never! I give tags as gifts. I don't keep score. # I did have, and still have, some technical problems. The pins are secured to the paper backing quite well, but the backing is not too well glued to the illustration board. Just reglue with ordinary white glue--or whatever you have--and all should be well. WR))

The desk clerk gave me an envelope addressed to me which had been left in the ladies room. It was KTEIC. But before I had a chance to read it, some girl claimed it and said she'd send it on to me when she finished with it. This time, for some reason, I was at the end of the chain instead of being the second link.

So I got it yesterday, and as always, chucked everything aside to spend an hour with a friend.

I read David Gerrold's and Kathleen Sky's letters and your reply. Surprisingly, as a reader of both FUTURE and KTEIC, I managed to miss David Gerrold's column in the former and your commentary on it in the latter. So I wouldn't presume to judge - or even form an opinion - on the right or wrong of what was covered in either.

But I would like to agree emphatically with something David said.

However much evidence you might have supporting your belief that a particular person is gay - no matter how flitty, faggotty, or bull-dykish he or she might be - unless you've caught them in the act, or participated with them, it's all conjecture. You don't know. And someone telling you that they know, doesn't prove a thing. People - any people - can lie. And they often do. It's so easy to appear to know by saying you KNOW something you only believe. If one is going to discount the testimony of religious people or UFO believers because they can't PROVE their claims, one can't then with any degree of logic say they KNOW about anyone else's sexuality without a little more proof than their own educated guess. Even if the individual admits it to you, all you know is that he SAYS he is. As illogical as it might seem, he could have his own reasons for lying about that.

Knowledge is something considerably more than strong belief or near-certainty. A strong personal conviction of something does not make it so. Gays have been killed for being certain about someone, acting on that belief, and being wrong... dead wrong. And who should better be able to judge homosexuality than another homosexual?

((Had I known my chiding of David would cause such a furor I would not have said anything. NOT because of any fear, just because of all these pages I feel I must xerox to give everyone a chance to voice their opinion. However--it did bring a lot of people past the point of Terminal Ennui and to the typewriter. I really like what George has to say here and I will stop editorializing & make comment as we progress. To wit: As I said in my original comment, the one that started all this, I don't know unless someone is actually sucking my cock--or whatever--but my entire chide was that David made such a broad statement...well...I just spent 5 minutes looking for that copy of FUTURE--Nov.78--and here, at last, folks, is the "offending" first paragraph:

"The odds are that most of the people you know who might be gay have not told you so--in fact, there is no way for you to know unless they trust you well enough to confide that information to you."

True, I--and you, my friends--operate every day, all day on a variety of assumptions, things that you do not know but are pretty certain about. Thus was my "Oh, come on, David" annoyance with the aforesaid D. Gerrold. I didn't read the rest of the article, true, but I certainly did not mean any of it to be mean or nasty. At any rate, back to George...))

Wishful thinking works on both sides of the fence. A gay might want to believe it of someone because he finds him attractive. And if someone is repelled by the concept of homosexuality, it's very easy for him to believe that a man he finds repulsive is homosexual. The very word "queer" means odd or different. Therefore anyone odd or different is easily suspected of being a "queer." People tend to believe what they want to believe. When I was in highschool, QUEER was an epithet used against ANYONE the user didn't like, for whatever reason. One boy was referred to as a queer because he had an undecended testicle. Only one ball made him different, odd... QUEER. It was years before I learned that there was a specific meaning to that particular derogatory term.

I think that's why so many people have such an ingrained fear of homosexuality. Since ANYTHING different was called queer, and that included such an incredible variety of deviations, perversions, and often quite dangerous behavior, when the term got narrowed down to refer to homosexuals, it retained all of the distrust and aversion it caused when its application was so much less specific. Loeb and Leopold killed a young boy. They were "queer". Homosexuals are "Queer". Therefore, homosexuals will kill young boys.

Even having been to bed with someone doesn't always prove anything. A man, having had a homosexual experience with another guy, can't say for certain that he was homosexual ^{any more} than could a woman say he WASN'T just because she'd been to bed with him. Certainly a gay can fake it occasionally. Many have fathered, (or borne) children and been unsuspected. If they can have "normal" sexual relations with the opposite sex and still be gay, then an instance of homosexuality cannot necessarily make anyone gay. Most men will readily believe that. After all, most men have had at least one homosexual experience in their lives... and obviously most men are not gay. (I've often wondered... when a man has an adolescent homosexual experience, and

yet grows up straight, never having any doubts about his own sexuality, does he go through life believing it was the same for the other guy, or does he automatically assume that at least ONE participant in a homosexual experience MUST be gay, and since HE isn't, the other guy automatically IS?) If a man can, on a whim, for whatever reason, accept a pass made at him by another man, and still be considered basically heterosexual, then he doesn't really have any right to assume that the guy making the pass is any more homosexual than he is. And, contrary to a lot of people's fears and beliefs, one experience, or exposure to a homosexual, is not going to turn anyone - child or adult - gay, or the whole world would be gay.

I think, that when a homosexual, having been very discreet and circumspect in his activities, doing his best not to embarrass or compromise his friends, finally takes his courage in his hands, and admits to those friends that he is gay, and then is told, "Yeah, we know," it would have to be one of the most disappointing and insulting experiences in the world. Because the friends DON'T know. They might have believed, believed very strongly... but they did not KNOW. What they are telling him, in effect, is that he is so obviously faggotty that all of his efforts have been to no avail. Even if they were fairly certain, they should have had enough respect for their friend to realize what a traumatic thing such an admission must be, and treat it accordingly. Probably everyone masturbates and picks his ~~nose~~ ^{nose}, but you wouldn't want your friends taking it for granted and treating you, talking to you, and taking ABOUT you as if it were an accepted certainty.

Like David, I have been intensely surprised at learning about certain people's homosexuality. I'd known them a long time and thought I'd known them well. But I hadn't known that, or even suspected. One friend I'd known since highschool told me, and I nearly freaked out. For ten years we'd been super-close friends. WE'd spent the night together many times - at his house, and on concert tours with the choir in which we both sang. And I'd never suspected. And it wasn't something he'd lately come to an awareness of; he'd been very active for all the years I'd known him.

Other people I have been certain WERE... but they weren't, or at least they gave me very good reason to believe they weren't. There are many people I don't know about whom I suspect are. But I doubt I'll ever know.

And I don't really care to.

Other than as an interesting topic of conversation, it doesn't matter to me at all what a person's sexuality is... or even what their sex is, unless I'm interested in going to bed with them. I understand totally your feeling about not caring if a woman's a lesbian unless she's in competition with you for a woman you want. Unless I have a physical interest in someone, it's none of my damned business who they go to bed with... and not even then, unless they happen to be interested in me as well.

~~But~~ I cannot accept that there is a special build, a mode of dress, a manner of speech, a LOOK, that is "Gay" unless it is something that a person has adopted deliberately to tell the world that he is. When I was in highschool, ~~Friday was known as "Fairy"~~ Thursday was known as "Fairy

Day" and wearing green on Thursday was supposed to be a signal. I found it out one day when I wore green. Up to that time I'd never heard of such a thing. And I can't believe I was the only stupid person in the school.

So unless a recognition signal is something which cannot be done naturally or accidentally by ANYONE but a gay, it's a damned poor recognition signal. A man can't help being small or slightly built. It's not his fault if nature gave him a high-pitched voice, or a natural lisp. Effeminacy is no more proof of homosexuality than machismo is proof of heterosexuality. In fact now-a-days, it seems to be almost the other way around. The VILLAGE PEOPLE singing group who recorded MACHO MAN, whatever their sexuality is, are almost cliché gay in appearance, parodying almost every aspect of cliché masculinity.

Burt Reynolds does one of the most perfect gay lisps I've ever heard, but I really doubt he's gay. But then I'd never have suspected Dave Kopay of being gay either. And quite obviously, nobody else did either. I would have suspected Wally Cox, Tony Randall, Frankie Avalon, and Pat Boone. But there's no evidence any of them are (or were, in the case of Wally Cox,) and plenty of evidence that they're NOT.

When I first moved to L.A. in 1968 I was taken to the LASFS by the Trimbles. At the second or third meeting I attended I saw a man I knew immediately was gay. He wasn't obvious about it, but too many of the give-away signs I'd learned to recognise were there. He wore a very full-sleeved, flowered shirt of a light blousey material, a leather vest, tight-fitting trousers with flared legs, boots with rather pointed toes, a chain around the neck, a neat beard, and hair a little longer (and a little neater) than most. And he was drawing. I embarrassedly admit that even I think occasionally in such clichés. I've been told all my life that sensitive, creative men are gay. I know better; but the gut-level feeling is still there.

I asked Bjo who he was, and she said: "Bill Rotsler."

