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Ronald Rabbit is a Dirty Old Man (1971), by Lawrence Block, is an X-rated classic in many ways a companion volume to Westlake's *Adios Scheherazade* and Dresner's *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books*. In those two the authors write about their years writing adult books. This is more of the same, although Block has changed it to a children's magazine, *Ronald Rabbit's Magazine for Boys and Girls*. Block's alter ego here is named Laurence Clarke. Hilariously nasty.

--Lynn Munroe, *List 24*, 1993

THIS ISSUE OF *e/* is a bit unusual...it's going in a different direction. Flashback to the past, to those glorious pulp fiction magazines of the 1950s, to 1958 to be specific. This issue celebrates those pulps, and two quite exceptional pulp writers who went on to become the best there is, Grand Masters of their genres.

Toward that end, I asked Alan White to go in a different direction for the ecover of this ezine. I said I needed something pulpish and 1958ish and all about detective stories and crime and... And he did that. Here, in all its glory, is Alan's artwork created just for the cyberspace cover of this issue of *e/*:

THIS ISSUE OF *e/* is dedicated to four old friends from The Porno Factory: Lawrence Block, Don Elliott, Andrew Shaw, and Robert Silverberg. There doesn't need to be a reason.

In the world of science fiction, it is also dedicated to Bruce R. Gillespie and the effort to Bring Bruce Bayside, a worthy cause to bring Gillespie from his home in Australia to the Bay Area next February for Corflu and Potlatch 2005. It is also in memory of Johannes Berg, Jerry Burge, and Roger Dee.

As always, everything in this issue of *e/* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at earlkemp@citlink.net and thank you in advance for all your help.

You are also encouraged to check out my website at <http://www.earlkemp.com> and the special roast site at <http://www.earlkemp75.com> for your continuing enjoyment.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *e/* whatever it is. And also, Dave Locke continues as *e/* Grand Quote Master. You will find his assembled words of wisdom separating the articles throughout this issue of *e/*, as well as his long-awaited fan masterpiece, "Thru A Glass, Greenly," that also sports artwork by the very same Dave Locke.

Other than Bill Burns and Dave Locke, these are the people who made this issue of *e/* possible: Victor J. Banis, Victor Berch, Lawrence Block, Robert Bonfils, Richard Brandt, Bruce Brenner, John Foyster, Bruce Gillespie, Dwain Kaiser, Arnie Katz, Lynn Munroe, Yvonne Rousseau, Robert Silverberg, and Robert Speray.

ARTWORK: This issue of *e/* features original artwork by Dave Locke and Alan White, and recycled artwork by William Rotsler and David Russell.

One cardinal rule of marriage should never be forgotten: "Give little, give seldom, and above all, give grudgingly." Otherwise, what could have been a proper marriage could become an orgy of sexual lust.

--Ruth Smythers, *Marriage advice for women*, 1894



...Return to sender, address unknown.... 6

The Official *e/* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp



We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to earlkemp@citlink.net or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Just to prove it, this is the official Letter Column of *e/*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *e/*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *e/* so you can look for them when they appear here.

Saturday March 27, 2004

Just finished reading your Corflu report....how nice! I enjoyed it a lot, and thank you for the kind words directed my way.

You seem to have exactly the feeling about it that I do. Corflu is a family reunion, a gathering of my most beloved friends. I don't care where it is, or what the hotel is like, or how the food is...that's all icing on the cake. What counts with me is being with the people I love, and the hours are never long enough to make me tire of their company!

I am so glad you found the same. I knew you would; I knew you and I would be seeing the same charm in the gathering.

It's a funny thing, but a couple of weeks or so back, someone sent me one of those round robins that continually encircle the Internet. This one had, among its questions, one that inquired, "Where is your favorite place to be." Even knowing my correspondents would be unlikely to recognize my references, I replied, "At Corflu, sitting between Robert and Ted, with rich brown directly across from me, with Andy right over there, and Frank (Lunney) over here; with Lenny sitting in the corner, and Arnie leaning over to say something; with Ken and Ben and Tom cutting up over there, and YOU right over there where I can smile at you." It is true; I feel happier in that circle than anywhere else...the only thing that even compares is sitting in the circle in Oklahoma with my brother's family.

Everything else, food and drink and smoke and some really great fanzines, is secondary to my pleasure of being among my friends at Corflu.

And I hope it's not as long till I see you again, Earl, as it was since I saw you the last time.

--Joyce Katz

A mini LoC for Earl:

"It had been *mas o menos* 25 years since I attended my last science fiction related convention."

Simple math would put your "last science fiction related convention" in 1979. But we saw each other at the 1982 Chicon....

--Ted White

I don't think Donald wrote that many of the books, Earl. He fairly early on stopped writing them himself and leased out the name. Unless he's confirmed your list, I wouldn't put much credence in it. As far as the putative textual analysis, Jesus, we told the ghosts what to put in to make it look like our work.

--Larry Block

Tuesday March 30, 2004

No way in the world I can keep up with your production. So I just flit around cherry picking, and I like it.

--Jerry Murray

Wednesday March 31, 2004

It was great to meet you at Corflu. Of course, at that time I hadn't seen your email, nor your fanzine, as I'd been off the Internet since January. I really should schedule frequent visits to Bill Burns' site, rather than just going to specific links when I receive an email.

If Jon Stopa thinks the USA looks like it exists in an alternate universe, he should consider how it looks to those of us from outside the USA.

Paradise Acres sounds like Sun Valley, a morning mist shrouded valley off the main road in the Blue Mountains. You would see the real estate agents taking buyers there mid afternoon, after the mists had burnt off in the midday sun.

When I moved to this small apartment, I was able to send the remains of my fanzine collection to the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. However the odd paper fanzine still struggles in, and I simply have no space to keep them. It is one of the reasons I prefer eFanzines, despite the poor response rate.

Talk of large English estates reminds me of the perils of actually owning enough of a house to continually misplace things. I once had the equivalent of a six-bedroom house. In the usually fannish fashion, it was bulging with paper. Some things I could find. I always filed non-fiction books by Dewey system order. Fanzines by the name of the editor. Fiction by the name of the author or editor as appropriate. However once a book got misfiled, it was invisible. Non-paper was far worse, with items disappearing for years at a time. Now that all my stuff is restricted to pretty much a single room ... I find I still lose things ... however I don't have as much area to search! Why, within a mere three days of returning home from Corflu I've discovered all except one of the things I lost in January when we left home.

--Eric Lindsay

Saturday April 3, 2004

Every so often -- most recently at the Toronto filkcon that put me in touch with you -- I'm pressured to join First Fandom (auxiliary, one presumes) and/or Corflu. I find both ideas amusing. Sitting around playing "remember when" isn't my bag. I enjoy the long view, and with filkers, many of whom are extremely well versed in history, I get both the past and future. We can speculate musically where we're going because we have a vivid idea of where we've been...but there's "no future in the past," unless you're a history prof or writing historical novels. It's a delight being the den mother of this bunch of musically involved people from 16 to 60. Especially when I startle them by bopping along with their parodies of the latest rock hits.

When I moved to London, OH I went to the local senior center -- once. Quite enough, thank you. What a bunch of unwrapped mummies. Aches, pains, and "oh, she died last year," and "whatever became of...?". Please spare me.

Re your ezine...interested in the comments about Economous. If we -- Coulsons and DeWeeses -- had been tipped off about Phyllis' particular hang-up, we probably would have refused to go to that New Year's Eve blizzard party. None of us tolerated that sort of nonsense. Which also harks to your reference to Beastley's on the Bayou. Another occasion where the "race problem" cropped up its enormously hideous head. Lee Anne Tremper (now Lavell) and I traveled there on the bus (bugged all the way by Ray Beam) and were to meet Buck, Gene DeWeese, and mutual northern Indiana fan friend Bev Clarke there. They never showed.

Near midnight I finally got a phone call at the hotel. Gene, calling from Indiana, explaining what happened. Until



then, I had been worried sick they'd had a wreck en route. Nobody, and I mean NOBODY, answered my constant questions all day and evening as to whether the threesome had arrived, though I learned much later that any number of fans I asked, including Harlan, knew EXACTLY what had transpired when Buck, Gene, and Bev arrived at Beastley's before the bus carrying Lee Anne and me did. They were refused admittance. Bev is brown. Gorgeous, modest, polite, well educated, and still a very good friend, and unquestionably a "person of color" in the euphemistic terminology. (Both widows, now, though she's recently remarried, we regularly continue to exchange missives, phone calls, encouragement, cheerings up, and share decades of good feelings.)

Those fans, and I know they were out there, who immediately assumed that two white male fans in the company of a black female fan were up to hanky panky were not only totally wrong, they reflected their own vast, ugly prejudice-locked attitudes onto others. There was never anything between Bev Clarke and the guys. The guys sure WANTED there to be, but Bev had no interest in them, and if she had, her mother would have killed her and both white males; prejudice can cut both ways.

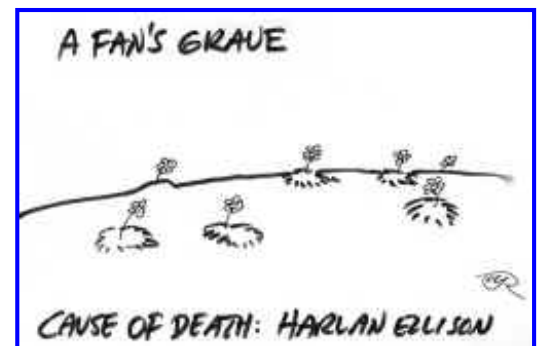
Ms Beastley took one look at Bev and said there was no single room at the inn. Buck had made reservations well in advance for two rooms: a double for the guys, a single for Bev. After Ms. Beatley's decision the guys said okay: give the lady the double and we'll sleep in the car. At which point NOBODY had a room. A number of fans stood around the front desk listening to this. Harlan fulminated he'd expose Beastley's outrageous behavior in *SF Dimensions*, and that all fandom would be plunged into war. (Obviously, Harlan never followed through. Which is why for the rest of his life Buck had little to no respect for Harlan. We both were gifted/cursed with VERY long memories and the ability to carry grudges when well deserved.) Buck, Gene, and Bev got back in

Buck's car and he drove back to Indiana. As he told me later, he was so furious that he was in absolutely no danger of falling asleep at the wheel. He delivered Bev Clarke back safe and sound (and dead tired) to her mother in Culver, IN, Gene to his rural residence in Rochester, IN, then drove back to Silver Lake, IN. By then it was Sunday. He was still wide awake and furious and burned off his rage in writings he never published or mailed (unlike certain other members of the fan family). In addition, he took special care to write a profusely abject letter of apology to Bev Clarke's mother (Bev was a minor, at the time), blaming himself and his color-blind assumptions for having caused the mess. He should have known such assholes (politely phrased) as Ms Beastley existed and he should have anticipated the horrible likelihood of such a person turning them away even before they'd undertaken the trip to Indian Lake. So much for happy hopes of a fun weekend.

(Apologizing earned him a lot of points with Mrs. Clarke, though never enough to soften her attitudes about interracial dating one whit. Our get togethers with Bev Clarke were always group fan affairs, such as the '54 trip to Philly Worldcon - Bev, her friend Ed (female) Turner, me, Gene, Buck, and Bob Briney. Bev Clarke never became an active fan, and after her experience at Beastley's, one certainly understands why. Fandom was not a warm place for anyone who wasn't white in the 50's...and on through the decades. Another Bev (DeWeese, nee Amers) and I were active in civil rights on campus before Selma and Montgomery, so I've been angry about this situation a long, LONG time.)

Anyway, vivid memories like that - and encountering far too often First Fandom types who carry exactly the same attitudes as Ms. Beastley - does not make me want to go back and play "gee, those were the good old days of fandom" games.

Feedback and communication, which seem to be the ne plus ultra for most of the Corflu crowd, were never what producing a fanzine was about, to me. That was Buck's bag, and you know how important he thought fanzines were. To me, producing a fanzine was a craft. Proofreading, doing a good job cutting the artwork, making sure there weren't any upside down pages, etc., etc., etc. I was the publisher, not the editor. When publishing was no longer fun and we had other fish to fry and heavy problems in our lives, it was no problem to give up *Yandro*. Harder for Buck than for me, I admit. I'd done everything I'd wanted to do in publishing. I have no problems communicating with people in person, by letter, and now by e-mail. I didn't need all the aggravations and trouble and expense of putting out an amateur magazine as a platform.



There it is. If I sound sour, I sometimes am. But not when it comes to music. In the musical branch of fandom, I'm still 17 going on 71 and loving it.

--Juanita Coulson

[Juanita, can I print this as an LoC to e/ please? -Earl Kemp]

Sunday April 4, 2004

In Harlan's defense, I would add that he DID fulminate and object loudly to the treatment Beastley's handed out, even if, for whatever eventual reasons, he was unable to follow through in publishing anything to that effect. His behavior in that respect was fine, as opposed to other fans encountered then and since, whose attitude was wonderment that WE were outraged, asking why were we surprised? Of COURSE Beastley's wouldn't "contaminate" their wonderful establishment by letting in...well...you know. Another prominent fan of that era, when we inquired in advance about his con's and his hotel's position, was outraged in the opposite direction from Harlan's: he was terrified and angry that we would "put his con at risk" by "threatening" to bring one of "those" to the con -- afraid that our doing so would give the hotel an excuse to cancel the con's contract and thus get everyone thrown out. As a result, we boycotted that con for several years, until the law and a younger con com and a move to a different hotel made the boycott moot.

Incidentally, I went through even more ugly and outrageous situations at my alma mater, which continues to send me the alumni mag full of glowing retro articles on how much fun the '50's were on campus and how everyone who graduated then should send nostalgia pieces to confirm their charming take on the era. I sent a blistering up close and personal "I was there, Charlie" e-mail telling them EXACTLY how it was, pointing out that the decade, on campus and nearby, had HUGE ugly racial prejudice pockmarks all over its HAPPY DAYS face. I didn't receive the dignity of a reply. Don't disturb the retro freaks with facts, I guess.

Feel free to print. I didn't DNQ. I have enough years to be retrospective, but I'm still bitter about some things, understandably. Which might explain my jaundiced view of glowing recruitment campaigns for First Fandom. It wasn't all fun, games, and brotherhood of fandom, guys. Not even close, truth to be told. ZOMBIES OF THE GENE POOL may have exaggerated, but McCrumb didn't miss the mark by so many yards, after all.

--Juanita Coulson

Today's link is a fun one, it leads to Earl Kemp's latest issue of e*I. The part that I think will be of greatest interest to writers who visit this journal will be the last feature in the issue--an in-house style sheet for Greenleaf Classics. Don't know what that is? They were one of the main purveyors of... well, to put it bluntly... dirty books in the 60s and 70s. The style sheet, however, will be of interest because much of what it says applies still today as far as good writing style is concerned. For the more prurient, there is an interesting list of accepted spellings of words which is somewhat revealing when you take Greenleaf's specialty into account. (It's also interesting to note that straight-sex books were shorter than the gay-sex books, and that chapters had to be twelve--exactly.)

Other items of interest in e*I include an article on Bela Lugosi, bad writing, soft-core porn novels, and an excellent couple of articles touching upon Weird Tales.

Enjoy!

--John Teehan, *Journalscape*

Monday April 5 2004

I am a longtime paperback collector, historian and reader. I primarily collect what are now considered "sleaze" titles from the 1960's like the ones you helped publish when you were at Greenleaf. I think your website and fanzine is amazing. I also appreciate what you did in regards to the Illustrated Guide you helped publish back in 1970 for the Presidential Pornography Report. It was a heroic effort against censorship and for free speech.

Thank you and once again, thank you for the wonderful website and wealth of information and commentary you provide.

--L. Truman Douglas

Sunday May 2, 2004

My apologies, I've been meaning to send you this ever since I read e/13 on Westlake et.al.

I think you did an excellent job on this and I always really enjoy your e-zine. Keep up the good fight.

I see that my usual muddy style confused you on one point I wish to clarify. You got the idea from me that *Circle of Sinners* was the "collaboration by committee" book. This is incorrect. Dresner told me it was an example of a collaboration, but only between Dresner and Block. Because Dresner asked me not to be specific or reveal too much about Block or others, I couldn't go into more detail then.

The other book, the one written by committee at the poker game, remains a guarded secret. Because Dresner said the lead character was in the Armed Services, I have long suspected that *A Girl Called Honey* "by Sheldon Lord and Alan Marshall", about an AWOL Air Force man, might be that book. But I have no confirmation on that from any of the authors. You are welcome to ask them.

--Lynn Munroe

Tuesday May 4, 2004

I believe I did meet Martha Beck at one point in my strange fannish career. We did make it down to two Midwestcons, and it may have been at one of those get togethers. Sometimes, you never really know who a person is (or who their dear friends say they are) until they are gone, and the friends emerge to mourn and reminisce. Right now, I am thinking of two fannish deaths, Shirley Maiewski and Johannes Berg, two friends from two completely different areas of fandom.

Dirce Archer was right about fandom...it should be diluted, or perhaps in its strongest form, eyedropped into water for a weak solution....

Passing along a message from you to Juanita Coulson at FilKONtario this year was a laugh. Her eyes bugged open, and she said, "Earl Kemp...well, that's a name I haven't heard in a long time." I hope you've been able to correspond with her.

--Lloyd Penney

That one's cause will succeed because it ought to succeed is perhaps the most general and invincible folly affecting the human judgment. Politics is a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles.

--Ambrose Bierce

All Fandom in Peril

Faan Fiction with a Message

By Arnie Katz

"This must be stopped!" thundered the deep, muffled voice from beneath the crimson cowl that marked the short, but powerfully built man as the person in charge. "That is essential to our plan to demoralize and destroy Fandom!"

Murmurs of assent rippled through the paneled conference room. If the Leader - no one living knew his name - thought it was that important, then they thought so, too. Even those who actually thought about it could see that, whereas they had a completely and totally fool-proof plan yesterday, today the Leader declared that there was something out there that could stop it. That had to be significant.



Arnie Katz at Corflu 04. Photo by Bill Burns.

The group didn't have a name. The Leader had agonized about the matter and it had, in fact, delayed the implementation of his Ultimate Plan to Dissolve Fandom by at least two months. Wracked by embarrassing indecision. He had riffed through hundreds of names. Yet after considering "the something-something Liberation Front," "the yadda-yadda consortium" and other equally unsatisfactory names, the Leader had decided to plunge ahead without adopting a formal name. It had worked for The Band; it could work for their secret society.

The name of the group was, in fact, almost the only thing about which the members of the cabal did not agree. Some thought it should be "The Southgate Illuminati," except that they weren't in Southgate. And moreover, a few of them kept asking what the plan to destroy and demoralize fandom had to do with light bulbs.

Others in the group favored "The Secret Master of Fandom." The problem with that, detractors pointed out, was that they'd have to change it again when

Fandom ceased to exist on March 1, 2005.

The Leader thought figuring out a suitable impressive title for himself should take top priority. Director General? Lord Chancellor? Grand Cyclops? None seemed to fit his personality or his role in the group as originator and chief executive office of the Ultimate Plan to Demoralize and Destroy Fandom.

"You may ask what is this sudden danger that menaces our grand design," he said, because he had actually heard at least three of the robed figures mutter exactly that. "The danger comes from one unexpected source, a factor that did not exist when I created the Ultimate Plan."

"No one could have foreseen it," the blue-cowled figure at the opposite end of the table put in quickly. The leader didn't know what his own title should be, but he had already unofficially dubbed this man as Chief Toady. Of course, he hadn't yet shared that information with the person in question.

"Thank you for that vote of confidence," he said, acknowledging the support. "The truth we must face is that the danger is there now and must be eradicated before it frustrates our plan." He looked slowly, searchingly around the room. "We must stop the BBB Fund!"

"The BBB Fund?" the rest of the group echoed.

"Yes, the Bring Bruce Bayside Fund is all that stands between us and Immanentizing the Fannish Eschaton."

"Can one thing like this really derail our foolproof plan?" asked his smart young male assistant who sat at his right hand at the large, oak conference table.

"It is the key," explained the Leader, "the absolute key."

"How can that be?" wondered his less-smart, but exceptionally well built young female assistant who sat within reach of his left hand under the table.

"If the BBB Fund succeeds, then Fandom will have successfully united to bring Bruce R. Gillespie to Corflu and Potlatch in San Francisco at the end of February 2005," the Leader said as he tried to stare down the front of her enticingly low-cut robe. Then he recalled the extreme severity of the situation and admonished himself for allowing his attention to wander. *Plenty of time for that*, he assured himself, *after Fandom is dead, buried, and forgotten.*

"He's only one fan," his male assistant blurted. "What can one fan, even this Bruce R. Gillespie, do to prevent the grisly and permanent death of All Known Fandom?"

"Nothing by himself, but he is not just any fan. "Bruce R. Gillespie is a fan paragon, despite his use of the middle initial," the Leader declared, "Think of the effect his presence would have on the fanzine fans at Corflu and the serious science fiction fans at Potlatch!"

"In what way?" asked his female assistant.

"He combines the stfnal and the fannish in one outstanding fan," the Leader resumed. "If he is in San Francisco before we trigger our Plan to Demoralize and Destroy Fandom, he could stop it in its tracks!"

"What can we do?" his two assistants chorused.

"We can prevent fandom from finding out that they can help raise the \$2,500," said the Leader. Shocked gasps filled the room. Was that paltry sum all it would take to bring Bruce R Gillespie, middle initial and all, to Corflu and Potlatch? This posed a serious threat to the plan. If they don't know to send their donations to Joyce Katz at 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107" or that they can write to Arnie Katz at crossfire4@cox.net for more information, they might not raise the money."

"Is that all we have to do?"

"No, it will be somewhat more complicated," the Leader admitted, "we might have to take out the fanzine editors who are publicizing the BBB Fund, including that pesky Bill Burns at eFanzines.com, where he posts *The BBB Bulletin* with all the latest fan news."

"If those foolish fans don't contribute to the BBB Fund, Bruce R. Gillespie will be home in Australia next February and nothing will be able to stop the Ultimate Plan for the Demoralization and Destruction of Fandom," the Chief Toady exulted.

#

Will fans send their contributions to the BBB Fund?

Will Bruce R. Gillespie come to Corflu and Potlatch?

Will he drop that middle initial?

The answers to these and many other questions, dear fans, are up to *you!*



"My mother, me, and my sister Jeanette. Photo by my sister Robin Mitchell, July 2002." -Bruce Gillespie

I was once asked to provide a quote for a Christian novel by Roger Elwood. He was astounded when I pointed out I wasn't Christian. And that Zeus was about as real to me as Jehovah.

--Robert Silverberg, online chat, 1999

[The following article was written in Australian (mostly British) English. Every effort has been made to retain this language intact and to not translate it into US English. --Earl Kemp]

'Wake Up, You Lot!'

John Foyster as Science Fiction Critic

By Bruce Gillespie

I



Elaine Cochran Gillespie and Bruce Gillespie.
Photo (nd) by Jeanette Gillespie.

Why speak about a period in the history of science fiction in Australia, especially a period in the mid to late sixties and early seventies before some people in this room were born?

First, because events in science fiction today in Australia in many ways are a direct result of events in that far-off era. In 1966, John Foyster began a range of activities in Australian SF that led to the holding of the first Australian World Convention in Melbourne in 1975, and that in turn generated the vast ripple of SF enthusiasm that has spread out continually during the last twenty years.

Second, because one of the most important events of the late sixties - the rise of SF criticism in Australia - has become very reduced in importance since the 1970s. Most SF activity today in Australia is devoted to the writing and publishing of science fiction itself, not reviews and criticism of the field.

Thirty years ago, the opposite was true. We had a few writers, some of whom had a little bit of success. Our SF critics were known throughout the world, and John Foyster was one of the best known of them. Today, Britain is the hotbed of SF criticism, and Australia has slipped behind. In losing John Foyster in 2003, we lost one of the great leaders in our field here. In this talk I want to give some idea of what he achieved.

At the end of the 1960s, John Foyster was known throughout the science fiction world as one of its best critics, yet today it would be hard to find evidence of his work. *Exploring Cordwainer Smith*, a booklet of criticism and interviews based on Foyster's investigations, is still mentioned in bibliographies of works about Smith, yet Foyster's most extensive body of writing dealt with the work of Samuel R. Delany and J.G. Ballard. Only readers who have access to both series of *Australian Science Fiction Review* (1966-70 and 1986-92) and several other publications of the late sixties and early seventies (especially *SF Commentary*, *Science Fiction Review* and *Speculation*) can gain an insight into Foyster's contribution to SF criticism.

Foyster's approach, which is the subject of this essay, would now be regarded as old-fashioned because he expected science fiction writers to write well-made stories and interesting prose and readers to be able to judge whether or not a story was much good. Foyster didn't think most SF writers were much good at writing, and he said so. Because of his refusal to 'run a line' - to back any particular theory of literary criticism - his work could not be categorised. It does not fit within today's world of grand theories that reduce writing to merely a type of 'cultural signs'. His heirs are rare, but fortunately one of



Astonished John Foyster. Photo by Lee Harding dated 1962.



Hazel and Dave Langford with John Foyster. Photo by Yvonne Rousseau.

them, David Langford (especially in *Up Through an Empty House of Stars: Reviews and Essays 1980-2002*, Cosmos Books, 2003), is still writing vigorously.

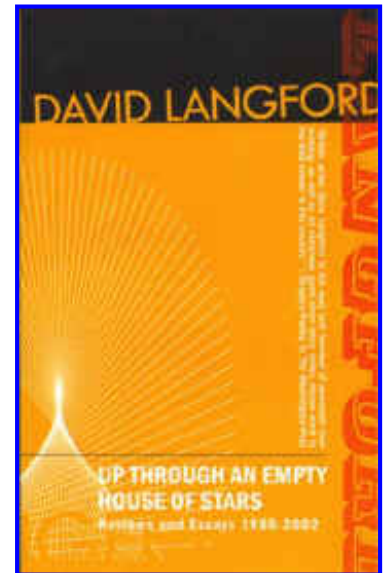
Foyster's work is hardly likely to be kept alive by the writers whose works he wrote about. Foyster pulled no punches, and was as severe on the writing of his friends (especially Lee Harding, Damien Broderick and John Baxter) as on unmet persons from overseas. Harry Warner's protest that writers are 'delicate organisms' only strengthened Foyster's scepticism.

By 1966, writers and

other critics believed that critics should be polite; John Foyster, in print at least, was never polite. He had before him the example of James Blish, whose collected criticism as 'William Atheling Jr' was issued by Advent in 1966 in *The Issue at Hand*. In 1967, the collected essays of Damon Knight, an even more impolite critic, were collected by Advent and issued as *In Search of Wonder*. A similar collection of Foyster's work issued in the early 1970s would no doubt have secured his reputation, but unfortunately no such publication occurred.

Not only was Foyster impolite, but he did his best not to make generalisations about science fiction. As the 1970s proceeded, the practice of the new breed of academic critics was to crush a vast butterfly collection of SF books under the steamroller of critical theory. As SF works suffered under the armies of categorisers and theoreticians, it became increasingly difficult to work out which books were worth reading. Foyster, by contrast, concentrated his critical mind on particular works and authors, leaving one in no doubt as to which were worth reading, and which were not. George Turner, who made his own splash as an SF critic in 1967, called this 'technical criticism', and was proud of writing it.

