
1. Softcover

REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE
LONG SHOT FOR ROSINANTE

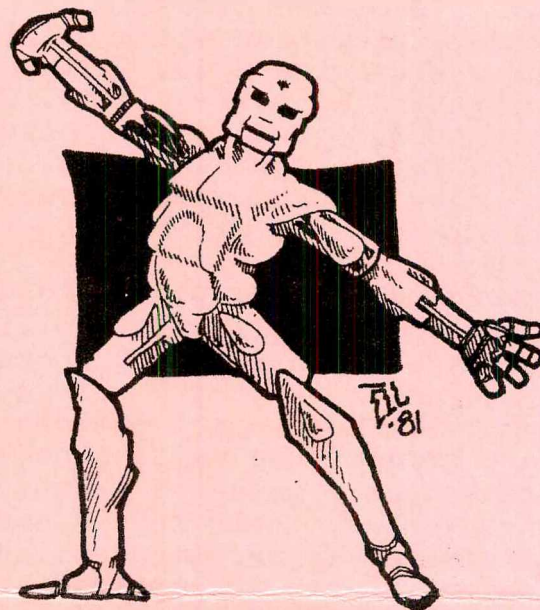
Alexis Gilliland

These two books, Gilliland's first novel and its sequel, make excellent reading. They suggest that Gilliland is on his way to becoming a Renaissance man -- first, Hugo winning cartoonist. Now two novels, particularly REVOLUTION, which merit serious consideration for writing awards.

REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE ripped my attention away from endless Destroyer novels at a time when my interest in sf was ebbing, by achieving several things brilliantly. Gilliland forms a dynamic plot from plausible economic, technological and bureaucratic rivalries. Mundito Rosinante is an asteroid adapted to an industrial space colony -- its economic purpose vaporizes in a series of financial manipulations on earth, leaving minor investors, workers, and some unexpected refugees to fend for survival. Gilliland's space colony, complete with schematics and material specs, becomes imbued with the cosmic qualities of a Ringworld, Gaea, or Rama. Best of all, he does these things in concise prose which always moves the story forward. You'll find virtually no expository lumps, where the universe takes time out to explain itself. The why of things most often is expressed through characterization -- when the players' actions and motives are so well expressed, the background reveals itself.

Gilliland brings two qualities to his book-- perceptive extrapolation, and imagination to invent the unexpected future.

Speed of Dark 30



THE SPEED OF DARK 30

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Both are supported by persuasive psychology. Perceptive extrapolation consists of the elements in present bureaucracy, finance, and space exploration which Gilliland imagines will be emphasized in the world circa 2040. Although the southwest's growing Hispanic population is self-evident, Gilliland is the first sf novelist I've encountered to recognize its basic political impact in formulating a future North America. And among the handful of sf writers who have thought through racial politics, he rates highly for making comments without polemics.

Inventing the unexpected future is an objective phrase, but I should also add how delightful Gilliland's results are. Computers are not merely sentient. Corporate Skashkash becomes a charismatic protagonist -- part legal entity, part entrepreneurial venture, part film buff, part philosopher, and part computer in the more predictable ways. One knows future computers will be tremendously advanced -- and like so many areas of science and engineering, their form seems unrestrained by technology and determined by our imaginations. Gilliland is definitely not mundane in his assumptions about technology, while his guesses are colorful and plausible.

The style of Gilliland's writing is no more or less than declarative sentences, well-paced by dialogue. The choice of words in various contexts subtly adds to our knowledge about characters -- in LONG SHOT the description of Deputy Administrator Hulvey's office communicates the kind of empire-building that is going on. These examples are, of course, available to us in the present. It is an example of Gilliland's sense of human psychology. I am very sympathetic to his choice of what human traits are likely to be drawn out in the future he describes. He is not the sort of writer who assumes the British Navy in outer space, simply because it's an age of exploration. Gilliland's two novels are strongly designed -- almost in the sense of architect's maxim form follows function.
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Those expecting Gilliland's incredible sense of humor to rear its head will find examples, but generally there is no comparison between the cartoonist's captions and his prose. There remains something of the trademark wit in the fact that two assassinations (in REVOLUTION) are the novel's most ingenious jokes. I broke up reading each passage.