So I was wrong. It wasn't by any means the first time I'd been wrong. I've heard, (and it seems to be true,) that if a man wants to be fashionable he should buy his clothes at a shop catering to the gays, and put them away for three or four years. By then they will have become accepted for all men, however startling they might have seemed at first.

Salt Lake City is a few years behind L.A. in fashions. I had just come from Salt Lake City where the clothes you were wearing would have been a dead give-away. I had not yet realized that what was blatantly gay in Utah was the height of avant-garde fashion in Los Angeles.

So I realized I was wrong in an assumption I'd made... not because of anything that man said or did, but because he was Bill Rotsler, and Bill Rotsler's heterosexuality was legendary.

But if Bjo had said: "I don't know who he is. I've never seen him before," I'd have left there that night KNOWING that that man was gay. I'd never have questioned it.

Many many people in fandom think they KNOW my orientation. And some have guessed right. (I haven't told them so, however.) Many haven't. But they've all guessed! None of them KNOW. Only those few I've chosen to share in that aspect of my life know anything at all, whatever they might believe, and however convincing the evidence might be. Some of them might be shocked at some of the things I feel I "know" about them. And they'd rise irate if I spoke out my suspicions. They'd maintain that whatever I suspected, I couldn't possibly KNOW such things. They'd be right, of course.

Best,



P.S. sorry about the lousy typing. Business letters I re-type. Friends have to accept me at my sloppy naturalness.

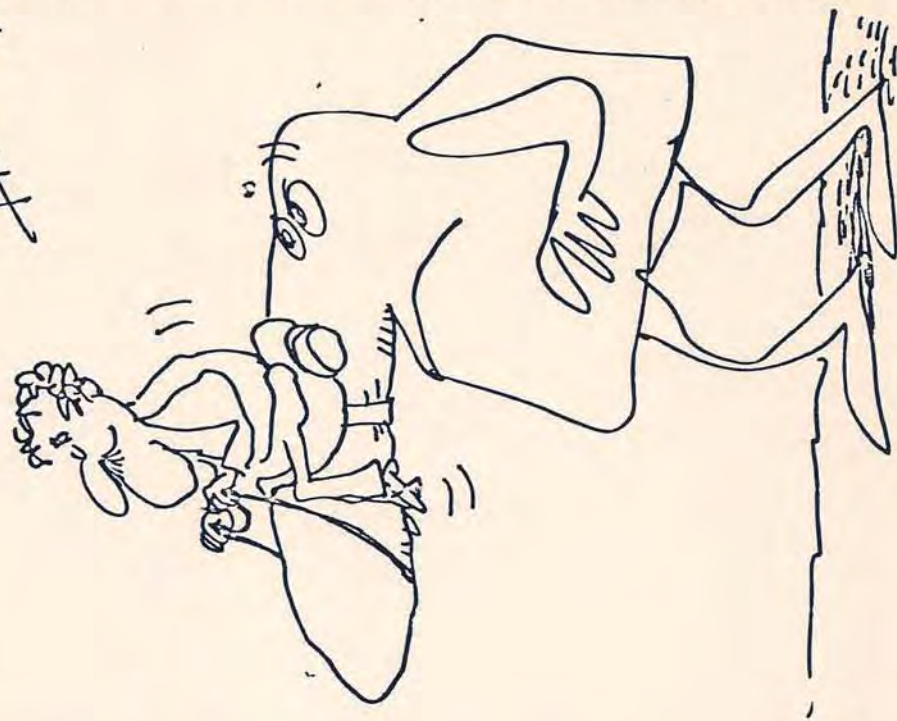
WR: Most interesting, getting a different viewpoint on oneself. Well, in any case, I have never had a homosexual experience. I have never smoked either, not even once. I don't believe I shall, ever, in both cases. But that is neither here nor there. Like Bob Silverberg once remarked, thinking about if he was to try it, what would it be like and constructing a mental image--it came out so close to a woman that he figured what-the-hell, stick to women. The nearest thing I have ever done in this line is with another guy (Mitch Evans once, Paul Turner once, maybe twice, I don't remember) with a single woman between us. Some have said that was some kind of repressed or pseudo-homosexuality--I thought it was giving a nice lady one hell of a sexual experience.

You see, once again, let me say, I was not attacking David's sexuality, choices, lack or overabundance, etc. Just his logic. We "know" a lot of things that might not be true, but we go right ahead and function as though they were. (We know we're going to die but constantly act as though we weren't....we "know" there is nothing harmful in that frozen food, that soft drink--I mean something that isn't supposed to be there--but go right on eating it. We know certain aspects of society or government will go on, will function. Etc etc etc. Most of the time (note the most, please, which was all I ever said) you do "know." And most of the time you are right, in terms of who is gay & who isn't. In David's case I have been saying for years he didn't know what he was, not really. I don't & didn't mean this as anything derogatory or nasty, but--as George mentioned--as a topic of conversation. We all find it interesting as to who is sleeping with whom, or isn't, or wants to, or used to, or how good he or she was or wasn't.

INC
M
by Se
Edited

AWA

TO WILLIAM ROTSCER
WHO'S REALLY INADVERTENTLY MAD!
love. S
JAMES 78.



TO BILL THE BEST
SCIENCE FICTION WRITER!
love. S
JAMES 78.

To
Gretchen
along
Highly
the
M

Lewis's Law: No matter how long or how hard you shop for an item, after you've bought it it will be on sale somewhere cheaper.
Rotsler's Corollary: Or you will meet someone who will say, "You should have asked me!"

WHOOOPS Just sat down to read my last Kteic. I do that. you know, from time to time. Catch the typos & winch. Should read it before printing it, I know, but the before copy os a wholly different fanzine than the actual, printing thing, isn't it? In any case, I read an interlineation by Zsa Zsa Gabor which had a comment added by me which must have been very confusing. To any who read it, that is. You see, I had hoped to have a letter from George Barr in that issue, but his permission had not arrived in time. As a matter of fact, it hasn't arrived yet, so if there is no letter from G.B. in this issue he didn't give permission, which is too bad because I had a chance at free Xeroxing & it is sitting on a shelf, printed. Make a lot of scrap paper if he doesn't give permission. We'll see. Tune in tomorrow. # Also left Tucker out of the "Who Gets Kteic" list.

Norm Clarke called me from far-off Canada tonight. Warned me about a TV show on tonight. He's in an earlier time zone, you see. That wasn't the reason he called. (It had something to do with the ~~Secret/Master\$ of Fandom~~ turtle-mating. Keen on turtle-mating, Norm is.) Earlier than that, Jim Benford called, is coming down next week and--availing himself of The Robert Silverberg Guide to Restaurants in Other Places, suggested a restaurant. It always amazes me that Bob knows the best restaurants in your city. Oh, I was going to say back when Dean A. Grennell ~~was~~ living in the chilly Midwest he used to call after midnight, his time, on New Year's Eve, and say, "Hello from the future" or some such. Oh, and Kathleen Sky called from her hospital bed to give me permission to use some quotes from a forthcoming--five years away!--book. Copyright carefully nurtured, of course. Why was Ms Sky in one of those funny, tie-up-the-back-and-look-and-feel-assinine gowns? "Minor" cancer operation--all clear now, 100% effective. She has no head now, but the operation was a success.

Hey, what about that, Bob? Your restaurant guide, distributed to fandom. Oh, sorry--forgot Benford's Law. ("Restaurants always deteriorate.") It would have to be a weekly. Forget it.

"Whomever you marry, you always marry the wrong person." (Stanley Hau
(Stanley Hauerwas)

THE TIME MACHINE I bought a time machine yesterday, yes, I really did. And a big TV to go with it. It's a video tape recorder, of course, and the reason I bought it was to record programs opposite something I'm watching & to tape stuff when I'm gone. I looked all over, finally found a Magnavox dealer that was \$205 cheaper than anyone else, and a technician who knew what he was doing & took the time to really explain everything. It arrives tomorrow.

I don't think I will build up a big library of tapes. I know I might tape certain movies (Citizen Kane, Casablanca, Terry Carr Rejects Sainthood) and anything Sharman might be in. I probably will accrete by bits & pieces (a Tonight Show anniversary, for example, which has some good bits).

One of the things I like about TV is the unpredictability of the movie schedule. "Hey, lookit what's on tonight!" kind of thing. Having anything & everything on hand is nice, but less special.

"The one food no one ever gets used to eating is crow. And
parsnips, of course."

(WR)

More on the tape recorder. I didn't get a camera--probably never will. I know that one member of CAPS got one & went ape, collecting hundreds of dollars worth of tapes. Mark Evanier (who has the big "industry standard" 3/4" machine as opposed to my 1/2" one) has a collection of tapes--about 80 or 90 one hour tapes of animated features, shorts, cartoons, some live features.