Foyster didn't give a name to his own method; he just invited people to read books carefully.



I'm writing this essay to make people aware of what they might find if they find and read Foyster's work. Also, I'm expressing a debt of gratitude. Not that John Foyster ever took me aside and said, 'Listen, Gillespie, you really should write this or that way.' Lee Harding, who was better at explaining John Foyster to people than Foyster ever was, once said to me: 'Listen, Bruce, why don't you stop writing academic-style criticism? Look at John Foyster's writing; he says more than you do, says it better, and never uses any academic jargon.' Lo! I looked, and saw that Lee Harding was correct, and that it was possible to explain what you want about a work of fiction without using any academic jargon. Not that my work resembles that of John Foyster, but it quickly cured me of writing English III essays for fanzines.



Lee Harding, John Baxter, and Merv Binns. Photo by Helena Binns dated July 2003.

John Foyster's writing for fanzines falls into two main categories: 'fannish' writing (about fan activities and personal concerns), and reviews and criticism of science fiction magazines, stories and books. The first category makes up most of Foyster's non-professional writing. The second category, SF criticism, occupies two relatively short periods: (a) from 1966 to 1970, in *Australian Science Fiction Review* (the original series) and *exploding madonna/The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology (JOE)*, and (b) from 1986 to 1991, in the second series of *Australian Science Fiction Review*. Yet those periods of intense activity provide a rich lode of material for the discerning reader.



Photo of John Foyster by Lee Harding.

Australian Science Fiction Review began as a result of a discussion at the science fiction convention in Melbourne during Easter 1966. There had been no such convention in Australia since 1958. It was felt that the enthusiasm generated during that convention could best be kept alive by the production of a nationally focused 'small circulation magazine devoted to the discussion of science fiction'. Pressed to become editor of such a magazine, Lee Harding nominated John Bangsund. With John as editor, Lee Harding and John Foyster became the staff of the new magazine, *Australian Science Fiction Review (ASFR)*. The first issue appeared in June 1966.



Rereading my copies of *ASFR* nearly forty years later, I get the impression that at first John Foyster did not expect to write a large number of reviews for the magazine. It was obvious that the staff hoped that most of its contributors would be writers such as Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock, Langdon Jones and John Baxter, the headline acts in No. 1.

Lee Harding writes a fair number of the pages in No. 1 (including the delicious article 'Communist Chulpex Raped My Wife!', a long review of Avram Davidson's *The Masters of the Maze*), and John Foyster opens his account with a review of Philip K. Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which had just been published in a British edition. John does not so much review the book as review the other reviewers, a practice startlingly different from reviews to be found in the overseas professional SF magazines (prozines). As a fanatical Philip K. Dick admirer, I was not much taken with Foyster's dismissal of the book itself (including his assertion that Jack Vance used the drug-reality theme more effectively in 1958 in a story called 'The Men Return'), but was amused to find him wiping the floor with P. Schuyler Miller's

review in *Analog*, Judith Merrill's review in *F&SF* and Algis Budrys's review in *Galaxy*. It was this sort of scepticism that was completely absent in the prozines. At last! I thought, I've found intelligent people who write about science fiction.



Lee Harding.

In *ASFR* 2, August 1966, a reviewing format for the magazine began to take shape. Between them, John Foyster and Lee Harding wrote 10 of the 36 pages, with four more pages written by 'K.U.F. Widdershins' (later revealed to be John Foyster) and 'Alan Reynard' (later revealed to be Lee Harding). Foyster's main piece was a lengthy discussion of four short novels by an author I had never heard of: Dwight V. Swain. My reaction: why bother?

On page 26, K.U.F. Widdershins reviewed Harry Harrison's *Bill, the Galactic Hero*, which has just been released in British hardback. It is not clear whether or not Mr Widdershins likes the book, since the final lines of the review are: 'All in all, this novel must be extremely highly rated, for its entertainment value is "tops". I recommend it strongly to all readers.' This is the tone adopted by reviewers in the prozines of the time. Even the Bruce Gillespie of 1966 could detect some insincerity in the recommendation. John Bangsund writes as a footnote: 'Some readers have complained about Dr

Widdershins's reviews, on the grounds "that he obviously doesn't like sf". I trust the above review will put their minds, so to speak, to rest.'

As the letters of comment, somewhat delayed by the six weeks it took to reach anywhere on the other side of the world, began to pour into *ASFR*, it became clear that the salvo fired constantly at Widdershins and Foyster would be that they didn't like science fiction very much. Playing with that concept became the hallmark of the Foyster/Widdershins persona.

In *ASFR 5*, Widdershins reviewed what would eventually become Keith Roberts' novel *Pavane*. It was appearing as separate stories in the British magazine *Impulse* (the revamped *Science Fantasy*):

The . . . stories . . . [each] deal with an episode in the history of Roberts's England. They cover a couple of generations, and each of them suffers the fault of appearing to be truncated; for each the resolution is unsatisfactory . . . As the series now stands, many questions are unanswered: who are the 'people'? Is Brother John the same man as Sir John the seneschal? (And if not, why not?) We may never discover now the secrets of Cordwainer Smith's world, but let us hope that Keith Roberts will reveal, in time, just what makes his delightful world tick.

In his letter of comment published in *ASFR 9*, April 1967, Keith Roberts writes, among other things:

I've just got to take exception to the Widdershins report, or review, or whatever he calls it, of *Pavane* in issue five. Whoever is lurking behind that noxious pseudonym really should have his head immersed in a vat of treacle, or sheepdip, or whatever bizarre fluid comes most readily to hand Down There. I've read bad reports of my work and I've read downright vindictive ones but I've never come across such an absolute masterpiece of misunderstanding; I'm well aware that widdershins traditionally go backwards but this is really too much . . . Mr Ditherspin successfully confuses the whole issue, with I must admit great skill and economy, before moving on to What I Have To Say . . .

To which Widdershins replies:

So that's how Keith Roberts reacts to a review fairly oozing with praise! May I construct the essence of the review? I suggested that the *Pavane* stories were the best things to come out from *Impulse*. That all the stories were worthy of expansion, and that I looked forward to this. And that I look forward, in general, to seeing more of the same. I did complain that the stories almost seemed cut off in the middle. I am, of course, quite shaken by this. I feel, and felt then, that my review was straightforward unabashed praise. I admit no other interpretation. Roberts has, almost paranoically, misinterpreted and confused what I wrote.

Had Roberts known it, he would be one of the last correspondents to receive a contrite reply from Widdershins or Foyster.

ASFR correspondents, especially well-known SF writers, reacted more and more strongly to reviews by the *ASFR* team (which, after No. 10, included George Turner). John Foyster began to think about reviewing science fiction in a quite different environment, which led him, a year later, to the secret publication of *exploding madonna*.

III

The task of reviewing the SF books that flooded into the *ASFR* offices had deflected Foyster from his true path - writing full-length criticism. The first evidence of the true Foyster can be found in Issue No. 4, October 1966. An etching of Don Quixote bestrides the cover. In that issue, Foyster devotes 19 pages to 'The Editorials of John Campbell'.

To say that I was dismayed when I received that issue is an understatement. But I did for the first time glimpse the possibility offered by the serious fanzine - as a forum for long detailed articles about single subjects.

I was dismayed, then more than now, at Foyster's taking the SF magazines seriously. True, in 1966 the prozines were still the only sources of short fiction in the field, but they were all at such a low ebb, in the quality of both their fiction and non-fiction, that *ASFR* seemed a mighty bolt of inspiration by comparison. John Campbell's *Analog* consisted of little but very boring technologically based stories and dreary right-wing diatribes by the editor or his writers. Production values were high, and *Analog* was the only magazine paying 10 cents a word to authors. But by the mid 1960s, it seemed unlikely that any ambitious writer would send his or her work to Campbell, except for the money.

However, Foyster wrote:

I think this article does make clear my admiration for the man who has edited the best science fiction magazine for almost thirty years. And in his own writings we can see just why his work has been so outstanding.

Campbell is a maverick: he just won't conform to any mould. The result is that somewhere, sometime, he must offend everyone. But he is always interesting, always challenging. One may think that a given article is meaningless twaddle, but one must always admit that it is well-written, interesting twaddle.

I had long since given up on Campbell's editorials as boring twaddle that pandered to his right-wing audience and challenged nobody. The value of Foyster's long article lies in that giveaway line: 'Campbell is a maverick: he just won't conform to any mould. The result is that somewhere, sometime, he must offend everyone.' Did Foyster ever more accurately summarise his own writing career?

IV

Through the end of 1966 and into 1967, I found that I disagreed with Foyster and/or Widdershins most of the time, but also found that his work, and that of other *ASFR* writers, shone as the only light in the murky wood of 1960s science fiction. In particular, I couldn't agree with Foyster's admiration for the works of Samuel R. Delany, an author whose earliest short stories had left me spluttering with exasperation, and whose novels proved unreadable beyond the first page.

Nevertheless, the Foyster-Delany correspondence is one of the most satisfactory aspects of these years, especially as Delany steadfastly refused to be offended by Foyster's taunts and jibes.

Foyster's review of *Babel-17* (*ASFR* 10, June 1967) falls into two parts, a review of the book itself, and a critique of some of Delany's earliest published opinions about SF criticism. Says Foyster of *Babel-17*:

Delany harks back to the old days of sf, when ideas were a dime a dozen and a decent author was not afraid to spend a penny. By comparison with many modern writers, Delany is a positive spendthrift; the material in this novel would provide eight or ten novels for other writers.

It has. Delany's ideas are not new, at least in the sense that they are familiar to readers of sf. At the same time there is a certain freshness about the way they have been handled, as though the author had a deep regard for the stories in which the concepts first appeared. This is not to say that Delany has copied, but rather that he has taken several old strands of ideas and used them to weave a new yarn. As a result, there are strong pieces and weak pieces . . .

Whichever way you slice it, though, *Babel-17* is good reading, as sf. Delany has more than average control over his writing, though a few novels published in *Startling* would have sharpened up a few remaining weaknesses in his writing: a tendency to verbosity, a mild desire to show off, and very occasionally, definite fuzziness around the edges . . . The tendency towards using as many words as possible is understandable when one is paid by the word, but that is not how I understand Ace's method of payment. Nevertheless, no matter how good the author's work (and Delany writes very well), in a story which is basically an adventure yarn, too many words can get in the way. Too many

words can slow the action, or at least throw the reader off the track. I may like what you are writing, Jack, but I've forgotten who is training the ray-gun on the Saturnian grulzak.

And when I say that Delany tends to show off, I really mean that sometimes there's a little too much embroidery, too much cuteness. This, too, one can take in small doses. It may well be that my tolerance is low.

Delany replies in *ASFR 14*, February 1968:

I've never put any hard-science into a tale without checking on it. The 'science' section in *Babel-17* that John Foyster got so upset about a few issues back was merely a dramatization of Fredrick Kantor's rather brilliant solution to what was considered a classically insoluble problem - up until 1965: the totally internal determination of location from within a free-falling system. It's a problem that classical relativity maintains is impossible . . . the Kantor solution was hot news at the time. But that was '65. . . .

Foyster replies:

You may imagine my chagrin at not having heard about Dr Kantor's wonderful discovery. This was tempered by the further discovery that neither *Physics Abstracts* nor *Mathematical Reviews* had heard of this 'hot news'. None of the 20 or so other journals in the area (aerospace, astronomy, mathematics and physics) which I consulted for a couple of hours seemed to have heard of it, either. So if Mr Delany can tell us where we can read all about it . . .

An author took his chances if he patted himself on the back in the presence of John Foyster. However, Delany did *not* reply to the much weightier comment from Foyster, that his prose shows 'too much cuteness'.

In the second part of his review of *Babel-17*, Foyster takes on an editorial by Delany in *New Worlds 172*, which appeared at about the time that Michael Moorcock decided that Delany was actually a New Wave writer, and Delany was pleased to be so anointed.

The editorial presents, one presumes, Delany's views on sf. He draws comparisons between music in general and fiction in general, perhaps unwisely, compares forms of music as an analogy with the forms of fiction, i.e. sf and mainstream. The unwisdom comes, perhaps, in suggesting that the quartet might stand for sf and the symphony for mainstream. The objection - and I regard it as an insurmountable one - is that while one composer may write quartets and symphonies, there has been, as far as I can see, only one sf writer who has also written in the other field - Cordwainer Smith.

This general assumption, then, seems untenable to me. But there are specific points in Delany's article which further suggest his intense concern with the oneness of sf and mainstream. He wants a critical vocabulary for sf and claims that no one has yet been able to build the bridge between sf and mainstream. I would submit that the need is not for a bridge, but a ladder. I further suggest that the inability of critics to examine sf in the way Delany wants is due to the absence of the kind of sf he supposes to exist . . .

This is almost the first general discussion about the relative merits of sf and 'mainstream' into which John Foyster was ever drawn, and occurs in the same issue in which George Turner published his first article, which protested about the 'double standard' in SF. As Foyster later confessed to Turner, he was rather in favour of the 'double standard' - that is, he thought it difficult to compare works of sf and the best works of literature.

Delany and Foyster continued to argue about such matters during the next couple of years, culminating in a long letter-article that Delany sent to *exploding madonna* in 1968. In reply to this nine-page letter (*em 5*, January 1969), much of it in defence of the New Wave, Foyster replies, in part:

Consider the critical performance of *New Worlds* this year. Sladek's review of Barthelme failed to get

much across to me. Sallis's review of *Hump* is an example of the worst kind of one-upmanship (the sort of thing to which *New Worlds* is much given, in fact). Sallis reviewing (?) poetry (No. 181) is simply laughable, while Shackleton/Aldiss does a fair job on Hillegas. Notice that it is clapped-out, nearly orthodox Aldiss who does most nearly approach a decent job. The rest can be wiped, with no loss at all.

There is so much in both literature and science that it isn't really possible for any one person to get a good hold on the lot. I don't know that I entirely approve of your approach to literature (dig the critics), but in science things are really tough. I suppose that a full-time reader could keep a broad grasp of the situation, but scarcely enough to claim genuine familiarity.

While you write about the invention of a spaceship (as an example) you forget that science fiction is written as wish-fulfillment for juveniles. This was then and will remain for some time the basic selling point of science fiction: it is simply unfortunate for older readers that they happen to like it too. Whether they have failed to grow up, or do have Broad Mental Horizons, is something on which I'm not prepared to cast judgment. But that's why I find it hard to take seriously the claims of sf as literature - it's basically written as adventure stories, and people like yourself who try to make sf 'mature' are voices crying in the wilderness. I also find it hard to forget Mike Moorcock's origins as an editor, for example.

V

So why - as those *ASFR* letter writers complained - did John Foyster read science fiction, let alone write about it?

One short answer is that he didn't read a lot of current science fiction, except when reviewing books for both series of *Australian Science Fiction Review*. I gained the impression that he often riffled back through his collection of the SF magazines of the 1940s and 1950s, which led to writing his interminable 'Long View' articles for *ASFR*, Second Series.

The other short answer is: for enjoyment. What appeared to annoy John Foyster was the constant scurrying by SF writers and critics to find pedestals to climb on in the hope that somebody would worship them while they were standing there.

In his introduction to the *SF Commentary 19*, January 1971, which brings together six issues of *exploding madonna* and three of *JOE*, Foyster writes:

The trouble with writing about science fiction is that one becomes serious about it . . . One way or another, people get serious about science fiction, the most frivolous form of entertainment yet devised . . .

However . . . I might remark that you are receiving this fanzine because, unwittingly and perhaps unwillingly, you have given me the impression, to quote Widdershins, that you discuss science fiction seriously . . . If a couple of you are interested, let us stagger into the darkness together. You are, by the way, Mr Brian Aldiss, Mr James Blish, Mr Red Boggs, Mr Algis Budrys, Mr Sten Dahlskog, Mr Samuel Delany, Mr Damon Knight, Mr Franz Rottensteiner and Mr Harry Warner . . .

I do not agree with Mr Warner entirely when he writes: 'A writer is a delicate organism; equally automatically, a reader may be as neurotic as a writer; his criticisms, though mere personal fads, may harm the delicate mechanism' (*Horizons 113*, page 2204) . . . Writers are not really delicate organisms, in general . . . While many science fiction writers are interested in discussing what is going on in the world of science fiction, there are also quite a few whose epistolary endeavours are directed solely towards the extraction of egoboo: in a word, you gotta have a proper respect. I don't, comrades.

Which brings us back to Widdershins' initial clash with Keith Roberts, as well as many other writers. Having found

through two and a half years of writing for *ASFR* that, above all, writers want their 'proper respect', Foyster decided to speak only to fellow critics, who, except for Franz Rottensteiner, in the end proved as prickly as the fiction writers. This so exasperated Foyster that, in January 1969 he wrote to the recipients of *exploding madonna*:

Wake up you lot! Here I am with my critical faculties hanging out in the cold and I haven't interested a single soul in talking about the way stf should be approached. Not one. Probably no one cares: it certainly looks that way.

Which, in turn, might explain why, not too many months later, Foyster turned over the whole lot to me. (I had by then, with a few other people, begged my way onto the mailing list). I reprinted *exploding madonna* and *JOE* as a 132-page issue of *SF Commentary*, and by early 1971 Foyster returned to publishing (with Leigh Edmonds) fannish fanzines with such ringing titles as *Boys' Own Fanzine*, *Norstrilian News* and *Chunder!*

Epilogue I



Damien Broderick.

Photo by Dick Jensen
dated July 2003.

John Foyster was (and still may be) famous for his admiration of the works of Cordwainer Smith (Dr Paul Anthony Myron Linebarger, who died in 1966 at the age of 53). Foyster at his best can be found in the special issue of *ASFR* about the work of Smith/Linebarger. It was always my impression that John Foyster discovered who Cordwainer Smith was, using various detective skills and travelling to Canberra to meet the people who had known Linebarger.

However, not long before he died Foyster sent me the enigmatic message that 'it was Damien Broderick who did the detective pilgrimage regarding Cordwainer Smith', not Foyster. This was the first hint that Damien Broderick had ever had anything to do with the Cordwainer Smith project. Through Yvonne Rousseau, Damien sent an email clarifying the situation:

Towards the end of 1965, I read *Space Lords* shortly after it arrived in Oz. There I learned that Smith lived in Canberra, attended the Anglican church (or something; this is from memory), and his broker was Mr Greenish, whom readers might approach to discuss Smith's credit rating (or whatever; some whimsy). I wished to apply for the Stanford Writing Fellowship, a year's well-paid stint in the States (something both Rory Barnes and Jean Bedford won in subsequent years); I had *A Man Returned* in my hand, nasty little squib that it was, and felt I might impress the judges if I could get a note from Mr Smith endorsing my cause (I was a naive child).

So I flew to Canberra on a venture and a prop jet, located Mr Greenish's office, had a flea put in my ear, wandered disconsolately to the ANU, came upon Bob Brissenden via Dorothy Green's daughter Harriet (whom I'd known at Monash); Bob told me that oh yes, this must be Paul Linebarger, but he was currently in the Pacific islands doing research. I stayed at Dorothy's house overnight . . . then I went home and *forgot Linebarger's name*. This is almost incomprehensible, but I was a pragmatic child; the plan had come unstuck, I'd used up all my money fruitlessly, so why clutter my mind with such stuff? When I told John Foyster this tale he was, perhaps, and understandably, a little indignant. So he subsequently went forth and repeated some of these evolutions, or at any rate his own version of them, and thus encountered Arthur Burns, and presumably *wrote the name down*, and the secret was out.



Paul Linebarger
("Cordwainer Smith")
photo by Arthur Burns
from the John Foyster
collection.

Except for John Bangsund's original introduction, the Cordwainer Smith material has been reprinted several times, first by Andrew Porter as a leaflet called *Exploring Cordwainer Smith*, then as the last issue of Peter Weston's famous British fanzine *Speculation*, and then in the second series of

In the Cordwainer Smith special issue of *ASFR*, Foyster wrote a critical essay on 'Cordwainer Smith', and extracted an article from Dr Arthur Burns about Linebarger, and also interviewed him. Foyster's and Burns's approach to Smith was so original at the time that it influenced, perhaps even warped, all later discussion of Smith.



David Russell did the nice little Cordwainer Smith cartoon for *SF Commentary*.

Foyster quotes Robert Silverberg, June 1965, summarising my own feeling about the Cordwainer Smith stories:

'I think that Cordwainer Smith is a visitor from some remote period of the future, living among us perhaps as an exile from his own era or perhaps just as a tourist, and amusing himself by casting some of his knowledge of historical events into the form of science fiction.'

Foyster's own view of Smith is very different:

If we examine the stories a little more closely we find that Smith was very much a man of our time, and that his feelings and thoughts were very much those of his contemporaries.

In 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town', 'The Ballad of Lost C'mell' and 'A Planet Named Shayol', to choose only three stories from his collection *Space Lords*, he writes strongly and with great feeling of the racial problems which surrounded him in his own land. His love of Australia is revealed in the Rod McBan stories. It isn't fair to Silverberg, but there is one way at least in which Smith shows himself very much tied to his time. His story 'On the Storm Planet' deals with an attempt by Casher O'Neill to assassinate the turtle girl, T'ruth. If one turns to page 38 in the February 1965 *Galaxy* or to page 69 in *Quest of Three Worlds*, one finds, despite the interference of both editors, the acrostic KENNEDY SHOT. Several pages later a second acrostic appears: OSWALD SHOT TOO. (Mr Arthur Burns, who had it from the author, is responsible for this information.)

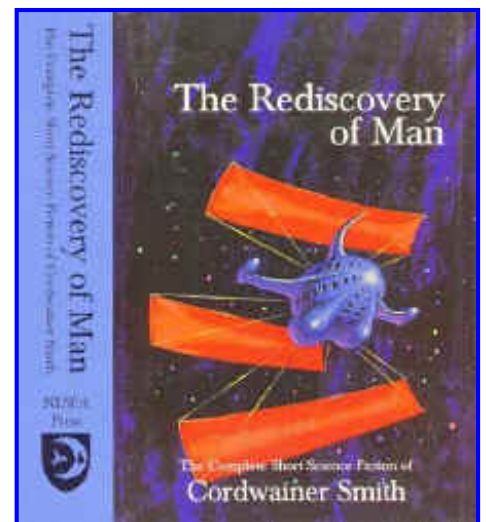
This revelation, with many other examples provided in the Arthur Burns interview, set off the Cordwainer Smith industry, best characterised by the work of John J. Pierce, and which led eventually to the publication of the *Cordwainer Smith Concordance* by NESFA Press. Unfortunately, this has given the impression that Smith is mainly interesting for the number of hidden references he could pack into each story.

Foyster has a much wider view of Smith than Pierce and most other commentators on:

Cordwainer Smith was the first writer to write science fiction which could possibly be accepted as 'Literature'.

I do not make this claim for him. His work does it for me, and for anyone who chooses to look . . .

Smith's approach to the revelation of the future is almost unique. Most sf writers have difficulty in convincing readers of the reality of the future they create. Some ignore the problem, and hope the reader can accept their ideas. Others attempt to make them credible by explaining what is occurring, as it happens . . . Smith reveals the workings of his world in a natural manner. In 'Scanners Live in Vain', for instance, the nature of the scanners and the habermen is made plain to the reader by the recitation of a ritual or catechism which is vital both to



the character Martel and to the plot. It is not something tacked on 'to make it all seem real'.

Robert Silverberg writes of Smith's world as being 'so tiresomely familiar to him that he does not see the need to spell out the details'. This is not quite true. The details of Smith's future are only made clear as this becomes necessary, and those who have read the bulk of his work will realize that it is filled with cross-references which help to give the whole a remarkable unity . . . Thus any given story by Smith may seem to contain things not seen, not explained. To see, to understand, one must refer to another, perhaps remote, story.

This is one of the first Foyster essays in which he concentrates on the style of the author as well as the structure of his or her stories:

And what of the general style of the stories? . . . He is talking to children; in his stories he is producing history as fairy tales. This is explicit in one story, 'The Lady who Sailed "The Soul"', where the familiar old story is told by a mother to her daughter. But it is implicit in many of his verbal mannerisms, in other stories. This is not to demean, in any way, the intelligence or maturity of his readers; myths and legends have always been told in simple language, by father to son, and to do otherwise would spoil much of their magic.

Because of the casual approach to the opening of a story, and because of the child-like language used, Smith's technique could easily fail; in writing thus he walks on one side of the narrow gap between beauty and fatuity. But his foot is sure. As an indication of his masterly control - indeed, to use the two sentences by which I would be prepared to let his reputation stand or fall, I will quote the ending of a story sometimes forgotten: 'The Burning of the Brain':

Magno Taliano had risen from his chair and was being led from the room by his wife and consort, Dolores Oh. He had the amiable smile of an idiot, and his face for the first time in more than a hundred years trembled with shy and silly love.

Assuming that any other sf writer had written the story, it would have ended with the word 'idiot'.. Go further; try to find any writer who would have finished the sentence more or less in that way. It would not be the same. For the words 'and silly' are unique with Smith. In these words, these two words, he transcends the petty world of science fiction and reaches out into the world of reality.

Foyster also quotes my own favourite Smith sentence, the first sentence of 'The Dead Lady of Clown Town':

You already know the end - the immense drama of the Lord Jestocost, seventh of his line, and how the cat-girl C'mell initiated the vast conspiracy.

This still gives me goose bumps - the suggestion in the first line that we are sitting there at the end of the time listening to a storyteller retell a legend that has already been around for thousands of years.

Epilogue II

The writer about whom John Foyster wrote the greatest number of words was not Delany or Smith, but J.G. Ballard. Anybody who can offer a summary of Foyster's findings on Ballard would be doing us all a favour. Again, this material should be reprinted rather than filleted. At the very least, Foyster offers a less worshipful view of Ballard than David Pringle did a few years later. Watch this space.

- - -

*Continuum version delivered by Bruce Gillespie, June 2003. Copyright 2003, 2004 by Bruce Gillespie. All rights reserved.

Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.

--William Pitt, British prime-minister (1759-1806)

[The following article was written in Australian (mostly British) English. Every effort has been made to retain this language intact and to not translate it into US English. -Earl Kemp]

Science Fiction Versus Life*

By John Foyster

This is my favorite photo of John Foyster. Bruce Gillespie writes, "It was named 'Two Blade Foyster' by Dick Jenssen. In fact, it was part of a project by Lee Harding to do a graphic strip made up of photos, with the photos starring Harding, Foyster, Bangsund, and Baxter. The graphic strip never was put together, but the great photos we have of those four gents from 1962 come to us because of Lee Harding's photos. Dick Jenssen was there the same day, also taking photos, which is why it's sometimes hard to tell who actually took which photo that day. Foyster is supposed to be a knife-wielding drug addict in that photo, just in case you couldn't tell."



The label 'escape fiction' has probably been applied more often to science fiction than to any other literary form. The reason for this label has recently been put rather strongly by Andrew Sarris in reviewing *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Sarris says: 'People who read and write science fiction have always struck me as a bit creepy for expending so much emotional and intellectual energy to cop out on the human situation. I think you have to be somewhat alienated from human life to sit down to consider its extraterrestrial alternatives.'



John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau
in November 2000.
Photo by Jenny Bruce.

