



Enter
At
Your
Own
Risk
#5

Later on we have a network première for you in our regular **Midweek Movie** slot.

This weeks' offering tells the tale of what happens when an ageing comedian with a string of so-so releases becomes a beneficiary in a will.

However, in order to claim his inheritance he is given a list of nightclubs which he must visit – each with their own specific dress codes – and six different brands of recreational Amyl Nitrate.

That's the network première of *Mister Penguin's Poppers* – tonight at nine, here on Fux.

But next up is another in our occasional series of travel documentaries. In this week's instalment, we find our intrepid explorer experiencing life in Patagonia, and the Southern Andes.

Tonight he finds out what it's like to grow maize in the traditional Indian way, herd llamas and alpacas up in some of the ridge plateaus, and take part in one of the traditional annual mountain expeditions, following the centuries old trails and passes.

On his journey, he gets to visit the high peaks of the Yarrbuts, while carrying one of the Pacific coastal region's sacred *Cocos nucifera* seeds – something never before entrusted to a European since the Spanish invaded the area in the 16th Century.

That's *Up Yarrbuts With A Coconut*, right after these short massages from our sponsors....

[Are you going to apologise for that? – Ed]

Not a hope in Hell...

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While most of **EAYORs** contents are now **Original Material** – this one isn't. This one is a Genuine Frankenziney – an unholy creature stitched together from various bits of eAPA's Boopledoggin'. EAPA is one of the original Monthly Electro-APAs (details available at www.efanzines.com) – eAPA is considered by many to be the equivalence of The Rapture by those who cannot help electro-fanning around (it says here...)

Skate Press Productions are available for Trade/Usual, eLoCs/LoCs (Letters of Comment), CoCs (Cards of Comment), Ooobies, Gooobies, and a wealth of Do-Wop-Do-Wah-Wah-Wahs – plus anything of a curious and interesting nature.

EAYOR – The Official Journal of the Counterfeit Goat Appreciation Society

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And now, back to the regular deprogramming...

This issue is, in part, the result of last issue's direly morbid content. It is also due to Taral Wayne's *Broken Toys 43* – in which he writes about his own short story writing, and various degrees of success in getting it published.

So, rather than clog the flow, here are the details as to where my own pieces have appeared before:-

The Writing Life (origin forgotten) first appeared as the front cover of my own *Heart Attack & Vine #11* (1996)

Extract from *Catch A Falling Star* was originally done for a *Writers' Magazine* competition back in 2008. It's been submitted to various other competitions and received a good few shortlistings. Still, a pat on the head is better than nothing at all (especially when you read some of the stuff that actually won the damn things. I mean, *seriously?*)

A Strange Case of Guilt appeared in *Boopledoggin' #73* (2014) The anthology is still available through lulu.com – though the price is somewhat higher than even I would've thought possible.

Neighbourhood Watch first appeared in The Hertford Writers Group anthology, *Encounters* in 2009 – and then in *Contrary Cats*.

The Case of the Rebel Tales Rebel appeared in *Boopledoggin' #53* (2011) and refers to an early draft manuscript (*Mad About A Boy*) which was later published under the title *California Twist* by Murderous Ink Press in 2013.

Never Look A Gift Zombie in the Mouth appeared in *Boopledoggin' #51* (2011) with the two short extracts from the short story, *And Dream of Angels*. It has still to be rewritten into a new form/storyline.

Pre-Launch Crash & Burn appeared in *Boopledoggin' 56* (2012) – What's not mentioned in that article is the fact that Dr. Pus also had a rough time with prostate cancer, and as far as I know, *The Library of the Living Dead* forum/bbs appears to have slowly declined into oblivion over the last 4 years – sporadic posting, and not much post-2013.

Let's Skip to the Good Bit – The closing piece of the issue. This is by way of bringing some of the story up to date, along with a short explanation as to why I've now gone down this publishing route.



Chuck Connor,
Author,
in

The Writing Life.

Carl had infinite respect for young Gloria, and as he approached her front door, his eagerness to share his ideas with her manifested as a contented smile on his handsome face....



Carl had strong feelings of love for Gloria. As he saw her standing in the doorway, his passion grew into rapture. His heart pounded with...



Carl had a terminal case of the hots for Gloria. "To hell with her sensitivity," he muttered to himself as he undressed her with his eyes, envisioning her firm, round breasts....



Carl had nothing in mind but pure rape for poor Gloria. He longed to feel her soft, vulnerable flesh cringe beneath his hulking form as his throbbing member tore away at her turgid innocence....



Carl hated the bitch Gloria! He drooled slightly from the savage sneer on his lips as the shotgun discharged, tearing away Gloria's shoulder in a spray of crimson and bone!



Journal Entry Dated
Wednesday November 9th 1975

I've always hated skin work. At least I've always hated it since I found out what it actually was, rather than what it wasn't. That was when my boyhood dreams of becoming an internationally acclaimed porn star, were cruelly dashed on the jagged rocks of despair. It was precisely two minutes after the manager of the Brunchy Burger Bar handed me the furry cat suit, and told me to stand outside and start enticing the punters in.

Back in digs yesterday, after nearly four weeks of long and depressing day shifts, I flopped down on the sofa and had a good moan.

"I tell you, Billy, not only is it embarrassing as hell, it's also very demeaning."

"And waving your dick at a camera lens isn't? Look, Michael, you're barely street legal as it is, so be thankful you're getting paid. It might not go towards your Equity card, but it'll go towards the rent at the end of the month."

Billy Canning has been 'resting' for as long as I've known him. His last had been as one of thee people 'picked at random' who couldn't tell butter from some revoltingly strange stuff made from fermented Yak's milk. I was staying with him and some friends in an old three storey terraced house, which would've been converted into tiny bedsits, were it not for the renters' protected status. The landlords changed on a regular basis, and despite modernisation to the ground floor – which had been turned into several shop fronts housing an assortment of businesses over the years – the living areas still retained a sense of late 1950s early 1960s faded squalor.