REVOLUTION takes its point of view from Charles Cantrell, Rosinante's chief engineer, later governor and commander-in-chief. LONG SHOT is told mainly from the viewpoint of William Hulvey, a careerist in government security with a dark past of religious fanaticism and violence. LONG SHOT overlaps REVOLUTION, providing the "inside story" of the conspiracies suspected in REVOLUTION. Later LONG SHOT returns to Cantrell, and events are brought to an end not unlike many '30s mysteries (Chandler, Cain) where truths are revealed and the evildoers inflict crude justice on one another.

These books are both fine reading, and likely career-launchers. It is hard to think of Gilliland as a "new writer", but on top of that, he is an exciting storyteller.

MAILING COMMENTS

OO: Thankee for noting the package address. As a result my mailing was not hijacked by neighbors, nor any stray packs of rabid dogs in heat who'd have mistaken Whatley's zine for a mating call. // Seeing as there's not even ten bits in the Treasury, according to this report, our new OE should probably call for an assessment, or raising of dues, or something. Gosh I'll bet this is something nobody, least of all the people who keep the records, have thought of -- duh, right George? // Before I chirp in further two cent criticisms, guess I'd better wait to see the new OE's rules.

IRIS BROWN: Say, we can always recognize the new OE by the two pagers contributed to the first mailing. Ever notice how all that behind the scenes work has the effect of "Here, hold this albatross" when it comes to pages contributed? // Quite -- everyone wants to be on the dais when Celko is around. It cuts down the angle of fire... // Yes, but the stencil didn't scorch in the closing scene. // Lon Atkins was the one who offered the definition of a Reinhardt which I published last issue. Possibly Lon's biases were showing just a wee bit.

MASOCHISM TANGO: Last issue I simply didn't comment on one-shots. This issue I've stopped reading them entirely. Is it too late to get vaccinated before I fall completely under the Coulson syndrome?

THREE FISTED TALES: Unsigned editorial material in an apa?

DEB HAMMER MINAC: More unsigned material, but I recognize the aura. Have you ever noticed how difficult it is for newzine editors to honor certain people's subscriptions when certain people don't send CoA's?

RON ZUKOWSKI: Are you going to be another one of these members who doesn't do mailing comments? And here I had such high hopes. You've even given up the orange paper.

JOHN WHATLEY 6: So you've been reduced to namecalling me? How you degrade yourself, Whatley.

GUY COBURN: I trust you've stopped looking for someone to share a room with at Denvention by now. // "Strategy" in Hearts, if it exists, has been reserved for more skilled players than I am. I, for one, noticed you had a low score, but since I got into the finals primarily by avoiding taking points (rather than ruthlessly and skillfully unloading the queen of spades on deserving victims) I could only continue to try and hold out in hopes that the rest of you would eat more points faster. It didn't work, because Guy kept insisting on biting the bitch every hand. Consequently the game ended before Inzer or I could recover from your skill in evading points.

CECIL HUTTO: I saw SOB on a double bill with STRIPES, having wanted to see the latter and knowing no one who did. Julie Andrews' tits did a lot less for SOB than a few other pair on display. As for STRIPES, had they made the film which is advertised in the trailer,

they'd have done well. I thought the plot was: an Army experiment where a company of recruits trains itself. Hardly so in the film. And the Czechoslovakian mayhem is simply stupid -- beyond silly, beyond pointless, simply stupid. What is so funny about blasting the shit out of a bunch of people?

DICK LYNCH: "At any rate, it won't appear here, but those of you who are in SFPA (and also in LASFAPA, if I can get it done in time) will ultimately see it." I have seldom seen anyone so ungraciously write off an apa as third in his priorities. You can read my mailing comments on your zine in Lasfapa and Sfpa. If you can find a zine of mine in there.