Time out: As I write they are running a lot of stuff on the People's Temple shoot out in S.A. I really have to admire the cameraman--he was shooting while they were shooting, but they had lead, he had silver nitrate. I love a pro. I've mentioned before, the still photographer on Lou Grant acts like a pro, too. I remember, years ago, they raised a Nazi sub, sunk 20+ years before. Found a camera with film in it. Developed the film. Found pix of guys in water up to their throats. He may not have been a "pro" but he had the right instincts. Do your job.

Went to a Fifties party at Roy Thomas's last night. I did not like the Fifties at all. Oh, I had a great time. Art school, then the Great Year of 1952 when I was fucking my brains out--for what was really the first time in my life. Marvelous time. Then married in 1954, had Lisa Araminta, lived on the ranch, made architectural sculpture, got divorced. Worked for Bernard Rosenthal (as a sculptor) and made big architectural sculptures. Went to the Solacon and got back into fandom & wholesale Living It Up.

But the rest of the Fifties I thought was phoney. Eisenhower college students--blah, playing it safe, borrrrrrring. Punks & that early Rock 'n' Roll, which was also very funny. I've never looked at Laverne & Shirley, not even once, though I've seen 4-5 Happy Days. Mark Evanier showed us a tape the other night of his Bobby Vinton Rock & Rollers Show (on the air tomorrow night) and I found the concept dull--there is nothing they can do with the Fifties to get me interested. (And Bobby Vinton looks tired, needs a personality transplant.) Mark's writing was fine--but the Fifties have all the interest, to me, of a stepped on dry turd and just about as attractive.

"Feelings pass; resolves and thoughts pass; opinions change. It's
amazing how steadfast I am."

(wr)

I type the above, the phone rings, it's Marv Wolfman from far off exotic New York, asking pro-type stuff about contracts...and I end up agreeing to do another Marvel novel for them. They had two different writers try & fail on Dr. Strange and were getting desperate, I guess.

Aside to Steve Langley: Len Wein and/or Marv will be perhaps calling you to pick your mind on some Computer Stuff, if you don't mind. They've been offered a 4 book deal on a detective series.

Gee, I'll have to get cracking--they have a 4-5 week deadline left on the Dr. Strange book.

"There would be a lot more easy answers if there were a lot more easy questions." (Anon. on 60 Minutes tonight.)





SCOOBY DOO "TROUBLE AT OAK BLUFF"

S-125

PG 3.



SCOOBY DOO "TROUBLE AT OAK BLUFF"

S-125

PG 4



SCOOBY DOO "TROUBLE AT OAK BLUFF"

S-125

PG 5.





A LETTER FROM CHARLES BURBEE:

Bill:

When I read David Gerrold's over-written letter of over-reaction I wondered what had set him off. I still don't exactly know. All you said was you knew or strongly suspected he was gay and didn't really care one way or the other. How he or anyone else could construe that as an "attack" or "brickbat" I could not say.

I would not have "fallen down laughing" at your Big Heart Award or whatever it was. I might even have said something maudlin myself, tempering it with a lovable insult.

It is good to have gays coming out of the closet. The more we have around, the less attention we'll pay to them.

I certainly do not want to legislate against them as people were trying to do in the last election. I do not believe in discrimination against part of the population, whether that part is gay and/or hooked on tobacco.

I see nothing wrong with gays teaching school. After all, I was taught for eight impressionable years of my life by sexual deviates, ~~a~~ i.e., Catholic nuns. Didn't make a deviate out of me. Didn't make me religious, either.

Girl I work with, Lynn, got a good one off at me the other week. I was pontificating against the props on the ballot, discriminating against gays and smokers.

Lynn said: "Charlie, I'm going to keep right on smoking. I don't know what you're going to do about your problem."

I didn't have a snappy comeback for that one. All I could say was: "Where is that sack they put over your head when you lip off at your betters?"

Pretty weak, you must admit.

"There's not much fellatio in Missouri."

(Germaine Greer)

Regarding the recent anti-smoking proposition defeated here in California: I voted for it, yet-I was (1) certain it would be defeated; (2) thought a strong anti-smoking "underground" would be emboldened; (3) it would make smokers more aware of what they are doing to other people. Yet...yet I don't like the idea of legislating against such things.

Those in favor of smoking always say, "Well, all you have to do is ask a smoker to stop." Fat chance. Some people, hell, most people, are just not that bold.

When I think of the forests lost, the property burned up, the lives and money and inconvenience caused by smokers I get angry. I

have seen hundreds of smokers just toss cigarettes away. No stepping on them, no caring about what they were tossing the burning butts on or in. I've had my clothes burnt, my hand burned, windowsills and furniture scarred. Personally, I hope they outlaw the damn weed, but I think it improbable, if not impossible.

But to think that most smokers are going to be polite about it is sheerest fantasy. They are hooked and that justifies anything and everything. It's a small scale version of junkies ripping people off to feed the habit.

I have never smoked--except grass and that just doesn't seem to work on me at all--so I suppose I cannot speak with authority. Yet--you do not have to be cut to know the knife is sharp. (A little pompous philosophy there--never do ya any harm.)

Those YES, I DO MIND buttons are great, but I've seen people ignore them, I've heard people say, "Yes, I do mind" and have others say, "Gee, that's too bad" and go on smoking.

If there is anything I hate it's an ashtray overflowing with butts. And I can't smell. One reason Sharman spends so much time in hallways at cons is to get away from the smoke.

I've noticed a trend at cons now--con suites are often two rooms, smoking & non-smoking...and the smoking room is the fullest by far.

I really hated the scare tactics commercials that flooded TV during the pre-election campaign. They were dumb, appeal-to-the-lowest-common-denominator types that almost outnumbered the gubernatorial ads. (We have the same gubernator still.)

It's time for a drawing. They have been conspicuously absent of late. I wonder what that means...?

"A healthy vagina tastes kind of neutral, like mucous membrane tastes anywhere, like the insode of a mouth." (Anon. gynecologist, in What Makes a Woman G.I.B.? (Good in Bed) (Wonder how he examines patients?))

THIS FANZINE
ADVOCATES BIRTH
CONTROL FOR
CRITICS



RETROACTIVELY, OF COURSE

"Sex is the last refuge of the miserable."

(Quentin Crisp)

KTEIC MAGAZINE

is published by William Rotsler, P.O.Box 3780, Los Angeles, CA 90028 for Lilapa and environs. (c) 1978 by William Rotsler, all rights returned to artists & writers. This is a letter-substitute, and should be treated as a letter, not a fanzine. If there is a stamped addressed envelope in the envelope with this, you should forward the copy as soon as convenient. (After reading & marveling at the diamond-cut prose, the awe-inspiring illustration, the deft metaphors, the

AW,
SHUDDUP!

THE FIREMAN VISITS Greg Benford's older brother Jim is in town. We had dinner at a Bob-Silverberg-approved-Mexican-restaurant (serving Mexico City food rather than border or Tex-Mex grub) that was very good. Then we went to Harlan's, got there as he & guests were finishing dinner. It will come as no surprise to you that the walls of the house grow apace with still more works of art. (His investment in custom framing probably rivals his original investment in the house!)

Harlan hustled people for pool, but I found two big books on Howard Pyle & N.C. Wyeth and wandered through them happily. I will never understand why people put down the art of illustration. Most of the great paintings are illustrations of something: Jesus and his mommy, alledged miracles, housewives, night watches, fields, workers, etc. I just don't understand it. "Illustration"--as opposed to "art"--just states it stronger.

Harlan was writing a chapter in a round robin (along with such as John D. MacDonald, Asimov, Garfield, Westlake, etc.) and suggested I read what he had done. I couldn't make sense out of it without reading the first 2 chapters so I started that, but gave up because of interruptions. Then I got into an argument with Harlan.

You see, Harlan has 3 times my experience in writing in just years alone, not counting everything else. I freely acknowledge he is a better writer. Certainly more dedicated (I mainly like just to amuse myself). But perhaps (just perhaps) he has let his success blind him to the effect of his "style." I know this is all presumptuous of me (please, god, not another Gerrold affair!) to criticize, but...

He was writing a hard-bitten Chanderlesque, Hammett-like story, certainly framed in that sort of prose--smashed noses with .45s, punching people, street language, smartass remarks, etc. Okay, pseudo-Chanderlesque. But right in the middle he'd have words like "strobismic," "unbraceletment," "letter of exculpation," and (right after calling someone a putz) "duplicitous." And Harlan's all-time favorite word (in variation) "phosphorescent." (He refuses to admit he uses it a lot--"Not 50 out of 900 stories!")

My point was not his contention--that I didn't understand the long words, nor that they were not used correctly (and in narrative voice)--but that everything else was smooth, properly phrased for the thoughts & actions, then SNAG! a word that makes you stumble. "What the hell is that doing there?"