Then the phone out in the hallway rang. It was Miriam – my agent – which was certainly an occasion for trumpets. She wanted to know if I would be available to do a short notice panto call, in some scout hut at the back of Ashley Street tube. I had to look it up in the A to Z while she was wibbling on.

"It's on account of someone having to drop out," she says, stating the obvious as if it were a totally new discovery.

"They weren't one half of a horse, were they?" After weeks in the cat suit I was in dire need of therapy, but there's little chance of that on the NHS! Miriam sounded confused, so no real change there.

"Would you rather play half of a panto horse?" Sound of her flicking through some papers on her desk. "There's nothing like that on the lists at the moment. Would a cow suit instead? They need one desperately in Reading – The Academy. It's not A-list casting, but if you think it would be a good fit?"

Give me strength! "No, dear, it's just if I'm part of a horse and I accidentally injure myself then they might be under contract to shoot me."

"What?" Her train of thought fought valiantly against being derailed, and despite my best efforts she successfully got us back on track. "The call's for a walk on in the second half. Ten lines. Twelve if you pad it."

Heaven forbid I'd upstage someone in panto. Oh yes you would! Oh no I wouldn't! Still, with the bad winter weather on the way it would be a damn sight better than being a freezing pussy out on the streets in December – ask any prostitute. So it was up at the crack of sparrow fart, pick a piece to memorise on the train, grab some toast and a couple of swigs of tea from the kitchen, then off on the Underground to Ashley Street.

Out of the station and into a bitterly cold North wind, and I'm half way down the street before I realise my nipples are like doorstops! Dolly Parton, eat your heart out! Of course, if I'd worn a vest as Billy had suggested then things wouldn't have been so obvious, but I've always felt that cotton vests were like Old Spice – given at Christmas to dirty old men, or your grandfather, which was pretty much the same thing in our house, as luck would have it.

When I finally got there the Scout & Community Hall wasn't too bad at first – sort of warm and inviting, like a middle-aged disreputable aunty – until I realised the smell from the extra paraffin heater and the creosoted walls was starting to jam the hell out of my sinuses. Wooden floor, wooden walls, wooden roof – even the wooden stage at the far end looked battle scarred and world weary. But I was determined not to let the atmosphere get me down, and on the positive side it looked like only five of us had tuned up for the call – all hopeful of getting to play the part of Third Cowboy.

God knows who originally put it all together – let alone successfully pitched it – but the production was Robin Hood and the Nottingham Sheriff. Sheriff as in 'bang-bang shoot 'em up' Roy Rogers. "More hay, Trigger?" "No thanks, Roy. I'm well and truly stuffed!"

The other four were there already, sitting on folding wooden chairs placed in a line along the far wall, and all holding little cards with numbers on them. I went over to the trestle table in front of the stage, pick up the remaining card – number

three – then took my place between two and four. Number one looked as if he was part of some Alamo re-enactment society, and for a moment I wondered if it might've helped if I'd also turned up in costume. Several minutes ticked by before someone else walked in, and settled themselves in front of an old upright piano half hidden in the corner. But I was still concentrating on remembering the piece I'd decided to read for this new development to impinge on my reality.

The jury of my peers, when they finally arrived and got themselves seated, consisted of three nondescript people I didn't recognise (*later, Clive Shenny would go on to direct and produce The Waterfall Boys in 1979 for Granada, to great critical acclaim – then have total failures for the next ten years and end up committing suicide on New Years' Eve 1990*) and as we sat on the rickety wooden chairs, waiting our turn, I thought calming thoughts and tried to centre myself into the right frame of mind I thought a cowboy might have. The best I could come up with were black and white TV memories of The Lone Ranger, which then led to several minutes of self conscious leg crossing while I desperately tried to think of someone more appropriate, who had not been a schoolboy crush.

What dragged me back into the realms of reality, was when I heard one of the casting committee say to the hopeful dressed as Davy Crockett, "Now if you could just select a song from the top of the piano, we'd like to hear you sing."

Sweet John Julius Norwich! Sing? Miriam never said anything about having to bloody sing!

As the first two went through their paces I could feel my throat tightening up, little by little – not helped by the second bloke handing the pianist some sheet music he'd brought along for the occasion. Then I'm called to read. I do my best to sound manly and convincing, but with my tight throat and nerves I end up sounding like Tim Curry on helium, and knowing I've totally lost it I finish by doing several chunks of *Romeo & Juliet* on amphetamines: "Do-you-bite-your-thumb-at-me-sir? Who-sir?-me-sir? Yes-sir-you-sir!-Do-you-bite-your-thumb-at-me?"

There's a deafening stunned silence when I finally stop, then one of the three asks me to step over to the piano. As I start to shuffle through the sheets, the old boy at the upright smiles and whispers, "You're doing great, son. Who's your favourite singer?"

"Carmen Miranda," I say, not realising he's trying to throw me a much needed lifeline.

"Well, that's both of us fucked then." He smiles, then hands me something

instantly forgettable, and I have to hold it up close to read it, which helps to cover my tone deaf rendition.

Out on the cold street again, I scurry around trying to find a phone box, then try to find one that hasn't been converted into some kind of Turner Prize entry. Local call to Miriam, so tupp'ences at the ready in case the ten pence piece isn't enough.

"How did it go?" she asks.

"Don't ask me to relive it all, otherwise I'll never come out of therapy," I tell her, desperately trying to forget the helium voice still in my ears.

"That bad?"

"Worse! They asked me to *sing!*"

"Oh...." There's a short pause, then she adds a little sheepishly, "Didn't I mention that when we talked about it?"

My anguished cry of frustrated rage is met by someone knocking on the telephone box door. "Are you finished in there, mate?"

"No! Now piss off!"

In my ear I hear Miriam saying, "Got to go, got another client waiting. I'll give you a ring if you get a call back." And then she's gone, leaving the machine to swallow my ten pence piece as I slam the receiver down.

I barge out of the box as several onlookers stare at me. The guy who knocked before suddenly pipes up, "You haven't broken it, have you?"

I resist the urge to turn on him. It's too cold and the post-failure depression is starting to bite just as deeply as the midday wind. Once home I treat myself to a large mug of hot chocolate with a generous splash of rum in it, then settle down for a serious slab of afternoon telly. Crown Court, followed a little later by the consummate professionalism that is Crossroads.