DICK LYNCH: So I lied. // Getting back to logic, do you equate the experience of a con chairman who ran a Leprecon, DeepSouthCon, MileHiCon, Midwestcon or a Chattacon, where attendance ranges from 125 to under 500, with the experience of a con chairman who ran Westercon, Norwescon, Boskone, Balticon or Windycon where attendance ranges from 900 to 2500? There are some regionals smaller than the average Lasfs meeting. Perhaps you would expand on what valuable experience you think the leader of a regional gets that is independent of size. What I have in mind about the Atlanta bid is that nobody living in the host city who's on the bid flyer in this mailing has been responsible for a con size 800 or above. Up to a certain level, fewer demands are made on the organizers. Above the 800 level (certainly at the 1000 and above) another magnitude of organization is involved. // Just what did you enjoy at Iguanacon that the committee had a direct bearing on? I know plenty of people who enjoyed themselves at con, simply because it was there, and the people were there. Recall, too, how many functions were farmed out by the committee. Ted Pauls organized the hucksters. Boston ran the masquerade. Hillis orchestrated the awards ceremony. The Moores ran the art show (poorly, considering how little it was open). Further, very little of the Iggy bid committee lasted to the end -- many other more experienced people threw in their lot to save the event in the last six months before Iggy. // What sense does it make to disregard the experience of the bidding committee, just because they will probably be rescued if they self-destruct? I don't think you would offer this bland naivete about a non-Southern bid. // I found your exposition on "scientific creationism" defects to be fascinating. // Assuming I understand your comment about the use of Gestetners, I think I did run the cover like that. But there is clearly room for improvement. // Movie promos were funny.

DAN TAYLOR: When I saw RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK a second time, I did not notice the matte lines I complained of in my review. One must conclude either that I was wrong the first time, or they upgraded the prints in distribution (and the preview print was defective). // I was at a theater (a multiplex) when the concession stand decided it needed more supplies. It turned out their storage room was the space between the screen and the outer wall. The screen was not entirely opaque. Therefore, superimposed on ARTHUR was the silhouette of two boys handcarting cylinders of cola base away, plus all the special effects of doors locking and unlocking, wheels squeaking, and, of course, their witty repartee.

JIM COBB: Thanks for mentioning SPACE MAIL. I wasn't aware of it. Stories done in the form of exchanges of correspondence have often amused me. The Kelvin Throop stories appearing in ANALOG during Campbell's last years as editor were usually quite funny.

SUE PHILLIPS: Denvention a mutual masturbation party? Does this belie the claims of those attendees who mutually went all the way? // Aha!// I'm proud that Guy went and defended his title against the Jaws of Southern Hearts, Lon Atkins. // Lon a quiet hearts player? Were the rest of the people throwing rabid fits? Lon is usually the needler and agitator supreme. // Of course, we're strictly holding you to those promised mailing comments...

EVE ACKERMAN: Your warning about the proper time to call planted the seed of a thought (but far from taking action) to cheerfully phone you at 10:01 pm and tape the fireworks. This tape might become as popular among MYRIADans as a certain tape is among Dodger fans. Several years ago when Dave Kingman hit 3 home runs in one game off Dodger pitchers, a reporter strolled up to Lasorda for a postgame interview and asked Tommy for his opinion. Replied Lasorda, "What did I think of Kingman's performance? What the bleep do you think I thought of Kingman's performance. What the bleep..." and it goes downhill from there for about two solid minutes. // Howard a highly-rated cantor? What other talents haven't we heard of? That's pretty interesting. // For a second I thought your letter was serious. Then for another second I thought: maybe that letter's not serious but she really does mail it to cops. And then I thought... // Try charities with what? I'm nearer to applying to them than donating to them. // How are men supposed to be fruitful and multiply without volunteers? I mean, and succeed. Remember, I work in Hollywood, which is where all the failed efforts come to live... (With any luck we won't see a second transsexual in here verifying its medical deductions... One was enough.)