At the risk of over-interpreting Sarris, who can manage quite well by himself, I suggest that Sarris is referring to science fiction, and science fiction readers and writers as a whole. He does not claim that every person who reads or writes science fiction has this rather fearful failing. However, it has also been put to me rather strongly that possibly no person can be a complete human being unless he or she has, at one time or another, copped out on the human situation and come back again. But this is an aside.

Perhaps the easy line of defence to this attack might be to question whether writers and readers in general do not suffer from this same alienation: one might even go on to ask the same about film producers and film critics. But this is to ignore the last phrase of Sarris' argument, for he seems to see the extraterrestrial factor as the decisive one. Here, at last, is the opening we have been looking for, for 'extraterrestrial

alternatives'. Perhaps we should divert towards this aspect of science fiction - or is this just a semantic trap? Does not, in fact, Sarris mean by this phrase 'extraterrestrial alternatives' just *alternatives*? Alternatives, that is, to our present world and its problems. If so, and I am sure that this is what Sarris intended (or else it is about the strongest argument along this line), then it is at this point that science fiction must be defended - or discarded.

The claim is that science fiction rejects the present world and its horrible realities for a dream world: a world in which terrors may exist without involving the reader. The dream world may even hold no horrors, but merely be a pleasant exercise: yet even then the horrors of our own world, which seep over into the most innocuous piece of non-sf, are barred from the reader's experience.

It must be admitted, I suspect, that much of science fiction does fit into just the mould which Sarris has cast: much of it does amount to an escape from this earth of ours on the part of the writer. And even more accurately, it all too often represents a means of escape for the reader. It is not the case that to momentarily forget this world is necessarily to 'cop out', but rather that if all that one does is directed away from the real world, then this is not just 'a bit creepy', but thoroughly unpleasant.



John Foyster ringed.

During 1966, the British science fiction magazine *New Worlds* published a series of four stories by J.G. Ballard, a name possibly known to the thronging millions of Melbourne from the publication in the *Herald* some years ago of his rather poor novel *The Burning World/The Drought*. Ballard took what he considered to be some of the major myths of our time and threw them together into a hotchpotch in which, so he claims, 'Images and events became isolated, defining their own boundaries'. Not only that, but 'the elements of sequential narrative have been . . . eliminated.' Unpleasant as this may sound, it nevertheless must have been slightly successful, for early in 1967 *Encounter*, then in the throes of self-examination (from a safe distance), printed the last in the series, 'The Atrocity Exhibition'. Undoubtedly the story was used solely on account of its relevance to today's world and use of today's images: it had very few other merits, if any. But it did, to some degree, deal with the world in which you and I and Andrew Sarris live. It is beside the point to recall that Mr Ballard's best fiction has dealt with worlds of fantasy.

Mr Ballard has now ceased to write science fiction, and has been adopted by *ambit*, a small magazine in which he runs competitions of doubtful value. He has, as it were, copped out elsewhere.

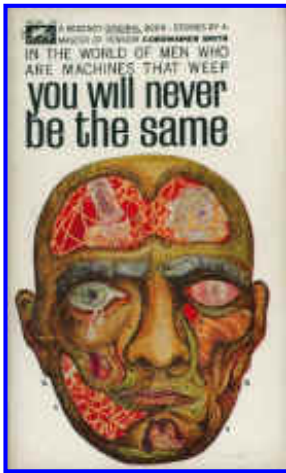
Sometimes science fiction writers may try to write of the world in which they live in a very different way. Last year a novel by James Blish told of a hero named Baines who set out to destroy the world: it should be remarked that Blish denies all connection between his fictional character and the present president of the USA.



John Foyster, Carey Handfield, Damien Broderick and John Bangsund.

Of course, these are rather trivial cases: neither of them exhibit anything more than a trifling concern, on the part of the author, for the world in which he lives. Blish himself has done much better, and in his *A Case of Conscience* (1953, 1958) he deals with a matter of some relevance - alien gods. And there are several other authors who have ventured into reality. Gordon R. Dickson, for example, is now slowly starting to examine the differences in human beings (by extrapolating from humans to aliens, admittedly), and Brian Aldiss' latest novel, *An Age*, although superficially a time travel yarn, is essentially concerned with the evil of our pasts. A notable exception to this list is Theodore Sturgeon, whose writing fits Sarris' comment completely. The fact that Sturgeon is so popular is evidence that science fiction readers do turn their faces to the wall.

But there are, or have been, two science fiction writers whose whole output is the result of, and to some extent



This is the only Cordwainer Smith book I ever worked on.
-Earl Kemp

reflects, a complete acceptance of physical reality. 'Cordwainer Smith' is now dead, but his short stories and novels, all written with one master plan, are wholly based on our present world or on those ideas which have grown out of it. Smith has inserted contemporary references into some of his stories, but these little word games are all but indecipherable, since they are only a joke on Smith's part. But Smith has built into his fiction the occurrences of his everyday life - cats, children - and some of the important events (?) of his time - the Egyptian revolution. His 'Lords of the Instrumentality' is simply the gov't of the USA, and in writing of Norstrilia he expresses in direct language his liking for Australia and his reasons for so doing. His stories can be read as complete fantasy, but only, I suspect, by those readers to whom Sarris' statement applies.

Samuel R. Delany is still living and still writing. He has cast into science fiction parts of his own life, generally distorting the patterns just enough to give the plot an appearance of fiction. His two most recent novels, *Babel-17* and *The Einstein Intersection*, have been exceptionally well received by science fiction readers, winning three or four awards between them. Both are

shorter novels, but Delany is now writing longer pieces, with *Nova* (in press) being about the size of an ordinary novel, and the novel [*Dhalgren*] he is at present writing (working title *Prism, Mirror, Lens*) will be over 200,000 words. It is not necessarily easy to see present life reflected in Delany's novels, because of the distortion mentioned above, and because Delany writes with extreme care (which makes him unusual, as science fiction writers go). Delany is, however, the only presently active science fiction writer who faces the world in which he lives squarely and writes about it. Perhaps Brian Aldiss and some others should be included, but if so, then this is not so plainly revealed in what they write.



Andrew Sarris is certainly correct in that many readers and writers fit this description. But their numbers are decreasing, and it is possible that at some time in the future it will not be true of the majority. Until then, writers like Delany, Aldiss, Blish and others will probably continue to make inroads on the world of science fiction slowly: but when the time is ripe, they may be recognised as major commentators on their times.

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*Reprinted from *The Mentor* (edited by Ron Clarke), No. 13, January 1969, by permission of Yvonne Rousseau. Special thanks to Yvonne Rousseau and Bruce Gillespie for help with this article.

Three Rules for Literary Success: 1. Read a lot. 2. Write a lot. 3. Read a lot more; write a lot more.
--Robert Silverberg

Thru A Glass, Greenly:

A non-definitive Towner Hall reminiscence

By Dave Locke

Preamble

I once wrote an article which killed every fanzine I submitted it to. It got stashed in a desk drawer until the curse wore off, or got tired and ambled away, and then Bill Bowers courageously published it in *Outworlds* and went on to produce many more fine issues. A brave fan.

Here, I'm afraid, is another article of that type (faanfic, actually, though I called it an "article" to maintain the fantasy), but this has a shorter history in terms of submissions. I wrote it in '82 for Dan Steffan. Two years later I asked him a second time to return it if publishing wasn't in the immediate future. He phoned me on 12/26/84 and said he'd have *Boonfark* out in February of 1985. I made a Post-It note of the conversation and stuck it on my copy of the article. In true fan timebinding tradition, I never heard from Dan again until this year. Nope, he couldn't find his original of the piece, nor the Ray Nelson illos he'd gotten for it.



Dave Locke at the Midwestcon in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1992.

Somewhere around 1984 Ted White and I were on the outs, so to speak, for a duration of over a decade. Ted plays a major role in this article. I stashed my carbon copy of the manuscript, which by the way was on green paper, and forgot about it for several years.

Somewhere in the 90s Bill Bowers expressed an interest in it. Several times. I finally gave it to him and both the manuscript and *Outworlds* disappeared into a stasis field. For a while there was some effort to OCR a fuzzy carbon which had been made on green paper, but I don't have to tell you it failed.

Bill fell further behind on producing an *Outworlds*, while his backlog of material continued to grow like topsy, and finally admitted he didn't need to take on yet another Locke manuscript with a possible curse on it.

At Midwestcon in 2002 Rich Lynch and I had a handshake agreement that I would produce an article for the final *Mimosa*. In the long ago Rich and Nicki had accepted another cursed article of mine, the second one, actually, but it never got published. It was lost in their house fire... That article later got totally redone almost from scratch (and memory) and in a vastly different form than originally conceived it appeared in Sandra Bond's *Quasi Quote #2*.

But, since this was the final *Mimosa*, and the Lynchs would have only an electronic rendition of the manuscript, I figured it just might be safe for this article to finally appear. Alas, Rich figured his readers wouldn't know most of the people involved. Probably, also, he didn't want his computer to catch on fire.

Earl Kemp is obviously the brave fanned for the job. A Hugo-winning fanpubber who has even gone to jail for publishing what he felt like publishing, he obviously has the cajones to face the third and last of the cursed Locke articles and overcome the jinx. Well, the last if we don't count the article which killed the sexual fantasy issue of Denise Parsley Leigh's fanzine... A copy of that now sits alone in my *Articles Out* folder, where it will probably continue to reside until the entire contents of that file drawer are hauled off to the landfill.

I only regret that this item here never appeared while my friend Ed Cox, another fan with a major role in the piece, was alive to read it.

A note. This was written in **1982**, and is about a lifestyle which was in effect in **1976**. Bear that in mind if you're not familiar with the social differences between then and now, because the times were indeed different. I won't rewrite history, either real or imagined (and this piece is both), to falsely instill new social sensibilities into older times.

I have resisted virtually all temptation to change anything, except to add *Steffan* the first time I refer to *Dan*, and to add one ingroup Towner Hall reference which I picked up in March of last year from Ted White.

Besides the influences which are noted within the story, I was also obviously inspired by Jack Finney's wonderful

tale *The Woodrow Wilson Dime*. Everything up to the point in the story where the Woodrow Wilson Dime is discovered, including the first phone call, is true.

-- Dave Locke, 8/03

THRU A GLASS, GREENLY:

A non-definitive Towner Hall reminiscence

article, by Dave Locke, 12/82

I've never told this story to anyone, and if it weren't for the Woodrow Wilson dime I wouldn't even believe it.

Have you ever awoken with your brain slipping its gears, spinning in place inside your skull and casting off a kaleidoscope of dream images that bear such a sense of reality you'd swear you were remembering something that actually happened? Of course you have. Hasn't everyone? You lie there staring at the ceiling, while your eyes seem to be turned inward watching the images as they flicker, flicker, flicker. It takes a few seconds before the clutch is let out and engages the brain, and by the time you've made it to the kitchen and laid hands on the coffee pot it's ten-to-one you can't remember what it was you were looking at.



Dave Locke wrote, "Greenly.jpg is a logo collage for the piece. I did the collage. The darkest green inset, bottom right with the man (me) caught up in gears, was taken from an illustration Alan Hutchinson did for me back in 1980 for my perszine, THE WORKS."

But that isn't the way it was that Sunday morning back in December of 1976, because I remembered. And I still remember, six years later almost to the day, and I still think it wasn't a dream even though the Woodrow Wilson dime got lost in the shuffle of packing and moving back a year or three ago. I've moved a lot of times in the last few years, and I don't know specifically when it got lost. It isn't here anymore to reinforce my belief in what happened that Saturday back at the end of 1976, but I've held it in my hand dozens of times since then and there's no question - to me, anyway - that it was real.

The story doesn't begin with the dime. That came later, so I'll get off it for the present. Where I should begin is with the Little Green Things.

Little Green Things is, not are, a drink. It's the invention of Ed Cox who, to everyone else, is more well-known for such things as drinking Coors and building beer can towers to the moon with the empties, and for inspiring the line "Ed Cox doodle here" which has served many fans well when they find themselves with a blank space at the bottom of a stencil. To me, however, he's more well-known for Little Green Things, because this wild and fuzzy drink is what led me to the Woodrow Wilson dime that Saturday in December of 1976. And it was the dime, I think, which led me to visit Towner Hall in December of 1961.

As to how I traveled from Los Angeles in 1976 to New York City in 1961 ... well, as I said, I've never told this story to anyone. You'll see why. As to why I'm telling it now, six years later, or twenty-one years later depending on how you look at it, I'm not really sure. It was agreed that I would write an article for Dan Steffan, and I found *Boonfark's* series of Towner Hall reminiscences to be compelling because of my own adventure there. The lure to Tell About It was almost too compelling, and the first article I wrote for Dan - but not on this topic - got bogged down. After

wrestling with it for months I finally completed it to my satisfaction, but then realized it wasn't a good fit for Dan. I sent it elsewhere, and for Dan I wrote another article. That also wasn't a good fit, and I have it here but it's earmarked for someone else. I'm not a believer in fate, normally (or abnormally), but I get the feeling that for *Boonfark* I'm meant to write about Towner Hall. I won't fight it anymore.

Nor will I apologize for it, or demand that you believe it. Consider it just a story, real or imagined.

If you take a blender, a bucket of icecubes, a six-ounce (screw metric) can of frozen lime concentrate, a teaspoon of powdered coconut, and a bottle of cheap vodka, you've got yourself the makings for a batch of Little Green Things. This drink is, believe me, quite unreal. I remember standing in EdCo's kitchen as, for the first time, I watched him make it. What I was doing over at Ed's in the first place was simply making a day of it. We were collaborating on a sci-fi novel for Laser Books, a project we later abandoned (and for good reason. I remember we used to keep around us several opened bottles of industrial-strength ammonia, just to kill the odor). After what seemed an adequate amount of time spent working - at least an hour or two - we both noticed the hands on the clock were straight up and we immediately headed for the booze. However, Ed stayed my hand as it grasped the scotch bottle and talked me into trying Little Green Things.

Into the blender went the lime concentrate and the powdered coconut. Ed filled the empty lime can with vodka and poured that in, too, then slapped the cover on his blender and set the machine in motion. As the liquid jumped and swirled he began adding icecubes, one at a time, through the hole in the cover. The mixture slowly rose, and when it hit the top he killed the power, poured two tall glasses of this green concoction, and put the rest in the refrigerator. We clicked glasses, sipped, and retired to the living room to swap stories and lies.

After two more containers of Little Green Things I knew all the secrets of this unreal drink.

Little Green Things is, above all, cold. Very, very cold. An alcoholic slushie, the coldness numbs your tongue and your speech before the vodka does the same to your brain. You sound tipsy, and feel it, before you actually are. Then as you quickly mellow you feel that your mouth is always one step drunker than you are, and you never quite catch up.

It was late afternoon when I volunteered to go fetch a pizza and then phoned ahead for it. The coldness from the Little Green Things had begun its surge from our mouths through our bodies to the nether regions, our brains having gone numb hours earlier. Ed, in fact, was pretty much frozen in his chair except for the elbow action on his drinking arm.

Plagiarizing from our mutual fan friend David Hulan, I said: "Thank Ghod I've got my car; I'm too drunk to walk." As a consequence of trying to chuckle while bending his elbow, Little Green Things ran into EdCo's beard and began dripping from his chin. He set down the glass and began wiping his chin with a page from our manuscript.

"Get some wine while you're at it," he told me, suggesting a brand I hadn't heard of.

As I walked across the street where I'd parked my car, I noticed again that it was a relatively cold day. Relative to Southern California, that is. Luckily, I thought, I had had the presence of mind to put on a teeshirt that morning.

With the pizza warming the seat beside me, I pulled into the supermarket parking lot and spent several minutes staring through the windshield while trying to remember what kind of wine Ed wanted. Olympian mental gymnastics were of no help. I couldn't remember.

There was a public phone on the outside wall of the market to the right of the entrance. Hell, I thought, I'll just call him up. And ask. Hey, EdCo, whathell was that wine you wanted? Eh? Does it have that ring-a-ding flavor, like Ripple? Will the color of it clash with the Little Green Things? Can I remember your phone number, EdCo, because some sonufabitch ripped out the phone directory.

I fed a quarter into the slot. Local calls were only a dime back then, but I didn't have a dime. I thought about putting in the nickel and three pennies I had and getting billed for the two cents, but it was just an idle thought. I wasn't

quite that drunk.

I punched out a number and waited through two rings. A woman said hello and money fell into the coin return. I said "is EdCo there?", realizing he probably wasn't, or that he was even more of a fast worker than his reputation would allow, and fished out the money.

"EdCo?" she repeated.

"Yeah, Ed Cox. I'll bet he isn't there," I said, looking at the nickel and dime change that I held in my hand. How could a pay phone give me change?

"No, he isn't," she told me. "I haven't seen him in a couple of weeks. Who is this?"

"Dave Locke. Who is this?"

She gave her name. Doris somebody. Doris Whatsherface. I had the right exchange, but the wrong number. I wondered what the odds were of dialing a wrong number in the Valley and getting connected with someone who knew and had probably even dated EdCo. Probably not too bad, I thought.

"Say, Doris, answer two things for me, will you?"

"Sure, Dave."

I stared at the change in my hand. "What's Ed's phone number, and whose face is on a dime?"

I was pretty sure she wouldn't say Woodrow Wilson.

It has to be a measure of my inebriation that I used the Woodrow Wilson dime to call EdCo. I mean, thinking back on it I saw that I could have used the two nickels; I'd already had one, and the phone had given me another. But, no, I used the dime.

"Towner Hall."

Oh shit, I thought, I screwed up again.

"Is Ed there?"

"Ed who?" The voice turned away from the phone: "Anyone here named Ed?" Silence. The voice turned back to me. "Nope. We've got a Ted, that's me, and we got a Sylvia and a Terry, Carol, Pete, Dick, Pat, Bhob, Steve, Gary, Les, and two Andys, but no Ed. If an Ed shows, who shall we tell him called?"

You'll have to realize that I didn't know squat about Towner Hall in December of 1976. Not at that point, anyway. I may have heard about it, but it didn't stick. There was no recognition on my part.

"Tell him," I said, "that NASA called. One of our satellites just ran through a wall of Coors cans." I hung up.

The Woodrow Wilson dime fell into the coin return slot. It shouldn't have, but it did. I looked at it for a minute, turning it around and around. In God we trust. 1961. E Pluribus Unum.

With the dime in my pocket and a jug of Pisano on the floor of the car on the passenger side, I drove back to EdCo's. Let him drink jug wine, I thought. Christ, we're so pissed we could drink vinegar. Our critical faculties had gotten all mixed up with that third container of Little Green Things.

I parked across the street again, same spot, and got one helluva surprise when I opened the door. In fact, I almost

dropped the pizza and vino. I stood outside the car, the door open, and stared at the world with great incredulity.

I didn't know where the hell I was.

Bear in mind now that, first off, there is no snow on the ground in Southern California. Not even in December. Here, there was. Not much in the street, which had obviously been plowed ("just like me" was the thought that ran through my mind), but it was everywhere else: between the sidewalks and the buildings, on the buildings, and, lightly, in the air. A big, fat snowflake alit on the end of my nose and then melted before I could get my eyes focused properly on it.

I shook my head vigorously, but what I saw around me didn't go away. This was not Filmore Street in Arleta, California. For that matter, I knew this wasn't anywhere in Arleta, and had strong doubts that I was in California. Cold. It was very, very cold. I had parked on a residential street and opened the door to what appeared to be an urban location.

Still holding the jug of wine and the pizza, I walked up to the sign on the corner. West 10th Street. I walked back to the car, still unenlightened and by now beginning to feel the cold, but the adrenalin I was pumping kept it from really getting through to me.

I was parked in front of 163 West 10th Street. Two large, heavy men with huge beards came walking down the sidewalk in my direction, one looking like a rabbi and the other like a mountain man. The rabbi, a much shorter but stouter fellow, fell back a bit and bent down to quickly fashion a snowball. The mountain man went on a few paces and stopped, but before he could fully turn around to see what was going on, the rabbi let fly with the snowball and off went the mountain man's hat. It was a good shot, but at that range it was hard to miss.

"Avram," said the mountain man as he walked up to the smaller fellow and paternally laid mittens on his shoulders, "you're reverting to childhood again. Shall I upend you in a snowbank somewhere until these urges pass?"

"A snowbank, Walter, in the Village?" The smaller man sighed. "We would freeze before we found one. Well, perhaps not. Perhaps in Sheridan Square we could find such a thing. But if I beg your forgiveness for my uncontrolled frivolity, and I went berserk only because your hat was so silly and so tempting, Walter, perhaps you may find it in your dark heart to let me retrieve your hat, brush it off, and all will be right with the universe. And," he said, looking around Walter, "we are almost there. Towner Hall lies just down those stairs."

Then they both spotted me. I stood there in front of my car. I suppose I must have appeared conspicuous with my teeshirt, pizza, and jug of wine.

"What in the hell?" said Walter.

"Obviously a Village person," said Avram the rabbi, "though obviously, too, a very demented one. I am becoming very much colder just looking at him, and I suggest we proceed inside at once before he does something distressing, such as falling down and shattering right before our eyes."

"Wait a minute," suggested Walter. Then he called out to me: "Are you lost?"

As plowed as I was, things were beginning to add up. To what, I didn't know. What I did know was that I was in New York City, in the Village, in front of a place called Towner Hall, that I had spoken with someone named Ted who was probably in there right now with a whole crew of other people, and that the two bearded characters in front of me were people I had met in the mid-Sixties: Avram Davidson and Walter Breen. And that of all the cars on the street, mine was the only one that looked newer than the 1950s.

As I said, I didn't know what that all added up to, but under my breath I began to curse EdCo and his goddamn blender.

"What's he mumbling?" Avram asked Walter.

Walter called out to me again. "Are you lost?"

"No, guys, I'm not," I told them, and was surprised to hear my own teeth chatter. "What I am, I think, is kidnapped."

"Do you think he's dangerous?" Walter asked Avram.

"Demented, perhaps, but not dangerous. Tell me, sir," he addressed me, "do you read science fiction?"

"Yes, I'm that demented." I lifted my arms. "I also eat pizza and drink wine. How about you?"

"Follow us," they said, almost in unison, and we went down the stairs and through a door to the left.

"Who'd you bring?" we were greeted. The speaker had a weary, measured voice.

"Hey, hey," shouted another, "maybe it's Ed!"

There were already thirteen people in a long, narrow and dimly lit basement room. With us, the new arrivals, we totaled sixteen. I could still count. People sat at desks or on them, in chairs, on the floor, or leaned against a wall. Three were women, the rest guys: looked like a typical fan party to me.

Avram had peeled off his outdoor winter clothing. He promptly moved to the weary-voiced fan and slapped him repeatedly on the back.

"Ah, Ted, my friend," he said, as Ted grimaced from the pounding, "how good it is to see you again. Ah!" he exclaimed, looking around. "So many good people here tonight."



Sylvia White in a ChiCon III photo by Arthur Shaw for Life magazine dated September 1962.

"Who'd you bring?" repeated Ted, now even beginning to look weary. Avram turned to where Walter had been standing, but Walter had gone over to sit on the floor with his back against the side of one of the desks. Avram and Ted watched Walter as he popped some candy in his mouth and, with a wastebasket just to his left, tossed the wrapper to his right. We watched as it bounced off the toe of a seated woman I suddenly recognized as Sylvia White. I'd seen her at the Chicon III masquerade in 1962 and, still in costume, afterwards. The delay in recognition was likely because I'd never seen her with clothes on. She looked down in disgust at the candy wrapper, and I noticed that Ted was looking even wearier.

It was at that point things fell into place in my frontal lobes, but slowly, because they were drifting through Little Green Things. What with seeing the ages of Walter and Avram, and Sylvia who didn't look any different in 1962 from what I could see, together with the old cars parked outside, and that Ted must be a young Ted White, husband of Sylvia, it all just added up to me standing with pizza and wine at a NYC fandom party somewhere in the early Sixties. I almost dropped the goodies again. Then I wondered how the hell I was going to figure out why I was here, and how, and how was I going to get the pizza to EdCo? To hell with it, I figured: it would be cold as a witch's tit by the time I could get it to the other side of the country. Then again, just to indicate how clearly I was handling this, I figured there was at least no question that I had lots of time to get it there.

"I'd like you to meet our host this fine day," Avram was saying to me. "Mr. Theodore White; *Ted* to friends and enemies alike." He slapped Ted on the back again, then put his arm around Ted's shoulder and gave him a hug.

"Who'd you bring?"

"Why, a fellow science fiction fan," Avram exclaimed. He took the wine and pizza and held them to Ted's chest. "Bearing gifts and, pour soul, freezing to death just outside your door."

Ted lifted the lid on the pizza box, stared inside, then pushed the lid down. He gestured with a thumb.

"Okay, throw it to the wolves," he said, grabbing the jug as Avram moved past him.

Ted found two glasses, which wasn't difficult as they were all over the place, and poured. Avram came back and took the jug as Ted was starting to set it down on a table. Ted came over, looking at me, and extended one of the glasses. He smiled slightly, lifted his own wine as I took my glass, and then raised it again in my direction before taking a sip. I drank, too, looking back at him, and thinking. Mainly I thought about how terrible the wine tasted after drinking Little Green Things.

It was somewhere around this time that I realized my alcoholic haze was obscuring the problems of this strange reality. I mean, while this realization comes to me frequently, I now incurred it in the Village in December 1961. It probably started when I saw the calendar on the wall. I actually began to think about my situation. About how here I was, 32 years old at a time when I was supposed to be 17 years old. What was I doing here at a fan party, when I was supposed to be either bringing Ed our food and drink on this same day in 1976 on the other side of the country, or in 1961 doing teenage-type things upstate in New York's Adirondack Park. And what was I doing now, as a teenager? Was I writing a letter of comment to Ted about *Void* right this very minute? I couldn't keep the tenses straight in my mind. Or was my 17-year-old self transposed to Arleta, California in 1976, and what would Ed say to him when he showed up without the wine? Could I call upstate and talk to myself? Could I talk to my dad, who was going to exit the world three months later on the day John Glenn went up? My alcoholic haze lifted just enough to let me ponder the situation. Ponder, ponder. I decided I needed a drink.

I had one. I took a swallow from it.

"What's your name?" Ted White asked me, looking down at my teeshirt and the goosebumps on my arms.

"I shouldn't have withheld it this long, Ted. My name is Dave Locke. You know me."

He shook his head. "No I don't. Dave Locke is a neo upstate. He publishes a mildly promising but mediocre genzine on ditto, and he's 16 years old."

"17," I corrected him.

He laughed. Still smiling, his eyes fixed on mine, he took another sip of wine.

"Now that we've established that," he said, "who are you?"

"Dave Locke."

"Come sit down." We and our drinks moved to two beat-up hard chairs. We cleared off the food wrappers and sat down to talk.

Other than this one evening in 1961, I have met and talked with Ted White only once. It serves the continuity of the timestream that our first encounter was at Towner Hall in 1961 and our second at the Cincinnati Midwestcon in 1978, which obviously hadn't happened as of this story here. However, he was older than I at our second meeting, but very much younger than myself as we sat together drinking cheap vino at Towner Hall. The others ate very small slices of pizza and chatted amongst themselves as Ted chatted with the 'stranger' in the teeshirt.