A Strange Case of Guilt?

Do you ever get to the point where you think to yourself: I really don't want

to get involved with this any more? I felt like that after I'd 'given' a short story piece to **Indigo Mosaic Press**, and then heard nothing from 'Catherine May' for well over 11 months.

It's not the delay that got to me, but the fact that, having initially read about the call for submissions in **Writers' News**, I steadily got the feeling that IM was not as professional as I first thought.

The contract is pretty tight and restrictive – it's obviously been pulled from somewhere else – however, the clause which I kept looking at was the '12 months from contractual date' release.

Basically, if the anthology didn't get published after 12 months from acceptance of the piece, then it was released back to me. And, odd as it might sound, after 9 months of total silence, I was beginning to count the days left before the piece hit that seemingly all-important deadline – even though it would have meant the piece would still be unpublished.

Now, after finally discovering that Catherine/**Indigo Mosaic** has finally published **Contrary Cats** via, of all things, Lulu.com (which is why it has an

off-putting price of £9.99 for a 159pp 15x22cm paperback), I'm left with a feeling that I've been duped somehow.

Okay, so the short story is only around 1,700 words – which has somehow spread out to 8pp if I still believe the crapped out proof Catherine finally emailed me.

The PDF file was so bad (orphaned quote marks, vanished spaces between sentences, double indented paragraphs) that I emailed her back, offering to take the originals and typeset them myself over a weekend. That was met with silence.

In fact, had I not kept tapping at Catherine May's Facebook page, then I wouldn't have known that the anthology had finally been printed up and released on Christmas Eve [2013].

Okay, so another curious surprise was that I didn't expect to have to pay £13.00/\$21.50 for a copy (especially when I'm also flogging a 345+pp paperback for less than £8.50/\$14.00) – and going through the contract I finally realised that there wasn't any offer of a complimentary copy for the contributors.

However, when I saw the size of the finished product (15cm x 23cm) and then checked the proof that was sent (20cm x 28cm – standard US paper size of 8x11 inches) I'm now more than a little concerned that the proof was nothing like the final edition. Also, the final printed version I paid lulu.com for, now seems to have a ragged right hand edge to the text – rather than justified. All of which might sound picky, but the point of a proof is to show what the finished product will be, and catch as many mistakes/errors as you (and others) can, before finally going into production.

But why the guilt, you may ask?

Well, if *Pride* is still a Deadly Sin, then I'm more than guilty of such – in that I'm bloody sure I could have done a much better job than Catherine May (or Catherine Knee, after digging into the Adobe proof file, along with the cover copyright)(or Gerry Huntman, as yet another website revealed.)

And, so help me, I also feel guilty about letting the piece down by not looking out somewhere better for it to appear.

Does that sound odd?

Let's face it, it was a small, throw-away piece – a Saturday Night Special, if you will – but I somehow have a soft spot for it that I never knew I had until now.

So, if you want to click and go across to www.lulu.com, search for **Contrary Cats**, and then purchase a copy, please feel free to do so. I doubt I'll see anything

from the piece either now or in the future – there are more than enough odd twists in the contract in regard to editorial contact and royalties – though without any production costings, it would be hard to say when those are likely to become a reality.

No doubt, over time, I'll feel less 'emotional' about the piece, but at the moment I feel a little guilty about letting it down.

So, in the true spirit of contractual obligation infringement, here is the original:

Neighbourhood Watch

“Marcus Alfonso Xavier Dodd, really doesn't give a sod.”

At least that's what he'd thought he'd sprayed on the front of the sofa. But the rolled up newspaper to the back of the head, which had left his ears ringing along with the bell on his collar, had seemed to indicate otherwise. Well, to hell with the old dear. No more mice for her at 3 o'clock in the morning, that was for sure.

Still, as he lay under the Periwinkle at the top of the garden by the old wooden conservatory, sheltering from the afternoon sun, he closed his eyes and purred softly to himself. It was the second week of the Fledgling Nouveaux season and, if all went well, he was hoping to pick off several of the feathery little meals when they came into the overgrown back garden to feed again. With her ladyship in the best room, soundly asleep in front of the television, it meant she wouldn't be banging on the conservatory window every time he was ready to pounce.

Later on he'd probably go back in for something tinned, load up on water and milk, then straight out for a night of territory tagging, mouse mugging and maybe a bit of garage roof karaoke. MAX-D callin' it out large to all the lay-dees in the 'hood.

Or he might see if Jimmy No-Nuts at number 53 was up for some supermarket skip diving and maybe a bit of dog baiting afterwards.

He rolled onto his back and scratched his belly for a moment or two.

No. However much he tried, it never felt as good as the real thing. Okay, so maybe he'd forget about the mouse embargo, provided she continued to give him a good stroking now and again.

He closed his eyes and sniffed. Tensed, and sniffed again. Then rolled over onto his stomach and crouched down low.

Something wasn't right in the Kingdom of MAX, and that something had a disgusting smell.

From under the foliage he carefully checked the bottom of the badly neglected garden. The smell came again, strong on the light breeze, and over the top of the high wooden fence, by the padlocked back door, there appeared two large hands.

Some subdued grunts, groans and scrabbling were followed by a muffled thump and the intruder, wearing training shoes, jeans, and a nondescript washed out tee-shirt, landed in the middle of a patch of long forgotten Dahlias.

From above MAX a voice said, “Looks like you've got a spot of bover, John.”

It was Chairman Meow, the Battersea rescue Siamese from three doors down. Rumour had it that, as a kitten, he'd been raised in a high-rise flat, and fed a daily diet of steamed fish and endless reruns of *Eastenders* on satellite TV.

They both looked back down the garden at the intruder. From his position on the conservatory windowsill, Chairman Meow continued. “It's what we in the profession call a classic example of *Humanii Nifticus Villianectis*. More commonly known as your Artful Little Blagger.”

