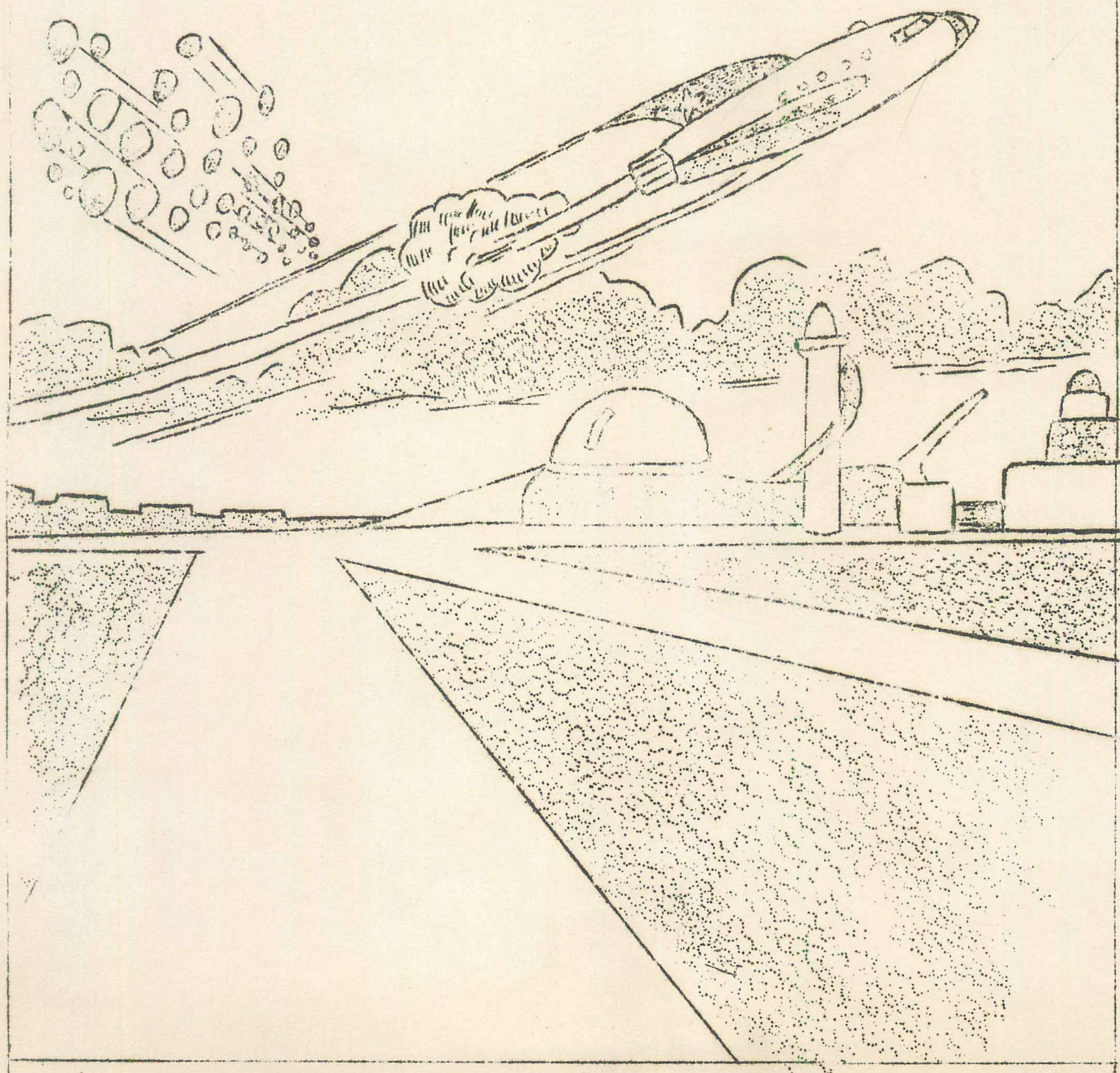


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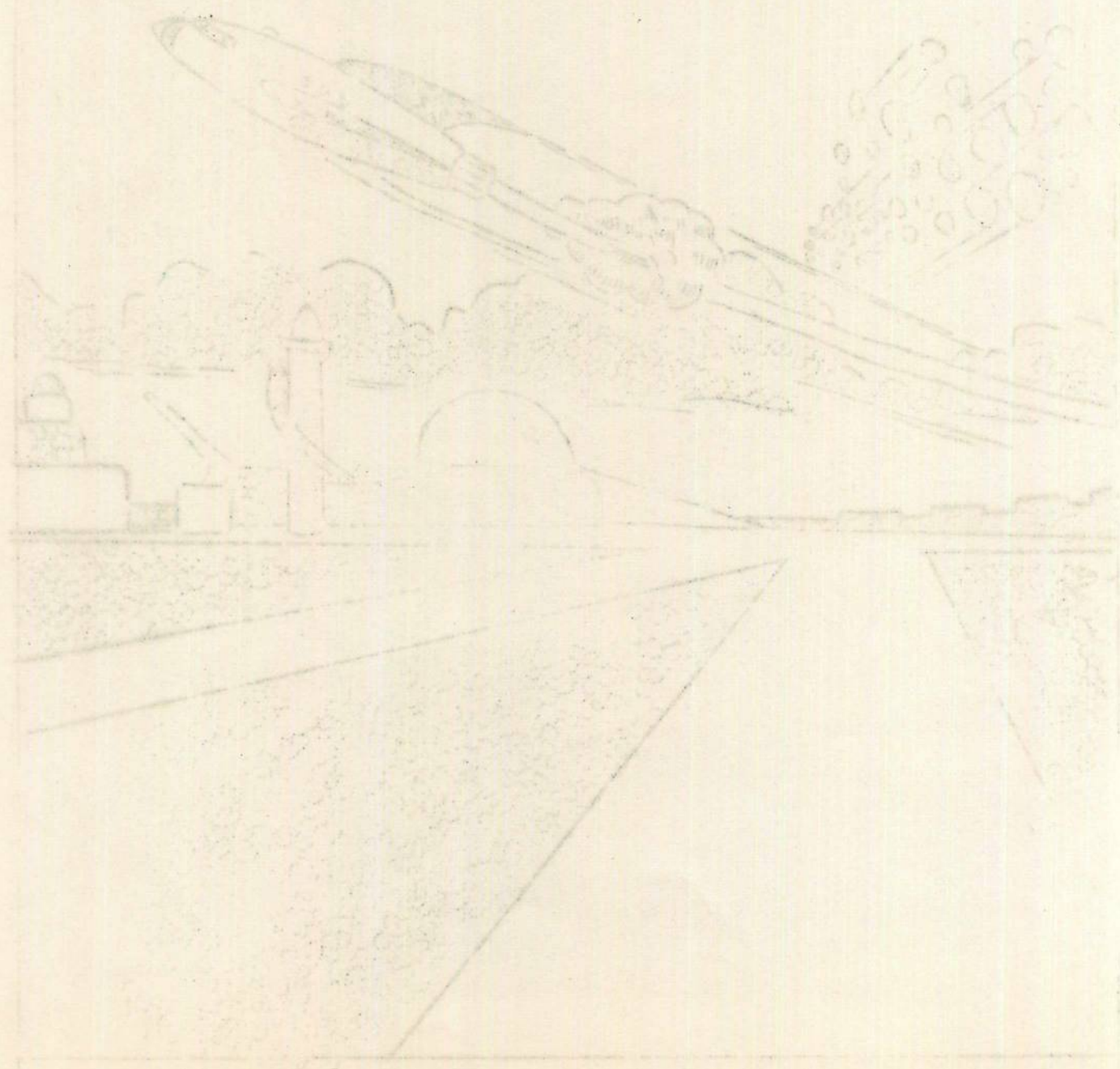
MUTTANT

APRIL 1949



MILITARY

APRIL 1949



This issue of Mutant is a half-and-half proposition -- that is, about half the issue was prepared by Steve before the magazine was turned over to us. We haven't read what is in that half the mag as yet!

Mutant, from now on, will be published under rather unusual conditions. Publisher Arnim Seielstad lives in Grosse Pointe, ye ed lives in Big Bay -- a distance of some five hundred plus miles separating us! Ah well, readers should be getting used to the unusual conditions surrounding Mutant, including its highly flexible schedule!

Speaking of schedules, we're going to pull an r-t Rapp on you folks -- i.e. we're going to try to catch up to schedule. Providing, that is, that Arnim doesn't break down over the mimeograph, the editor doesn't break down over his typewriter, and the gremlins stay out of our hair!

In order to succeed in this speed-up, we're going to need some contributions. (No, no; don't misunderstand us! We're not asking for money, but manuscripts!) Although we have a fair supply of manuscripts on hand, our backlog isn't all that we'd like it to be. What we have consists mostly of fiction -- and most of it darn good fiction -- but we are woefully low on articles and poetry. Now we like fiction a great deal; but Mutant is supposed to be a general fanzine, and we'd like to keep the fiction in its pages balanced with articles and poetry. So come on -- dust off those old mss. you've been saving and send them in; if we can't use them, we'll return them in good shape, or, if you like, try to place them elsewhere. (Manuscripts, incidentally, should be sent directly to me at P. O. Box 14, Big Bay, Michigan.)

Next issue hasn't been completely planned yet, but among the stories that will appear are "Only a Dream?" by Norman Ashfield, a nice bit of weird writing; and "Happy New Year" by Ed Cox, a "Different" story of interstellar invasion. Cox has that unusual gift, the ability to take an old theme and develop it in a new and refreshing way. "Happy New Year" is a short and quiet little bit that carries within it a powerful punch. It's a story we know you won't want to miss.