I'm not certain how I would have conducted myself had I not been under the influence of EdCo's Little Green Things. Sober, things might have gone differently.

As it was, I decided that conversation might have more meaning for Ted if I explained what I knew about how I got there. I won't tell you that his face disclosed belief in what he was hearing, but the story of an LA fan from 1976 traveling through space and time certainly managed to grab and hold his attention. He stopped me when I came to the part about the Woodrow Wilson dime, though. I fetched it from my pocket and showed it to him, for the first time making the connection that the coin was minted the same year in which I now found myself.

"You feel this coin is somehow significant to your story?" he asked me.

"Well, it seems as weird as the rest, doesn't it?"

He considered that for a second, then asked: "Whose face are you used to seeing on a dime?"

"Roosevelt, I do believe."

"Teddy or FDR?" I stared at him, and he pulled a small handful of change from his pocket. He sorted out three Woodrow Wilson dimes and held them for me to gawk at.

"Well, I'll be damned," I said, taking another swallow of Pisano.

"Do you have a Roosevelt dime?" he asked.

"No."

"Apparently you not only travel through time and space, but into alternate universes as well." He paused in contemplation. "Finish your story."

I did, ending with Avram and Walter. Ted half-listened, still contemplating.

"Let me see your wallet." I gave it to him. He examined my driver's license, expiry dates on my credit cards, and printing dates on the various denominations of bills. His eyes kept getting bigger, and his motions faster, the further along he went. Finally he looked up, my wallet still in his hands, and in a quiet but intense voice he asked to see my car.

The warmth from the wine and the room had not yet, I felt, been fully appreciated. It was true that my goose bumps had disappeared, but I wasn't yet ready to go back outside into the snow and cold. I wanted to stay a while longer right where I was, and felt there were quite a number of things we could talk about. I conveyed this to Ted.

"Oh, yes," he said, "no doubt about it. I just want you to give me a fifty-cent tour of your car."

"Ted, I haven't even met, or in some cases remeet, or maybe premeet, these people here yet." I waved my hand at the others, who seemed oblivious to us.

Ted jumped up.

"Hey!" he shouted, startling me. Some of my wine slopped out of the glass. "Your attention please! We have a guest to introduce." Everyone looked at Ted, then at me, then back at Ted again. Ted grabbed my arm and pulled me out of my chair. We moved closer to the others.

"This," said Ted, still holding my arm, "is Dave Locke. Those," he told me, pointing to each person in turn, "are Dick and Pat Lupoff, Bhub Stewart, Andy Reiss, Andy Main, Walter and Avram you've met, Steve Stiles, Les Gerber, Gary Deindorfer, Pete Graham, Terry and Carol Carr, and my wife Sylvia."

"Hello."

"Howdy."

"Pleased ta meetcha."

"Hey, hey, how are ya?"

Etc.

Terry Carr rose and asked me "How would you like to make a BNF happy?" He held out a dime to me.

"He'll bring you a cold Pepsi; we're going out anyway," Ted told him, taking the dime.

"Dave," Ted continued, "is the one who phoned here looking for Ed." Several people said "ahhh..." Ted went on: "Dave is also a time, space, and parallel world traveler, having come here to visit us from an L.A. in 1976 where Roosevelt's picture is on dimes."

"Teddy or FDR?" asked Walter.

"FDR," I said.

"Interesting," Walter told me.

"And we'll be right back," Ted informed them. "We're just going out to his car for a minute."

"Okay."

"See you in a little bit, then, Dave."

"Give him a coat, Ted."

"Later, Dave."

"Hey, hey."

Etc.

Ted grabbed two jackets and tossed me one as he started getting into the other. Out the door and up the stairs we went while I struggled with what must have been Walter Breen's coat. Except for my head I disappeared in it.

"It's locked," Ted told me, trying to open the passenger door.

I went around to my own side, while trying to fish for the keys in my pocket. It was an impossible task. I couldn't find my hands in Walter's coat sleeves. I stripped off the jacket, hollered "here!", and tossed it over the hood. Then I remembered I hadn't locked my side.

"Shit," I said, opening the car and sliding in to unlock Ted's side. Then I straightened up in my seat and slammed my door shut, started the car, and turned on my heater full blast.

When Ted didn't open the door right away, I looked to see what was keeping him.

He wasn't there.

Neither was New York City. I was parked in Arleta, across the street from EdCo's house.

"Shit," I said.

I killed the heater, then the engine, but it was still ice cold inside the car. I opened the door not knowing what to expect. Arleta? The Village? Belfast?

Arleta. Cool air, but not cold air.

I opened and closed my door several times, but Arleta didn't go away. The action did serve, I noticed, to accelerate the passing of a young woman walking by.

"Shit," I said again, "I missed the party. Goddamn."

EdCo was inside the house, and hadn't moved an inch. Grasping a tall glass which was all but empty, he slept peacefully with a big smile on his face. I woke him up.

"Where's the wine and pizza?" he asked, surveying my empty hands.

"That got finished up a short while ago," I told him, as he rubbed a watery eye with one hand and drank with the other. "I just wondered if you were ready for another drink. I sure am."

He looked at the empty. "Yeah, I guess so," he said, and then scratched his head. "Christ, I'm still hungry, though."

"Me, too," I admitted. "How about I phone in for another pizza after I bring the next round?"

"Yeah, good idea," he said, looking puzzled and still scratching his head. "How did you like that wine?"

"They didn't have it. We drank Pisano."

"Oh. Yeah. Okay."

And now, six years later, and without the Woodrow Wilson dime or any proof whatsoever that any of this took place, I'm telling this story. When you consider the fact that Ed and I never finished the novel, that I had to pay twice for one meal of wine and pizza, and that I never did get to party at Towner Hall, I'm uncertain that anything useful ever came out of that day back in 1976. Except for the Woodrow Wilson dime, which I lost a few years later.

And an aversion to drinking Little Green Things.

"If the Gods Had Meant Us to Vote, They'd Have Given Us Candidates"
--book title by Jim Hightower

Matinee*

By Victor J. Banis

The solitary cowboy sits astride his horse and peers for a soulful moment into the vast horizon of the Western plains. Then, his eyes ablaze with emotions vaster than the setting, he rides slowly into the distance, a melancholy journey into nothing. In his place, a pseudo-housewife takes over the screen, pimping for a new, improved, stronger than strong cleaner.

The young man on the sofa stirred his long legs, stretching them lazily out before him. In the seemingly casual and

unrehearsed action was a veritable universe of purpose, carefully planned, expertly executed. The muscles of the legs were tensed, swollen to their best advantage. The hips, to all appearances resting lightly upon the sofa, were, in fact, thrust upward at a precise and effective angle, the stomach held deliberately flat, the bulge of the genitals displayed in their most effective and enticing-he hoped-position, the chest athletically expanded. Like a skilled and artistic arrangement of flowers, the various and combined charms of this attractive young man were put on show, posed and poised, merchandise intended to attract and sell.

"I love this one," he said aloud, turning to the man beside him on the sofa. "I think it's my favorite."



Victor Banis and admiring fans in 1994.

Lee Denver smiled superficially, remembering that the same young man had said the same thing about the last movie they had seen-or was it the same young man? Where the hell had he met this one, at the Why Not? He left the question unanswered, not important enough for real deliberation, and thought again of the movie on television. I'm too young, Lee told himself behind the smiling mask. Too young for my movies to be showing on Saturday afternoon television. Like I'm a Tom Mix, a cowboy relic of some bygone age.

"It had some message," he agreed to the young man's statement without enthusiasm. "I think I was more at home in this role." Involved though he is in his own self-pitying thoughts, he is not unaware of the pose assumed by the man beside him, nor of the wealth of loveliness being offered to him. Nor, although this scene, in infinite variations, has been enacted countless times before, with countless young men, is he really hardened to the thrill, or at least pride, of being courted, as it were, by the neverending stream of young men-lovely, charming, studied, some of them quite exciting-who see, in pleasing this aging but still important star, a golden opportunity to springboard their own success.

Aging? I'm not so aging, he thinks, stealing a covert glance at the length of his own body. But the truth is, he is aging. His robe has fallen open and his legs, in contrast to the ones near him, are thin, his knees boy and prominent. His stomach, try though he might to hold it in, no longer obeys his commands without engineering assistance.

Remembering what is expected of him, and compassionately aware of the pains to which this young man has gone to make himself desirable, Lee smiled again at his companion and assumed a mildly flirtatious manner. With one hand he stroked the virile surface of a thigh. "Wouldn't you be more comfortable without all those clothes on?" He hoped that this one would be coy, perhaps even refuse for a time to accommodate these advances. It was always a little more interesting when they offered some resistance.

But this one was not coy, not quite skilled enough in this, his secondary trade, to make a game out of the inevitable. He grinned, too obviously pleased with his success, and stood. "Sure," he replied, beginning without hesitation to strip. His smooth, too-evenly tanned flesh gleamed in the light reflected from the television screen, muscles rippling and dancing as he moved, bent, turned.

The housewife and her cleaner were gone and Lee was uncomfortably aware of the face-his face, and yet not quite his face-smiling out at them, like a peeping Tom, watching the drama being enacted on this side of the screen.

"Jackie says I have a swinging body," the young man comments. "You know, Jackie from the Why Not. I'll bet I could have that if I wanted. I'll bet I'm the only guy in the place who could make Jackie."

Lee suppressed a smile, wondering if the young man can really believe that he is masculine enough to appeal to Jackie from the Why not, whom he remembers clearly.

Wanting to be polite and yet without genuine interest, Lee tried to watch the strip tease before him, found himself annoyed when the young stallion, now naked, stepped over his legs, placing himself directly in front of the screen. His flesh swung indolently, a sacrificial offering on the altar of prostitution. Dutifully, Lee leaned forward.

"We'll ride due west," a voice, Lee's voice, said from somewhere beyond the firm taut buttocks. Lee choked, unnecessarily, and pulled his head away. With a kindly but firm hand he pulled the young man toward him. For a moment there was a trace of hesitation, of resistance, and Lee's hopes soared. But his young lover relented, determined to satisfy, and he kneeled meekly, suddenly less masculine and too submissive.

"I've never known what love is," said Lee, the cowboy, from the television screen. Lee's eyes are riveted now to the screen, watching the handsome man there move about, pose, smile sadly into the reporting cameras. He is only vaguely aware of the wet, warm mouth on his body, trying inexpertly to arouse some passion from the disinterested flesh.

- - -

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I never miss a chance to have sex or appear on television.
--Gore Vidal

\$20 Worth of Cinderella*

By Earl Kemp

A Mystery Writers of America Grand Master, Lawrence Block is a four-time winner of the Edgar Allan Poe and Shamus Awards, as well as a recipient of prizes in France, Germany, and Japan. The author of more than fifty books and numerous short stories, he is a devout New Yorker who spends much of his time traveling.
--Fantasticfiction Website

Early in 1961, when I began my tenure at The Porno Factory, I was directed to do all the butt work. But what are new-hires for if not to take up the slack the old hands leave in their wake?

One of my first tasks was checking the proofreaders marks against the revised book pages for *\$20 Lust*, by Andrew Shaw. It was my first encounter with that famous writer of yesteryear but far from my last. At the time, I didn't even know that Shaw was only a pseudonym hiding Lawrence Block from his soon-to-be-waiting fans. That was a secret Scott Meredith wanted to hold on to as long as possible, some misguided effort at protecting his Black Box pornography writers from the world at large, and hiding his personal shame at being involved with that market himself. Scott's second secret was that Sidney Feldman was neither Scott nor Meredith.

I got a kick out of the element of deception that is inherent in pseudonymous writing. Pen names provided me with a vehicle for escaping the prison of self. The lure of false identity always appealed to me, and there was a time when I traveled around the country under a pen name, acting out in a rather bizarre fashion.
--Lawrence Block, *Telling Lies for Fun and Profit*

#

{Pen names] allowed me to do recognizably inferior work. I used pen names as a way to avoid taking responsibility for my own work, not in the eyes of others as much as in my own....
--Lawrence Block, quoted in *List 24*, 1993

Shaw was a prolific writer, and he kept Henry Morrison happy with his black boxes and that in turn kept Scott Meredith happy. He could continue thinking that, behind those secret black boxes of his, he wasn't really the biggest supplier of pornography in the entire country, only he was exactly that for several years, and he was ripping off his writers at the same time.

I recognized right away that Shaw was something special in the way of a craftsman. His novels were noticeable better than those coming from his contemporaries who had coalesced into a Friday night poker and rip a new hole for Scott social club that they called The Happy Pornographers. I have touched upon that club on numerous occasions in *el* and have no doubt that more will come along shortly.

In *el13*, in "[Nobody Can Write This Shit Forever](#)," I described Andrew Shaw's manuscripts in this fashion:

"Now let's take another writer's manuscripts: Lawrence Block. He had his own individual style of typing, his own fingerprints all over his manuscripts. To begin with, he used a better grade of typing paper than most of the other writers did; his manuscripts were very easy to spot because of it. He had nice wide margins all around each page with lots of room for the editor's eyes to read the words and his pencil to write in whatever is needed there. He was a pretty good typist too, and made relatively few strikeouts. And, especially important, he took the time, now and then, to correct some of his typos. The only negative I can recall is that occasionally Block would stretch his typewriter ribbons a bit beyond endurance.

"Working a Block manuscript, for an editor, was relatively easy. The big stack of reasonably typed pages seemed to dwindle before the editor's very eyes."

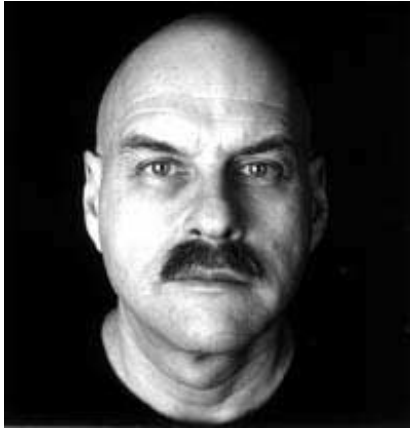
Those years seemed to roll by faster than they should, and hundreds upon hundreds of same-formula sleaze books passed through my hands and, always, Shaw's were among the very best written and frequently the best selling ones.

Eventually, as it always happens, Block grew too good for that field and moved on to bigger and better novels and publishers. And, to very wide recognition and acclaim. Naturally, many honors came to him because of the superiority of his efforts and he should wear all of them proudly.

I have been amused by watching him playing the success game, and reading his interviews and listening to radio broadcasts of some interesting discussions that he participated in through the years. I always felt that Larry was a friend even long after he and I had parted from our professional writer/editor relationship that I had cherished for so many years. You can always tell who your friends really are by the way they treat you.

WANTED

AMERICA'S MOST HONORED MYSTERY WRITER



LAWRENCE BLOCK A.K.A. "GRAND MASTER" KNOWN TO USE MANY ALIASES

His sense of humor allows him to portray himself in front view and profile, exactly like a wanted poster, and he has grown well with time, affecting just a little bit of G. Gordon Liddy just for the hell of it.

...This remarkable little hard-boiled crime novel masquerading as an adult paperback is *\$20 Lust* by Andrew Shaw (NB1546, 1961)....

Many of these early-60s pseudonymous adult paperbacks are forgettable today. The only reason we pursue books Block would like us to ignore is because HE wrote some of them. His readers are always hungry for more. Finding something as exciting, fast, and well written as *\$20 Lust* makes it worth all the trouble of digging through scores of trashy old paperbacks. That tough, engaging, hard-boiled prose style is familiar. It is very similar to some other paperback originals of the same period, paperbacks written by Lawrence Block.

Only some of the Andrew Shaw books are crime novels, and of those *\$20 Lust* is probably the most captivating....

To those critics who suggest *\$20 Lust* is trashy junk, all I can say is, "Yes, okay, and also it's the best damn trashy junk I've read all year." It's not for everyone. But...it is hard-boiled pulp fiction.

--Lynn Munroe, "Lawrence Block's Paperback Lust," *Mystery Scene* 59

#

Flash forward 42 years.

Ed Gorman and I have a number of things in common [besides Juanita Coulson], we both consider Lawrence

Block to be a good friend, only Gorman is a good bit closer to Block than I am. Gorman also used to read a lot of Nightstand Books and I used to edit them. It came to pass that Gorman and William Schafer of Subterranean Press decided that they should persuade Block to reissue one of his best books from the entire sleaze paperback period...and wouldn't you know it, that book was the one I had begun my pornography career with...*\$20 Lust*.

If Block is to be believed, and I certainly do, he resisted their efforts just weakly enough to eventually be persuaded that they were right, and that the book should be reissued.

\$20 Lust, wearing a bright new face and packaged unusually classy, reappeared in 2003 as *Cinderella Sims*. Now it's my turn to dig into both versions and see what I can come up with that is worth telling.

#

In his Afterword to *Cinderella Sims*, Lawrence Block wrote:

Look, this wasn't my idea.

Three or four years ago, Bill Schafer suggested that I might give some consideration to republishing a book of mine called *\$20 Lust*, which had originally appeared as "by Andrew Shaw." I recalled the book he meant, but dimly; I had, after all, written it in 1960. But I didn't need to remember it all that vividly to know the answer to his suggestion.

No, I told him....

Time passed. Then Ed Gorman, the Sage of Cedar Rapids, used an ancient private eye novelette of mine in a pulp anthology. When it came out he sent me a copy, and, while I didn't read my novelette-I figured it was enough that I wrote the damned thing - I did read his introduction, which I found to be thoughtful and incisive and generous. I e-mailed him and told him so, and he e-mailed me back and thanked me, adding that my early work as probably better than I thought.

"And," he added, "I really think you ought to consider letting Bill Schafer publish *\$20 Lust*."

I felt as though I'd been sucker-punched. Where the hell did that come from?

#

Of course Ed Gorman wrote the Introduction to the new volume. He certainly should have, he worked hard enough to make it all happen in the first place. And, he began by quoting the introduction to the Block piece in the pulp anthology that so pleased Block to cause that e-mailed message of thanks.

Gorman wrote:

Lawrence Block...writes the best sentences in the business, that business being crime fiction. No tortured self-conscious arty stuff, either. Just pure, graceful, skilled writing of a very high order.

No matter what he writes...no matter what he's telling us, he always makes it sweet to read. He's just so damned nimble and graceful and acute with his language.

By now, his story is pretty well known. Wrote a lot of erotica in the late fifties and early sixties, all the while writing his early crime paperback originals and stories for magazines of every kind. Started becoming a name in crime fiction in the seventies, really broke out in the nineties and is now posed, one would think, for superstardom....

...I've always hated the word "wordsmith"...but that's what Block is. A singer of songs, a teller of tales, a bedazzler.

I read three of his erotic novels and I'll tell you something. They're better written (and we're talking 1958-1961) than half the contemporary novels I read today. He was pushing against form even back then, creating real people and real problems, and doing so in a simple powerful voice that stays with you a hell of a long time.

Moving on into the new portion of the introduction he was writing for *Cinderella Sims*, Gorman wrote:

Larry began his career, as most of us know by now, selling short stories to the crime magazines of the time and to the sort of paperbacks that local religious groups were always trying to drive from the newsstands.

We called these, as I recall, the motley crew of outcasts I hung with in my early college years, right-handers. Suggesting that this type of book inspired one to a certain kind of action few other books did. Except maybe for *Peyton Place* and its imitators. The underlined passages.

I read a lot of...Nightstand novels in those days....

A few of the right-handers were written reasonably well. No great masterpieces slipped through, you understand, but some of the books were actually...kinda sorta actual novels rather than just the usual monthly tease.

Which brings us to some guy named Andrew Shaw.

This was one of Larry Block's pen-names circa 1959-61. Other writers would share the name later on (someday somebody will do an article on how contracts to one writer secretly got handed off by that writer to another writer, a particular form of "ghosting" that goes on at the lower levels of publishing even today) but the early Shaws, at least those I've read, read like Larry Block.

Not the Larry Block of today. The Shaw prose isn't especially polished, the Shaw stories don't always escape cliché; and the Shaw attitude is not unlike the hardboiled crime fiction magazines of the day - i.e., too tough for its own good.

Yet you can see in glimpses - and sometimes sustained for long stretches - the Larry Block of today. The idiosyncratic take on modern morality; the dour irony that hides fear and loneliness, and the seeds - just planted - of the style that would become the best of his generation.

Cinderella Sims, was originally called *\$20 Lust*. The editor obviously spent a long time coming up with that one....

One thing Larry Block always had was the ability to move a story forward while giving you detailed character sketches. He has a fast eye for the unusual, the quirks in us, and he makes us come alive with these details....

...from the very beginning of his career, Larry Block was a vital and powerful storyteller.

#

Lawrence Block, in his Afterword to *Cinderella Sims*, picks up from there.

Now where does *\$20 Lust* fit into this scheme of things? Good question, and I'm not sure I can answer it....

What I do know is that it represents a reversal of the earlier pattern, in which I'd started out to write a sow's ear and wound up with, well, call it a polyester handbag. I set out with the intention of writing a Gold Medal-type crime novel and somewhere along the way I decided it wasn't good enough and finished it up as a sex novel. I don't remember when this happened, only that I was still at that desk and in that apartment at the time....

I called the book *Cinderella Sims*,. My publisher called it *\$20 Lust*.

Block asked his wife to read it for him and tell him what she thought about reprinting it. As it happened, she was in

favor of reissuing the book, as Block continues:

She gave me a look, and she gave me the book, and I didn't exactly read it, because reading very early work of mine makes me sick to my stomach. But I skimmed enough of it to realize that it was a far cry from pornographic, and really didn't have much sexual content at all. I'd evidently gotten fairly far with it before I gave up on it and finished it for the sex novel house.

I wonder what made me do that.

Hell, who knows? Who knows why the kid that I was did any of the things he did?

#

In *Publisher's Weekly* (June 10, 2002) in "From the Critics," *Cinderella Sims*, was described this way:

Originally titled *\$20 Lust* and published under the pseudonym Andrew Shaw by Nightstand in 1961, this early Block novel has its quirky charms. As the MWA Grandmaster explains in the Lawrence Block Bibliography: 1958-1993, "much of the work in question was bad, and categorically so...in the early sixties I wrote a soft core sex novel every month, designed to titillate but not to inflame, with a requisite sex scene in every chapter." Strip away the requisite sex scenes and one is left with a dark, clever crime story that shows Block's emerging strengths: good storytelling, a bright sense of humor and more than a few flashes of good writing...The sex scenes, mild by today's more graphic standards, are more likely to amuse than titillate...But established Block fans should enjoy this peek at the author's obscure apprentice work and be grateful that he moved on to create better books.

#

Gorman and Block both question the use of *\$20 Lust* for the original title of the book. This would have been a decision made by Harlan Ellison at the time and I can't claim it as my own doing. Personally, over the years, I have had a different kind of problem with that title, it appears that nobody knows how to alphabetize it. That answer is simple, of course; you speak the title of *\$20 Lust* as "Twenty Dollar Lust," exactly as it is written, and always alphabetize it in that fashion. Microsoft will never be able to do that operation correctly.

The 2003 reissue, as *Cinderella Sims*, is a joy of quality book manufacturing. The paper is excellent, the typeface outstanding, and the only complaint I can find to make involves the proofreading, and that is embarrassing for such an almost impressive effort.

I do need, however, to take issue with Bill Schafer, assuming he was responsible for the jacket copy. The text reads: "It's no secret that Mystery Grand-master Lawrence Block wrote a number of pseudonymous paperbacks early in his career. Few gained additional printings, given their disposable nature, and the speed with which they were written. *Cinderella Sims* was such a book...."

It is the "Few gained additional printings" that so annoys me.

Let's talk numbers, Schafer...how many copies of *Cinderella Sims* did you sell, in terms of units of 10,000 copies? Have you reached the 5X mark? The 7X mark? The 10X mark?

You should be so lucky as to sell as many copies of the book as Nightstand sold in its first month on-sale, keeping in mind that all Nightstand books were periodicals, not books, and each title had a projected and expected life span of only 30 days.

Then, let's examine one major reason for those sales, impulsive as they might have been.

Here is the cover of Nightstand Book 1546, *\$20 Lust*. The exquisite cover painting was done by Grand-master Harold W. McCauley, and here is his inspiration taken from the text of *\$20 Lust*.

This is Andrew Shaw describing Mona from *\$20 Lust*:

...a house where every room smelled of Mona. Her scent was everywhere, and whether I actually smelled her or only imagined it didn't make much difference at all....

...I remembered Mona - long golden hair breaking over creamy shoulders. Eyes like blue ice, cold and hot at once, ice and fire. I remembered all the delicious details of her delicious body. It was worth remembering - big, firm breasts, beautiful legs, skin as soft as feathers.

So much to remember. How much happens in two years of marriage? How many times had we made love? How many times had I kissed her, touched her, run my hands over that soft smooth skin?

Too many times....

#

Here is the cover of Reed Nightstand book 3034, *Cinderella Sims*. The superb cover painting was done by the world's greatest paperback cover artist, All Time Grand Master, Robert Bonfils, who used a fleshed-out Cindy for his inspiration taken from the text of *Cinderella Sims*.

This is Andrew Shaw writing vicarious sex from *Cinderella Sims*:

It was time.

And then it began.

I've already said it was good, and that's about all I can say. It was the beginning and the end of the world. It was a pair of bodies drawn to one another like magnets, clutching and clinging, working rapidly and relentlessly, making moves and seeing stars and breaking records.

"Ted, I love it. Ted, I love it I love you I love everything!"

I loved everything, too.

And it got better and better and better, and it got faster and faster and faster, until it had to stop or it would almost certainly have killed us both.

Then the explosion came. The earth began to tremble and shake, and guns went off and rockets shot up and satellites went into orbit.

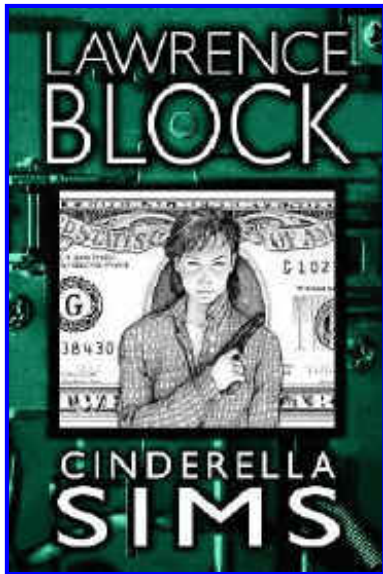
And so did we.

#

Here is the cover of Subterranean Press' *Cinderella Sims*.,. The excellent black and white line drawing was done by Phil Parks (including both his and Block's signatures). And here is his inspiration taken from the text of *Cinderella Sims*:

This is Lawrence Block describing Cindy from *Cinderella Sims*:





...I can tell you that her hair was black as sin, that she wore it short and pixieish. I can tell you that her skin was as white as virginity personified, white and clear and pure. She was wearing plaid Bermuda shorts that showed enough of her legs to assure me that her legs were good from top to bottom. She was wearing a charcoal grey sweater that let me know that legs were not her only strong points.

But that doesn't do her justice. It shows that she was pretty; that the various parts of her were in good order. It doesn't show the girl herself, the beauty of her, the radiant quality that reached with both hands across the width of 73rd Street like a human magnet, reached me and grabbed me and would not let go.