As they continued watching, the intruder stood up, put his hands behind him, and untied the end of a piece of rope which snaked back over the fence. Several steady pulls, and over the top appeared a worn and paint-stained navy blue canvas tool bag. On the side of it, in faded lettering, were the words: *Gas Fitter & CORGI Servicing*.

Offhandedly MAX asked, “Does CORGI Servicing mean...?”

Chairman Meow silently stretched and insinuated his way under the Periwinkle. “Nah. His legs are too long for a start. No, he's here for a bit of B-and-E. Probably looking to make off with your old dear's sparklers.”

“B-and-E? Sparklers?”

“He's looking to lift some Tom.” Then, seeing MAX's suddenly worried and confused expression, Chairman Meow went on, “Tom Foolery.” Still nothing.

“I’m talking about her valuables, John!”

“Oh. Er. Right...” MAX looked back at the intruder, who was kneeling down checking the contents of the tool bag. He’d never had call to defend his territory from anything as large as this. There had been a couple of grey squirrels a year or so back. An acquired taste, it was true, but MAX had found them quite palatable. And after all they were universally classified as vermin, which made them fair game in anyone’s books.

Then he’d almost clawed the nose off that fox cub several months ago. Well, no one upstages MAX-D when he’s rockin’ da house.

“Of course,” said Chairman Meow in that soft, seductive tone which he firmly believed charmed goldfish out of their bowls. “What you need are the services of a professional Neighbourhood Watch.”

“Neighbourhood what?”

“Not ‘what’ – *Watch*. A crack team of experts who are unselfishly prepared to risk fur and paw in order to uphold the letter of the Law.”

From the cover of the Periwinkle MAX could see the training-shoe’d feet making their way up the path towards the conservatory, bringing with them the unsavoury smell. One hand was casually stuck in the pocket of the well worn pair of jeans, while the other carried the battered tool bag, the sound of muffled clankings coming from it as it swung and bounced in time with the movement of the legs.

“So where would I find this Neighbourhood Watch then?” MAX did his best to keep an edge of panic out of his question. “Saying, of course, I wanted to find them in the first place, that is.”

Chairman Meow purred contentedly. Just like goldfish out of a bowl... “I think you’ll find our fees are very reasonable. For you we could make a special introductory rate. What have you got to offer?”

Well, Friday night was Fish and Chips night – and there was no way the skinny little blue-eyed devil was getting any of that action. But the old dear usually had a tin of something special at the back of her cupboards. The last treat had been Scotch Herrings in Tomato Sauce, and MAX licked his lips at the memory. It would mean having to degrade himself by sitting on the windowsill looking sweet and fluffy. The big eyes and adoring expression did for her every time, which was why he didn’t play the cute card too often.

The intruder walked past them and knelt on one knee, examining the conservatory door, tool bag close to hand.

MAX said, “What if I can get you some Pilchards?”

Chairman Meow looked at him sneeringly. “Pilchards, John? I wouldn’t even use my own kitty litter tray if I was offered Pilchards.”

Another worried look at the intruder. He had started to rummage around in the tool bag with one hand, and poking at the cat flap with the other. Reluctantly MAX caved in.

“Okay, look, she has some Herring I might be able to finesse from her. But it’s the best I can do at short notice!”

“Herring it is then, John. I’ll be back in a couple of minutes.” And with that, the Siamese carefully retraced his steps and disappeared silently back over the garden fence.

Meanwhile, the intruder now had one hand through the cat flap, his shoulder against the flaking paint of the lower, wooden part of the door – and from his movements it looked like he was trying to barge his way into the conservatory. MAX felt his tail puff up and his fur stand on end. This just wasn’t right at all. Why didn’t the old dear hear him? Even though she wasn’t all that tall she was always ferocious when roused from her afternoon naps. So much so, in fact, the Jehovah’s Witnesses printed regular warnings in their monthly newsletters.

Behind him came the sound of paws scabbling at the wooden fence, then several slats being nosed to one side. Through the resultant hole walked Chairman Meow, closely followed by Lord Kitchener, the Micklethwaites’ aged Pit Bull Terrier.

Without any preliminaries, Chairman Meow said, “There you go, Kitch. Piece of Haddock, an’ no mistake.”

As if to oblige, the intruder bent down even further to examine the door’s bottom hinge, stretching and shifting his jeans in true tradesman-like fashion.

Lord Kitchener sniffed, squinted myopically at the partially exposed buttocks, and wrinkled his nose several times – revealing a surprisingly healthy set of teeth in the process. He cleared his throat a little before speaking.

“Sirs. I will have you know I have bitten, ripped and torn the seat out of some of the finest tweeds, worsteds and virgin lamb’s wool bespokes ever worn by a wide assortment of sales and trades-people. But I have never, ever, lowered myself to denim.” He looked at both cats pointedly. “I trust, gentlemen, that we shall never speak of this again.”

With that, he turned and started padding discretely through the overgrown border, down towards the back fence.

As they watched him go, Chairman Meow said in a confidential whisper, “You know, the last time he was banged up it was for chasing a car. No squeaky toys for a whole week.”

“That seems a bit excessive.”

“Leave it out, John. It was a hearse, after all.”

Both cats continued to watch as Lord Kitchener worked his way to the bottom of the garden, carefully align himself with his target, paused for a moment to compose himself, then shot up the garden path like a Fifth of November bottle rocket.

Still silent, they followed Lord Kitchener’s rapid and relentless progress up the garden, head down and eyes closed, still aiming for the intruder’s rear. Then almost at the point of impact the intruder stood up to get something out of his tool bag. And in silence they watched as Lord Kitchener, having committed himself to executing a classic airborne lunge and bite movement, partially disappear up to his stocky shoulders through the cat flap hole in the conservatory door.

The door shuddered, groaned, and with a squeal like a teat-starved piglet, reluctantly freed itself from the door frame and swung inwards.

It was MAX who finally broke the ensuing silence.

“Oh *Catnip!*”

“Catnip indeed, John. I’m off!” And with that, Chairman Meow went back over the fence and made good his escape.

The intruder, having gotten over his shock, looked down at the dog now firmly wedged in the hole and scratched his head. Lord Kitchener looked back up at him in mute but defiant embarrassment.