Also scheduled is an article by Evan H. Appelman, "Homo Sapien: Mathematical Impossibility". Man, says Appelman, is Nature's mistake -- and his article goes a long way to prove him right!

For future issues we have stories by Baldwin, Nelson, Harmon, Groover, Warren, etc. But as we said before, our backlog isn't all we'd like it to be. All magazines are controlled to a certain extent by their contributors, but especially fanzines where the only remuneration is a free copy of the issue in which a writer's work appears. When press time rolls around, as Merwin says, all an editor can do is select the best he has received and print that.

The quality of Mutant depends on its contributors.

The Night Flowers

TTTT

Ray Nelson

One night, here is this dim tavern two blocks off the great white way, the vampires sat in murmuring little circles all around the ruddy-faced country man, subtly nibbling away at his will. They did not touch him; did not even look at him, but little by little they drained away his life.

The country man was too tired and sad to notice how out-of-place was his solid frame among the slender night flowers. He sat and drank with no eyes for the smoke or the vampires, for he dwelt in a world of memory. He drank and remembered his newly-dead wife; buried back on the farm. So young, so pretty she had been when the fever took her. Oh, how pitifully he sought forgetfulness in the glass which, to his sorrow, but brought memories closer.

John Slater, for that was his name, rose from his table, walked to the vampire-covered bar and paid his check. He turned listlessly and shuffled out; too deep in his own sorrow to feel the pale ones' last, gentle, deadly drain.

One of the night flowers, still thirsty for more life, but ataggering drunk, rose and followed John into the night.

The vampire, in its drunken haste, stumbled into the street. It stood, swaying, and drained savagely on him. John staggered with a sudden vertigo and turned around. He saw the pale one in the street and the car bearing down on it. He screamed a warning but it was too late. The car struck the night flower and bore it down under wheels with a ghastly crunching sound. The car came to a grinding stop. A white moon-shaped face protruded from the driver's window and stared a moment at the silent shape on the pavement, then the gears clashed and the car lurched away, screeched around the corner and was gone.

John was the first to reach the stricken vampire. He knelt beside it, and listened as it gasped, "Do me a favor, buddy. Do me a favor, and I'll give you anything -- anything you want".

"Don't worry; everything's going to be okay. Lie quiet and don't talk." John turned to the gathering crowd and called for someone to get an ambulance.

"You'll need a hearse, buddy." rasped the thing. "I'm done. A favor, buddy. Anything you want for it."

"What?"

"Tell my girl, Daisy, I'm dead. You've got to make her believe I'm dead. Take the ~~message~~ and I'll give you whatever you want most."

"The address." John fumbled for paper and pencil. "What's the address?"

"Room 17, Harley Apartments, 615 Salem Street. Tell her I'm dead. Anything you...." It wheezed and coughed, and then was dead.

The next morning John slept late.

When he finally did awaken, he had such a ghastly hangover that he was hardly able to drag himself down to 615 Salem Street, but he did somehow.

The Harley Apartments was a gray, weatherbeaten old tenement and room 17 was on the second floor, way in the back.

Almost before John knocked at the warped and faded door a nagging, harping female voice wailed, "Whad 'ya want?"

John bit his lip and answered, "I've got bad news."

"Then go away," snarled the voice.

"It's about your boy-friend," said John.

"Which one?"

"I don't know. He didn't tell me his name."

"Okay, come in then."

John opened the door and stepped inside. A plump, brutal-looking woman lay on an iron bed in a torn and dirty nightgown, thumbing thru a copy of True Sex Stories. John blushed deeply. What would the folks back home think if they could see him now. Now, only a few scant weeks after the death of his wife.

"Are you Miss Daisy?" he asked.

"Yeah," she answered. "Now, what's the bad news?"

"Your gentleman friend is ---, well, I mean, -- a medium tall fellow, thin and -- well, pale --. He got drunk last night and ..."

"That's Frankie Grogen," chuckled Daisy. "The only time anybody ever sees him is at night, and then he's always drunk."

John bit his lip again and stared out the dirty window at the wall ten feet away. He thought with terror of how he had felt when they told him his wife was dead. How how would this Daisy woman feel?

"Prepare yourself for a shock, Miss Daisy," he said.

He heard the bedsprings creak behind him.

"Frankie Grogen is dead."

He felt sickly sorry he had not said it better, and braced himself for the woman's reaction.

"Don't make me laugh," she said. "Frankie won't ever die. He's preserved in alcohol."

"I tell you he is dead. He was hit by a car and died -- thinking of you." John felt miserable.

She snickered loudly.

"He's dead. Don't you believe me?" he moaned.

"Haw. The only kind of dead that boy will ever be is dead drunk," she laughed. "You ain't the first mug who's tried to tell me Frankie is dead. Somebody always tells me that, about once every month. The next time I see him I'll tell him to put a stop to it. The novelty wears off."