Envision the reverse. The Bible and right in the middle of Song of Solomon you find "cunt" or Proverbs has putz or "swinger" or "hey, man." The effect, to me, was the same.

Hemingway said (and I quote him because H.E. has a photo of Papa at work on his Wall of Heroes--never to use a new word when an old word will do. I say, you can lay traps of logic, plot, action, anything--but not words. It smacked strongly of showing off, Harlan. Sorry. Now you can savage me.

Remember the old saying I created just for you, sir: "Just put down the words you need, and no more."

Later: We had a good time going to book stores & museums. Jim thought there was a good subject for a study in how people handle money in relationship to their personalities. We also discussed the Ethical Structure of the Universe, Marta Randall, SoCal architecture, and reached no conclusion at all (except about Marta).

"Always take your wallet on stage with you."

(George Burns)

HOW TO AVOID SEEING BAD MOVIES BY MARK EVANIER

- 1: Never go see any movie that boasts in its ads, how many cars were destroyed during filming.
- 2: Never go see any movie with a character named "Billie" or "Bobbie" in the title, especially "Billie Jo" or "Bobbie Jo."
- 3: Never go see any movie that you even suspect Elliot Gould may be in.
- 4: Never go see any movie that Time Magazine didn't loathe.
- 5: Never go see any movie you never heard of that claims to outdo a movie you've heard of (i.e., if they have to say, "Funnier than Blazing Saddles," it isn't).
- 6: Never go see any movie that someone has already made before; (Single exception: The Maltese Falcon).
- 7: Never go see any movie that uses the words "ultimate," "gut-grabbing," or "explosive" in its ad.
- 8: Never go see any movie that changes its name.
- 9: Never go see any movie based on a classic but with the director's, producer's or writer's name above the title; (Single exception: Walt Disney).
- 10: Never go to any movie where the ads or commercials quote the people coming out of the theater.
- 11: Never go into any theater where the cashier wears No Pest Strips instead of earrings.
- 12: Never go to any movie produced by a man named Irwin.

"Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is." (Arnold Palmer)

SHARMAN STUFF You will notice that there is (at least) one of her Scooby Doo comics in this issue. It was drawn by Texas artist Pay Boyette and is a good example of her current work. I may put in two, depending on how this issue fills out; if not, there will be one next time.

"The moment caught on canvas was always second best." (Dick Francis, in In The Frame, 1976)

REPORT ON THE VTR I'm really having fun with it, recording shows while I'm out or on another channel while I watching. The quality is good, though the "programming" of the machine is still slow. (I have to do it with the manual in my hand.) But it has given me a new attitude toward TV--subtle but interesting. Looking at a tape show you

know you can jump up and Fast-forward it passed the commercials, or just cease to look & go back to regular TV, etc. I figured out that when I move & get cable TV I'll tape the movies (some of them) if I'm out and then have something to look at on dull nights.

In fact, I'm getting this idea to do a VTR magazine, or one-shot book.

But, soon, the novelty will wear off & it will be just another gadget, useful but not miraculous.

I'm more worried about why I'm not putting in more drawings.

"Most women are still scared of telling their fantasies in case the man will think she gets more pleasure from her fantasies than from him." (Johnny Bristol, in What Makes a Woman G.I.B?)

We spent Thanksgiving Day at Paul Turner's. Paul's been working for Magicam, doing electronic & other work on Star Trek, a 1,200 light map of USA for Sears, & other stuff. Howard Ziehm, of Flesh Gordon fame, gave him the penis-shaped rocket model, now on display in his living room.

Paul also said he's read portions of the ST script & it sounds just like a ST TV episode they once did, only with more money spent. The Voyager satellite we launched goes through a black hole (ho-hum) and is found by a robot race who wants to go back to the source of the Voyager & make Earth into a shrine...after getting rid of the "contamination" of biological stuff. (This is an approximation of the plot.) Well, so they test-fired a plot & now they are doing it. Again.

"After the age of 80, everything reminds you of something else."
(Lowell Thomas)



Frank Franz was at Paul's and during a long discussion on science-fiction possibilities he sighed and said, "Gee, the world is science fact is dull." Frank, you see, is involved in putting up what will be 24 Navstars, or navigational satellites, that can give within-meters capability to planes, rockets, combat infantry men calling in artillery, etc.

"If it moves, shoot it, and if it grows, chop it down." (Aussie sayingg)

I don't know if I mentioned it, but a story Sharman wrote for Hanna-Barbera will be in this issue...and one next time. Also a couple of drawings done in his books for me by Sergio Aragonés. # Another visiting fireman has been Philippe Hupp, the translator of Patron of the Arts in France. We spent a lot of time drinking wine and eating in Fancy Expensive Restaurants. He said Patron was published in what they consider "hardcover" in France (though it looked like an oversize paperback to me) and will be reprinted in regular paperback soon. The original publisher broke--I hope there is no connection to Patron--

and the new edition will use a "new" translation. That is, Philippe will change a couple of things & they are buying a "new" translation from him. # Sharman has given notice at the theater and will be On Her Own "real soon now." At least in time to go to the Bay Area for the usual Xmas whoopie. # I was offered a deal today to package a magazine for the publisher of ADAM. A special first, then a quarterly, then who knows. Probably just a quarterly. Fee & % and good money for the amount of time I'll put in, which is next to zip. Sometimes you are just in the right place at the right time with the right skills. No title yet.

"The most damaging lies are told by those who believe they're true."
(Dick Francis)

A bit more on the VTR: I bought some tapes at Muntz TV when I found they were cheaper than elsewhere, and when I discovered I (ahem) "needed" more. I find I tape things when I am out & then don't get around to looking at them right away, but don't want to wipe them. This way lies madness. (Fun, too.) But the VTR works well, and I tape while watching something else, while I'm out, and the quality is excellent. What can I say? I love it.

"There is no substitute for experience except blind luck." (wr)

We were having dinner with Philippe Hupp tonight and I was kidding him because he frequently comments, "How very American" about this or that. We got on the subject to assassinations (Moscone--who Sharman once dated--had just been killed) and he had said some version of "How very American." I said, "Yes, and in Russia they take them out with bombs & purges, in Japan they kill the Premier with a knife and in France they shoot at De Gaulle and miss."

Philippe said, "In France they make them go to bad restaurants."

"When kissing your grandmother, keep your tongue in your mouth."
(Johnny Carson)

KHAT TALK Sharman got a gorgeous Abyssinian recently--the teen-age Abby she had a few months ago was recalled to the factory. The new one is unnamed. Most Abby owners give them prestigious Egyptian names, like Ra, Osiris, Hotep, etc. She can't think of one and in her heart the cat is Cat. She thought she might dress it up to Khat. The thing is lion-colored and I suggested Simba, but knew it to be a fancy name. Khat is water-crazy. Climbs into her shower with her, into the sink. I was out there today, dropping off a present, and nearly killed the beastie when it hopped up on the seat of the toilet just as I was sitting down. ("Out there" is 13113 Vanowen, North Hollywood, don't know zip about the Zip.)

"It's easier to establish a tradition than to get rid of it."
(Dick Francis)

Sergio did this one in yet another of his books...and the face of the Alfred E. Neumanesque alien is pale green.

Booker's Law: An ounce of application is worth a ton of abstraction.

Redd Boggs said: "A fugghead is someone who never has second thoughts."

Terry Carr's Law of Gossip: "The more damaging the rumor, the wider it'll spread." Mr. Carr also wrote: "Don't take any advice."

"These days it is possible to feel outnumbered and persecuted about one's sexual orientation, no matter what it is," writes Arthur D. Hlavaty in *Diagonal Relationship*, 1978. "Once I would have felt ashamed had I not gazed lustfully at passing women. Now I feel that my ogling and impure thoughts require justification . . . It is **NATURAL** for me to gaze lustfully. Every species needs a way for the males to recognize the females, and ogling certainly has more class than the canine method of sniffing asses. To take it a step further, my own preferences are particularly **NATURAL**. The most noticeable difference between the sexes (certainly when clothed) is breasts, and therefore we tit-men are much more **NATURAL** than leg-and-ass-men

"I hope nobody thinks I mean any of this **NATURAL** shit. Any human behavior pattern can be described as **NATURAL**, since if it were really against the Laws of Nature, you couldn't do it. My favorite argument of this type is: If God really and truly didn't want us to play with ourselves, how come He made our arms long enough to reach? But everybody acts as if their own favorite pastimes are particularly **NATURAL**"

Harlan Ellison grumbled: "Love ain't nothing but sex misspelled!" . . . Redd Boggs declared: "The perfect lady is not the perfect woman," but he said *that* years before Women's Liberation, so I don't know if he thinks it now. . . . Gerald C. Fitzgerald said: "I want a nice girl who is just a little bit promiscuous."

"We've raped the Earth and Mother Nature is no longer a virgin."