Carefully putting his head around the door, the intruder called out, “Mrs. Johnson? I’ve been able to free your conservatory door like you asked...” His voice trailed off for a moment, then he added, “But I think we’re going to need about a half a pound of butter to get the dog unstuck.”



Chuck Connor

Stars In

The Case of the Rebel Tales Rebel

Like a miner, you know you’ve been shafted when the floor drops out of your world unexpectedly. In my defence I will say that the Authonomy/Harper Collins slushpile website promotes active participation on the grounds that agents and publishers allegedly read through the hopeful submissions and may pick something out of the morass to follow up on. I will also add that I’ve discarded the site for a while now, mainly because I couldn’t stand all the ego-stroking which is still required in order to get your ‘product’ up the pile and supposedly viewed by one of HC’s editors.

So, after a delay of some 6 or 7 weeks, I revisited to find the following two messages:-

Hello, I’m an editor for *Rebel Tales* magazine, and I’m putting together a season of comedy suspense and crime fiction, to be published in early 2012. I’d love to get a copy of your manuscript to edit and consider for publication as a serial. If you’re interested, you can reach me at my personal email address, caeristhiona@gmail.com, over the holidays. Thanks,

Kirsten Anderson

The second was almost identical, only it was signed *Kate Ferreri* though still ran back to the same email address.

I did some searching in regard to Holly Lisle – an author I’d never heard of, who seems now to be more involved in her on-line creative writing courses. That initially seemed to bring up a mass of dead/discarded websites, but more digging finally produced several links to the *Rebel Tales* ‘home site’ forum.

It contained masses of the usual gushing “fabulous, darling!” comments from aspiring authors (I assume) all of them with undying faith in whatever dream Holly Lisle was selling.

A little more rooting and digging around and I found out that the business model was going to be Small Press/Semi Pro in nature – a percentage of the sales going to contributors of that particular issue (or issues in the case of serial work.) The one thing which didn’t cause me concern at the time was the lack of any dummy or newly released edition so as to get an idea of the material the *Rebel*

Tales team were looking for.

I'd also received several emails from another person (the author of a crime novel, *CondoMAXimum*) who had also been approached with the same kind of introduction, and did I think it was worth following up?

I wrote back saying I was prepared to see what kind of response I got from the magazine, and replied to Kirsten Anderson with an email, stating that I wasn't a regular to the Authonomy site anymore, and if she was interested then I had two versions – one at around 99,000 words, and a shorter, 80,000 word version.

Yet more communication with Kirsten followed, and eventually we both decided that the shorter version would be the more appropriate for the target audience.

And that was the thing. I was receiving what was obviously genuine human feedback – an obvious 'live' person rather than something which was simply computer generated in response to key words:-

Difficult times for fiction? Good grief, I don't know what he's talking about -- from my perspective, the only difficulty is finding fiction that I'm passionate about publishing.

I'd like to get a full-length copy of "Mad about a Boy" for consideration for a season I'm curating in about a year's time, which will focus on comedic writing in suspense and mystery fiction. I read the first couple chapters of the novel on Authonomy, and felt that it struck a great comedic tone.

If you're interested, go ahead and send me the novel, along with any other proposal materials you have to hand (synopsis, etc) and I'll begin to review it. Full disclosure, it might be a bit before I get comments back to you, since I have a season beginning in March and I'm finishing up all my manuscripts for that. But I do my best to get back to emails regularly, so if you don't hear from me for a bit and get nervous, just shoot me a line and I'll give you an update on what I'm doing and when you can expect to hear from me about your book.

Also, if you happen to have any spy stories or noir fiction (the two seasons of *Rebel Tales* which will precede the "comedy in suspense" one), or if you're interested in on-assignment writing for the magazine, drop me a line and I'd love to send you my season requirements for my other upcoming issues.

- Kirsten

And there was even sent an address to post the full typescript to:-

Kirsten Ferreri

2031 S. Shenandoah St. #6

Los Angeles, CA 90034

But having worked with 'Kirsten' the shift between Anderson and Ferreri didn't register with me.

Airmailing a 295-page MS, in a folder, with a mini biog and a CD-R of the files in several formats (Doc, RTF, Opensource) came to over £22 (around \$35) and seeing as it was just before the New Year (29th December) I knew I had to just sit back and let things take their time.

January came and went, and I sent an email to Kirsten/Kate asking if she'd received the package – having in the meantime taken details of her 'March' Spy Themed issue, and posted them up on Livejournal and several other places.

The silence left me more than a little concerned, and when I dropped onto the Authonomy website again to see if there was any further information I could glean about Kirsten/Kate, I found a message from yet another Authonomy member, saying he was now also concerned and was seeing if anyone else she had contacted had received the same kind of treatment.

Not being one to pussyfoot around, I thought it best to go to the top, and the following was sent to Holly Lisle via Kari Wolfe (the only 'editor' I could find mentioned on the RT website before it was shut down. Googling the name gave me a Facebook reference, and lo, an e-mail address. Fairly basic STALKER-101 stuff):-

I'm writing on the assumption that you are the Suspense Editor for *Rebel Tales*, as mentioned on the *Rebel Tales* website (well, one of several from various Google searches.) If not, then please forgive the intrusion.

However, if you are, then I would appreciate if you could please update me in regard to the state of play re my novel, requested by Kirsten Ferreri – and duly sent airmail from the UK back in December (29th) 2010.

Having received a message from another Authonomy member (Peter Scholes) in regard to also being approached, and the fact that my regular Bluebottle mailbox seems to have become a SPAM magnet of late (similar to Peter's experiences), I am beginning to wonder about the validity of the whole thing.

If this has all been some kind of sham/hoax then I'm out. Airmail costs shipping the hardcopy typescript/MS plus several copies on CD – and if someone is going to start submitting my material as their own work then I've just handed them the perfect way of doing it.