There was a long silence, then John shrugged and, without a word, walked out of

the dinky little room, down the stairs, and out into the sunlight.

That night John returned to the dim tavern two blocks from the great white way and sat again, in silent loneliness, among the night flowers.

He glanced around absently, then gasped with surprise. Thru the twisting smoke he saw a horribly familiar figure leaning against the bar. It was Frankie Croger.

And someone was with it. Said "Frankie, your boy friend."

John's wife.

"f i n i s"

PAN'S GARDEN

by

Isabelle E. Linwidde

Agarden stood above the sea,
Above the wave-lashed cliffs.
The trees bent down to toss their arms
To signal fishing shiffs.

For days on end the fog rolled in
From miles along the coast
It curled around the garden walls
As quiet as a ghost.

Then the statues in the garden
Of elves and unicorn,
Diana, Pan and dryads danced
Until the day was born.

A pathway wandered down the cliff,
Worn smooth by elfen feet,
On certain moonlit nights they came
Other strange gods to meet.

Sharp little hoof-marks on the sands
Were washed away by dawn,
No signs of revelry were seen
On beach, or path or lawn.

(Sutro's Gardens in San Francisco)

LEGEND OF PAN

By
RICHARD WAGB

The mist of a fall morning was slowly rising when an infant was born many centuries ago to Penelope, the wife of the Greek hero, Odysseus. This child's father was Hermes, the messenger of the Gods. He was an odd child, being more or less bestial in shape, having legs and ears of a goat accompanied by a small set of horns, growing forth from his forehead. His form seemed of no great surprise to his mother for was he not a child of the Gods, being related to Zeus himself.

Pan grew with great celerity and within a month of his birth he broke free of his mortal ties, seeking the woodland green of which he was to become God. He is generally referred to as the god of fertility of man, animal, and soil. He was vigorous and lustful. Many have pictured him as a shepherd ruling over the flocks and herds of Greece; thus he had the power to make men stampede in panic and the cattle. This ability brought him great fame among the Athenians for it is told by myth when Phedippides, the greatest runner of Athens, was sent to ask the help of the Spartans to save Athens from the Persians, that Pan stopped him, saying:

"I am a friend of Athens, and it shall be saved."

When the Athenians conquered the Persians, Phedippides having related the story, they organized the Cult of Pan (presumably because the panic of Pan had been sent among the Persians.)

He had many loves, though the most outstanding of his passions is the nymph Syunx from which developed the legend of Pan's pipes, and the nymph Pityo (Pine-Tree). But his greatest love was for the moon-goddess, Selene, for whom he loved in vain.

What could such a god be noted for to-day? He wasn't the most wise, but his being lives to-day in the hearts of men and women, who love the fields and forest green. Pan alone of all his fellows has weathered the drafts of time, and even you may hear -- when the moon is full -- the sound of his pipes floating upon the moonlit air.

The End,

I need; you got?

////////////////////

FANTASTIC NOVELS: November 1940

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES: Oct. 1942

(must have both covers, etc.)

I got; you need?

////////////////////

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES: June 1941

Dec. 1941

(mint copy) 1941

ED COX

4 Spring St., LUBEC, Maine.

FINAL FREEDOM

by James C. Dilworth

They gravely opened his door. The slight sound brought him lurching to his feet. He faced them eagerly.

He tried a weak smile. They nodded. He moved slowly, unbelievably to the door. They stood aside.

He turned down the hall toward freedom and they fell silently into step beside him.

Today was the day! Freedom! At last! He breathed deeply. Even now he could smell the cool, fresh outdoors.

It was too bad he had been ill for so long. How long had it been? His mind studied the problem briefly. He felt a twinge of uneasiness, quickly washed away by a little thrill of anger.

His wife. She would be waiting! He remembered her warmly. There had been some sort of unpleasantness the last time he had seen her, but the details eluded him. How long ago had it been? A day? A year? His mind refused to help him.

He saw the door and walked more quickly. She would be there, he knew. The heavy door ponderously swung open.

He entered the room uncertainly, his eyes searching anxiously.

She had not failed him. She sat patiently waiting for him, and her smile of welcome beckoned.

He sat down with her, too full of emotions, blurry and and the smothering sensation of freedom to speak.

Her eyes looked deeply into his and she tenderly stroked his hair. She dropped her hands on his wrists and waited for him to speak.

The others in the room watched silently.

He sat straight and still and grappled with his memory.

Suddenly he felt the dark, chilling mists clearing from his mind. In another second he would have the answer. It was clearing! Vaguely, now, he could see why he was here and why he was tasting freedom now.

His wife's hands on his wrists seemed to become as cold and as relentless as steel. He tensed frantically, in a panic to break away from her grasp.