#

All three of these artists, McCauley with his painting of Mona, Bonfils with his *Cinderella Sims*, and Parks with his portrait of Cindy, were remarkably true to the text they were given to work with. Each did a superior job.

The question of the century is, looking at these three covers, which one sold the most copies in terms of 10,000s of copies?

#

There is absolutely no reason for it, yet it is so...I have a healthy feeling of parental pride about some of the Black Box writers, as if I had somehow created them, nurtured them, or perhaps even cleaned up their acts after they thought they were finished with them. All those daddy things that one can grow to love to hate.

Lawrence Block is certainly one of them. He makes me swell with pride every time I see something new, better, damn near best originating from him. Larry isn't alone in that special spot, of course. His company includes Ed Westlake and Hal Dresner for sure [and Bill Coons, because he earned the right to be included], and everyone who ever heard that special Sound of Distant Drums. Sort of like having a whole bunch of neglectful children who have managed somehow, through difficulty, to not only survive on their own but to soar to relative greatness among their contemporaries.

Thanks, guys....

#

An Afterthought by Lawrence Block:

Hmmm. I've tried to avoid either confirming or denying anything written about the old days, but part of allowing the book to be reprinted would seem to be Setting the Record Straight, so here goes:

1. I don't know if Earl (or anyone else at Nightstand) realized it, but I only wrote about half of the Shaw titles, if that many. When Hamling announced that he wanted two a month from me, I found a friend of a friend, taught him how to write the books, and took an ever-decreasing percentage of the gross for my trouble. (I think I started out getting half of \$1200, and shrank that rather rapidly to \$200, where it remained.) I used various ghosts over the years. That's one reason I've wanted to avoid the whole topic. It's bad enough being associated with the garbage I actually did write, worse still being tarred with the crap other guys wrote.

I can't always tell from the titles, or even from the covers, what I did and what someone else did. I can usually tell when I look at a book, because I can spot a sentence that definitely is or isn't mine, or a name I remember having used, or know I didn't use. (The fan's research here leaves a lot to be

desired; various things they regard as giveaways are there because the ghost was advised to include them.)

LYNN MUNROE: What about all the Westlake jokes?

WILLIAM COONS: Block made me promise to put them all in. I was also trying to copy his style.

--"The First Andrew Shaw," *ei14*

2. And yes, *Cinderella Sims* is one of mine.

3. Throughout, I was writing other things; the books for Bill Hamling and Harry Shorten were rent payers. Sometimes I'd try something more ambitious, and when it ran aground I'd finish it for Nightstand. That's what happened with this title. Beyond that, I don't remember much about its composition. I don't remember much about most of those books. They generally took one to two weeks to write, and while it was a great training ground for a writer - I can't offhand imagine a better one - the product was not something I wanted occupying a lot of real estate in my head.

4. *Cinderella Sims* was published in France last year, and was very well received. It's great to know I'm appreciated in a country that thinks so highly of Jerry Lewis and Mickey Rourke. It's still hard to explain; I can only assume the book gains something in the translation.

5. Earl alluded to the relative sales of Nightstand's and Subterraneans's editions. We didn't get royalties, so we never had a clue how many of the books sold, but I'm pleased to say that Sub Press's edition has done very well. My deal with them gives me payment in copies, and I sell them on the web, at www.lawrenceblock.com. I've moved most of my allotment, but I can still fill orders at the list price. Just click on LB's Bookstore.

6. Now that I think about it, five's plenty.

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*This is for Larry and Andy and all the good times at Nightstand Books in Evanston, Illinois. Dated February 2004.

Hal Dresner, the first of several authors who wrote as Don Holliday, told me that *Circle of Sinners* (BB1220, 1961) was a collaboration by Dresner and Block. They alternated chapters. Dresner says they put a literary joke for each other in each chapter, usually hiding an author's name. For instance, in one scene a gang member knocks a Lesbian to the ground and then says, "Up, dyke!" (That's Dresner's kind of humor, all right.) The villain's name is Daniel Starowski Starke. That's an anagram for "Don Westlake is R. Stark." Dresner signed my copy "Hal Dresner +" and told me it would be up to me to get Block to finish the signature. I told this story to Block when I handed the book to him to sign. He looked at it and refused to sign it. Well, I tried.

--Lynn Munroe, *List 24*, 1993

[The following article is revised from an original appearance in Lynn Munroe's 1993 *List 24* about Lawrence Block. --Earl Kemp]

The First Andrew Shaw*

By Lynn Munroe

Lawrence Block is extremely reticent to name books he wrote under pseudonyms from 1958 to around 1975, when (as far as anyone can tell) he stopped writing under pen names. We understand Block's decision not to discuss these books. He has gone on to bigger and better things.

But there are two reasons we've decided to try to spotlight Block anyway. 1) The books he wrote and won't own up to are mostly vintage paperback originals, that wonderful treasure trove of sixties pulp fiction, and 2) Lawrence Block is one of the best living mystery writers. Some of his early stuff stinks (which is one of the reasons he won't admit which paperbacks he wrote), but each new book he publishes shines even brighter than the last. As proof of this contention, *A Dance at the Slaughterhouse*, won a richly deserved Edgar Award as Best Mystery Novel of the Year. We want to read more by this writer, to chart his growth from college dropout/hack writer to the top of his profession. If Joe Schmoie refused to talk about his early books, we'd say, "So what?" But Block is a different story.

This effort could never have happened without the help of the writer Harvey Hornwood, librarian extraordinaire Victor Berch, and adult book specialist Chris Eckhoff. Also helping were Block specialist Wayne Mullins and Godfather of paperback collecting Lance Casebeer, both of whom are now deceased. Also helping were Bruce Brenner, Mark Goodman, R.C. Holland, Earl Kemp, Tom Lesser, and Art Scott. Thanks, guys, I honestly couldn't have done this one without you. -Lynn Munroe

Here's some biographical information on Block that will be of importance to what follows: born 1938 in Buffalo, NY, parents Arthur and Lenore Block, sister Betsy. Father died some years ago, mother remarried, to Joseph Rosenberg. Block attended Antioch College at Yellow Springs, Ohio, from 1955 to 1958. Scott Meredith was his first agent, until 1963. (Later agents: Henry Morrison and Knox Burger.) At Scott Meredith, Block met fellow writers Donald E. Westlake and Hal Dresner, and agent Morrison. Married Loretta Kallett, 1960; three daughters (Amy, Jill, and Alison), divorced. Married Lynne Wood, 1983.

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The Andrew Shaw Checklist:

In this article we are limiting our bibliography to the Hamling/Greenleaf titles (Nightstand Books, Midnight Readers, Bedside Books, Etc.).

Lawrence Block has said that he wrote two adult novels a month for three years. In an interview, William Coons admitted he was the second Andrew Shaw, ghosting for the first Andrew Shaw, Lawrence Block. After Block left Scott Meredith Literary Agency, the publisher used Andrew Shaw as a house name.

This is a checklist of books by Andrew Shaw from 1959 to 1963, an attempt at sorting out some of the obvious clues and cross-references to other books, and a guess at which ones might be Block and which ones might be Block's friends, such as Westlake. Bill Coons said, "Don Westlake never wrote a single book as Andrew Shaw." When I wrote to Westlake and asked him if Coons was correct, he did not reply.

Campus Tramp, NB1505, 1959: The first Andrew Shaw book introduces us to Clifton College in Ohio, a thinly veiled Antioch College, Block's alma mater. This takes place at Schwerner Hall; Block's college roommate was named Schwerner. Characters: Linda Shepherd and Ruth Hardy.

The Adulterers, NB1511, 1960: Mona and George live it up in Mexico. One character is named Richard Stark. Like most of the early Shaws, this one is terribly written. You can't blame the author for wishing these forgotten.

High School Sex Club, NB1517, 1960: The cover says Shaw but the title page ways John Dexter. Dexter was to become a house name at Nightstand, but in 1960 the name had just been introduced with NB1513, *No Longer a Virgin*, listed below. I think the Dexter name here corroborates that Block was the first Dexter, for this book is

surely Block's work. The members of the club include Marvin Gardens, Alan Marshall, Dave Carson (named I think for a friend, Dave Foley), Larry Prince, Dean Hanson, and Ed Bainbridge. A teacher named Schwerner suggests one of the boys should go to "Antioch or Clifton. I went to Clifton myself." One of the guys remembers reading *All the Girls Were Willing* (an Alan Marshall Midwood paperback).

The Sin-Damned, NB1520, 1960: Wife-swapping in New York City. Schwerner on page 57.

The Wife-Swappers, NB1526 1960: Perhaps the worst-written of the early Shaws (which is saying it's almost unreadable), characters include Don and Nedra Marshall (the Westlakes), Larry Carson (who has a brother Dave, who is a writer), and Linda Pierce. On page 146 a footnote explains that Linda, nee Shepard, is the Linda from *Campus Tramp* (NB1505).

Sexpot!, NB1531, 1960: Cindy Marlin sins in New York City, first with a pickup named Schwerner. Cindy goes to a movie named *A Sound of Distant Drums*, a title that will appear as an in-joke throughout the books of Andrew Shaw, Alan Marshall, and Sheldon Lord.



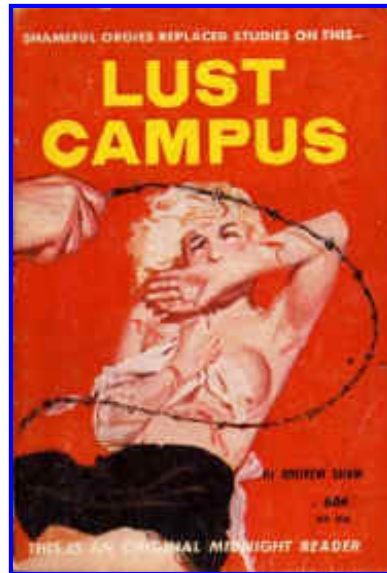
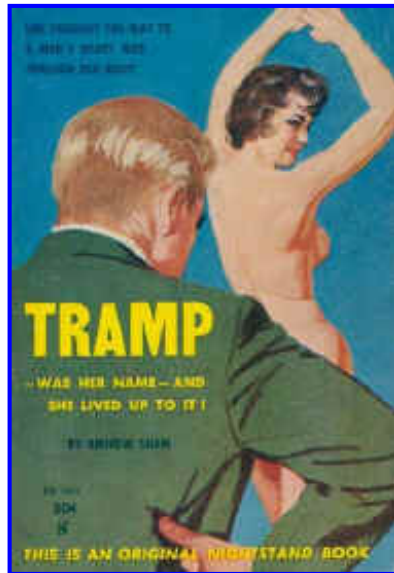
College for Sinners, NB1534, 1960: The Libertines at an unnamed New York City college. Jazz and hashish in Greenwich Village. There's a Kallett Hall (Block's wife's maiden name) and someone goes to the new Swedish movie, *A Sound of Distant Drums* by Ingemar Schwerner. But the big clue, the giveaway, in fact, is on page 112: "It was Abbott and Costello, Gallegher and Sheean, Lord and Marshall. It was Tippacanoe and Tyler as well." A young Andrew Shaw fan named Joe Goldberg, who had been buying these books at 42nd Street. newsstands, read that passage and got the joke. He wrote an article about the books, "The Popular Pornographers," that appeared in *Nugget Magazine*. In the article he noted that this quote showed there was actually someone behind those pen names, that this was an obvious reference to the Sheldon Lord and Alan Marshall books from Midwood. When the article appeared, a woman at work came up to Joe and said, "Andrew Shaw and Sheldon Lord and Alan Marshall saw your article. I know them. Like to meet them?" And that's how Goldberg met Block and Westlake.

Passion in Paint, MR402, 1961: Nightstand introduced its second line, Midnight Readers. It was obvious, by the size and layout of the books, and by the same pseudonyms, that these were from the people at Nightstand. Many other lines would be introduced throughout the '60s, all published by the same man, William Hamling. To keep some semblance of order, we will list the Shaws by year and then alphabetically by imprint. Don Westlake is a character here. Harvey Hornwood called our attention to this line: "Peter could hear the sound of distant drums from a nearby village."

Motel Sex Club, MR404, 1961: In 1961, with the publisher increasing output and demanding more and more books, Block, Westlake, Dresner, and the agency began recruiting young aspiring writers to ghost their pen names. These writers, friends from school in Syracuse, Albany, and Buffalo, included Bill Coons, Art Plotnik (who told me he wrote Don Hollidays for Dresner), Dave Foley, and David Case, a wildman who later claimed, in his Contemporary Authors entry, to have written 400 of these books. All of these writers turn up as members of the Motel Sex Club in this book by Block and/or a member of the circle. The characters' names are Larry Hunter (I suspect this is Block taking the name of his then-favorite, Evan Hunter), Jack Trevor (?), Billy Bluto (Coons), Art Plotnik, Mel Foley, and David Casen (who is called David Case in at least two probably intentional typos.) The adult characters are named Henry and Lenore, Block's agent's and mother's names.

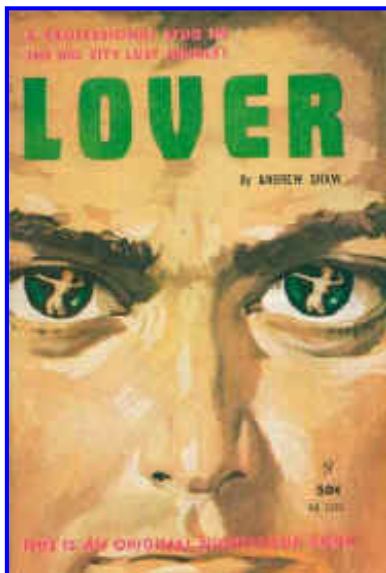
Lust Campus, MR408, 1961: Schwerner and Shaw at Bingle College, Ohio. According to Bill Coons, this one was written by Lawrence Block.

Tramp, NB1541, 1961: Julie Marsten from Clifton College. Julie's brother Dick is a writer, which I think is a Block reference to Evan Hunter's pen name Richard Marsten. Julie sees *A Sound of Distant Drums*, remembers Ruth Hardy of *Campus Tramp* (NB1505), meets a guy named Schwerner, and winds up engaged to her cute boss, Ben Christopher, one of Block's pen names.



The Twisted Ones, NB1543, 1961: Dave and Nancy Schwerner, Kallett Brothers, *A Sound of Distant Drums*. Nancy reminisces about a Lesbian encounter back at Clifton College. Her friend Sandra gives her a book named *Strange Are the Ways of Love* by Lesley Evans, another Block pseudonym (page 37).

\$20 Lust, NB1546, 1961: Along about here Andrew Shaw changes into one of the great crime novelists of the '60s. This heist/crime spree story follows Ted Lindsay, who can't quite forget his ex-wife Mona until he meets *Cinderella Sims*, femme fatale and hell on wheels. Ted reads the book *A Sound of Distant Drums* by Ben Christopher, visits Schwerner Square and uses various "aliases," many of which are aliases Block will use as well: Harrison, Benjamin, Crowley. Ted and Cindy counterfeit twenty-dollar bills as the book ends.



Girls on the Prowl, NB1548, 1961: Sandy from Clifton College and her two roommates in Greenwich Village. Schwerner. *A Sound of Distant Drums*. Some great jokes, like a publisher named Phulcorte Press, a night club called Open d'Or, a Chinese restaurant called Haow Naow, a Spanish restaurant called Dolor de Estomago. Harvey Chase's Agony Magazine is introduced. As Wayne Mullins showed us on one of his excellent Block checklists, two of the characters are anagrams for the author: Cornwall Becke and Lance Brecklow ("Phoney sounding name," a character says.)

Lover, NB1551, 1961: Johnny Wells, Park Avenue Gigolo. To achieve class, he pretends to be a Clifton College graduate. Harvey Chase is mentioned. Like most Shaw books, there's a description of a porno movie. Johnny also goes to a double feature: *The Mercenaries*, "based on the book that had won the Edgar, whatever the hell that meant," and *A Sound of Distant Drums*.

Trailer Trollop, NB1553, 1961: Four wild girls at a trailer camp at an Army base at Coldwater, Kentucky. No clues, but this book is mentioned by Block on page 28 of his *Writing the Novel*.

Passion Slaves, NB1563, 1961: Chock full of Block and Westlake jokes (Westlake County, a reference to *The Mercenaries*, a character named Barry Lock), I had this on my Block list. Imagine my surprise when Bill Coons told me this was his first Andrew Shaw. "What about all the Westlake jokes?" I asked. "Block made me promise to put them all in," Coons said. "I was also trying to copy his style." He did a good job.

Sin Devil, NB1566, 1961: Coons' second Shaw. Character names include Barry Lock and Ed Westlake.

Army Sin Girls, NB1569, 1961: Coons. Pvt. Punky Petersen of Punxatawney, PA joins the WACS and marries Joey Schwerner. A character named Ellen Marshall is a good Westlake in-joke, but then so is Lt. Gen. James "Jumping Jim" Westlake. The name Barry Lock is used.

The House of 7 Sins, NB1575, 1961: Coons.

Ponytail Tramp, NB1578, 1961: Coons. A character named Don Block appears.

Gutter Girl, BB1224, 1962: Writer unidentified. Donna Waldek (maybe an anagram of Donald W. Lake?) is a New York City gang member who becomes a prostitute. Ultra-violent, with gang rapes, dismemberments, sadism, several murders, and a violent incestuous double-suicide finale. Yes, a little something for the whole family.

Slum Sinners, MR409, 1962. Block. A footnote reminds us that character Joan McKay was also one of the *Girls on the Prowl* (NB1548 above). The Village poetry magazine *Agony* appears again, this time the writers are Loretta Kallett and Karl R. Colby (another anagram). Badly written.

Lust Slum, MR416, 1962

Passion C.O.D., MR420, 1962: Coons. Book salesman Vance Killian.

Crossroads of Lust, MR427, 1962: Block. A violent crime novel about an armored truck robbery. The Western movie *The Sound of Far-off Tom-toms* is on page 27 and, the John Dexter book *No Longer a Virgin* (NB1513) is mentioned by name on page 72.

Flesh Parade, MR431, 1962: The travels and loves of Tony Cross. His lovers include the hophead Mona. Tony goes to a movie called *Around the Wistful Bums*. On page 170, everything stops for a commercial: "He picked up a paperbacked book at a newsstand... The book was *Border Lust* by Don Holliday. He enjoyed it. You would, too, incidentally. Pick it up when you get the chance." This seemed like Block plugging a book by his friend Hal Dresner, but Dresner told me he didn't write *Border Lust* (NB1588), it's another "Don Holliday," either the same writer or a good friend of whichever "Andrew Shaw" wrote *Flesh Parade*.

Passion Nightmare, MR436, 1962: Coons told me he wrote this, another one we had on the Block list for its clues: Clifton College, Joe Schwerner, a character named Roger Glendower who also appears in Shaw's *Tramp* (NB1541). Either Coons was adding these at Block's request, or Block was editing the manuscripts before publication.

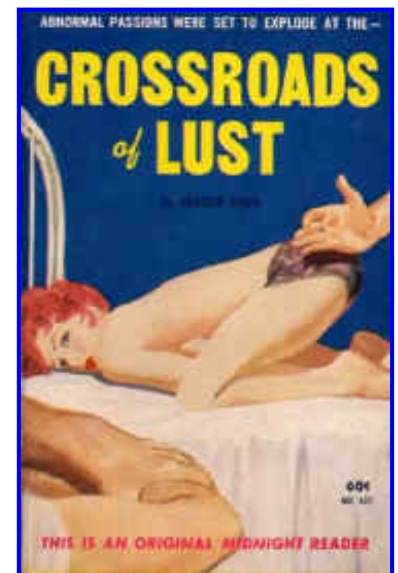
The Wanton Watcher, MR447, 1962

Harlot School, MR456, 1962

Flesh Mob, MR462, 1962: A Clifton College novel, with three footnotes referring to earlier Shaw titles. One character in the book is even reading *The Twisted Ones* (NB1543) by Andrew Shaw! The local jukebox has records by the Kallett Sisters-Rozi and Lori (Block's sister-in-law and wife). The kids go over to Xenia and check into motels for kicks. Someone at Clifton turns out to be the town slasher, hacking everyone to death by the book's bloody finish.

Sin Sucker, MR463, 1962: Sleazy nightclub story of Mona Manning. Different style from the Shaw of *Flesh Mob* (MR462).

Sin Hellcat, NB1599, 1962: According to Bill Coons, this is pure Lawrence Block. Harvey Christopher lives on



Barrow Street in the Village and writes ads for Dexter's Frozen Dinners. Some years ago I was given a list of books that "a friend of a friend" of Westlake's claimed were Westlake's adult titles. In time I've come to suspect that some of the books on that list were either written by Block or were collaborations. This book was on the list.



Butch, NB1604, 1962: Anne Mason, a nice kid from Buffalo, goes to Clifton College and is initiated into the ways of Lesbianism by Ruth Hardy (from *Campus Tramp* (NB1505), etc.). Ruth gives her a book that changes her life: "The book was *The Lesbian*, by Dr. Benjamin Morse," another Block pen name. Anne becomes a gay hooker in New York City. Joan McKay and *Agony Magazine* are mentioned. Anne's friend has affairs with the Hollywood sex symbol Mona Morgan, and with someone named Lesley Evans. But, like a lot of Lesbian fantasies written by men, this one ends with Anne falling for a man ("the real thing") and getting married. How could you, *Butch*?

Passion Alley, NB1611, 1962: Would-be writer Jack Edwards gets kicked out of Crampton College, heads east to New York City. A friend lives at 69 Barrow Street. Jack holes up at the Del Dios Hotel, writing stories like "Brides of a Beatnik," drinking Bushwhacker's 69; winds up on junk.

Lust Weekend, NB1614, 1962: One woman's life is changed when she picks up a book at a newsstand, "a book called *The Lesbian* by a doctor named Morse."

Harlem Harlot, NB1619. 1962: Title page says Andrew Shaw, cover says Don Holliday. No clues.

Reform School Girls, NB1623, 1962: No clues. Probably Coons, not confirmed.

East Side Sinners, NB1627, 1962

The Sadist, NB1629, 1962: Sadistic hit man Jack Garth comes to Albany to kill an entire family, which he proceeds to do with methodical terror. In one chilling, unforgettable scene, he chops up the mom with an ax while forcing her daughter to watch. This one lives up to its title and took readers into a dark night of the soul quite removed from the usual sex and fun of the Nightstand books. "I realized when I read *The Sadist* that Larry Block was creating a whole new direction in these books," Bill Coons told me. "Instead of being the villain, this insane sadistic killer was the main character." Jim Thompson, of course, had already written *The Killer Inside Me*, but Lou Ford is a pussycat compared to mad Jack Garth. The cold, bleak, amoral world of *The Sadist* takes us further, disgusting and compelling us with a morbid fascination. Our "hero" is a serial killer. "Block was ahead of his time," Coons says. Coons' sequel, *Passion Madman* (LB603), was published in 1963. Clue: one character lives in the Kallett Building. Many Nightstands are tame by today's standards. This one is strictly Adults Only.

Sintime, NB1635, 1962

At some point in 1963, Lawrence Block left the Scott Meredith Literary Agency and his deal to write Andrew Shaw novels ended. The agency, however, continued to supply Shaw books to the publisher and Andrew Shaw became a house name. Books by Shaw continued to appear through 1967. The post-1963 Shaws offer no clues of authorship and are probably the work of a series of increasingly undistinguished hack writers. The earlier Shaws, as we've tried to show here, abound with clues that point to Larry Block. If he didn't write each one, the recurring themes and clues suggest his proximity.

Where Block's Shaw work stops has yet to be established. Also in 1963, Hamling began some new lines: Ember, Leisure, Pillar, Etc. For some legal reason, all of the author's pen names were changed just a little on some of the 1963 titles. They changed them, but not so much that readers couldn't recognize them. Alan Marshall became Alan Marsh. Clyde Allison became Clyde Anderson. Curt Aldrich became Burt Alden. Don Elliott became Dan Eliot. And Andrew Shaw became Andrew Shole. Somebody apparently thought A. Shole was a funny pseudonym. Bill Coons has confirmed that he wrote at least some of the Shole books for Block, assuming they'd be published as Shaws. Just as abruptly as it started, the original pen names returned in 1963. I have only turned up a handful of 1963 Shaws, but here's a checklist for you completists:

Sin Babes, EB904 (Shole)
Lust Team, EB906 (Shole)
Orgy House, EB910 (Shole)
Shame Club, ER709
Wild Ones, ER713
Passion Madman, LB603 (Shole)
Sin Sultan, LB605 (Shole)
Sin Alley, LB613
Sex Route, LB620
Sin Bum MR472
Flesh Fools, MR477
Sin Hostess, MR491
Lust Pad, NB1639
Flesh Mad, NB1641
Sin Slum, NB1647
Sin Beach, PB816
Sin Master, PB827

Again, the cut-off date is nebulous. More research will need to be done on these books and the 1964-67 Shaws (and those credited to "Andrew Shay").

Writing as John Dexter:

Lawrence Block says he never wrote as John Dexter, and while I wanted to note that first, we should remember that he is the author of a book called *Telling Lies for Fun and Profit*. He also told me he never wrote as Sheldon Lord, etc. So this one is just conjecture on my behalf. One thing I noticed in my research of the Nightstand writers was that every single one of them told me that sometimes their books would come out under a house name like John Dexter. The only authors who claim *not* to be Dexter are Block, Westlake, and Dresner. The Alan Marshall books are full of references to Dexter. One of them mentions a playwright named Dexter St. John. Nightstand editor Earl Kemp told me that whenever they had two manuscripts by the same writer, they would stick a house name like Dexter or J.X. Williams [after that pseudonym was abandoned by John Jakes] on the second one. It is obvious when reading Dexters that they are the work of a wide variety of writers.

Everybody, at one time or another, was John Dexter, so we can deduce that Block was probably Dexter too. Then there's *High School Sex Club* (NB1517), listed above under Andrew Shaw, which lists Shaw as author on the cover but Dexter on the title page. Is this a typo, or were Shaw and Dexter linked somehow? As shown above, one of the Shaw books talks about a Dexter Nightstand called *No Longer a Virgin* (NB1513).

No Longer a Virgin, NB1513, 1960: This is the first John Dexter. Research has shown that all of the often-reused

Nightstand house names started with one author, then were carried on by countless others.

John Dexter is definitely a house name, but who started it? From the clue in Shaw's *Crossroads of Lust* (MR427), it would appear that this first Dexter was written by Block or one of his pals. This title was on the Westlake list I was given, but Westlake insisted when I spoke to him that he did not write this book. When this was printed early in 1960, there had only been two Andrew Shaw books published. *High School Sex Club* was NB1517, and Dexter's name on the title page is his second Nightstand credit.

Ann Salter from Lewiston quickly fulfills the title in Chapter 1. Her two lovers, Dan and Barry, represent Don and Larry, the two authors who possibly wrote this book. Another boyfriend, Roger, works for Loomis, Lawrence and Osgood. Another guy is a swell jackass named Jack Caswell. In *Contemporary Authors*, Block says he co-wrote three books with Westlake. Two are well-known (*A Girl Called Honey* and *So Willing*), and both of them are dated 1960. I think all three were written around the same time. Block and Westlake?