As it is, I am not particularly reassured by the forum at rebeltales.com, but if this is a genuine 'error' I do not want to go into the forums with guns and flames blazing – hence this email first off, with the associated papertrail left intact below

it. My other concern is that I ended up passing the market information on in various other forums (Livejournal, LotLD, ANDR, amongst others) and also to several local writers' groups in the Hertfordshire area – all of whom I now have to go cap in hand to, and offer apologies for encouraging people to consider RT a market worth pursuing.

Whatever – as Holly Lisle states on one of the RT websites: “Shit happens”

In the hope I have found the right Kari Wolfe,

Ed-ceddera, ed-ceddera.

The response I got back is probably just as confusing as the rest of this business:-

From: HollyLisle.com Support

Hi, John,

I have detailed info on my personal weblog and on the Rebel Tales site concerning this issue. And I offer my heartfelt apologies.

While Rebel Tales was legit, and Kari Wolfe is/was a genuine editor, unfortunately Kate Ferrari was not.

If we were able to keep the doors to Rebel Tales open after what Ms. Ferrari has done, I would offer to read your work myself and if at all possible would find a place for it in a season.

Unfortunately, what Ms. Ferrari did in presenting herself as an editor with a pending season in March for a magazine that was already a going concern--- instead of a freelancer trying out for a job that did not yet exist for a website that was just getting started on a shoestring, which is the truth of the situation--- has done irreparable harm to both Rebel Tales and to me as a prospective publisher, and has destroyed trust and goodwill I have spent a quarter of a century as a full-time writer building with writers and reader around the world.

Rebel Tales is therefore closing it's doors today. If there is anything I personally can do to make up for what Ms. Ferrari did, please simply let me know what, and if it's within my power, I'll do it.

I will of course pay you for whatever shipping costs you incurred sending your manuscript and CD to Ms. Ferrari, and if you would be so kind as to forward to me the address to which you sent the manuscript, I'll will attempt to get it back for you.

Holly Lisle

I wrote back, passing on the address and stating that I didn't hold her liable for any 'compensation' in regard to lost money. It wasn't her fault, so there

we go.

However, what does surprise me is the rapid way this project was shut down – without so much as a single issue being produced.

Like others in this minkey house, I have a background in fanzine, small press and semi-pro publishing, and I suspect, were it not for various career choices, then I would be buying and selling lucrative titles somewhere within my various lives. So to shut something like this down so quickly – when there is probably only a minimal financial outlay, and there is also likely to be minimal concern in regard to the whole Ferreri/Ferrari business – makes me wonder if Holly Lisle had (for whatever reason) lost faith in the project already.

The business model remains a good one, working with a minimal financial outlay (domain registration, website construction, open source software for compilation of finished product into various eBook/pub formats – a PDF file – and maybe use a file store such as Megashare, or similar to keep bandwidth concerns low) with the 'spoils' being divided up between the publisher/publishing house & the contributor(s) – initial split, say 40-60 to publisher, with some of the set-up costs being deferred over a number of issues as 'one time only' bites.

But to close this section off, it seems despite my own comments, there will be action taken, instigated by Holly Lisle:-

I'm putting together an e-mail to Victoria Strauss of Writers Beware, and that is the final detail I needed to offer her so she can get the word out on Kristen Anderson.

With your permission, I'd like to include copies of your correspondence with Anderson. Obviously you don't want them printed, but I want Ms. Strauss to be aware of the forms of misrepresentation Kirsten Anderson took, and to be able to give other writers a heads up on specific tactics she used.

I'm also hiring a lawyer to draft a letter to Ms. Anderson at the address you gave requiring the return of your materials. I know you don't actually want them back, but from a legal perspective, you need proof that she has relinquished them if you can get it.

So I sit and wait for yet more emails and hard copy letters for signature, etc.

I still don't know what was to be gained from all the subterfuge and supposed misrepresentation, as there doesn't appear to be any route to 'success' as far as I can see. And if the idea was to close down the project before it started, then I'm more than sure the closure would have happened of its own volition rather than needing a helping hand from any outside source.

-oOo-

-oOo-



LoC

E

Chains

Bad news comes in threes. After Ned Brooks in the last issue, Don West passed away, due to inoperable lung cancer. Don was, even for a Yorkshireman, a feisty old sod – though like most paper tigers, he was by all reports, the opposite of his Fannish persona. He will certainly be missed. However, as he is not now able to defend himself, I've taken the liberty of removing the relevant sections of various letters which commented on/around D, and to some extent his concepts of fanzines and Small Press/Indie Press/Semi-Pro magazines.

Also Ian Bmbro also passed away. Although he wasn't a prominent fan, he was someone whose cheerfully dour and wonderful sense of humour will be more than just 'sadly missed.' He really was a wonderful guy.

So, to kick off the proceedings, here's *John Purcell* - LoCcing about LoCcols:-

"Say, I really like the way you construct your letter column. Interweaving your comments with those of letter writers is a good idea, but I would think difficult to pull off effectively. You did, though, so I commend your efforts. It reminds me very much of what *Mike Meara* does with locs in his zine *A Meara for Observers*, and that comes across as a conversation in a con suite."

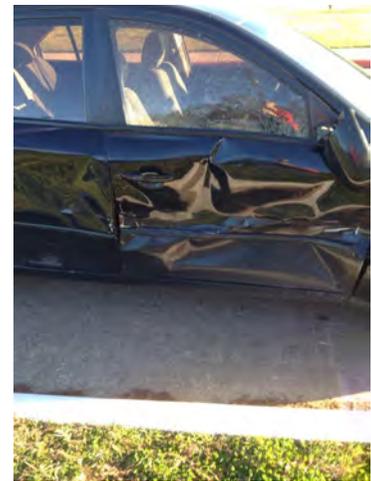
Actually, I've been doing this kind of LoC-Linking (hence the Chains in the title) since about 1984/1985 – mainly because I find it more easier on the readership in regard to continuity of topics, and also it allowed me to comment in one area – rather than having me say almost the same thing a number of times in different replies. The trick is in getting an intelligent readership (such as yourself) who can digress the balls off a rhino at fifty paces. That, and the

fact that I've always believed that the LoC section should be like a group therapy session – er, sorry – a group conversation. Here's *John Purcell* again:-

"Interesting that you start off nattering about automobiles and acquiring driving privileges, notably in Gibraltar. Lucky you. It sounds like that little corner of the universe has some peculiarities most unique to itself. Here in Texas, people generally don't remember how to drive once they have passed their behind-the-wheel exam and get that damned ID card. Just yesterday morning I got rammed amidships by a woman pulling out of a school driveway. I am attaching a photo I took of my car just before driving it back home, then took the other car - a much bigger vehicle, too - in to school where I was able to finish off final grades for the semester and call it quits until the third week of January, 2016. Hopefully later today (Saturday, December 19, 2015) the insurance appraiser/adjuster will be calling to come see the crumpled beastie and give me an estimate on the repair costs. I am expecting something in the \$3K to \$4K USD range. We shall see.