(wr)

"Earthquakes are a variety of religious experience."

(Rotsler)

...pocketa pocketa queep, pocketa, pocketa queep...

TO BILL
MAD-UP!

INGONE'S 78.



I have not written many short stories in recent years (or ever, I suppose) so when I do write one I'd like people to know about it. So here's the latest, from The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, January 1979.

Oh, and it's one where I do know where the idea came from. In Ray Milland's autobiography there's a chapter on Clark Gable, which ended with a comment that Gable died before his only child was born. The story popped into my head (or from it, like Athena) full-grown.

Parental Guidance Suggested

by WILLIAM ROTSLER

Norman watched his dead father, on the television screen, slouched in the battered sofa, gripping a can of beer. The film was an old Warner Brothers black-and-white potboiler from the mid-Thirties, and his father, Norman Manford, Senior, was playing one of Edward G. Robinson's henchmen. It was Senior's third film, his second as a gangster, a role he was often to play. He held the good guy, helped beat him up, and had lines like "Yeah, boss," and "The coppers!"

It was 2:30 in the morning and the only light was from the bluish screen. He'd been waiting six days for this one, ever since his ritual search through *TV Guide*. He'd seen *The Last Gangster* before, but not for a long time. It was the one where the director allowed him the privilege — rare for bit players — of devising something a little special when he was killed,

something more than the usual sprawl. He watched his father closely, critically, as if seeking something, some clue. His father was young then, younger than Junior was now, but even then he had that indescribable something called "star quality." People responded to it; they still did.

Junior suddenly frowned. There was something about the scene — between Allen Jenkins and his father — that was somehow different, or new. He didn't remember it quite like that. He chewed at his lip. He couldn't exactly pinpoint what the matter was; a line he didn't remember being there, some reference he didn't catch. He shook his head and gulped a swallow of warming beer, still frowning.

Norman Manford, Senior, had died of what was delicately called "complications," on September 19, 1948, just nine days before the

birth of his first and only child. Like Clark Gable, some years later, he was never to see his eagerly awaited infant son. Nor had the son seen his father, except as a flickering two-dimensional image on a motion picture screen or television's phosphor stage. Unlike other small boys, who grew up knowing their fathers or some strong father-figure, Junior had grown up with a weak uncle, a strong aunt, a ghostly father-image and what knowledge he could glean from films and books. It was a paltry vein, shifting and uncertain; his father seemed so many different men. And all his father's friends said he had great plans for his son — but Junior didn't know what they had been.

He blinked. Senior had just said to Edward Brophy, "As the man says, what a father says to his children is not heard by the world ...but it will be heard by posterity."

The derby-hatted character actor took the cigar out of his mouth to give him a sneering reply. "Oh, yeah? I suppose you got sumpin' better for kids than parents?"

"No," Junior said aloud. That wasn't in the picture. Nothing close to it even. He was certain his mind wasn't playing tricks. His father played Blackie Marston, who was just not supposed to be that articulate. He watched the screen

intently, but Joseph Calleia entered, dark and suavely sinister, Eddie G.'s archenemy, and the story went on, leaving Junior puzzled and uneasy. The young feminine leading woman reminded him of his mother, but, then, so many actresses of that period did.

Junior barely remembered his mother, dead when he was five, a failed starlet who didn't make it, even on Senior's coattails. Her career had collapsed at his death, she took up drinking as a serious hobby, and sent her son to live with her sister. Junior had a difficult time getting a fix on her. She looked so much like all the other young actresses of the late Thirties and early Forties, all even-featured into easily forgettable blandness, with their hair all in the same style, and broad Joan Crawford shoulders built into their dresses. They all had good cheekbones and perfect teeth; even their voices were alike. His mother showed up in some of his father's later pictures, those made at the peak of his earning power, and some after, as drink was helping the fall. But she had never played higher than second lead, "the other woman" parts, or parts with a touch of whore in them. She had died, he found out as an adult, of pills and booze. Her memory was in eight-by-ten-inch rectangles, glossy black-and-white, with her name and an agent's name

in opposite corners.

Only his father had any reality, and not much of that. He hungered for something solid and personal. He couldn't get enough of the old movies; he combed the biographies of stars and directors for references; he collected memorabilia.

"You look just like him," people always said. Always. And always with just that touch of condescension tinged with pity and curiosity that replicas and counterfeits always receive. Junior was also an actor, or thought he was, but the Manford style of looks had passed out of vogue.

Robinson was into a scene with Jimmy Gleason, Roman Bohnen as the priest, and Priscilla Lane as the ingenue. He just waited. The double-cross was coming up soon. Eddie G. mentioned something about what his name — his character's name — meant. It started Junior thinking again about changing his. Being a Junior opened doors to some of the old-timers, and to some of the curious newcomers. But the old-timers were dying off or leaving the business, to be replaced by accountants from Gulf and Western, or hotshots from some other conglomerate. They had little or no feeling about movies, about the fun and — yes — mystique of films. It was just a business to them, or perhaps a

source of attractive women. Their idea of beauty was a good-looking profit and loss sheet; they thought art was coming in under budget. They didn't know an out-take or a snoot from an Arriflex 35BL or a flat bed editor.

"Ah, the spittin' image of himself," the old guard at MGM always said, grinning. "Knew your old man, Junior — he had class. Not like some that come through here, now or then. Never failed to say hello. Even shot the breeze here, many's the time, waitin' for the rain to stop." The sigh and the wan smile. "Not all his shenanigans were out in front of the cameras, boy, nossir." The wink. "Central America, y'know, 'n' Shanghai before the war, the whole Orient. Wouldn't surprise me none if he'd done a touch of smugglin' or gun-runnin', y'know." Another broad wink. Another sigh. "Don't make 'em like that now. Well, son, who are ya wantin' t'see today?"

On the screen the G-men were closing in, and a burst of gunfire wounded Eddie G. in the upper arm. George Tobias was dead on the floor. Senior wanted to give up, to toss the guns out to Warren Douglas and Dick Lane, out beyond the big black cars. But Eddie G. wasn't having any of it and ended Senior's role with a slug from a snub-nosed .38. His father crashed

back into the wall, took a long time dying, then went down, spilling the suitcase full of money. Norman got up and turned off the set right in the middle of Robinson's snarling speech to the coppers outside.

Dead, but not dead. Live, but not living.

Junior aimed the beer can at the waste basket, missed, then went on through the darkened room into the small bedroom. Somewhere there was a siren, rising and falling. He could hear the traffic noises from Sunset Boulevard, and the distant faint rumble from the freeway. He turned on the light and pulled down the Murphy bed. The light revealed the movie posters all over the walls. Some had been found in storage, but most had been bought at stiff prices at Collector's Books, a couple of blocks east of the Chinese Theater, on Hollywood Boulevard.

Some of the posters said "Co-starring Norman Manford." Others proclaimed "Starring Norman Manford," sometimes with a name before his. A precious few had the name above the title: "Norman Manford in." Those were the important ones, the ones that were remembered, the swashbucklers and the bullet-riddled gangster epics. There were none that said "with Norman Manford," because Jun-

ior hated those. His father looked puffy from drinking and walked through the parts with contempt, or worse — utter indifference. Those were the films of his declining years and not the way Junior wanted to remember his father.

He undressed and stretched out on the bed. 'Those extra lines in *The Last Gangster* bothered him, but a life-long problem was more on his mind. Living with another man's name and face — even if it was his father's. He was always being compared, measured, being "better than" or, more often, "not as good as." People compared him only to the Image of his father, to the Legend, not the reality. He thought he was just as good an actor as his parent, perhaps even better; but he just didn't seem to have that charisma. Or if he did, they thought it imitation.

Junior envied his friend Tony Haze, not only because his father was living and often helped him, but because he had another name. He also was not the son of a star, but of a character actor, one of those familiar faces that had no name to anyone outside the industry, but one of those actors who was always working. Not because he was so good, but simply because he was dependable, always showing up on time knowing his lines, seldom "blew" and was never really *bad*. He had worked with Senior

and had tales of dressing room trysts with beautiful actresses, sound stage pranks and location antics. He'd also been the one that put the film society in touch with Junior.

The Norman Manford Film Festival was one of a series of tributes by a group of film buffs to the stars and directors of yesterday. Junior had hated going, hated the questions, the curious stares of comparison. But he had needed the money they offered him. It had been nice to see good prints of *Captain Danger* and *The Pirates of Tortuga*, but the questions had bothered him more than he cared to admit.

"Is it true your father died of drink?"

"Yes," Junior had replied with a practiced smile. "He slipped and fell into a martini and there was no olive to cling to. Next question?"

The expected, dreaded question and the prepared ad-lib. The usual ones about the three wives, the Forrest Tucker incident, the motivation for the gimmick in *Ganglord*, the Freudian questions about guns — all expected. The answers were glib, easy, pat. But all the people who came up for autographs were not the film buffs, but the *fans*, all after some kind of mark on a piece of paper to give them some tenuous connection to a star. Any star.