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Pseudonyms:

Block has written that he has used at least twenty different pseudonyms. Our goal was to see how many of them we could discover.

In addition to books appearing under his own name, we have discovered that Lawrence Block wrote under the following pseudonyms:

William Ard (Block ghosted one book as Ard.)

Ben Christopher

Liz Crowley

John Dexter (House name, Block titles unknown.)

Jill Emerson

Leslie Evans

Chip Harrison

Don Holliday (Block collaborated on one Holliday title, *Circle of Sinners* [BB1220], with Hal Dresner, who was the first Don Holliday.)

Paul Kavanagh

Sheldon Lord

Dr. Benjamin Morse

Andrew Shaw

John Warren Wells

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There are, of course, other Block pen names not listed here. We may never know all of them, unless he decides to publish the list someday. Many of them are no doubt adult potboilers.

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*Revised from an original appearance in *List 24*, 1993.

As Block himself wrote in *Writing the Novel*, "The books I wrote were devoid of merit-let there be no mistake about that-but they've been driven off the market by a product that is indisputably worse."

--Lynn Munroe, *List 24*, 1993

Lie Back And Enjoy It*

By Lawrence Block

It was late afternoon, and the sun was beginning to dip to the level of the horizon. Frank pressed down heavily on the accelerator, gunning the car smoothly along the highway. Just a few more miles, he thought. Just a few more miles and he'd be home, if you could call an empty room in a run-down hotel home. Just a few more miles and he could take a hot bath and drink himself to sleep.

Then he saw the girl. At first glance he took her for just another hitch-hiker, and speeded up to pass her by. Then his eyes took in the long hair and the swell of the breasts, and his foot found the break pedal and slowed the car to a stop. He reached across the front seat and opened the door.

"Hop in," he said.

She climbed into the car and sat down beside him. He took a good look then, and he liked what he saw.

She was wearing a pair of faded blue dungarees and a man's shirt, open at the throat, but even the shapeless clothing couldn't conceal the shapeliness of her figure. Her breasts were large and full, and they pressed against the flannel fabric of the shirt. Her hair was long and jet-black; her face very attractive, with high cheekbones and large brown eyes. As he looked at her, Frank felt the blood surging through his veins. He'd been a long time without a woman.

"Going to Milford?" she asked, naming a town a few miles the other side of Frank's destination.

"Sure," he said. She leaned back in the seat and closed the door, setting her small black purse on her lap.

He put the car in gear and eased it back onto the highway again, watching her out of the corner of his eye. Pretty, he thought. Almost beautiful. And so very young, too-she couldn't be over 19.

"Been waiting long?" he asked.

"Not too long. About fifteen minutes or so."

"Funny how some guys won't stop for a person, isn't, it?"

"Yes," she said. "They read about people getting robbed and all, and they just drive on by."

He stole another glance at her. It took a lot for a girl to look like that in men's clothes. He pictured her in a dress, in a bathing suit, and finally in nothing at all. He turned his eyes back to the road as the perspiration began to form on his forehead.

If only he could have a girl like that! Then he wouldn't mind those damned trips all over the country, not if he had something like that back at his room, waiting for him to come home. But he couldn't have luck like that, not him. He never had.

He was 41, and his hair was starting to go. Slowly but surely, his life was slipping by. Without anything real or important ever happening to him. The only love he ever had he bought for three dollars in a little room over



EXAMPLE: This picture shows how Lawrence Block's "Lie Back And Enjoy It" was presented in *Trapped Detective Story Magazine* for October 1958.

Randy's Bar. And he knew that he would go on like that, coming home every night to an empty room and passing three dollars to a prostitute every Saturday. And someday he would die without ever doing anything.

"Mind if I smoke?" Her voice broke into his reverie and stopped his train of thought.

"Go right ahead," he said. He took a lighter from his pants pocket and turned toward her, offering her the flame.

She leaned forward to take the light. The shirt fell away from the front of her body, and Frank got a quick glimpse of smooth white skin and rounded flesh.

Again the desire surged through him. He replaced the lighter in his pocket and gripped the wheel as tight as he could in his large hands. He was breathing fast, almost panting.

"Thanks," she said, softly.

The sun dipped lower, and he passed a sign which indicated that his town was only two miles further on down the road. Just two more miles, then three or four to Milford, and she would be gone from his life. She would leave, and he would be left with her memory and nothing more.

He looked at her again. She seemed so soft, so warm and peaceful. She yawned and stretched her lush body before him. And then he decided that he was going to have her.

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The decision came in a flash. He couldn't let his whole life disappear without doing something about it. He would take her, swiftly and violently, and the freshness of her would let him live again like a full man.

The realization of what he was going to do calmed him. At the same time, he was tense with anticipation. He could practically feel the soft pressure of her body against his, could picture her nude in his arms.

"Just a few more miles," she said.

"Won't be long now." He turned and smiled at her.

"I really appreciate this. It'd be terrible out on the road at night."

I'm glad you appreciate it, he thought. You'll get a chance to show just how grateful you are. A good chance.

He didn't really want to hurt her. He glanced over at her again. Hell, he thought, she was no virgin. It wasn't as though he were taking something away from her. She might even like it. He chuckled inwardly, remembering the old saying, "If rape is inevitable, lie back and enjoy it."

Well, it was inevitable. He was going to take her, and nothing was going to stop him. He wouldn't hurt her anymore than he had to, of course. Maybe she would tell the police, but he was willing to take the chance. He couldn't stop himself now, even if he wanted to.

Besides, there was little chance that she would tell. He had read somewhere that 90% of the rape cases were never reported, because the girls involved were ashamed of it. And he could always say that she let him-no one could prove otherwise.

"It's a nice day," he said.

"Very nice."

He spotted a turn-off, a rutted, two-lane road that went nowhere and was rarely used by anyone. He slowed down the car and cut over onto it.

"Where are we going?" she asked. There was a touch of alarm in her voice.

"A short-cut," he replied.

"I never went this way before."

"It cuts out Herkinsburg. Not many people know about it."

He was amazed to hear himself lie so easily. He had always had difficulty in lying, but now he was so set on his goal that the words came from his lips with no trouble at all. Evidently she believed him, for she relaxed in the seat.

After a few hundred yards on the turn-off, he cut the motor and pulled the car over to the shoulder of the road. It was time, now. No one would disturb them.

"Why are we stopping?" There was panic in her voice now, as she sat up rigidly and gripped the black purse tight in both hands.

He didn't answer. His right hand encircled both her wrists in a tight grip; his left shoved the car door open. Then he forced her out of the car. The purse flew from her hands as he sent her sprawling to the ground and flung himself upon her.

"No!" she pleaded. "Don't!" His face was so close to hers that he could feel her breath against his cheek, just as he could feel the warmth of her body through the thin shirt.

"You can't stop me," he said. "No one'll hear you if you scream." He smiled. "You might as well lie back and enjoy it."

#

At last it was over. The girl remained motionless.

"There," he said. "That wasn't so bad, was it?"

She didn't answer. He walked slowly back to the car, taking deep breaths of air and savoring the taste of it in his lungs.

He had one hand on the door-handle when he heard her say, "Stop!" There was something in her voice that compelled him to release the door-handle and turn around.

She was holding the small black purse in one hand and a small black automatic in the other. The gun was trained on him.

"You bastard," she cried. "I was just going to take your car. I would even have left you a little money to get home on, but not now."

His mouth dropped open in shock. "Wait," he stammered. "Wait a minute."

"You can't stop me," she said, levelly. "I'm going to kill you. You might as well lie back and enjoy it."

The bullet made a small, round hole in his stomach. He fell to the ground and lay there moaning while she straightened her clothes and took the wallet and keys from his pockets. He watched her get into the car, blow him

a kiss, and drive away down the road.

It took him twenty minutes to die.

- - -

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From Grand Master mystery author Lawrence Block's January 2003 newsletter: "And if you don't have email, well, what are you waiting for? Computers are simple enough nowadays so that an hour or so after you get one out of the box you can be online, and a week later you'll wonder how you got along without it. If you're convinced you're too old for this, well, you're wrong. Just get a grandchild to show you the ropes."

"Top o' the World, Ma...."*

By Earl Kemp

Working with writers is sometimes frustrating, especially when they're doing whatever it is they think they want to be doing instead of whatever it is I think they should be doing for me. I run into it all the time. It sure raises hell with trying to put out an ezine on a regular schedule. Reminds me of the good old days and all those multitudes of deadlines I had to deal with routinely.

As this issue of *e/* was taking shape, and things changing all over the map the way they usually do, I had a wonderful time. Producing this issue was fun, again like in the good old days. Most of that was because of Lawrence Block. I still think of him formally after all these years, instead of as Larry, but he knows I don't mean anything by it.



We reached a point where we were selecting one of Larry's - see, I said it - short stories to run in this issue along with all the stuff about Andrew Shaw and *Cinderella Sims*, and bogged down just a bit. Finally he made the decision, it would be "Lie Back And Enjoy It" from *Trapped Detective Story Magazine* for October 1958, and he mailed me his file copy of the story...a virgin, mint-condition copy of *Trapped*.

When I examined the pulp magazine, I discovered much to my delight, that the very same issue also contained a story named "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead," by none other than the venerable pornographer and long-time contemporary of Block's, Robert Silverberg.

That was too good to be true. For a bit I wondered what the odds were of that happening, in October 1958 or next month for that matter? Instantly I knew I had to reprint both of those stories, together, in the same issue of *e/*, and here they are in June 2004, in all their antique glory.

#

Block told me that his story had been reprinted once, in one of his short story collections named *One Night Stands*. Thanks to the ever-popular Lynn Munroe, a copy of Block's book rapidly appeared as if by magic.

In "If Memory Serves...", Lawrence Block's Introduction to *One Night Stands*, he wrote, "For God's sake, when I

wrote [this] my typewriter still had training wheels on it."

He was 19 years old when "Lie Back And Enjoy It" was published in *Trapped*, and the following year he began his career writing pornography for Henry Morrison inside one of Scott Meredith's black boxes as Andrew Shaw.

Continuing with "If Memory Serves...": "I was writing books," Block wrote. "Sex novels' was what we called them, though they'd now get labeled 'soft-core porn.' I wrote one to order the summer before I returned to Antioch, and the publisher wanted more. So that's what I did instead of classwork. And I also went on writing crime stories. At the end of that academic year, in the summer of 1959, I dropped out again, and this time it took. I started writing a book a month for one sex novel publisher, and other books for other publishers, and from that point the crime short stories were few and far between."

Then someone made the suggestion that the stories might be so antique as to need some updating, to which Block replied: "Someone else suggested that some of the stories might require revision, because attitudes expressed in them are out-of-date and politically incorrect. No way, I told him. First of all, one of the few interesting things about [these stories] is that they're of their time. I'd much rather burn them than update them. And screw political rectitude, anyway. You want to go through *Huckleberry Finn* and change the name of Huck's companion to African-American Jim? Be my fucking guest, but leave me out of it."

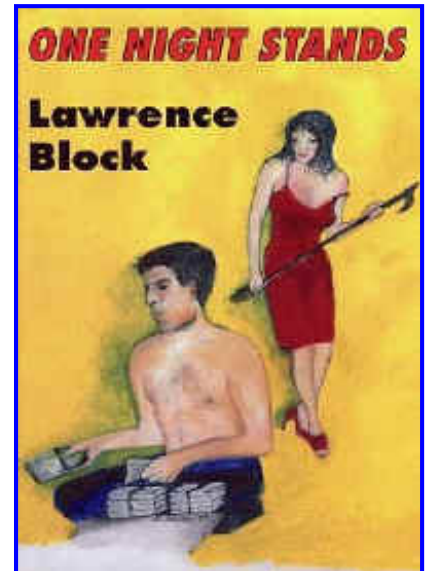
And he is not alone. I also agree that these antique stories should remain in their original form with no attempt at updating. Elsewhere in this same issue of *el*, in "Thru a Glass, Greenly," Dave Locke also agrees. He touches upon the same subject this way: "A note. This was written in **1982**, and is about a lifestyle which was in effect in **1976**. Bear that in mind if you're not familiar with the social differences between then and now, because the times were indeed different. I won't rewrite history, either real or imagined (and this piece is both), to falsely instill new social sensibilities into older times."

#

One particular aspect of reading these antique stories, as written, that is beneficial, is that they remind us of simple little things we have long forgotten. The prices of things, for instance, and the way routine things were done in those days. The pace of movement and action, as an example. You could buy a house for cheap, and eat good on only pocket change. Even big time important rich business executives used public transportation to and from work.

Silverberg would have us believe that one could travel from Cleveland, Ohio, USA, via train, to Acapulco, Gurrero, Mexico in less than two days.

Silverberg's protagonist is named Randall, and he is neither a Rob(ert) nor a Garrett, and his story is set, peculiarly, in Cleveland rather than in New York City, his own turf. In fact, every location, street address, intersection, and passing aroma is pure, unadulterated Harlan Ellison. Which is not unusual, considering how close they were at the time.



Let's start with some good news. The Science Fiction Writers of America have named Robert Silverberg as the latest Grand Master. I don't think any sf writer has done as much that's as good, but I realize that others with different reading values could make the same claim for previous winners Poul Anderson and Jack Vance. For me, though, Silverberg's prose skills, willingness to fit into a larger literary picture than Science Fiction, and emphasis on character make him the best.

--Arthur D. Hlavaty, *Nice Distinctions* 5, March 2004

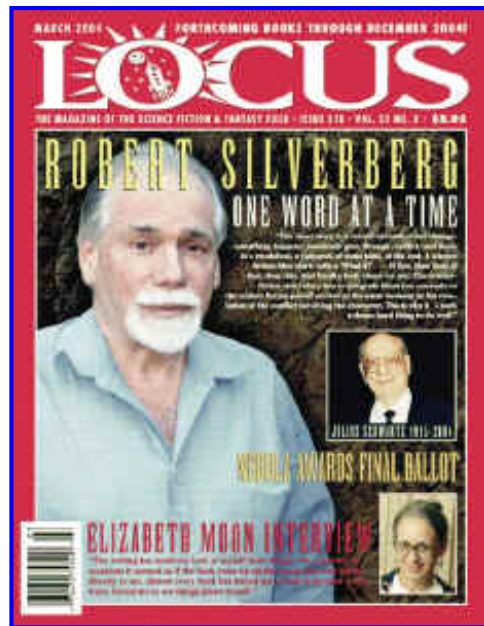
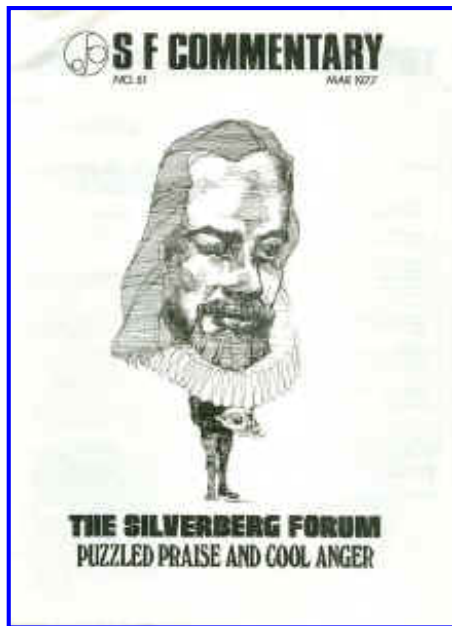
Robert Silverberg, born in 1935, is three years older than Lawrence Block. Bob - see, it's becoming habit forming - sold his first piece of fiction when he was 19 years old, the same age Block was when "Lie Back And Enjoy It" appeared in *Trapped* for October 1958.

By that time, Silverberg had learned a very valuable lesson that was instantly obvious by comparing the two short pieces. *If you're being paid by the word, you use as many words as you possibly can.* Basic.

#

The 46 years from *Trapped* to today have yet another unique phenomenon associated with them for both Lawrence Block and Robert Silverberg. They are both now officially branded "Grand Master." Block for his crime and mystery fiction, and Silverberg for his continuing work in science fiction.

Separately, each of them has scaled the writing mountain to the very top of their profession. Genuine stars of their cosmos. Perfection.



Robert Silverberg adorns the cover of Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* for March 1977 (left) and *Locus* for March 2004 (right)- a 27-year term of superior service, and that's only a portion of Silverberg's writings.

That was the real reason I felt a strong need to bring together as much Block and Silverberg as I could possibly assemble inside the same issue of my ezine, to honor both of them for all their accomplishments.

And for having been allowed to be a small part of those fetes, lurking there somewhere far back out of sight and out of mind.

*For Henry Morrison and all the goodies inside Scott Meredith's black boxes. Special thanks to Lynn Munroe for help with this article.

I'll Be Glad When You're Dead*

By Robert Silverberg

When Harshman left his office that day, his watch said ten minutes to five. He rode down in the elevator with a couple of the other men, mumbled goodnights to them, and ducked off to the left, heading for the big drug store across the street. He kept looking impatiently at his watch. Lois was expecting him at her place about quarter after five, for dinner. But first he had to phone his wife and make some sort of excuse for coming home late.

He had to wait a couple of minutes for a phone booth, and that annoyed him. Harshman was an impatient man. It was a windy autumn day, bleakly hinting at a long cold winter to come.

A fat woman squeezed her bulk out of one of the phone booths and Harshman pushed past her into the booth, quickly shutting the door. He held his dime all ready in his hand. Dropping it in, he dialed his own number, the Cleveland Heights number he had had so long. *Married twenty-two years*, he thought as he dialed. *And all to the same stupid woman!*

The phone rang a couple of times and then Beth picked up.

"Hello?"

"Hello, Beth," Harshman nibbled his lower lip uneasily. "I'm - not going to be home for dinner tonight. Thought I'd let you know about it now, before the girl prepared anything."

A pause. Then: "Oh, I see. Working late tonight, dear?" There was an unmistakable ironic edge in Beth's voice. Harshman was sure she knew about Lois. That gave him another good reason for hating her!

He said, "Yes. Something came up in the Wainwright case late this afternoon - a new plea, you see, I have to stick around and interview a couple of people, and there's a statement to notarize, and a lot of stuff like that. So I'm afraid I won't be home until late. Say about eleven."

"So late?" Beth asked.

"I'm afraid so. By the time I wrap everything up and catch a bite, it'll be late, you see. Well, I'd better get off the phone and back to work, now. See you later, Beth."

"See you later."

He hung up. The time was nearly five, now. He was in a cold sweat, and a tight band of fear constricted his stomach. Another minute on the phone and the operator would have cut in, asking for more money. Beth would have discovered that he was at a pay phone, not in his office, and there would have been all sorts of questions for him to answer.

But that problem was behind him now. He was free, free till eleven o'clock. *Six hours*, he thought. *Six hours!*



EXAMPLE: This picture shows how Robert Silverberg's "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead" was presented in *Trapped Detective Story Magazine* for October 1958.

With Lois. Some day he was going to spend a whole night with Lois. After Beth was out of the way. He had known Lois nearly a year, and in all that time he had never spent a whole night with her, never been able to fake a business trip, never found some excuse to pack Beth off to the country. Beth kept a close watch on him. Beth didn't want to lose him-not him, Randall Harshman, middle-aged and wealthy lawyer. Beth knew how much Harshman was worth, and she knew his heart wasn't in such good shape.

Beth wasn't letting go of him. Oh, no. Not Beth.

Harshman left the drug store, crossed Euclid Avenue, and hailed a cab. Lois had a small apartment in downtown Cleveland, on Payne Avenue. The cab pulled up outside her place at five-fourteen on the nose, and Harshman handed the cabbie a bill, telling him to keep the change. Money didn't matter to him-not when Lois was waiting upstairs.

He let himself into the apartment with his key, the key that he kept tucked away in his wallet where Beth wouldn't find it. The smell of cooking steak reached his nostrils - and a moment later Lois was in his arms, and he was holding her tightly.

She was wearing a filmy dressing-gown and nothing else, and the fragrance of her perfume obscured the odors of the cooking food. He held her tight against him, lifted her head, kissed her.

"You look wonderful," he said.

"I love you," she said.

Lois was twenty-three, and worked for one of the local radio stations. She was a tall girl, only a couple of inches short of Harshman's five-feet-eight, and with brown hair cut in bangs over her forehead. She was beautiful. *If only I met her a quarter of a century ago*, he thought. *No, cancel that. If I had met her then, she'd look the way Beth does today.*

She led him to the easy chair in the living room and lit his pipe for him while he slipped out of his tight shoes and into the slippers he kept here for the purpose. She had a tray of Martinis ready - ultra-dry, the way he liked them, with a twist of lemon peel in them instead of an olive. He sipped the cocktail and feasted his eyes on the girl.

"We'll eat in ten or fifteen minutes," she said. "How late can you stay tonight, darling?"

"Beth is expecting me at eleven," he said. "That means I have to leave here at ten."

Her face brightened. "Almost five whole hours with you!"

He smiled and drew at the pipe. Her eyes were alive and sparkling, the look of a girl in love. The thirty-year difference in their ages didn't seem to matter to her at all. She loved him the way he had always wanted to be loved. If only Beth were out of the way --

Music welled up around him - Beethoven, coming from the hi-fi speaker in the corner. The hi-fi setup had cost him fifteen hundred dollars, but he hadn't begrudged it. Anything Lois wanted, Lois got from him. He had furnished this whole apartment for her.

He finished the drink, and she tugged him up from the chair and led him into the dinette. The meal consisted of steak, French fries, peas, all the things he liked best. Lois poured some wine to go with the meal, and, coming so soon after the Martini, it made him a little dizzy. Delightfully dizzy.

#

Later, when the dishes were stowed away in the electric dishwasher and they were together on the couch, Lois said, "Darling, how long does it have to go on this way?"

"What way?"

"You know. Meeting me on the sly, sneaking up here when your wife isn't looking?"

He shrugged. "I wish it didn't have to be that way."

"Why *does* it?"

"Because Beth sticks to me like glue. I'm sure she wouldn't give me a divorce."

"But if she would we could get married. You want to marry me, don't you, darling?"

"Of course."

"Then why don't you tell her about us? Tell her that you've been cheating on her for a year. Maybe then she won't be so anxious to keep you."

"You don't know Beth," Harshman said gloomily.

"Try it," Lois urged. "Stay overnight tonight. I want you to stay here so badly, darling! And then when Beth asks where you were - tell her!"

He toyed with the idea. He had long dreamed of staying out overnight. Well, why not? What better way of proving to Beth that he didn't want her any more? But Beth might be stubborn.

He looked at the girl. "I'll do it. I'll stay here tonight! But - what if Beth still won't divorce me, even after that?"

Lois returned his gaze squarely. "Why - why, then you'll have to kill her, I suppose," she said calmly.

#

Lois had to wake him the next morning, about half past seven. Normally he woke by himself, but he had trouble getting out of bed this day. *I'm not as young as I used to be*, he admitted sadly to himself. *A night like that takes a lot out of a man.*

While Lois prepared breakfast he shaved with her razor and dressed. He wondered about Beth, whether she had worried about him, when he had failed to come home on time. Some wives might have called the police at half past eleven, but he was pretty sure Beth hadn't. Beth didn't give a damn about him. Beth was just sitting by patiently, waiting for him to kick over so she could inherit the Harshman money.

And there was plenty of that. Between what his father had left him and what he had built up through his own shrewd investments, he was worth more than three quarters of a million, altogether. The interest alone could keep Beth living in high style the rest of her life. *Damn Beth*, he thought.

#

He reached the office on time and almost immediately sent out for coffee. He was really worn out - there at the beginning of the day, too. But somehow he got through the day all right. Lois called once, in the middle of the afternoon, to find out whether Beth had contacted him. But Beth hadn't. Either Beth had given him up for dead or she just didn't care where he had spent the night.

He finished up work at four-thirty, cleaned his desk, told his secretary he was leaving, and left. He caught the bus

on the corner of Euclid and Fifteenth Street and rode out to his suburban home with growing uneasiness. He was wondering how to go about saying to Beth what had to be said.

He turned up the walk to their attractive modern home, with the picture-window in front and the lamp burning behind it. Harshman had had this home built four years ago, at a cost of better than \$40,000. Someday, he hoped, Lois would be living in it with him.

Hanging up his coat in the front closet and dropping his briefcase off in the downstairs study, he heard Beth behind him and turned. She stood there, a dowdy little woman of fifty, once plumply pretty but now just plump.

He moistened his lips. "Hello, Beth."

"Hello, Randall. Did you have a good day at the office today?" Her voice was steady and calm.

"Pretty good," he said, forcing himself to share her calmness. "Lot of routine business. Dull." He eased out of his shoes, into his old battered slippers. "Will dinner be ready soon?"

"Half past six, as usual," Beth said.

He glanced up at her. "Everything okay here?"

"Everything okay."

There was a moment of silence between them. Harshman felt his stomach churning, and wondered if it meant a recurrence of the ulcer trouble of ten years ago. She seemed so icy calm, damn her! He wished he knew what was going on in her mind now.

She said, "There's a letter from the Book-of-the-Month Club on the mantel. You forgot to pay them for your last book and they're a little annoyed about it. It's a matter of \$4.67. Otherwise there wasn't any mail for you this morning."

"Is that all you can talk about? The Book-of-the-Month Club's bill and the mail?"

"Why, what else should I talk about?" she asked with mock innocence.

"You know damned well."

"I don't understand, Randall."

"I said you know damned well!"

"Please keep your voice under control. You wouldn't want Esther to think we're quarreling."

"She's in the kitchen and well out of earshot. Besides, I don't give a damn what Esther thinks about us."

Beth shook her head reprovingly. "I wish I knew what you were so excited about. You really mustn't shout at me that way."

With an effort he forced his voice to level off. He said, "Beth, what's your game?"

"Pardon me, Randall?"

"What are you trying to do?"

She shrugged hopelessly. "Maybe we'd better begin this conversation over, dear. I'm utterly lost."

"I'll be very blunt, then. Last night, Beth, I stayed out late. Very late. As a matter of fact, I didn't come home at all. Didn't you notice that? Weren't you aware of the fact that I didn't come home, that I slept somewhere else last night?"

She said idly, "Obviously you were working very late at the office. You told me so yourself, when you called at five."

"Don't be deliberately naïve. It doesn't look good on you. I didn't work at the office all night."

"Perhaps you slept at some client's, then."

He scowled. In quiet tones he said, "I didn't stay at the office at all, last night. I went straight to the apartment of a girl downtown. I had dinner there and then I slept over."

Her blank expression didn't flicker. "Don't you think I knew that, Randall?"

"And you don't care?"

"No."

"I was unfaithful to you, Beth. I committed adultery. I keep a mistress. Don't these things matter to you at all?"

"I'm surprised that you can manage all these activities at your age," she said.

"Damn you, why don't you get angry?"

"Because I'm your wife, Randall. For better and for worse. Right now it happens to be for worse."

"You'll stick by me through thick and thin, eh?"

"Yes."

"You won't fly off the handle. You won't call a lawyer and sue for divorce."

She laughed harshly. "You'd like that, wouldn't you? A divorce, that is." She shook her head. "Sorry, no. I like things the way they are. I'm not interested in collecting alimony. I've been Mrs. Randall Harshman for a long time now, and I intend to stay that way."

"No matter what?"

"No matter what."