STVEN CARLBERG: The secret to why I said nothing about your guacamole nachos is that I evaded the offer to eat some of them. It's a difficult technique, but I found it has helped me out of similar situations as when I found myself at a dope party for Judith Merrill... Basically I kept passing the joint every time it came to my spot at the table. Although I simply didn't want to smoke the stuff, I also figured it was a bad time to try, and wind up coughing my guts up (which at least is my reaction to smoking tobacco). But serially, frelk -- I went up to visit Fran Skene last year, who picked me up at the airport and promptly went to a nonfan party of about eight people including Merrill whom they are able to import to Vancouver whenever their library district funds a visit from a "living Canadian writer". (Don't mind me -- I'm not implying that anyone would want to be visited by a dead Canadian writer.) They were passing the evening with cold cuts, tequila, and in closing, some well-traveled weed that Fran had unintentionally smuggled across the border twice. // Yes, that was the point I was making about subliminal frames. // Oneupsmanship in CoAs -- the range of your creativity is astonishing.

JANICE GELB: I'm waiting to see whether you make good on your plan to quit out of sheer boredom this mailing before I say anything

judgmental. // Meantime, if you're looking for a reference to "Call me Ishmael" (a guess, since I don't recall the item which instigated your ct Schlosser), there is a Silverberg story which uses the same beginning line. It's uttered by a dolphin. I don't remember the title.

CLIFF BIGGERS: Having read your mc, when I encountered Centipede in a 7-11 market I squandered a quarter on it. It's got some interesting variations on targeting, though it seemed a lot like Space Invaders in its basic design. (Firing from a fixed emplacement at the bottom margin of the screen, against an approaching creature which destroys you when it reaches you.) One thing Pac-Man still has over Centipede is the former's innate silliness in contrast with the Thunder and Lightning Ragnarok overtones of most video arcade games. // I picked up the Othello cartridge for my parents' Atari. They play quite a bit of Backgammon, so I thought another board game might hook them. It seems to have done so. The computer's play is brutally efficient -- much better than in Video Chess. // The computer's play in Video Chess, at any level I've had the patience to try, is merely adequate in a defensive position, while confused and blundering when it has the initiative. Video Chess has eight levels of skill, calling for increasingly long response times up to 10 hours average. I've tried up to level 3, and the quality of play seems no different, only my concentration is broken by the interminable waits, thus diluting my effectiveness. // The bad feelings in Myriad eventually take care of themselves. What I find of long-run concern are these items. (1) The condition of the treasury -- deceased. (2) The general disappearance of mailing comments, even from the zines of supposed fresh blood. (3) The switch away from assembling zines into a volume. (4) Excessive boiler plate -- clubzines, flyers, convention paraphernalia -- which amount to 94 pages in this mailing out of 297. (5) Various members' demotion of Myriad to a low priority for contribution once they get involved in SFPA or LASFAPA. (Curiously, despite my comment to Dick Lynch above, he seems comparatively little affected by this when placed alongside a number of others in the same boat.) // While I've been blatting about worldcon bids and committees and experience, I've recently discovered something to be humble about. Just in case LA wins the '84 worldcon, positions and persons for the operating committee are being put forward. Co-chair Craig Miller revealed to me that I will be asked to do on-site publications. This means, run the daily newzine. Shows what a swath I've cut in the last 7 years of working on cons... Actually I had always assumed that there was no escaping an arduous and responsible job on the committee -- now I don't know whether to be insulted, or relieved... // The PO keeping a list of what entities get mail at your address is not exactly a manifestation of Big Brother in all his shining splendor. I suspect it's a bureaucratic response to high turnover in residences -- to know which recipients are current, and not to deliver misdirected mail. // If I adhered to your plan, I would wind up opening a correspondence with Whatley that would simply continue to give him what he craves and deprive me of the peace which I value. // Hm, I find my reaction to your view of Hlavaty rather trivial. That is, the only thing I would argue about is the decade. Hlavaty is very much the Seventies to me -- looking out for number one,

interested not in changing the system but simply avoiding it, prone to disavow religion by embracing baroque parodies (neo-paganism) unlike the Sixties, which seemed characterized by simplifying religion, or at least informalizing parts of established religions. Perhaps your opinion was influenced by a recent issue of DR, which included a Menckenesque attack on puritanism, and a review of "sexual revolutions" which would have suited UC Berkeley in the early 60s with a few four-letter words salted in? I didn't think they were "typical Hlavaty", and wondered if he was moving in a different direction.