"As a quick aside on that incident: I was not injured, nor was the other driver.

"Now our vehicles, being designed to crumble into oodles of big and little bits upon impact, they're both bad. Hers is worse, though. Oh, the joys of driving through a school zone and one driver (her) had a completely blocked view of traffic due to a string of cars waiting to make the turn in to drop off their children. Most dangerous."



The last accident we had certainly supported the 'myriad of pieces' - pictured right, the sad remains of 'Glow-2' after Mr. Tingley's W-reg Ford decided to bump uglies with our Mazda back in 2008. Mr. Tingley had decided to overtake a caravan and car, coming over the crest of a hill, on a blind corner (B6265 Pately Bridge to Ripon) – just as we came up the hill in the opposite direction. I was left with the choice of going completely into the deep drainage ditch (which the back end of the car had partially slid into – that's Den in the passenger seat waiting for assistance from the ambulance team) or a full head-on with Mr. T.



Thankfully, we managed to get a compromise. The medical team arrived, and we were then shipped off to Harrogate A&E.

We were lucky that nothing was broken or dislocated – bruised ribs, and a cut on my forehead where I'd bounced off the steering wheel.

Time to move on, methinks, and what better way than with *R-Laurraine Tutihasi* playing catchup and getting us back into the swim of things:-

“With regard to getting your salmon in the reduced price section of Tesco, I once had such a terrible experience doing a similar thing in our local supermarket that I've never since bought fish that was reduced in price. When I got the fish home and unwrapped it, it stank to high heaven. I got my money back, but that's not an experience I want to repeat. Of course, in England it's probably safer than here. We're located about eight hours' drive (at an average of 60 MPH) from the nearest ocean. The fish is already old when it gets here. Also the fish was wrapped in plastic, so you couldn't smell it in the store.”

I suspect it's also how the fish are transported and stored as well. At the local indoor market there's now a fresh (aka wet) fishmongers stall (as opposed to a wet fishmonger) – and I have to admit I've succumbed to one of his little 'oddities'. Well, when someone presents you with a couple of nice sized Strawberry Groupers, also called lapu-lapu, it would have been discourteous to refuse. Den did his usual, so I had to get



the fishmonger to 'top and tail' the two I bought before I was allowed to bring them home. But, apart from that, they were delicious. And now I know why they're sometimes referred to as Butter Fish.

And from fish, to foul fowl, and why *Andy Sawyer* feels like a gooseberry now and again:-

“Re your piece about squirrels in #3, the response to it got me thinking about the furry little blighters and frankly, I'll give them a pass if they can keep the pigeons away.

“Pigeons are just rats with wings – back at the Flaxyards we were wondering why our best ever crop of gooseberries was resulting in so little to actually pick: until someone told us that during the current drought the gooseberries were probably the pigeons' best source of water, and sure enough the tree over the wall in next door's garden was festooned with pigeons doing their patent vulture impressions until they felt thirsty enough to nip down for a

gooseberry and tonic into ours. By the time I got the netting up it was too late. Here, we don't have gooseberries, but the first lot of beans I planted resulted in one miserable ragged survivor.

“I'm not sure about pigeon pie, but one day I will bring my bow out and they'll be sorry....”

As will the neighbours once you start fiddling with that violin. Usually I'd be reaching for something, but maybe I'm getting too soft in my old age. Speaking of too soft – and smooth – *Brad Foster* expands:-

“I'm thinking of adding this to my business card in the future, from issue #3: 'Brad Foster is too soft and smooth...' Chuck Connor, 2015. Then just let people make up their own story to go behind that quote...”

I stand by what I say – I've not seen you do 'anarcho-spiky' material or angry lines. Points & edges, yes, but not 'angry' compositions. Unlike, say, the cover to RAW #2, where even the guy's hair looked like the blade of a buzz saw. Just face facts, Foster – you're just too nice to draw nasty... And to prove it, the guy goes on to say:-

“My first thought on seeing this new issue, being a self-centred fan-artist, was to go 'Hey, look! Actual toons from fan folks like Gilliland and West!' I have no real problem with a fanzine using or not using submitted art, over stuff pulled off the web, but always feel bad when I get a printzine without contributing in anyway. And if a zine these days seems to have no interest in using submitted toons, I leave them alone. But, now that a few of those radical old-schoolers like A and D are in here, I will attach one of my own weird little 'soft and smooth' pieces, in hopes it might find a home in the pages of a future issue, and thus make me feel that I have, in even this tiny way, contributed somehow to the zine.

“Feel free to totally reject it if not to your taste, of course. But do let me know if that is the case. There are *hundreds* of my toons and drawings sitting all over the world in fanzine files, not published, waiting for the light of day still...”

And from nice, to *Steve Jeffrey*:-

“My vote, by the way, is for a trebuchet as the delivery method in *So Goose Me!* Much more classy.

“Cannibal Highschool Girls... wasn't another Harry Adam Knight book was it? No evidence of it anywhere on the interweb, but then I can't find Crickets!, which graces(?) the front cover of Graham Charnock's latest Vibrator. [Erm, I'm sure I could have phrased that last sentence a little better...It's put my head in places I really don't want it to be.]”

Cannibal Highschool Girls In Trouble is a spoof of the old Kentucky Fried Movie spoof, *Catholic Highschool Girls In Trouble* “Never has the beauty of the

sexual act been so crassly exploited!” Though, as the original had a pair of large breasts being rhythmically pushed up against a steamed up glass shower door, I’m sort of at a loss how that would be reworked into context.