Everything was plain now. He felt fierce grippings in his stomach, and a fiery surge of hatred toward this woman he had once loved and married. She had known about Lois all along. She hadn't been fooled by his tales of after-hours conferences and late work. And she didn't intend to budge. She was going to sit tight, and needle him now and then, and wait for him to die. His heart wasn't so good. He was no youngster.

Damn her, he thought!

#

That night he ate hurriedly and in silence, and the food tasted like rat poison in his mouth. After dinner he went to the upstairs study, locked himself in, and spent the evening brooding.

Talk about ball and chain, he thought. There was no way he could get rid of Beth. And time was running out for him. Maybe he had only a few months left, maybe five or six years. Maybe he would fool everyone and live to be eighty. It didn't matter. He wanted to spend those months or years with Lois, not with Beth.

And Beth wouldn't budge. Well, there was one way he could get rid of her. Maybe Lois had been joking, maybe dead serious. She had said, "*Why, then you'll have to kill her, I suppose.*"

Yes. That is the only way, he thought. And as he formed his decision fully, his mood of depression lifted. *Kill Beth*. He and Lois could elope to Mexico the minute Beth's body was in the ground. *Yes. Yes. Freedom at last*, he thought. *At last!*

#

It took Harshman three days to make contact with Larry Bose. He was taking a chance, contacting Bose, but he knew Bose would deliver the goods. Harshman contacted him through channels. Being a criminal lawyer had its advantages, he decided, when you decided to step over the other side of the law. You knew where to go when there was a job you wanted done.

So Harshman phoned somebody who phoned somebody else, who phoned somebody else, who phoned Harshman. And three days later Harshman was having lunch with Larry Bose.

Bose was a small man, five-four or so, well built, and stocky, with handsome, intelligent features and eager eyes. He had killed, so far as Harshman knew, seven or eight people. He had never been tagged with any indictment. Harshman had helped him out once, three years before, when it had looked as if Bose might at last be getting in dutch for one of his hired kills.

They dined well - it was a twelve dollar check, and Harshman paid it without wincing. Then Bose said, "It was swell of you to take me out to lunch like this, Mr. Harshman. You say you have a proposition for me--"

Harshman nodded quickly, "That's right. Let's go someplace where we can talk without being disturbed, shall we?"

"Someplace" meant Lois' apartment on Payne Avenue. Lois was away at work, and they could talk in privacy there. Harshman didn't want to negotiate for his wife's murder in his own office, or in a public restaurant.

#

Bose looked around the apartment admiringly. Harshman beckoned him to a seat and offered him a cigarette. He took it.

"Nice place," the little killer said.

"Yes. It belongs to a girl I know."

"Oh," Bose said thoughtfully.

Harshman leaned forward, moistening his lips. He knotted his hands together. It was a gesture he often used when questioning a witness.

He said, "Larry, I got in touch with you because there was a job I wanted you to do for me."

"I figured that."

"Have you figured what sort of job it's going to be?"

Bose shrugged. "It's not my business to make guesses about anything, Mr. Harshman. You tell me."

"Okay," Harshman said. "I want you to kill my wife, Larry."

For an instant Bose looked startled. Then he flicked a nervous glance around the room. "Look here, Mr. Harshman - I don't know what the gag is. You got me out of trouble once. You trying to get me into it again?"

"I'm not trying to do anything of the sort."

"Then why are you asking me to commit a murder? You think I'm a criminal, Mr. Harshman?"

"Yes. I know you are, Larry. You murder for money. You've killed at least seven people that way."

Bose blinked. "You got me off the hook once. If you thought I was guilty, why did you defend me?"

"Larry, I'm not baiting a trap for you. Believe me. I want my wife disposed of. I want to know your price for the job."

Bose looked around. "How can I trust you?"

"I helped you once, didn't I?"

"Yeah."

"This apartment belongs to my mistress. I want to marry her. My wife won't divorce me. You see the picture now, Larry?"

A slow smile appeared on the killer's lean face. "Yeah. Yeah, I start to see it. You're serious, then. You weren't just trying to hook me for the police."

"Will you do the job?"

"Will you meet my price?" Bose asked softly.

"How much?"

"Ten thousand. Half in advance, half on completion of the job."

Harshman closed his eyes for a moment. Ten thousand was a lot of money. But he *had* a lot of money. He'd never miss ten thousand out of all that. And to be rid of Beth forever!

Bose said, "I met your wife once, when I had that trouble three years ago. I'd recognize her. But I'll need a photo anyway, just to make sure. Is it a deal?"

Harshman nodded slowly. "It's a deal. Ten thousand, Bose. And I'll give you a photo of Beth."

"Fair enough."

"How will you do it? And when?"

Bose said, "You leave those things to me, Mr. Harshman. In case there's an inquest you don't want to have too many facts in your mind. I'll get rid of her and I'll do it in the next ten days. You give me five grand and it's a deal, okay?"

"Okay," Harshman said heavily. "I don't want to give you my personal check, of course. I'll draw the cash from the bank and pay you tomorrow."

#

That night he visited Lois again and told her that it was all fixed up. Some time in the next couple of weeks, Bose was going to kill Beth. Lois took the news steadily enough. She didn't seem frightened at all. She was just happy that the last obstacle between them was at last going to be removed.

Harshman said, "Right after Beth's funeral I'll apply for a leave of absence. I'm sure my partners won't mind taking over my pending cases while I go away to recover from the shocking tragedy. I'll go to Mexico - Acapulco, I guess. And you arrange to take your vacation the same time. You travel down there separately and meet me there, and we'll get married. A honeymoon in Mexico for a month, then back here. I'll tell everybody I met you down there and it was love at first sight. They'll believe me. It's not unusual for a middle-aged man whose wife dies suddenly to marry a much younger woman immediately. I have no children, and I need a companion. Nobody will whisper. It isn't as if Beth had been dying for a long time of some disease, and I jumped into another marriage as soon as she was out of the way."

Lois ruffled his thinning hair affectionately and said, "Who's middle-aged, darling?"

"Me."

"You don't act it."

He drew her to him passionately. She didn't seem to care that he was murdering his wife to have her. In fact, she seemed to approve. Which showed how much she loved him, he thought.

#

He left her place early, about nine, and rode home feeling a pleasant glow of warm content. She had wanted him to stay the night again, but he had refused; there was plenty of time for *that* later, he told her. After Beth was out of the way. Besides, he didn't want Beth to get too suspicious in these final days. *The final days of her life*, he thought, savoring the delightful thought that he would be rid of Beth soon, and forever, without the lingering nuisance of a messy divorce.

The next day he drew out the five thousand and paid it over to Bose. The thin-lipped little killer smiled pleasantly as he pocketed the money.

"I hope I'll have occasion to pay you the other half before long," Harshman said.

"You will. Just be patient and let me time this thing right, Mr. Harshman."

#

Harshman was patient, every night he came home hoping to find Beth dead, but there she was, smug and self-contained and still alive. It was almost as if she were trying to irritate him by deliberately staying alive. By the fourth day, he found his patience beginning to fray. He wished Bose would get on with the job. He began to wonder if Bose planned some kind of swindle. Somehow, he doubted it. Bose had a certain kind of killer's honor.

But Harshman lived in a state of constant anxiety. He slept poorly and ate poorly and could not see Lois for fear of arousing suspicion. He had to keep away from her, these days. And, of course, he couldn't make reservations for the Mexico trip until after Beth was dead. If some eager D.A.'s man found out he had bought a single ticket to Mexico *before* her death, he was as good as in the death house.

He sat tight. The first week passed without anything happening. Bose had said ten days.

On the ninth day after he had hired the killer, Harshman's office phone rang. His secretary picked it up and said, "It's for you, Mr. Harshman."

He switched on his extension and heard a deep voice say, "Mr. Randall Harshman?"

"That's right."

"This is Captain Doggett of the Cleveland Heights police station, Mr. Harshman," Doggett sounded grim. *Easy*, Harshman said. *This is it!*

"What can I do for you, Captain?"

"Aaah - this will come as a shock, I'm afraid--"

"Is something wrong?"

"Your wife," Doggett said.

"Beth?" He forced alarm into his voice. "What's happened? Tell me, what's happened?"

"I'm afraid she was run over by a hit-and-run driver a little while ago, Mr. Harshman?"

"Good Lord? What hospital is she in?"

"You don't understand," Doggett said sympathetically. "She was killed in the accident. I called to ask you if you'd identify the body for us."

#

Bose had done it very neatly, very neatly indeed, Harshman thought. Probably he had spent all these days hiding out in the neighborhood, watching the Harshman house, seeing what time of day Beth went out for her morning walk. It was always about eleven-thirty. Careful observation must have told Bose that.

Harshman managed to put on a fairly convincing act of grief. He explained to his secretary what had happened, told her to let his partners know, and staggered out of the office. He took a cab to the police station, and they let him look at the body in the morgue.

Yes, it was Beth all right. Struck amidships by a car doing at least sixty on the quiet suburban street, and killed instantly.

"Did anyone see the license plate?" Harshman demanded. "You must find that driver!"

Doggett soothed him and said, "Afraid no one thought of looking at the car. A couple of people in the neighborhood claimed to have seen the accident, but one said the car was a maroon sedan and the other thought it was a black-and-gray hardtop convertible."

"You mean there's no chance of finding the killer?"

"Guess not, Mr. Harshman. It certainly is a terrible tragedy."

Yes, a terrible tragedy, Harshman thought!

He went home and made arrangements for the funeral - a small affair, just a couple of close friends. He placed an

announcement of her death in the paper. He told Esther, their maid, that he was going away for a while, and gave her four week's pay in advance.

#

There was a flood of condolence notes and a few visitors, and to the callers Harshman gave the appearance of a man greatly bereaved. After two or three days of this kind of mourning, he decided the time had come to break away. He phoned the senior partner of his law firm and told him he was going to Mexico for a month.

"Glad to hear it, Randall. It's just the thing to help you snap out."

"I thought so too," Harshman said. "I have to get away from our house, from all of our memories."

"We'll take care of your work. Don't feel you have to rush back. I know how it must be for you at a terrible time like this."

That afternoon, he phoned a travel agent he knew, and made arrangements for an immediate flight to Acapulco, and a month's stay at a flossy tourist hotel down there. He notified Lois that he was leaving, and instructed her to travel down by train two days later. He would be waiting for her at the hotel.

The last thing he did before leaving was to draw five thousand dollars out of his personal expenses fund, and to hand it over to Larry Bose. It had been a perfect job. And now Mexico waited - and Lois!

#

The four weeks were fabulous.

He settled in at the hotel, a plush place with a plush price, and sure enough later in the week Lois checked in - into a different room. He had made sure of that. The first evening he met her in the hotel bar; the second day they spent together, and in the afternoon they applied for a marriage license. They were married by a Mexican justice of the peace and with the hotel's blessing Lois moved out of her room and into the suite Harshman had been occupying.

After that, it was four weeks of Utopia. Sightseeing and swimming in the daytime, cocktails and dancing at night, then bedtime. Harshman hardly ever thought of Beth. He did manage to send a postcard to his friends at the law office. He said, "Having wonderful time and am slowly recovering from my loss. I have met a young lady here who has been very kind and sympathetic."

That would prepare them for the day when fifty-five-year-old Randall Harshman came home with his new twenty-three-year-old wife.

The days slipped by. Harshman had never remembered a more wonderful month. It cost him plenty, of course - close to five thousand for all expenses during the month. And ten thousand more for disposing of Beth. But the cost didn't trouble him. Fifteen thousand wasn't much out of three quarters of a million, and he didn't have any plans for taking it with him. Might as well enjoy life while he still could. *And this*, he thought, *is really living!*

They reluctantly returned to Cleveland in November. Cleveland was cold and drizzly, and Mexico had been sunny and pleasant. They weren't anxious to go back, but the honeymoon couldn't go on forever.

Besides, Harshman admitted, Lois' ardor was rapidly wearing him out. The girl had a seemingly insatiable appetite for love. Perhaps when they had returned to the less tempting climate of mid-November Cleveland, he hoped, she'd go easier on him. After all, he wasn't a young man. But he didn't dare hint any of this to Lois.

When he returned he saw to it that Lois moved from her apartment to his house, and he phoned a couple of friends who were sure to spread the word. He told them he had met a girl in Mexico, young, lovely, eager to

comfort him in this time of sorrow. He said he had married her. No one questioned the propriety of his action. A man who finds himself suddenly alone in the world has every right to seek help and comfort.

Nobody suspected a thing. Beth was dead and he had married Lois.

Everything was perfect.

It looked that way, anyhow.

#

It was the third week since their return from Mexico. Lois had quit her job, and devoted all her time to making the house more attractive. She tore down a lot of Beth's curtains and fixtures and replaced them with newer, cheerful ones. Harshman found himself loving her more and more every day. Beth was just a memory now, a memory receding rapidly down the corridors of his mind.

Perfection abruptly shattered on a snowy Thursday in December. Lois was downstairs, fixing up the basement recreation room. Harshman was reading the newspapers in the front sitting room.

The doorbell rang.

It was the maid's night off, and Harshman knew Lois was downstairs.

"Just a second," he grunted. "I'm coming." He wondered who might be calling at this hour, unexpected, in this kind of weather.

He opened the front door.

He found himself looking at a young man, about thirty, neat, well dressed. Snow was settling on the brim of his hat. He smiled cordially at Harshman and said, "Good evening. I'm Mike Parker - a friend of your wife's. May I come in?"

Hiding a frown of puzzlement, Harshman smiled pleasantly and said, "Of course, Mr. Parker. Come right in."

"Thanks. Thanks very much."

Harshman took the stranger's coat and hung it up while the other peeled out of his galoshes and rubbed his hands together to warm them.

Harshman escorted him into the sitting room and said, "Won't you make yourself comfortable, Mr. Parker? I'll go downstairs and tell Lois we have company."

"That'll be all right, thanks. I'd rather speak to you alone, without Mrs. Harshman present."

Harshman blinked and said suspiciously, "You *are* a friend of Lois', aren't you?"

"Oh, no. Not at all. I suppose I should have said your *late* wife. I was a friend of Beth's, you see."

Now Harshman felt one kind of anxiety vanish and a new kind take its place. He was pleased that this handsome young man was no friend of Lois'; he knew little enough of her former suitors, and certainly was not interested in having them call socially on him or on her.

But a friend of Beth's? How could Beth have known anyone so much younger than she?

And what did he want, anyway?

Harshman sat down facing the stranger.

"Cold night, isn't it?" Parker asked.

"Pretty bad."

"It's warmer in Mexico."

"I'll say," Harshman agreed. He stared curiously at the other. "Might I ask if you had any specific purpose in visiting me?"

"I did. Could we go somewhere where we're sure not to be interrupted?"

"My study," Harshman said.

He felt the streak of uneasiness widening within him.

He conducted the man who called himself Mike Parker into the study and drew out a chair for him. Parker made himself comfortable immediately. He leaned forward, faced Harshman squarely.

He said. "Beth warned me you were going to have her killed."

The jolt of the flat, confident statement rocked him to his foundations. The words were like fists pummeling his tired heart. He gasped, then reasserted control over himself.

"What are you talking about, Mr. Parker?"

"It's very simple. Beth told me the whole story. You had another woman, and she refused to give you a divorce - and she was sure you would arrange to have her murdered."

"Suppose I order you out of my house? I won't be spoken to in such a way, young man!"

Parker chuckled amiably. "Order me out, if you want to. But I won't let a little snow bother me. I'll go straight to the police with what I know."

"And what do you know?" Harshman asked, feeling a cold chill seizing his limbs.

"That you hired someone to run your late wife over and make it seem like an accident. That this girl you say you met in Mexico has been your mistress for over a year before you ever set foot in Acapulco."

"How can you prove any such ridiculous charge?"

"I have a registered letter from Beth, still unopened, dated ten days before her death. She also sent me a copy of what was in the letter. In it she says you repeatedly asked her for a divorce and admitted to her you were keeping another woman in downtown Cleveland."

"That's not enough evidence to prove anything. She could have made the whole thing up."

"Perhaps. But certainly it's enough to arouse the interest of the D.A. enough to make an investigation. He might check on your present wife's salary, and compare it with the rent on the apartment she was living in. He might ask you to explain a lot of expenditures - including the no doubt large sum you paid to have Beth murdered. You wouldn't stand up to questioning very long. Not even a skilled lawyer like you."

Harshman was quiet, listening to the irregular sound of his own breath. Cold sweat dribbled down his body as he watched this cocky young man sitting with his legs crossed five feet away.

He said, "You're a very shrewd devil, Parker."

"Not very. Just opportunistic."

"May I ask how you came to know Beth?"

Parker puffed coolly at his cigarette and blew a smoke ring. He said, "You weren't the only member of the Harshman family who was engaged in extracurricular activities, friend."

It was like a slap in the face. Beth - with a lover? A man twenty years younger than she was? It was beyond belief. It was incredible.

"You?"

"That's right. I first met her on a sales route, and she asked me in. That was the beginning. I used to stop by every afternoon for a couple of hours. She used to tell me she wished you would come home suddenly and surprise us. The shock would probably make you drop dead!"

"And," Harshman said thinly, "you could then marry her and live happily ever after on my money."

"That was pretty much the idea."

"But how long would you live with Beth?" Harshman asked. "I see the whole picture now. You were waiting for Beth to become a widow. A rich widow. Then Beth would die - accidentally - and you'd inherit. And off you'd go. Very clever, Parker. Probably you would have gotten tired of waiting for me to die and killed me first if I hadn't--"

He stopped. Parker said, "Go on. If you hadn't *what*? If you hadn't killed Beth?"

Harshman felt his heart pounding fiercely. He didn't know whether it would hold out against this kind of strain. "Why did you come here? To torment me?"

"Only partly. Mostly to ask for money."

"I thought so. How much?"

"Fifty thousand."

"Fifty thou--"

"You heard it. Fifty thousand or I go to the police with what I know. They'll make trouble for you. Big trouble. You've cheated the D.A. out of too many defendants, Mr. Lawyer Harshman. You can bet they'll do all they can to see that the book gets thrown at you."

"Fifty thousand is a lot of money."

"I'll take it in five ten-thousand dollar installments," Parker said cheerfully. "Have the first one ready for me on Monday. Then one a week for four weeks. I think I've said all I need to, Harshman. Can I have my hat and coat, please?"

Numb, Harshman showed Parker to the door and off into the snowy night. He stood by the door a long time, letting

the tension drain out of him. He went back inside, poured himself a drink, took a pill. His heart was going like a trip-hammer.

#

Lois came up from below, smeared with paint, "Did I just hear the door close, dear?"

He shook his head. "I dropped a book, that's all."

"Oh. I thought we might have had company." She looked at him closely. "Are you feeling all right, dear? You look so strange!"

"I'm - a little tired, Lois. I think I'll go upstairs and lie down for a while."

#

He spent a dreadful weekend, consumed with fear. If Parker exposed him, he'd be finished, through, kaput. Utopia had lasted only a few weeks. Now it was over. He was up against the hard realities of life.

So many times he had defended murderers and wondered what had impelled them to take another life. Now he was on their side of the fence - and feeling all the agonies of the condemned man already. He wondered how long his heart could take it. This episode had probably cost him several years of his life already.

He made the payment to Parker on Monday - \$10,000. The money made a dent, but he had no choice. The idea of killing Parker didn't occur till later in the week.

The more he thought about it, the more he liked the idea. For one thing, Parker had been his wife's lover, and he wanted to get even for that. For another, he'd save \$30,000 if he paid Bose to kill Parker before the next installment was due. And it would rid him of one prying fear; that Parker would not settle for the \$50,000, but would go on bleeding him forever.

So that Thursday he contacted Bose again. He went to see the lean little killer at his waterfront apartment.

Bose didn't seem happy to see him. He said, "I wish you hadn't come here."

"I had to."

"Why? Everything's okay on the job, isn't it?"

"Not quite. Someone knows. Not about you, but that it was arranged. I'm being blackmailed."

"That's too bad. Keep me out of it," Bose said.

"I want you to kill the blackmailer for me."

To his surprise Bose shook his head. "Sorry. No."

"No?"

"I'm under hire," Bose said. "Another client. And I never work for two people at once."

"But every week I wait costs me \$10,000! Look, Bose, I'll double the price. I'll give you twenty gees to do this for me!"

Bose looked pained, but he stuck to his guns. No amount of persuading would change his mind. He would not take on the job under any circumstances. After fifteen minutes of pleading, he pointedly asked Harshman to leave and not to contact him again.

Brooding, Harshman returned to his office. He hadn't expected the flat refusal from Bose.

I have to get rid of Parker some way, he thought. Maybe even kill him myself! But how? When?

His heart pounded frantically. He felt tired, sick, discouraged. Lois' passion was wearing him out - and the threat introduced by Parker kept him in a state of constant terror that was hell on his weak heart.

At three that afternoon he decided he couldn't remain in the office any longer. He had to go home, lie down, relax. *Maybe I ought to tell Lois about Parker, he thought. Let her share my troubles.*

Yes. He made up his mind to tell her everything about the blackmailer. Maybe she would have some ideas.

He reached Cleveland Heights at about ten minutes to four that afternoon. Thursday; the maid's day off. *Only a week ago*, Harshman thought bitterly, Mike Parker had stepped into his life and ended all happiness for him. *Only a week.*

He unlocked the front door, thinking that Lois would be surprised to see him home so early. But he was the one who got the surprise.

He walked into the bedroom. Lois was there. She wasn't alone.

"Hello," Mike Parker said.

#

The sight of him was like a piledriver smashing into Harshman's ribs. He looked at Parker, who was smiling smugly. Then at Lois, clad in her filmy housecoat. Then at the rumpled bed.

Fingers of pain clawed at his heart. He caught his breath and said, "What are you doing here, Parker?"

"Guess."

It was all too easy to guess, Harshman's breath came thickly. "Lois--"

She looked away. Parker said, "We weren't quite expecting you home this early. We might have tidied up a little if we knew."

"How - how long has this been going on?" Harshman asked in a quivering voice.

Parker shrugged. "Since the day after I visited you. Last Friday, I guess. I had heard your new wife was kind of pretty, and I figured I'd drop around to socialize. So I did. And I've been coming back every day since."

"The way you did with Beth," Harshman said.

"Yeah. The way I did with Beth."

Each of the words seemed to stab at his heart. Harshman looked at Lois. He understood now why she had paid so much attention to him, why she had treated him so well, why she had married him.

Money.

Everyone wanted his money. Lois knew if she married him she'd soon be a rich, young, pretty widow. A person like that had the world at her feet.

And now she had Parker. Parker still had his eyes on the Harshman bank account. If he couldn't marry Beth, he would marry Lois.

Lois said, "How's your heart, dear? Acting up again?" Her voice held no sympathy, only hardness and hatred.

"Lois--"

"I figured you couldn't last long, Randall dear. And I'd inherit your money. How's your heart?"

He could hardly speak. Arrows of flame shot through his chest. The shock of finding the two of them together demolished what was left of his world.

"I'll marry Mike after you've gone," she went on. "And we'll live happily ever after."

"Damn you!" Harshman grated. He started forward, wanting to hurt, to tear, to beat. Suddenly an invisible hand squeezed his heart and he staggered, nearly fell. The long-awaited attack had started.

"My medicine," he whispered. "Lois, where's my medicine?"

"Upstairs, dear."

"Go get it. Get it!"

She shook her head. "Sorry, Randall. I'd rather not."

"You'll let me die?"

"It would be a pity, wouldn't it?"

Hot tears streamed from his eyes. He struggled to stay on his feet despite the pain. The real force of the attack had not hit him yet; if he could get to the medicine in time--

But he couldn't climb the stairs now. And they weren't going to get the bottle for him.

He turned away suddenly, heading out to the hall. He snatched up the phone, thinking to call the police, or even just the doctor across the street. Doctor Robinson would help him. He'd live to see these two vultures in jail yet.

But Parker was there, snatching the phone out of his numb hands.

"Give me that," Harshman muttered.

Parker shook his head. "You could make trouble with the phone."

They weren't going to let him get help. Without laying a hand on him, they would murder him! He thought bitterly of the new will he had made only the week before, leaving virtually everything to Lois.

To Lois - and to her lover, Parker.

He had only one hope left. To escape, to get across the street to the doctor's office. He lurched down the foyer toward the front door. To his surprise no one followed him. They let him go.

He threw open the door. A cold wintry wind whipped back at him. He didn't have much time left. But it was only forty feet to the other side of the street. And they weren't following him--

He staggered out into the sidewalk and then toward the street. A blue car was parked across the street, half a block away. Harshman hardly noticed as the parked car began to pull out.

Then suddenly it was speeding toward him - right at him! A horn was screeching, but he was frozen, unable to move, shock seizing him and making him paralyzed.

He dropped to his knees in the path of the oncoming car. The screech of brakes was heard; the car came to a halt inches away from him.

Inches.

But the shock was too much. He felt consciousness leaving him. He looked up, saw the driver of the car looking down at him and smiling.

The driver was Larry Bose.

Numbly Harshman lay there as the blue car started up again and drove around him and away. Somebody was coming out of the doctor's house now, running toward him, but he seemed to be running in slow motion, and Harshman knew it was too late.

Larry Bose, he thought. A craftsman at murder. Why run down a man with a heart condition when scaring him to death is enough?

Voices above him. A soft feminine voice saying, "Yes, that's my husband. I don't know what got into him! He simply ran out of the house into the path of that car. And his heart--"

Dying, Harshman understood. He knew who Bose's client had been now, and why Bose had not wanted to kill Parker. Lois and Parker had hired Bose to kill him. They couldn't wait for him to die naturally. They were impatient, the way he had been impatient.

He opened his eyes and saw five or six people standing over him.

"Give him air," someone said.

He could hear what they were saying. He wanted to speak out, to say, "I murdered my wife to marry that woman, but she killed me for my money." He wanted to say lots of things. He wanted to point to Parker and say, "He blackmailed me and hired a man to kill me."

But no words came out. Only wordless hysterical moaning.

He felt Dr. Robinson kneeling over him. *Too late*, he thought, *too late for everything*. He was paying the price for killing Beth.

"They - they--" he started to say, and the words died away.

"Randall! Randall!" Lois screamed.

Harshman managed to smile. As he blanked out for good, it occurred to him that murder begets murder. Parker and Lois were greedy. Neither would want to settle for half his estate. Before long they'd be scheming for ways to get rid of each other. He wondered which one of them would kill the other, and how.

One thing the dying Harshman was sure of: Lois and Parker were going to be very happy together.

But not for long.

*Reprinted from *Trapped Detective Story Magazine*, October 1958, by permission of Robert Silverberg. Copyright 1958, 2004 by Robert Silverberg. All rights reserved. Special thanks to Lawrence Block for supplying the text of this story.

It has been suggested that Tiptree is female, a theory I find absurd, for there is to me something ineluctably masculine about Tiptree's writing. I don't think the novels of Jane Austen could have been written by a man nor the stories of Ernest Hemingway by a woman, and in the same way I believe the author of the James Tiptree stories is male . . . And there is, too, that prevailing masculinity about both of them - that preoccupation with questions of courage, with absolute values, with the mysteries and passions of life and death as revealed by extreme physical tests, by pain and suffering and loss.