A white light exploded in his brain.

THE GUARD knew his face was pale and sweaty but he wasn't ashamed of it.

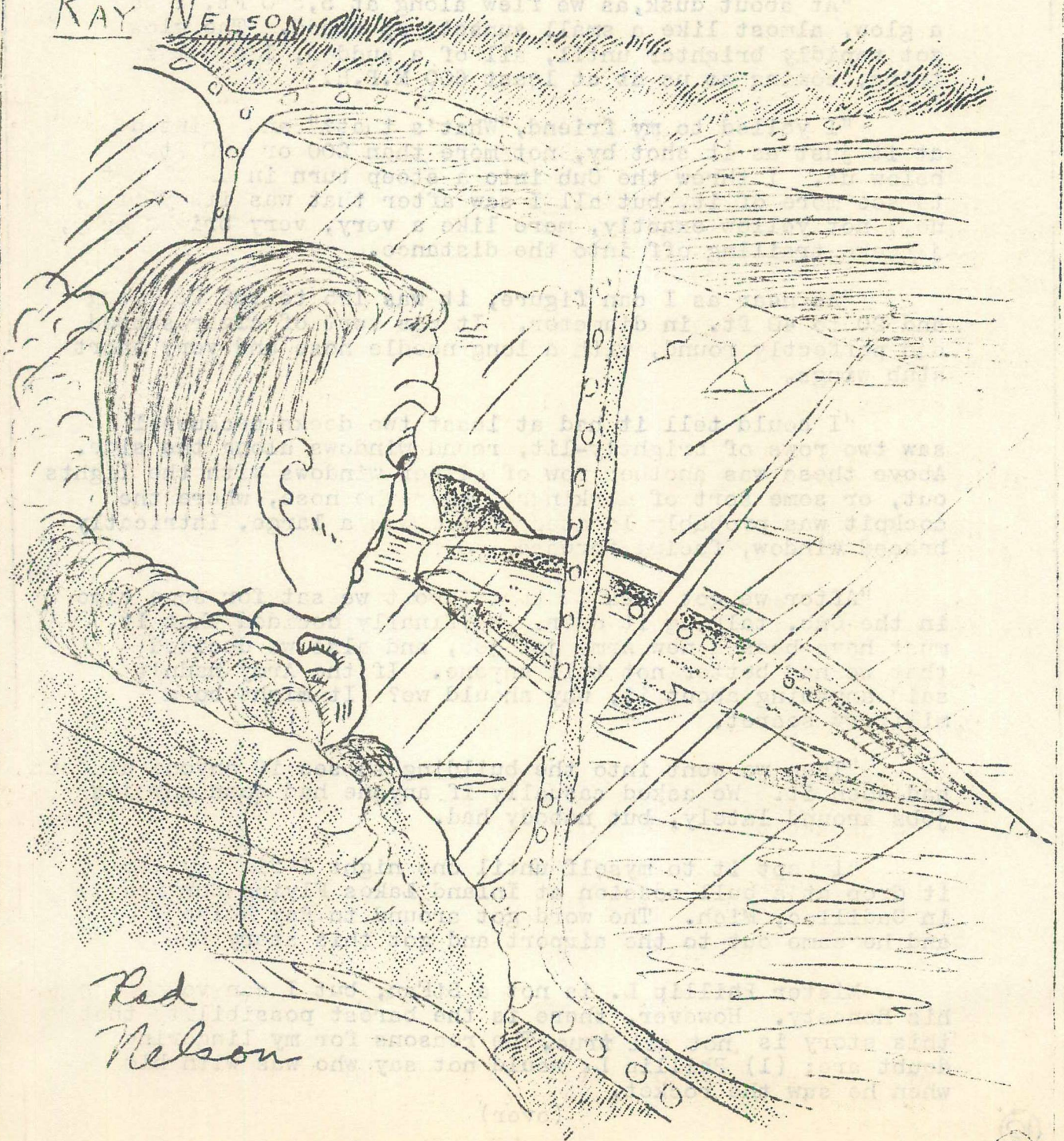
"A wife-killer," he breathed. "I never saw anyone take it ly." His fascinated stare was fixed on the motionless figure of the electric chair.

- THE END -

SPACE SHIP OVER DETROIT

(By)

RAY NELSON



Red
Nelson

This story was told me by a Detroit airman who, for reasons of his own (I.E. He doesn't want people to think he's insane.) will be identified here only as Phillip L.

Here is the story, as he told it to me.

"On the evening of June 28, 1948, a friend of mine and I took off from the Detroit city airport in a Cub Crusier and headed East.

"At about dusk, as we flew along at 5,500 Ft, I saw a glow, almost like a small sunset, up ahead. The glow got rapidly brighter until, all of a sudden, I saw this thing, coming at us at at least 600 M.P.H.