DAVID SCHLOSSER: I'm voting for RAIDERS for the Hugo, myself. In my opinion, it's far superior to SUPERMAN II. // Did Lee finally get around to admitting it was a personality clash? I certainly made that observation to him often enough. // If you recall Cantor's behavior when he joined AZAPA, you'll know why I zone out when he starts to explain his theory of apac. In general, I consider his tenure in Lasfapa a tribute to the belief that as long as the mailings go out on time, the OE has no more influence on events than any other individual member. Marty is a very efficient OE, from what I've seen, but Lasfapa is blessed that he can only suggest, not legislate, the sort of civil war he finds interesting.

MIKE RAUB: Bless you -- mailing comments by an aspiring member. (Same benediction should go to Schlosser, for that matter). // When I spent a year in Ohio, I got the impression that there was a much higher acceptance of processed food. This is probably not mysterious -- a good salad bar is much more expensive in a region where fresh lettuce etc. has to be shipped in from a distance. LA is only a couple hours by truck from a year-round agricultural cornucopia. But setting that aside, I was still interested in the higher enthusiasm for junk food shown by the average midwesterner. They seemed less contaminated by the macrobiotic guilt trip which plagues LA. They also were tolerant of some things -- like Campbell's simulation of chili -- that I regarded an insult to good taste. // In Calif. groceries are bagged. One market chain named itself "Shopping Bag". // What do they call those humongus radios in your town? Out here my favorite nickname is "ghetto blaster".

NOSTALGIA FOR THE FUTURE: Make that 98 pages of boiler plate.

DEBORAH CLAYPOOL: The pool water turns emerald green after a storm? What kind of pollution have you people got back there? // Is your pinball vs. video games view an extension of something McLuhanesque? The tv screen is all-absorbing. The pinball machine is nearly so, but people can at least crowd around to ooh and ahh more easily if they are inclined. Maybe the plethora of mechanical background noise pleases you more than the 60 cycle hum of tv?

JANET LYONS: Wish you luck on your med school applications. // Right, it's how old you act. Unfortunately, I've been acting like 55 since I turned 28... // THE FACE OF BATTLE is a book that goes far to illustrate the experience of combat in three different eras for those who haven't lived it. The first segment describes archeological evidence of a Swede/Russian battlefield of the middle ages -- all the gruesomeness of Excalibur, but in 95 degree heat.

LLEWOH HCIR: The zip in SoD 27 (91342) is the same one Sylmar has had ever since the digits were invented. Explanation? Beats me. // Having finally played the Missile Command Atari cartridge, I agree that it is not as sophisticated as the arcade version. It's amusing enough to be worth playing, but not enough that I would shell out for it as I did Othello, or Video Chess. I expect to pick up Asteroids eventually. // Not reading something doesn't make it go away. Besides, when one announces that one will no longer read a certain person's contributions -- that person still gets plenty of mailing comments which are inconvenient to stop reading. It's a real case of slicing off your nose to spite your face. Even if I was inclined to quit reading Whatley's zine (not the case) I'd just do it, not bother to advertise it. // Yes, I recall the American History animation set to Classical Gas. There, overload was the difficulty (and intent), not the perception of single-frame images. But you're right, it's probably visual retention that permits the brain to interpret the image, and this is prevented by a succession of brief and varied images. // Yaz, but in all legalistic technical perfection, the ratio of usage on my typewriter and ribbon between by fan stuff and my "pro" stuff is extremely low on the pro side, leaving an insignificant deduction. This is not to say that in reality such hairsplitting is either desirable or required. // Ct Janice -- Hear hear! Isn't it nice to discover that your alleged friendship hinges solely on your capacity to entertain and amuse? Do try and be more witty, won't you Rich? Sheesh. I can't read the mailings, what with the snoring!

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