--Robert Silverberg, "Who Is Tiptree, What Is He?"

in *Warm Worlds and Otherwise* by James Tiptree, Jr., (Ballantine Books, 1975)

My Life as a Pornographer*

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Robert Silverberg

This is how I might write it if I were writing it today:

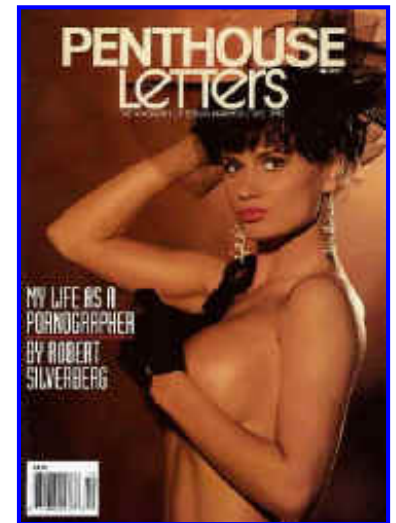
"Come on," she said, her green eyes wild with hunger for it. "Are you ready to fuck or aren't you?"

Her clothes dropped away and instantly, at the sight of her full, hard-nippled breasts and the dense, dark thatch of hair at the base of her belly, his cock sprang up into aching rigidity. She grinned and came toward him and knelt before him, slipping one hand under his balls and grasping his stiff shaft with the other.

"Go on," Holman said hoarsely. "Suck it! Oh, Jesus, suck it, babe!"

She tickled the tip of his dick with her tongue and rubbed it voluptuously for a moment or two between the heavy mounds of her tits, and then her lips slid over him and she took him into her mouth. Deep. Amazingly deep. And moved slowly back and forth, back and forth, wringing moans from him, driving him wild with sensation. Her mouth was as soft and as sweet as a velvet cunt. She squeezed his balls lightly as she sucked. He could feel the jism starting to pulse within him, on the verge of leaping forth into her throat. But then she pulled back and spread herself for him, and an instant later, to his amazement and delight, his hard cock was plunging into the hot, throbbing depths of her moist pussy, and--

The year was 1959, though, and the American government's ideas of what was permissible to print and sell through normal commercial channels was very different, so this is what I actually wrote:





She undid the garter-belt herself, and rolled down the stockings, and then she was nude, and he stood up, dropping his trousers, and she reached out and caught his arm and pulled him down again, and they rolled off the couch together, down onto the carpeted floor.

For what might have been an hour they lay there, side by side, lips glued, hands roaming up and down bodies, breath coming shorter and shorter. Holman opened his eyes and saw her staring at him, her eyes moist and the pupils that peculiar shade of green again. He smiled into her eyes and brought his fingers lightly down the small of her back, pausing at the dimples

just above her firm, swelling buttocks.

It was like pulling a trigger. She began to gasp excitedly, and she dragged him over on top of her, her eyes going tight shut, her lips drooping open, moist and passionate.

"Now, darling! Take me now!"

She shuddered convulsively as the moment of union came. Her thighs tightened around him, and she began to writhe and moan - an animal moan, low and deep in her throat, coming from the same place that those deep, sad blues came from.

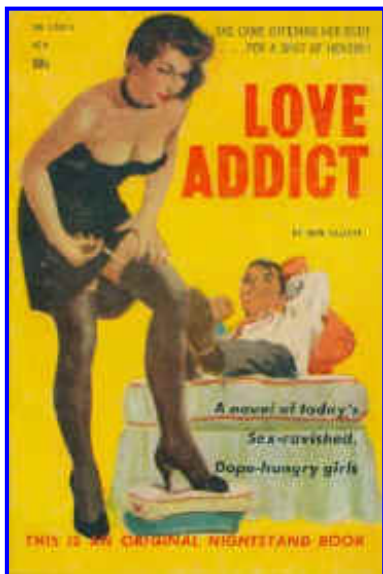
Holman clenched his teeth and gripped her shoulders tight, and she cried out three times, a whimper of excitement following, and then they were thundering away together on a tornado of passion, and she dug her fingernails into the skin of his back and gasped out breathlessly, "Oh oh oh oh," and Holman felt the explosion in his loins, and then they were lying quietly all of a sudden, limp and sweat-soaked, and he could feel the pounding of her heart when he touched her breasts, and the fireworks stopped.

It was over.

Hot stuff, yes? Well, actually it is, in its quaint fashion. No tits or cocks or cunts are mentioned, or any other nasty Anglo-Saxon words, no clits, no moist pussies, no vivid descriptions whatsoever of genital organs, erect or otherwise - not even of pubic hair; and an orgasm isn't a fountain of hot jism or anything else anatomically specific, it's a metaphorical "explosion in the loins." People don't fuck or screw, they experience "union." The tone is very antiseptic, almost

prim, you would say. Even so, all the basic ingredients of the good old beast with two backs are there, the moans and groans, whimpers of excitement, and, yes, the explosion in the loins - everything you would want in a scene describing passionate sex, if you were living in 1959.

This was, in fact, the opening erotic passage in *Love Addict*, published by Nightstand Books of Chicago in October



of that year - the first of about a hundred and fifty novels of what we now would regard as very innocent soft-core porn that I would write over the next five years for Nightstand under the pseudonym of "Don Elliott."

That's right. One hundred fifty full-length novels in five years. Thirty books a year, better than one every two weeks, month in and month out, between 1959 and 1964. Written on a manual typewriter, no less. (There were no computers then, not even IBM Selectric typewriters.) Other writers whose names would surprise you very much were turning the books out at almost the same sizzling pace. We were fast, in those days. But of course we were very young.

WANTED

AMERICA'S MOST HONORED SF WRITER



ROBERT SILVERBERG

A.K.A. "GRAND MASTER"

KNOWN TO USE MANY ALIASES

I was 24 years old when I stumbled, much to my surprise, into a career of writing sex novels. I was then, as I am now, primarily known as a science-fiction writer. But in 1958, as a result of a behind-the-scenes convulsion in the magazine-distribution business, the whole science fiction publishing world went belly up. A dozen or so magazines for which I had been writing regularly ceased publication overnight; and as for the tiny market for s-f novels (two paperback houses and one hardcover) it suddenly became so tight that unless you were one of the first-magnitude stars like Robert Heinlein or Isaac Asimov you were out of luck.

I had been earning a very nice living writing s-f since my graduation from college a few years earlier. I had a posh five-room apartment on Manhattan's exclusive West End Avenue (\$150 a month rent - a fortune then!), I had fallen into the habit of spending my summer vacations in places like London and Paris, I ate at the best restaurants, I was learning something about fine wines. And suddenly two thirds of the magazines I wrote for were out of business, with a slew of older and better-established writers competing for the few remaining slots.

But I was fast on my feet, and I had some good friends. One of them was Harlan Ellison, a science-fiction writer of my own age, who - seeing the handwriting on the wall in the science fiction world - had left New York to accept a job in Chicago as editor of *Rogue*, an early men's magazine that was trying with some success to compete with its cross-town neighbor, *Playboy*. (*Penthouse* didn't yet exist, in those far-off days.) The publisher of *Rogue* was William L. Hamling, a clean-cut young Chicago suburbanite whose first great love, like Harlan's and mine, had been science fiction. Bill Hamling had published an s-f magazine called *Imagination*, which bought one of my first stories in 1954. From 1956 on, he had paid me \$500 a month to churn out epics of the spaceways for him on a contract basis. Now, though, *Imagination* was gone, and Hamling's only remaining publishing endeavor was his bi-monthly girlie magazine.



Robert Silverberg and Harlan Ellison in 1960.

Harlan, soon after going to work for him, convinced Bill that the future lay in paperback erotic novels. Hamling thought about it for about six minutes and agreed. And then Harlan called me.

"I have a deal for you, if you're interested," he said. "One sex novel a month, 50,000 words. \$600 per book. We need the first one by the end of July." It was then the beginning of July. I didn't hesitate. \$600 a month was big money in those days, especially when you were a young writer at your wits' end because all your regular markets had crashed and burned. One book would pay four months rent. They were going to publish two paperbacks a month, and I was being offered a chance to write half the list myself. "You bet," I said. By the end of July Harlan had *Love Addict* - a searing novel of hopeless hungers, demanding bodies, girls trapped in a torment of their own making, et cetera, et cetera. (I'm quoting from the jacket copy.)

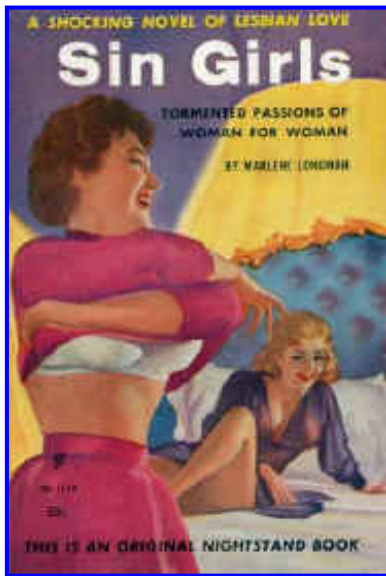


Bill Hamling loved *Love Addict*. By return mail came my six hundred bucks and a request for more books. I turned in *Gang Girl* in September. I did *The Love Goddess* in October. Later that month I wrote *Summertime Affair* also. Two novels the same month? Why not? I was fast, I was hungry, I was good.

In October, also, the first two Nightstand Books went on sale - mine and something called *Lust Club*, by another young writer who also was making a quick adaptation to changes in his writing markets. His book, like mine, was really pretty tame stuff. What we were writing, basically, were straightforward novels of contemporary life, with very mild interludes of sexual activity every twenty or thirty pages. But the characters actually did go to bed with each other, and we did try to describe what they were doing and how they felt in as much detail as the government would allow.

At that time, fairly rigid censorship still prevailed in American publishing. It was illegal to publish or sell such classics of erotic literature as *Tropic of Cancer* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and even the presence of words like "fuck" or "cunt" in a book could bring its publisher a call from the district attorney's office. To a reading public eager for vicarious sexual thrills, Bill Hamling's Nightstand Books, which were openly and widely distributed, offered a commodity that was in instant and enormous demand. Incredible quantities of the first two books were sold. It was impossible to reprint them fast enough.

Hamling sent me a bonus of \$200 for each book I had written thus far, and raised my price to \$800 from then on. And he decided to publish four titles a month instead of two. "Can you possibly write two books a month for us?"



he asked.

A Nightstand Book, you understand, was a 212-page double-spaced manuscript. I was setting myself up for an unthinkable amount of typing - not to mention the problem of inventing plots, characters, setting, all that stuff. But I didn't hesitate to say yes. I could type quickly and I could think quickly. And I had arrived at a perfect formula for these books. They were stories about ordinary people who were in the grip of powerful sexual obsessions that got them into trouble.

What I did was take a sympathetic character (male or female, it made no difference) who has normal, healthy sexual desires that are somehow being frustrated - the hard-working husband who suddenly feels a powerful need to have an affair, the woman who unexpectedly discovers that drinking too much makes her want to let go of her sexual inhibitions, with all the risk that that involves. Remove the frustration. But the fulfillment of the desires leads to complications and then more complications, which create tensions that can best be satisfied by more sex, and so on and on, in and out of bed and in and out of trouble, until in the end everything is resolved and the protagonist's life

shows signs of becoming calmer.

Any setting would do. I just had to pick my characters and set them in motion against a vivid background. I told tales of illicit goings-on at plush Caribbean resorts, of high school kids learning what to do with their bodies, of suburban swap clubs. Where I could make use of my own experiences, such as they had been at the age of 25 or so, I did. The rest I spun out of whole cloth, or out of my own teeming, steamy fantasies. (For I had grown up in the repressed fifties, and had plenty to fantasize about.)

Over the years I contend that I have edited more words written by Robert Silverberg than any other living editor has ever done with any other living writer. [Hey, Mr. Guinness Records Man!] Together we stand at the top of every list for continuity alone, if for nothing else.

Every single thing that Silverberg did or thought wound up in one of his porno novels. Every place he ever went wound up in one as well. Every trip. Every vacation. Every nightclub. Every restaurant. Bob was essentially frugal. He didn't believe in wasting anything. He knew as well as most other writers that you write best the things you know best. Besides, Bob had it all figured out so every one of those things, those trips, those meals, were legitimate business expenses and therefore tax deductible as long as he used them as experiences and wrote of those experiences in his erotic material.

--Earl Kemp, "Cold Mashed Potatoes and a Jug of Gallo Red," *Nonstop Fun 6*

I wrote *Pawn of Lust* and *Nudist Camp* in November, 1959. I wrote *Warped Lusts* and *Suburban Wife* in December. January produced only *Sin on Wheels*, but in February came *Sin Ranch* and *Trap of Desire*. And so on and so on, month after month. Each book took me

exactly six days: one chapter of 18 pages before lunch, one of 18 pages after lunch, twelve chapters and 212 pages in all. No book came out short and none, of course, ran long: I became adept in moving my characters around in such a way that the climax of the plot always arrived on schedule in Chapter Twelve. The books sold well and more retroactive bonuses were paid me for the early titles. Now I was getting \$1200 a book for the new ones. That was an income of better than a thousand dollars a week at a time when dinner for two at the finest restaurant in New York cost about \$40, including a bottle of first-rate French wine. My new career in pornography was rapidly making me rich.

Silverberg really had a thing for "Fancy Expensive Restaurants." He never saw a one he didn't like. He was particularly fond of revisiting the establishments in his novels. And that was where *The Game* really took off.

In the *Porno Factory*, particularly with Silverberg manuscripts, we began a pattern of systematically and routinely "downscaling" the more elaborate establishments he favored to something just beneath the minimum acceptable level. We would write into the manuscript the most absurd, inappropriate things we could think up at the moment.

As an example, Silverberg would be in one of those "Fancy Expensive Restaurants" ordering a particularly elaborate fancy and expensive meal for himself and the *poke du jour*. As he would reel off the delicacies, we would change them one at a time to things like "cold mashed potatoes," "a side order of grits," or something equally as unattractive.

Choosing the right wine from the wine list was always an ordeal for Bob. To make things easier, we ordered a jug of Gallo red for him on those very special occasions, like those accompanying white meat delicacies.

If Silverberg would be unpacking one of his endless suitcases, as he carefully hung up his tailored suit, he equally carefully hung up his ragged edge hand-cut cut-off crotchless Levi's.

And on and on. There was no limit to how much the pretentiousness could be downplayed. If he was sailing off on a "love boat" to some exotic harbor, we would divert him and the cruise ship to Tijuana. If the scene was taking place in a palatial nightclub, we would change it to a back-alley entrance establishment in Tijuana's most notorious Colonia [neighborhood]. The star of the floorshow would become an unsavory street hustler.

--Earl Kemp, "Cold Mashed Potatoes and a Jug of Gallo Red," *Nonstop Fun 6*

I felt absolutely unabashed about what I was doing. Writing was my job, and I was working hard and telling crisp, exciting stories. What difference did it make, really, that they were stories about people caught in tense sexual situations instead of people exploring the slime-pits of Aldebaran IX? I experienced the joy - and there is one, believe me - of working hard and steadily, long hours sitting at a typing table under the summer sun, creating scenes of erotic tension as fast as my fingers could move. Of course, what I was writing was not "respectable," not even slightly, and so when people asked me what I did for a living I told them I was a science fiction writer. (I was still writing some of that, too, as a sideline.) I could hardly tell my neighbors in my elegant suburban community that I was a professional pornographer.

But was I really writing pornography?

Not if the use of "obscene" words or graphic physiological description is your definition of pornography. As the sample I quoted above should show, the stuff was really laughably demure. Everything was done by euphemism and metaphor. No explicit anatomical descriptions were allowed, no naughty words. About as far as you could go was a phrase like "they were lying together, and he felt the urgent thrust of her body against him, and his aroused maleness was penetrating her, and he felt the warm soft moist clasping and the tightening...."

Unmistakably these people are Doing It. But his "maleness" is what's penetrating her, not his cock or his prick or his dick, and something is clasping and tightening, presumably a vagina, but we aren't told that in so many syllables. Characters didn't "come" - they reached "the moment of ecstasy." Men had neither cocks nor balls; they had "loins." Foreplay was a matter of cupping breasts and letting a hand "slip lower on her body." Anal sex? No such concept. Dildos and other sex toys? Forget it. Oral sex was indicated by saying, "He kissed her here and he kissed her there, and then he kissed her there." And so forth. None of it was much spicier than Peter Rabbit.



I limited myself to words that were in the dictionary because I had been warned

at the outset that the publisher would not tolerate what he termed "vulgarisms" in the books. One reason for this was that he genuinely didn't like them - he was basically a very earnest and straight type of guy, who would much rather have been publishing science fiction - but also he knew that might very well go to jail if he started printing them. Jail, yes - no matter what the First Amendment might say. (And eventually he did, many years later - not for publishing sexy novels, but for violating the postal code by sending an advertisement for an illustrated history of erotic art and literature through the mails!)

The list of what was a "vulgarism," though, kept changing in line with various court actions and rulings affecting Nightstand's competitors in the rapidly expanding erotic-book business. All across the nation, bluenosed civic authorities were trying to stamp out this new plague of smut. Whenever a liberal-minded judge threw out a censor's case, the word came down to us that we could take a few more risks in what we wrote, although our prose remained exceedingly pure by later publishing standards. And whenever some unfortunate publisher was hit by a fine, the word was passed to the little crew of Nightstand regulars that we had to try to be more proper.

One day the word "it" became a vulgarism. "It" as in "'Do it,' she cried," I mean. By this time Harlan Ellison had moved along to Hollywood, and my Nightstand editor in Chicago was Algis Budrys, another top science fiction writer who had found it necessary after the s-f crash to switch from freelance writing to editing. Budrys phoned me to say that I must restrict my use of "it" from now on. I took a look at a recently published book of mine and saw that they had indeed changed all my "it"s to "that"s, creating stuff like: "Do that,' she cried. 'I want that! I want that!'"

This sounded nuts to me, and I told Budrys I would refuse to abide by it. To prove it, I turned in a book in which "it" was just about every other word: "Give it to me! I want it! It! It! I must have it!" I was the star of the line, the first and most reliable and prolific writer they had, and I got my way. "It" was removed from the list of vulgarisms.

By this time - it was about 1962 - I was turning out three Nightstand books a month. It was a fantastic amount of work to do, but I had no choice. Like many writers (Sir Walter Scott, for example, or Mark Twain) I had gone in for owning fancy real estate. I had bought myself an enormous mansion in the finest residential neighborhood of New York City, close to the Westchester County line, for the immense sum (then) of \$80,000. The place had 20 rooms, all of which needed to be painted and furnished, and then too I had to think about the heating bill, property taxes, etc., etc. So I upped the output. The record for June, 1962, for example, shows *Unnatural*, *Illicit Joys*, and *The Flesh is Willing* - a typically productive month. That month the plumbing in the house broke down and I remember a team of five plumbers digging around in the back yard, simply trying to locate the water main, while I sat upstairs trying to turn out words fast enough to earn more than their combined hourly rate. And did.

...[Robert Silverberg's] manuscripts were as close to being letter perfect as I have ever seen in my life. There was almost no work involved with editing them, aside from the mind-melding numbness. In fact, they were things of physical beauty. Silverberg had the world's best typist in his employ. Even the paper they were typed on was just a cut above the average and noticeably so. The typing throughout the manuscript was even and consistent with an unvarying degree of ink from the first to the last page. It was a rare day when you could discover anything wrong with any page of any Silverberg manuscript.

--Earl Kemp, "Cold Mashed Potatoes and a Jug of Gallo Red," *Nonstop Fun 6*

Incidentally, that wondrous typist you say I have was me. I put white paper in the typewriter, carbon, yellow paper, and wrote all those books first draft, eighteen pages before lunch, eighteen after, six days for each book. Never corrected anything. Never gave them out to be retyped. I wish I knew how I did it.

--Robert Silverberg, email September 3, 2001

One way I managed to keep up this amazing level of output was to assemble a sheaf of what I called "modules" - prefabricated sex scenes that I could simply plug into any book. Plots and characters had to change from book to book, of course, but under the highly restrictive rules we were forced to use there were only so many ways to describe what my people were up to in bed, and so I extracted relevant scenes from my books - a basic seduction scene, a copulation scene, a voyeurism scene, a rape scene, a Lesbian scene, and so on - and recycled them into

the new manuscripts in the appropriate places, as needed. Nobody ever objected. (If computers had existed then, I could have done it all with a single keystroke. Instead I had to type it all out, over and over.)

The Nightstand line now was running to eight or ten books a month, maybe more, and as the list grew, a lot of other clever young men joined the roster of writers. (Entry to the list was by invitation only - the publisher didn't want to deal with amateurs, only with crafty young pros.) In an insecure career like freelance writing, those guaranteed monthly checks were very tempting. You would probably be astonished at how many eventually famous writers were among my colleagues at Nightstand. We were like a bunch of future major-leaguers getting a chance to sharpen our skills in Triple-A minor-league baseball.

I won't name names, because it's not my place to do so. But I can tell you that two of today's most widely admired mystery novelists, now enormously popular and successful, were Nightstand regulars under the names of "Andrew Shaw" and "Don Holliday." Their work for Nightstand usually had a broadly comic touch, which mine never did. (Sex was always Serious Stuff to me.) Another, who wrote under the name of "J.X. Williams," became a major best-selling author of historical novels, specializing in American history, and I mean major. The author of the "Don Bellmore" books went on to a career as a Hollywood writer. "Clyde Allison" was the pseudonym used by a brilliant young mainstream novelist who died of alcoholism while still in his thirties. And, though I have no proof of this, I was told on good authority long ago that one of the Nightstand writers was a man who was already a best-selling author even then, and who was knocking out Nightstands on the side for the fun of it, without his wife's knowledge (or his regular publisher's) and having the payments sent to the mistress he was keeping.

Because all these blanks were filled in a long time ago, I'm going to fill them in here: Andrew Shaw was Lawrence Block. Don Holliday was Hal Dresner. J.X. Williams was John Jakes. Don Bellmore was George H. Smith, but he didn't go on to a career as a Hollywood writer. Silverberg was mistaken about that. It was Dresner who went to Hollywood. Clyde Allison was William Knoles. Evan Hunter (in itself a pseudonym) was the writer [Dean Hudson] with the mistress and an incredible retinue of protégés. And, not mentioned, one of the really greats, Alan Marshall was Donald E. Westlake. -Earl Kemp



We were all working hard, and having fun, and making plenty of money. (So was the publisher, who left Chicago for a Palm Springs estate.) Of course, all sorts of governmental units right up to the Federal level were trying to put us out of business, and there were indictments all over the place, and a nasty censorship trial in Houston. Since we writers worked under pseudonyms, and got our checks from a dummy corporation, we weren't involved in that.

But one day the F.B.I. came to talk to me. It was all very silly. I received them in the paneled library of my imposing mansion. We chatted about my writing - my science fiction writing. I showed them a few recent books on archaeology and science for young readers I had written - I was doing that too, in my spare time, and I just happened to have the books close at hand. The word "pornography" was never mentioned. They did ask me if I had ever done business with a company called Such-and-Such Enterprises. Evidently that was one of the dummy corporations that paid the writers for the Nightstand Lines; but it so happened that my checks came from This-and-That Enterprises instead, a different dummy corporation, and the nice F.B.I. men had gotten

things mixed up. "No," I said, absolutely truthfully. "I've never done business with Such-and-Such. I've never even heard of them." And that was that. The F.B.I. men left, probably thinking there was some case of mistaken identity here, and no one ever bothered me again.

But I did stop writing for Nightstand a year or so later - not because I was afraid of more government harassment, but because after 150 erotic novels in five years I was getting pretty tired of marching my characters in and out of

bedrooms. I wanted to get back to the intellectual challenge of science fiction, which was making a strong commercial recovery after its slump of the late fifties. And my non-fiction books on archaeology and science were very successful too; I wanted time to do more of those. So in a final flurry - *E for Eros*, *One Night Stand*, *Sin Kitten* - I went out of the business of writing erotic novels.

But I have no regrets about those five years in the sex-book factory - none. I don't think any of us who wrote *Nightstands* do. It isn't just that I earned enough by writing them to pay for that big house and my trips to Europe. I developed and honed important professional skills, too, while I was pounding out all those books.

Working at fantastic speeds (I once did a complete novel in 3-1/2 days, just to see if I could) we mastered the knack of improvising plots from scratch and making everything work out neatly at the required 50,000-word length: a wonderful exercise in structural discipline that has stood me in good stead ever since. There was no time to make mistakes: we had to get it right on the first draft, and we did, telling good stories in crisp, no-nonsense prose. And

because we worked under pen names, we were free to let all inhibitions drop away and push our characters to their limits, without worrying about what anyone else - friends, relatives, book reviewers - might say or think about our work. We had ourselves a ball, and got paid nicely while we were doing it.

And also we never forgot that we were doing the fundamental thing that writers are supposed to do: providing pleasure and entertainment for readers who genuinely loved our work. Huge numbers of the books were snapped up as fast as they came from the presses, which meant that they filled a need, that somebody appreciated them a whole lot. It meant something to me to know that my novels were brightening the lives of a vast host of people in those dim dark days of thirty-plus years ago when Puritanism was riding high and sex was in chains.

One hundred fifty novels! *Passion Patsy!* *Flesh Flames!* *Sin Hellion!* *The Orgy Boys!* Writing those books was a terrific experience and I look back fondly on it without shame, without apologies.

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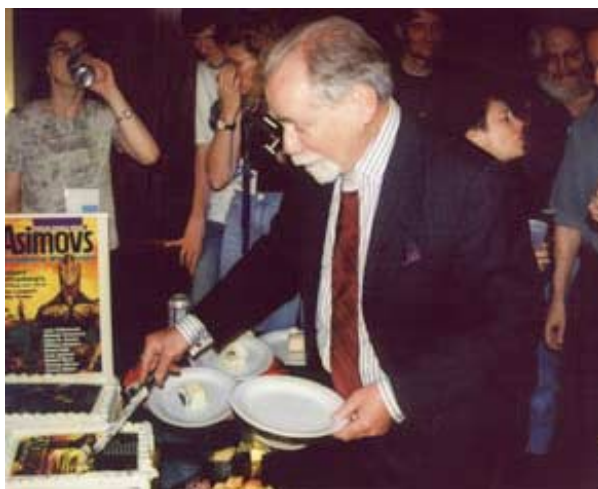
*Reprinted from *Penthouse Letters*, December 1992, by permission of Robert Silverberg.

Dear Earl:

I didn't mention you because I wrote this back in the years before we got in touch again and I doubted that you'd enjoy being named in public about this stuff.

What I figured at the time I wrote it is that you had retired to private life after your prison ordeal, that you might not feel overjoyed to be described in a big-circulation magazine as a pornographer, and that yours was not a name that would mean much to the readers of *Penthouse* anyway. Whereas I didn't give a damn about whether Hamling would be upset at being mentioned, since he was, after all, the owner of the company, and I figured Ajay Budrys wouldn't care. Harlan Ellison gets mentioned too, but he did think up the whole project, after all. It was a question of your egoboo versus your privacy and privacy won out in your case.

--Bob (Robert Silverberg), email, February 26, 2003



If the gods are annoyed with me, then let them tell me so, and I'll do penance.

--Robert Silverberg, *Kingdoms of the Wall*