"I yelled to my friend, "What's that?" and pointed at it just as it shot by, not more than 200 or 300 ft. below us. I threw the Cub into a steep turn in an effort to see more of it, but all I saw after that was its glow, no,, not yellow exactly, more like a very, very bright gray, jetwake trailing off into the distance.

"As near as I can figure, it was 125 to 150 ft. long and 20 to 40 ft. in diameter. It was sort of cigar-shaped and perfectly round, with a long needle nose and very short stub wings.

"I could tell it had at least two decks because I saw two rows of brightly-lit, round windows along the side. Above these was another row of either windows with the lights out, or some sort of markings. Near the nose, where the cockpit was probably located, there was a large, intricately braced window, facing forward.

"After we got back to the airport we sat for some time in the Cub, talking it over. We finally decided that it must have been a new Army jet job, and also we decided that we had better not tell anyone. If the Army hadn't said anything about it, why should we? It might be a military secret.

"Then we went into the building to see if anyone else had seen it. We asked casually if anyone had seen any jet jobs around lately, but nobody had.

"I kept it to myself until one night I finally let it drop at a bull session at Inland Lakes Flying Service in Cadillac, Mich. The word got around to Ray Nelson, and he came out to the airport and got this story from me."

Mister Phillip L. is not a StFan, but I can vouch for his honesty. However, there is the barest possibility that this story is not all true. The reasons for my lingering doubt are; (1) Phillip L. would not say who was with him when he saw the rocket.

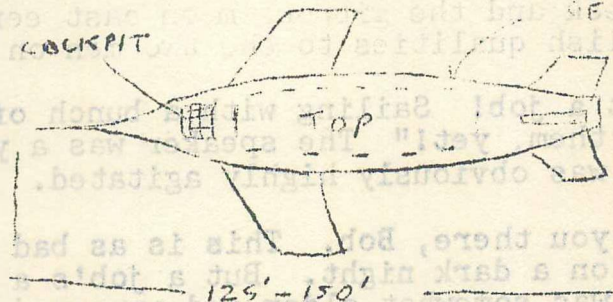
(over)

(2) He did not allow me to use his full name.

(3) He was unable to recall the number of tail fins on the rocket.

(4) During the flying disk scare the Army denied possession of any such ships.

However, if the rocket ship did exist, I should certainly like to know whose it was, where it came from, and why.



Phillip L's sketch of the strange aircraft he saw near Detroit. Note superficial resemblance to Bell XS-1.

THE PROSPECTOR; a bit of the off trail by FANDOM

The Collected Stories of Ben Hect--Grosset & Dunlap

Here is a collection of stories by one of the most versatile writers of our time, Ben Hect, movie and radio writer, playwright, newspaperman, poet, art critic, and general all-around story teller. As might be expected of such a man of many faces, his anthology contains many fantasies, semi-fantasies, and realistic stories with fantastic overtones.

The most obvious fantasies are "Remember Thy Creator", an unusually moving religious tale containing some rather radical theological ideas, "The Adventures of Professor Emmett", a somewhat St. Ives melodrama about what happens when a man turned against mankind and into an ant is required to decide whether mankind is worth saving or not, "The Death of Eleazar", another religious fantasy, "The Shadow", "The Specter of the Rose", "The Rival Dummy", "The Ax", "In the Midst of Death", "The Lost Soul", and other grimly entertaining little screamers, and "The Heavenly Choir", a slightly funny radio advertising satire in which Heaven takes over radio. The others are realistic only in that nothing impossible happens in them, but all but the strained humor makes unbeatable entertainment.

STAN

By EVAN H. APPELMAN

"What is that, beside the post?
Never fear, 'tis just a ghost!"

I

The coffin bearing transport Chicago, plowed her way through the waves of the Pacific, two days out of San Francisco. It was deathly still on deck and the gibbous moon cast eerie shadows which took on ghoulish qualities to the two men on watch.

"Brrrrrr! What a job! Sailing with a bunch of corpses and keeping watch over them, yet!" The speaker was a youngster of about nineteen. He was obviously highly agitated.

"I agree with you there, Bob. This is as bad as walking through a cemetery on a dark night. But a job's a job." Bob's companion on watch was somewhat older and appeared to be much more composed.

"Yeh, I suppose so. But give me deck scrubbing any day. Just thinking of those rows of sleek black coffins below gives me the jitters." Bob shuddered visibly.

"What's wrong with coffins? I think they are very pretty, and cozy besides."

The two men spun around simultaneously at the strange voice. There, leaning nonchalantly against the rail, was a soldier clad in the light tan shorts and short-sleeved shirt of infantry summer uniform. There was something inhuman about him; something that sent cold shivers running up and down Bob's spine. For the soldier's body was no more substantial than a veil of gauze of the same dimensions, and through it Bob could clearly see the rail and the tossing ocean beyond. Furthermore, the body glowed with a weird blue-white radiance.