He'd asked his Uncle Ted, who had raised him, "What was my father like?" He'd asked first at fifteen, then many times afterwards, hoping for some clue, some different response.

But he always got some variation on "Just like you see him on television, Norman, always charming and very, very brave." But Aunt Connie had a few other comments. She'd been his mother's sister and thought Senior could have done more for his wife. "He was a sonofabitch, Norm, but a charmer, I got to say that. He was really looking forward to having a son, you know. Always wanted a boy. Had plans, he did, all kinds of plans for you. Was going to change his life, but...well, it was too late, that's all. Got your mother drinking, too. Well, that's all chaser under the bridge now, huh?"

He had asked the old-timers at the studios, too, the directors and grips, the property men and gaffers, the enduring technicians. And even some of the actresses, mostly now doing character work, but who had once been leading ladies and ingenues. "Oh, your old man was something," one said. She smiled with fond remembrance and shook her head. "Oh, the tales I could tell you, boy." But she never did and left Junior with the feeling that Senior had been her lover.

Among others.

He had even searched the microfilms of the *Los Angeles Times*, looking at old Hedda Hopper columns for mentions. He meant to go through the *Examiner*, too, and dig into what Louella Parsons had said, but he never seemed to get time for that. It had been the time of the Hays and Breen offices, the Morals Clauses, virgin actresses, spotless reputations, and little cleavage. Barrymore, Flynn and Mitchum had survived scandals, but Norman Manford didn't quite make that very privileged class. He had to toe the line for the Front Office, for those old bitches Hedda and Louella, for the Eastern Banks and America's Heartland. Junior smiled into the dark. He would have loved today's code, Junior thought, and fell asleep.

He woke up to a phone call from Amanda. She was giving him trouble, perhaps more than she was worth. He had broken up with her several times, but it didn't seem to take. She loved him, she said, but she couldn't marry a man who couldn't support her in the manner to which she wanted to become accustomed. Junior didn't remember even asking her, but he knew women could read between the lines of verbal contracts. It was true he couldn't support her, not now, maybe not ever. He just didn't have the *drive* to get rich, or

to get famous and thereby rich. It just wasn't very important to him.

But it was to Amanda. She wasn't a "Hollywood brat" like him; she'd grown up in South Gate, an L.A. suburb, and trying to be an actress was just something for a pretty girl to do until she got herself "settled." Being an actress gave her a certain amount of advertising, of cachet. Women's Liberation didn't interest her; there was too much work and responsibility involved. Secretly, she was waiting for some producer or big star to find her, give her the big house, the big car, the credit cards and fame. Without work, without talent, without trying, without anything. It happened, she said. Often. She was beautiful, wasn't she? Wasn't that enough? "All you have to be is at the right place at the right time," she often said, smugly. She spent her time in whatever was the latest chic place to be, drew money from daddy, and used Norman much as he used her — a convenience.

But she just couldn't quite believe that the big Mulholland Drive house, the custom Rolls, the yacht, the jewels were all gone in taxes, bad investments, alimony, high living and hospital bills. She kept citing Mary Pickford, Corinne Griffith, Harold Lloyd, Chaplin and Swanson and other old-time stars who were very well off. She just

didn't hear Junior's comments on That Was Before Taxes and He Didn't Have An Honest Business Manager. All that was left was a tiny trust, a few scrapbooks with the Scotch tape turned dark and brittle, some minor awards, a proper sword, and a lot of curling photographs.

But somewhere Amanda Starling, née Doreen June Dahlke, had gotten the idea that Junior should star in a film about his father's life — with her as co-star, of course — and she just wouldn't let go of the idea. She tried again and again, and this morning was no exception.

"Met this writer at Pip's, Normie. Really interesting man, y'know? Credits as long as your leg. Wants to get together to talk about a bio. I'm setting it up for —"

"No, Amanda. He's just bullshitting you to ball you. Can't you tell by now?"

"Darling, everyone wants to ball me! I can't go on that alone. Now, listen..."

Junior held the receiver away from his ear and looked at it. Then he cradled it against his shoulder and picked up *TV Guide*, looking at the clock. Just about right.

"No, Amanda."

"Forget it, Amanda."

"Good-by, Amanda."

He got up, put three eggs on to

boil and went into the tiny bathroom. He came out brushing his teeth and turned on the television set. It was Norman Manford in *The Sea Warriors*. A rare week. During the commercial, he rinsed his mouth, cooled and peeled the eggs and poured the hot water into a cup of instant coffee. He got back just in time. He'd seen *The Sea Warriors* at least five times, but frequency never stopped him before and didn't this morning.

It was one of the biggies, a swashbuckler of the Errol Flynn genre, swords and ships and swinging from ropes. Marvelous stuff. Totally non-cerebral, the kind of film that gave movie critics hives. It was the one that Maureen O'Hara couldn't be in, which always saddened Norman. She would have been so much better than the simple-faced dolly who replaced her, thanks to the eternal lust of the studio head. During the scene between an elegant Joseph Schildkraut and a dirty Akim Tamiroff, he took the dishes in and came out with a glass of orange juice. He dropped into the couch, noticing it was getting a definite dent where he usually sat.

There was Senior, in a white dueling shirt, smiling. He took the young cabin boy over by the rail and was explaining about women. "Women are creatures wiser than men, Jamie, because they know

less and understand more." Jamie listened worshipfully, as Senior treated him like an equal.

"No, sir," Jamie blurted, "she wants me to be rich! I just want to sail the seas, with you, sir, looking for adventure..."

Senior nodded, his usual suave, man-of-the-world expression saying that he was leveling with a friend. "Aye, son, and that's a man's way, though most of what men call adventure is really just trouble and only later do ye call it adventure. If you live through it. But remember, lad, by the time a man meets a really fascinating woman, so much has happened to her that most men are afraid to take a chance. Don't you be like that, son — wait for the right one, be sure of your feelings, then move!" He shook his head warningly. "But don't be a woman's slave, either, boy. Few of them ever like that."

There was a broadside from Schildkraut's vessel and the battle was under way. Junior scratched his unshaven cheek and sipped at his juice. They must have cut that scene out of all the other showings, cutting it for time, probably. He hadn't seen it before and thought it interesting, but he became involved in the intricate editing of the battle scene. They were using footage from some other picture — probably *Black Swan*, as it was a

Twentieth picture — and the thoughts about the new scene faded. By the time the film was over he didn't really care about Amanda's ideas about anything.

He found her waiting for him when he got back from his walk down to Schwab's to get *The Hollywood Reporter*. She started her campaign while he was still coming up the apartment house walk. He just kept shaking his head. "No, Amanda, it's a dumb, dumb, dumb idea. I am *not* going to say I'm behind it. They'd laugh me out of the office. Better you should make a bio on Sonny Tufts or Donald Meek."

"Norman..."

"No."

The fight started in earnest, went into its second skirmish as they were undressing for a quick matinee. He had to smile at her "before sex" method of pressure. She relented, they balled, achieved their standard quota of orgasms, and the next battle began.

"You adore your father, Norman; how can you stand in the way of a project to glorify him like this?"

"Male bovine waste matter, Amanda."

The fighting escalated into war, ending in a Type II Pout and a Class I Stiff-Backed Walkout, but happily without Crying. Junior sighed and turned on Channel 13.

Ganglord was on the early movie and he hadn't seen it in a couple of years.

Senior was soon shooting it out with the Eduardo Cianelli gang and stopped to reload his chopper. Claire Trevor cowered in a corner. "The trouble with you, sweetheart," Senior said with tight lips, "is that you are always pushing a guy. Get married, get ambitious, get this, get that. There are some guys who just ain't ready for that." Close-up of his eyes, hard and dark, with a cigarette dangling from his mouth. "No vine-covered cottage for Nick, see? I got other things to do, see?"

There was a burst of gunfire off camera and Nat Pendleton spun against the wall, uttered a catch phrase from earlier that now was drenched in pathos, and died. Claire screamed at another rattle of tommy-gun fire and covered her ears. Norman laughed nastily, smashed out some window panes with the barrel of his Thompson, loosened a burst and jumped aside as they answered his fire. Sweaty, hair artfully dishelved, he leaned against the wall and spoke to Claire. "No dame is stone-deaf, sweetheart, They'll hear diamonds every time." He sent a shattering trail of shots across at the rival gang, wounding Eddie Norris and putting a bit player out of the film. There was a quick close-up of

Cianelli firing, then back to see Senior hit. He crashed back and fell to the floor. There was practically no blood. Claire crawled to him, clasping him to her bosom.

"Nick! Nick, darling!"