"Don't be disturbed," the spectre went on in a soft, far away voice. "I just came up for some fresh air. Those coffins are air tight, you know. How do you expect a ghost to breathe in one of those things?"

"Larry," Bob asked, "am I seeing things?"

"If you are, so am I," replied Larry. "And hearing them too."

THE GHOST SMILED. "So you don't believe in ghosts, eh? Well, I didn't either, until I -- er -- became one. But maybe I ought to introduce myself. I'm Stan Winters, reported killed in action on

Mindanao. But that isn't so."

"No?" asked Larry. "Then what did happen to you, if it isn't too personal?"

"Not at all," replied Stan. "In fact, that's one of the reasons I wanted to contact you. You see, while on board ship, I caught another GI doing some petty stealing. He was very seriously admonished and he held me to blame. Just before we landed he shot me, and when we did land he threw me out of the barge and I was counted as one of those first killed in the landing."

"Do you know his name?" asked Bob.

"Sure. Tom Russell. He got shot in the leg some time later and was brought back to the States."

"Can't we get him arrested or something?" asked Bob.

"How?" asked Larry. "On the evidence of a ghost? Hardly substantial."

"That's just it," said the ghost. "No one believes in ghosts so how can you use the testimony of one?"

"But there must be something we can do," said Bob.

"There is," said Stan's ghost grimly. "And I intend to do it! But I'll need the help of you two."

"I'll do anything I can to help," said Bob.

"Check!" responded Larry.

"Good," said Stan. "Now here's what I want you to do. In the first place I'll need some small sums of money. They don't put change in the clothes of a corpse anymore like they used to do with mummies. You will have to act as agents for me until the final stage, when I'll step in. It just won't do to have a ghost walking down the streets of San Francisco."

"How do we find out where Russell lives?" asked Larry.

"I've taken care of that," replied the spectre. "Though I didn't want to haunt him while he was still fighting, I kept track of his whereabouts. Right now he's living with his mother in Los Angeles. Now this is what we'll do. . . ." For the next fifteen minutes the apparition whispered instructions to the two sailors. "Remember, we'll have to work fast. For best results I want to finish before the funeral, and it would be almost impossible to postpone it."

"When is the funeral?" asked Larry.

"In a little over a month," replied the ghost. "It will be a big public affair. Are you both sure of what to do, now?"

"Right!" replied the two sailors simultaneously.

"Okay then," said Stan's ghost. "I'd better be getting below now. So long."

II

Thomas Russell opened and read the last letter in the day's mail. His face turned as white as a sheet and the letter fluttered to the floor from his limp hands. He picked it up and read it again. It said: "Dear Tom, Be sure to come to my funeral. It will be within the month. I will be looking forward to seeing you there. Your friend -- Stan."

Tom rushed to the desk and drew from a drawer an old letter from Stan. Carefully he compared the signatures. They matched perfectly! Tom Russell sat down -- hard.

RUSSELL PICKED UP the telephone receiver. A methodical voice said, "Telegram for Mr. Thomas Russell."

"I'm Thomas Russell," he said.

The voice began reading. "Remember the date Stop A month from yesterday Stop Maybe it can be a joint affair. Signed, Stan."

"Do you wish it delivered?"

Russell smashed the phone down into its bracket. As he turned away he thought: "It's someone's idea of a joke...It's gotta be...Someone's just playing a joke on me...But the signature...it matched Stan's... Could have been forged...Sure...that's it...It was forged!"

RUSSELL LOOKED at the card that had come in the morning mail and tore it to shreds. It had read: "Dear Tom, Do you still have the gun you used? Or did you leave it on the island? Yours, Stan!"

As the telephone rang, Russell grasped the edge of his chair for support. He sighed with relief as he heard his mother answer it.

"Hello? ... Why yes, he is. Who is this? ... A friend? ... Just a minute -- I'll call him."

"Tom! Telephone for you!"

Trembling, Thom picked up the receiver. "Hello?"

"Hello, Tom."

"Stan!" Russell exclaimed.

"Don't faint on me," the voice said softly, "because it won't do you any good."

"What -- what do you want with me?"

"You have a little less than four weeks left. If by the end of that time, you haven't confessed to the police, you won't live to do so later. Goodbye, Tom." There was the sound of a phone being hung up.

"Stan -- wait! ... Hello! ... Hello! ... Operator? ... Get me the police department ... Hello, police department? ... A man just phoned me and threatened to kill me! ... No, I don't know who he is ... All right, I will." Russell hung up and waited. Ten minutes later his phone rang again.

"Hello? ... Have you found out anything? ... Oh, I see... He called from a public phone booth, eh? ... Yes, I'll let you know if he calls me again... Thank you."

SEVERAL DAYS LATER a long, thin, package was delivered to Russell's home. Opening it, he found it to contain a phonograph record.

"It must be the wrong address," he thought. "But I wonder what it is? It wouldn't do any harm to play it once."