"No use, sweetheart, this is it. Just remember... ." He coughed. "Find another guy, one that likes to trim roses." He coughed again and a trickle of blood appeared at the corner of his mouth. "It would have been great to have those kids ya talked about, babe. I'd have gotten a tommy gun made to size for them." Another cough. He smiled wanly and knuckled her chin. "See ya, sweetheart. Don't take any wooden" His head dropped and he died.

Junior stared in utter fascination. This was a whole new ending, he was certain of it. He was positive the film originally ended with Elisha Cook — another Junior — shooting it out with his father, Cook with big Colt .45s, but losing. Then Senior shoots Cianelli, and the cops come in and get him. In those days bad guys, even "good" bad guys had to pay for their transgressions. The easy, quick, dramatic way was with a bullet not jail.

It disturbed him, this new ending, and he tried to think of reasons for it. He would have liked to think it was his confused memory. He dug his address book out from

under a pile of magazines and called Warren at the film society. He was a film buff who would know. But there was no answer. Junior scratched his face and dialed his agent, Stanley.

"Sorry, kid, you lost it to that new stud in Morrie's stable. Hell, Norm, it was just a made-for-TV film. I'm saving you for something big, the big screen, man, the big time. Got something working on that; can't tell you about it now, but... ."

Yatata, yatata. Junior hung up in bad spirits and took a Tum for his sour stomach, then a beer to wash it down. He slumped into the couch again and read the beer label, beer bought with an unemployment check. He thought of trotting down to Schwab's and trading lies and hopes with other out-of-work actors, but it seemed too much trouble. He watched the last of a daytime soap, thinking in first gear about what he was going to do next — or *could* do next — when the promo for the evening movie on Channel 5 came on. Instead of the Dennis O'Keefe comedy announced in *TV Guide*, it was a Norman Manford western, *Gunfighters West*, a better-than-average oater from the middle Forties.

Almost at once he detected a scene cut from the previous time he had seen it and restored in this

showing. At least, that was what he thought. Maybe he was overdosing on his father's films, but it was like an addiction. He sat forward and put his elbows on his knees, massaging the beer can between his palms.

His father was telling the young son of a rancher he had befriended that being a gunfighter was not all glamour and high adventure.

"Most men work at what they happen to learn how to do," Senior said, "not at what they wish they had learned how to do. It's greener pastures, boy, that makes what another man does look inviting. It takes more courage for your paw to sit on this here farm, grubbin' out a life for you and your maw, than it does for me to go traipsin' off, followin' my gun."

The boy protested, but Senior went right on. "You gotta do what you gotta do, son, but don't let no one pick out your trial for you." The boy nodded reluctantly, and so did Junior, sitting entranced with a beer grown warm.

Although he watched the rest of the film with unusual care, there was nothing else that seemed out of place. He turned off the set and sat thinking for a long time.

He had become an actor because he wanted to be like his father, to imitate him, to share the kind of real-life and fictional adventures he was always having,

and because it was the easiest course of several open to him. He had worked a little as a child, mostly in live TV; in his teens, he was often the member of a gang, or an aristocratic youth at some eastern school. The work was easy and interesting enough. The pay was good, but infrequent, and up until adulthood there were still a lot of doors open to the Manford name. Some jobs were payoffs on old favors, some were cynical bids for a little extra publicity on films that could use it, some — a few — were genuine uses of his talents.

But was acting what he really wanted to do? There were lots of pretty girls in and around the movies, and although actors had plenty of prejudice against them in some circles, they still had attractions in other areas. Being an actor was a fine excuse to sleep late, lots of people said. But even after all these years he still didn't know the answer to that question he kept asking himself; *Is this what I want to do?* He knew what he *really* wanted to do — have real-life adventures like his father, or even cinematic adventures, stuff like *A Prince of Arabia* or any of the pirate flicks. Maybe acting just wasn't his thing, he thought sleepily. Maybe if I...maybe I should...

He woke up suddenly, after midnight, with a mouth some sadist had been using to clean bird-

cages with. He staggered to his feet, upsetting the pile of beer cans near the couch. He took some aspirin and found there was no more beer in the refrigerator. With a kind of reflex action he turned on the television set.

"Son of a bitch," he said aloud. *Footlight Frolics* was on the Late, Late Show. He had thought that was still in the package of unsold Goldwyn pictures. He sat back to enjoy it, only slightly disturbed that this sudden mass of Manford films wouldn't sour the market for a while. He'd seen it only once before, at Virginia Mayo's house when he was a teenager.

It was the usual backstage confusion, wisecracks, musical numbers, misunderstandings and frantic attempts to set things straight. Iris Adrian and Phil Silvers, Barbara Nichols and Jerome Cowan. His father starred as a fast-talking song-and-dance man who was always in trouble with bookies and women. There was a serious moment early in the film, between Senior and a young actor Junior couldn't identify, while Virginia Mayo was on-stage, going through a number with a lot of feathers and sequins.

"An actor," Senior said, "seems to need something in his life to stabilize his personality, something to pin down what he

really is, not what he is currently pretending to be."

The handsome young actor nodded, but protested that maybe he'd be better off as an architect like his father, with something solid and reliable. Senior smiled. "Son, you may think acting is sublimation for lying. Lots of people do. But it's serious work, not for amateurs. Be a pro or get out." He applauded as Virginia came off stage, giving the youth an aside. "Some have a talent for it and some don't."

During the commercial Junior sat unblinking, staring, waiting. Something very strange was going on. It was wrong, what was happening, something he wasn't certain he wanted to happen. It was exciting, but disturbing, like a new sound in the night. With the commercial over, Miss Mayo went back for another bow and was applauded into an encore. Senior turned to the boy. "Just don't confuse reality with real life, son." Virginia finished her song and waved for Senior to come on. He broke into a wide smile and went into a number with her.

Junior sat through the rest of the picture in a daze. Something was *definitely* wrong. He was certain those scenes didn't exist. He had his father's bound copy of that script. It couldn't have been something that had been shot, then

taken out of the original release, then put back in for television. They never did that, not on television, because the costs of completely re-editing and re-dubbing were too high. Only Coppola and the *Godfather* had done that. But there *had* to be some explanation: faulty memory, different TV versions, some kind of original preview print, or —? None of the answers came close to satisfying him.

Long after the film had ended, after a flea collar commercial and one for an intimate-flavored douche, Junior sat watching blankly, staring, just thinking. No answers came. Sleep, when it did come, came hard.

The phone woke him. It was Stan, fresh out of a meeting at Universal and bubbling over. "We did it, we did it! It's fantastic, Norm — fan-frigging-tastic! I got you the hottest role in town, baby the long shot paid off —! Sweated blood on this one, man, I tell you!"

"Stan...what is it?"

"Oh, yeah, yeah...it's the lead, hear that, the *lead* in *Chicago Hard Guy*, only they're going to call it *Bullets and Ballerinas* now."

"My father did that."

"Yeah, right, isn't it great, huh? Like father, like son. Universal's going to produce and distribute, natch; Glen Larson's the

producer; the director will be either John Frankenheimer or Peter Yates! How about *that*, huh? Is nostalgia in or not, huh? They've already set Jacqueline Bisset for the femme lead and —"

"Forget it, Stan,"

"What? Norm, boy, what have you been shooting? This is the Cinderella story of the year, poochie. Okay, so it's remake time, but look at *King Kong*, *Hurricane*, *A Star is Born* and —"

"That part requires a sophisticated, highly confident man that people will accept as having a long, tough history."

"No, kid, no. It requires an actor that can *look* and act sophisticated and that other stuff. You can do it. Worst that can happen is that they'll test you. They've agreed. You're a dead ringer for your old man. They're planning on getting a lot of mileage out of that. If this goes — and why shouldn't it? — they'll sign you to a long term and remake all of your old man's pictures! You'll be a star, rich and —"

"Stan —"

"Is it money? They're talking only forty-two five for this first one, kid — and I talked them up from twenty-eight — but they'll go higher, a *lot* higher, on the rest of the flicks, kid, and —"

"No, Stan."

"Kid, I guarantee you half a

mil within a year, my word on it, if everything goes according to plan."

"Forget it. I'm not going to be a surrogate for my father."

"A what? Listen, they plan to have a premiere at the Chinese, big, just like the original, Norm. That Rolls of his is owned by either Liberace or Harrah, can't remember which; they'll get it for the opening. It's nostalgia done Big, let me tell you. The budget on this one is —"

"I'm me, Stan, not my father."

"Kid, kid, this is *it*, what we've both been waiting for. I don't want to hype it too much, fella, but I *sweated* this one."

"So long, Stan."

"Norm, I'm coming over —"

Junior hung up and sighed deeply. He staggered into the kitchen and found he was out of orange juice. He opened a can of tomato juice and poured it over ice. He needed distraction, something to keep him from thinking about the Universal deal. *Why* didn't he want to do it? Didn't he want to have adventures like his father? Wasn't this the chance to do just that? But he didn't want to *be* his father...

He flicked on the TV and collapsed into the couch, washing the taste from his mouth with the tomato juice, which this morning

tasted like liquid flannel. He blinked as the announcer said what the Morning Movie was.

Plainsclothes Killer. One of the potboilers Senior had made when he was on the slide, a late Forties black-and-white cheapie, brightened only by the "new realism" of the cop-type pictures of the time. Although Junior remembered the story as being about a cop who killed dope pushers and rapists because they were getting released by the courts, the film seemed to be about a cop who investigated a murder on a movie lot. Regis Toomey had been the killer, the cop paired with Senior, but now he stayed in the background, smoking a pipe and looking alert. In the course of the investigations on the lot Raymond Walburn said, "An actor is much better off than an ordinary human being, Lieutenant. He isn't stuck with the ordinary fellow he really is."

His father, looking only slightly puffy, pushed back his wide-brimmed hat, ran a finger over the thin Lee Bowman mustache they had made him grow for the picture, and said, "The only way to handle actors is to send them to bed without their applause." The film went on, carved into five-minute chunks by greedy stations, until the final minutes, when Senior gathered everyone together on the sound stage — Junior remembered

it as a hotel lobby — and told everyone who the killer was. Toomey made a break for it, there was a brief gunfight and justice had been served.

Senior stood under a single spot, and the camera drifted slowly down from a high crane shot to a close-up, isolating Senior against black. "If you can be nothing more than you are, you must be careful to be all that you can be," he said, looking into the lens. "If I had a son, I'd tell him that. I'd tell him never to eat at a place called Mom's or play cards with anyone named Doc, or Slick. I'd tell him never to sleep with a woman whose troubles were worse than his own, to be wary of strangers who call you 'friend' and people who smile too much or too little. I'd tell him that things most taken for granted need the most to be doubted. I'd tell him to do only what he really wanted to do, and that which is right, and to do it to the best of his ability."

The end music was rising, and Norman Manford, Senior, looked out of the screen at Norman Manford, Junior. He smiled and winked "Here's looking at you, kid." Then he turned and walked away, out of the light, and the end credits rolled.

On came a deodorant commercial that implied that no one ever fell in love or got laid unless they

had sealed armpits. Morris was being jowly and finnick. The news. Promo for a feature coming soon. Stanley pounding on the apartment door.

Junior didn't get up. He was sluggish and slack-jawed. After a while Stan went away, but not before pleading and cursing. Try this gentle laxative. This soap. This razor blade would make your jaw like a baby's ass. The day went on. Junior turned from channel to channel, restlessly, nervously, waiting for the other shoe to drop. There *had* to be another shoe. He felt unfinished, dangling, half-made.

The early news, the sitcoms, the police shows that had cops on them like non, Junior had ever met, the late news. Johnny Carson.

Only, Johnny wasn't on tonight. Instead, there would be a Special NBC Presentation. Fanfare. Norman Manford in *Buccaneers of the Crimson Sea*. Junior signed deeply and sat back, the tension draining out of him. He watched, impatient at the opening commercials, then licking his lips as the titles came on. He no longer felt surprised or bewildered; it seemed right somehow.

Searchlights erratic over the Twentieth Century Fox Flash Gordon logo set. Letters in blood red, slashed on freely, old parchment

background. Norman Manford, Maureen O'Hara, Claude Rains, Fay Bainter, Reginald Denny, J. Carroll Naish, Patric Knowles, Arthur Shields, Andre Morell, Anthony Quinn in a bit part. Directed by William Wyler from a script by Leigh Brackett. A three-master against the great blue sea. White clouds. Senior on the deck, Arthur Shields at the helm, Naish pointing out the Spanish fleet. Cut to Claude Rains in a Spanish uniform and a dark, pointed beard, giving the order to fire upon the pirate rabble. Smoke, good miniatures, a shattered mainmast, a tear in Senior's white dueling shirt. Outgunned, outnumbered by the Spanish fleet of pirate hunters, Senior has his ship blown out from under him. A sudden storm is the only thing that saves Senior and his key men from being taken prisoner. They escape on a tangle of wreckage. Fade-out.

Junior stared, breathing shallowly. The picture hadn't been like that at all. Maureen O'Hara had been taken prisoner; Fay Bainter her *duenna*, Reginald Denny her irate father. They had been double-crossed during the ransom negotiations and — Junior shook his head, blinking. But the little screen was like Panavision, wide-screen, Cinerama. It was like being there.

Fade-in. Senior was lying un-

conscious on a white beach, washed by waves. Waving green trees, Max Steiner music, inviting winds, strange odors. Senior stirred, awoke, looked around, right into camera.

"You survived too, eh, lad?"

"Yes, father."

"Come, then." He got to his feet, the wind blowing his dark hair. "We've got to start over, eh? That's Quinn...and Pat! Hey! over here!"

Wet, bedraggled men gathered around. "Who's the little one?" Quinn asked, squeezing the water from his dark-striped jersey.

"A stout lad to trouble Spain," Senior said. "Come on, men, there's a village around that headland. We'll borrow a longboat and find our way home. Then it's another ship, another day, and the buccaneers will sail free again!"

There was a cheer and Naish passed around a bottle of rum salvaged from the debris washed ashore. It tasted hot, hotter than the sand that burned Junior's feet. He tossed his empty beer can into the surf and watched it bobble un-

til it filled and sank.

"Come on, boy — catch up!"

"Yes, father — coming!"

He looked back, toward where his footprints started in the soft sands of the beach. He caught a glimpse of a fading rectangle, something glowing, but it dwindled into a dot and was gone. Mirage.

Junior started slogging through the sand toward his father. He hoped he wouldn't get too bad a sunburn or be seasick. He didn't want to disgrace his father. Not now, not ever. He caught up to him, matched his stride, almost afraid to look up at him.

"Aye, laddies, a good shipmate this!" Senior stated loudly, giving Junior a whack on the shoulder. Junior grinned and walked straighter, swinging his arms, shoving his legs out briskly.

He thought for a moment he could hear music above the surf, but he wasn't certain. Korngold, maybe, or Alfred Newman. It didn't matter. There would always be music. And adventure.

The question of the unmarried couple is everywhere. How to handle the linguistic problem of what to call the person with whom one's daughter lives? "Lover" is too archaically lubricious by a shade or two. "Roommate" sounds like a freshman dorm. "Bedmate" is too sexually specific, but "friend" is too sweetly platonic. "Boyfriend" and "girlfriend" are a bit adolescent. "Partner" sounds as if they run a hardware store together. The Census Bureau calls them "Partners of the Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters" or PossLQs. Mrs. Billie Jenkins, an elegant hostess who lives on Boston's Beacon Hill,

has developed a rather sweet technique for inviting living-together couples to her parties. "I send an invitation to the one of the two I know better," says Mrs. Jenkins, "and I write a personal note on it saying, 'Of course you'll bring your darling George!'"

This clipping is from the recent TIME cover story about manners. I quickly wrote a letter--my first in decades--to TIME, suggesting "freemate." (Now if they would just wonder about the crack of the ass I could pop the "correct" term, "Rotsler's Gluteal Cleft.")

Or maybe not.

"On hearing of the death of anyone I have known well, I have usually experienced a slight thrill of pleasure. Another witness to my stupidity or weakness has been silenced." (Quentin Crisp)

GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS The bad news is that the same thing that has happened to my hands (Dupeytren's Contracture) is happened to my feet. As I said before, if my feet get as bad as my hands I won't be able to walk. Now let us not speak of this again. The good news is that Rixhard Curtis (the agent we get at 8% because of a group rate (N.IK) sold the least of my three unsold novels to Playboy Press. THE WAR FOR ZIKKALA will be in paperback without, one presumes, a staple in its bellybutton.

"Every anthropological group considers even their most bizarre tribal customs quite normal." (Shannon Carse)



I know I really wanted to get the whole ~~Wattergate~~ Gerrold thing behind me, but George Barr's letter (which actually came quite some time ago) said a lot of very interesting things, and far beyond just the current "controversy", so I wanted to put it in here. Hope you don't mind. Or even if you do.

"Critics know everything about everything but not what they like." (wr)

Well, folks, consider this your Yuletide greetings from Sharman DiVino and William Rotsler. We just didn't get around to getting cards. With a "tradition" of sending special cards, photo cards, lithographs, etc.

you can't just go to Hallmark...but you do have to get started early. We didn't. This is 12 Dec and I am really busy: finishing the DOCTOR STRANGE book...putting together the first issue of CHOICE...finishing the ZANDRA sequel...writing articles...and now (six months after they bought it) the notes on the re-write on SHIVA DESCENDING have come. That book is definitely going to be tail-end charlie. Drat. So this is your 1978 Christmas card.