He put the record on the phonograph and turned the instrument on. The next moment he had fallen into a nearby chair as Stan's voice came from the phonograph.

"Surprised, Tom? Remember, you have only three weeks left. You never thought that this would happen to you when you killed me, did you? I could kill you any time I wanted to but I'm giving you a chance. Confess in the next three weeks and you will be spared. Otherwise --"

"Giving me a chance, Mike heck!" mumbled Russell as he sent the record hurtling across the room in the general direction of the waste paper basket. "He's just torturing me!"

A WEEK LATER Russell woke up in the morning conscious of a tickling sensation on his side. When he saw the cause of it he nearly screamed. There, firmly implanted in his bed, was a bayonet. It had slit his pajama shirt and the contact of the cold steel with his skin had caused the tickling. Tied to the other end of the bayonet was a small piece of paper on which was written just three words. Three decisive words. Twelve letters that were to haunt him for the next fourteen days. The slip of paper read: "Two more weeks!"

For the next two weeks Russell was left entirely alone. On Saturday night he went to bed contented. Tomorrow was the funeral, and he now believed he would escape the dire vengeance promised by Stan's ghost.

HE WAS AWAKENED in the middle of the night by a soft chuckle that sounded as if it came from a great distance, but was clearly audible. Sitting up, Russell stared drowsily at the blurred shape that had materialized at the foot of his bed. As he stared, it seemed to lose its fuzziness and come into better focus. Instantly Russell's doze left him.

"Stan!"

"Yes, Tom!"

Russell let out a terrifying yell, and leaping from his bed, he dashed out of the room. The spectre made no attempt to stop him.

Mrs Russell later testified, that roused by her son's eerie outcry, she had come out of her room in time to see him streak out of the house. As she passed his room, however, she thought she saw leaning against her son's bed, a souldier cald in infantry summer uniform. His body had been semi-transparent and had seemed to glow with a pale bluish-white radiance. His face wore a smile of contentment.

HAUNTED BY GHOST, EX-GI KILLS SELF

Clad only in pajamas, Thomas Russell, a veteran of World War II, late last night dashed in front of a speeding car near his home in Los Angeles.

Fatally injured, Russell was removed to a hospital where he asked to see a police officer. When one was secured, he confessed the murder of a fellow GI, Stanley Winters, in a ship off Mindanao on the eve of combat.

Russell claimed the ghost of this man had haunted him into committing suicide.

A half hour after making this amazing confession, Russell lost consciousness and did not awaken.

Bob put down the newspaper and turned to his companion.

"Larry, do you believe in ghosts?"

THE END

RETURN

By Isabelle E. Dinwiddie

Was that
A sigh? I sensed
Some presence here just now.
I wonder if she could not rest
In her
Last sleep
But came to watch that all went well?
Go back, uneasy soul,
Time will heal up
My wounds.

By Norman Ashfield

I have recently been thinking about this Bergey question. I myself hate (HATE is the word!) the covers produced in what we have come to call the "Bergey" style, but I find myself more and more convinced that I am one of a very small majority, for I dislike internal pics of this nature as well.

Despite all this guff in the readers' columns about the BEMs, etc., I am convinced that in general fans like the idea behind it. A good example can be found in F E M and F N where finlay does some of his fine drawings of women -- almost, if not entirely, in the altogether. Letters in those mags usually say how much the fen liked those pics -- I've never seen one damning them -- but those self-same fen will mean like everything at a girl or girl-beast cover! In other words: "Give us pics of lassies inside but keep them off the cover!"

The last sentence leads to the belief that fen generally like to see pics of unclothed ladies but don't want to advertise their likes to other folk by having these gorgeous creatures on the cover of the magazine. All this guff about the covers is purely a defence against disapproving looks in public. If Bergey's wonderful (?) covers appeared inside the magazine, in full color, fen would go crazy and be prepared to pay another dime for the magazine even if some of the 180 pages were sacrificed.

There then appear to be two major types of SF fen (not including the Fantasy or Weird lovers). The great majority are it seems, beer-drinking, girl-ogling monsters, just like their hated (?) BEMs in their inner minds. They create defence mechanisms, such as objecting to the covers, but they'd be disappointed if all the lassies and monsters disappeared and we had the true Science fiction pictures a-la-Astounding (or rather Science Fiction -- for it's no longer astounding!). And mention of ASF brings me to the other type, the small minority, that like ASF best and can only put up with some of the other magazines for the occasional good story they throw up.

Judging by the pictures in the many SF magazines, only one of which has "staid" covers and pics liked by the minority, it seems clear that the majority must be by far the larger of the two types.

The publishers always try to please their public, and I am sure that the covers won't change till the fen change their leopard's spots!

THE END

ED'S NOTE: We think (and hope!) the above article will arouse some controversy. Paging Ray Nelson!

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