I’ll also let Steve open up the comments re the darker sides of *EAYOR #4*:-

“I know that feeling of lying awake waiting for the person next to you to breathe again.

“In V’s case it seems to be a mild and occasional form of sleep apnea since she isn’t asthmatic and has no problems during the day, nor, most of the time, at night. We both snore quite heartily and healthily, and I suspect it’s the sudden cessation that wakes me, and then I hold my breath for what seems like ages (but is probably only 15-30 seconds at most) until I hear a sudden intake of breath next to me, and then I can turn over and relax.”

The oft mis-quoted “Buckle up, it’s going to be a bumpy night” always springs to mind – though *John F. Haines* goes for a different Davis quote:-

“Modern health care has turned the whole process of ageing into a competitive sport – how many ailments can you collect before one of them finally kills you? Place your bets now. As Bette Davis so memorably said: ‘Getting’ old ain’t for cissies.”

Nor for the poor, despite the advantages of the NHS. Even now, when I need a repeat prescription, I get one of those 3 month Payment cards, and then hammer the be-julius out of it. 1 tub of Dermol, 1 large tub of Balneum cream, 1 tube of Elocon cream, and 2 Activa ‘below knee, open toe’ compression hosiery (apparently not available in fishnet, as the humourless Boots pharmacy assistant informed me when asked) would come to the princely sum of over £40 (around US\$60) per ‘order’. So I hammer it for 5 or 6 repeats in the three month period, and that keeps me going for a year.

As to what might finally kill me? My bet would be on some brainless phone drone on a bicycle undertaking stationary traffic while I’m crossing a road in London. Still, keeping on things medical, *John D. Owen* wades into the murky waters of *EAYOR*, in order to have at me about my distrust of steroids:-

“Hope Den is recovered from his problems. Been there, done that, and the wife still twitches when I breath funny at any time, even though it’s been decades since I was last hospitalised with the asthma. Must take some issue with you over the throw away comments about steroids. Way back when I were but a spotty teenager of fourteen, asthma treatments were still of a suck it and see variety. Literally in my case, as the only drug available was a yellow pill that you stuck under the tongue and sucked until it disappeared. It tasted foul, stained your tongue yellow and didn’t work all that well. I got quite used to the sight of old Dr Coyer turning up at my bedside in the middle of the

night with a pair of trousers and an overcoat hastily put on over his pyjamas to give me an injection so I could breathe easily again. Not pleasant for me, my parents and siblings, or for the GP either. Then one day he had me and my mother in and said he was going to put me on a new treatment that had just become available, little white pills that were terribly expensive – “Half a crown each!” Dr Coyer said – but the latest thing in asthma treatment.

“That was my introduction to prednisolone, and I can honestly say it probably saved my life. If you’d told the fourteen year old me that I’d make it to my sixty-ninth birthday (later this week, as it happens) I’d have laughed in your face! I’m still taking some steroids (clenil modulite), and a course of prednisolone is still the fallback drug of choice if I get a chest infection (though it’s been years since I last needed any), but the asthma is now well-controlled and gives me little problem on a day to day basis (touch wood!) Of course, I’ve never lead a hyper-active life: never run a marathon, climbed Everest or swam the Channel, nor ever wanted to, to be honest. Those early years gave me more bookish interests in life anyway, so I’ve never felt deprived by a lack of athleticism. Found a soul mate in my late teens and we’ve been together now for over fifty years (forty-six of them married), while good fortune brought us to Milton Keynes in the early days of the place and into the Open University in its formative years, too. Now retired after 30+ years at the OU, with two decent pensions, there is not much tension in our lives, so we can relax and enjoy ourselves, all of which contributes to my continuing good health. Long may it continue (with a little help from those steroids you non-specifically were scathing about).

“Good heavens, where did all that come from? Better send it off quick before the next issue arrives.”

It wasn’t that I was anti-steroids, it’s just that *I* don’t trust them in large doses when this auto-immune thing I have is still basically guess work – and one of the supposed treatments put forward prior to the topical version (Elocon) had been something akin to daily/weekly injections. I’m the same with statins. I’m at the age where most of my piers and contemporaries are on statins as a matter of course. However, apart from the moisturiser and elastic stockings, I’m prescription free. Den’s memory has become patchy in places – and not just because of his age. I’m sure it’s down to the statins, but the GP keeps saying otherwise.

To help prove my point (and what other is there?), here’s old friend, *Bill Butcher*:-

“I’ve been using Virgin as my service provider and for emails ever since I left AOL – in those heady days of dial-up internet access. It really wasn’t fun trying to access my AOL account from the Caribbean, especially as Jackie used to be

online at the same time back here in the UK – but that's another story.

“Anyway, Virgin are in the process of divorcing themselves from Google / Gmail at the moment, and a few odd things seem to be happening during the changeover period. The majority of it is minor teething issues that are not a problem, but over the last couple of days I've noticed a shit-load of old emails that I'd previously cleared from my email client and Gmail accounts had suddenly resurfaced.

“This didn't bode well as, apart from all the spam messages promising dubious sexual exploits, in one session I'd deleted 450 emails that were no longer required – so the prospect of wading through all those again didn't please me!

“However, there's always a bright side to this. In amongst all the crap were some of the early messages that we'd exchanged, trying to fill in the last 30 years. Attached to one of them was a document that I had no recollection of seeing or reading, *Of Times Remembered*. I know they say that the internet, like your memory, never forgets – you just have to know the key to finding stuff – well this essay of yours did just that.

“Another little kink in the story here which, again, you will find relevant. Being over 50 (I know – I really can't believe it !) and type II diabetic, I was advised to start on a course of Statins, but experienced the worst of the side effects from the first - very vivid dreams, so came off that one pronto. The second one seemed to be working well, but after a few months Jackie noticed that I was having some alarmingly bad lapses of memory - mainly centred on things that had happened a while back. I know I'm getting on a bit, but my memory has always been pretty good, so alarm bells started ringing and, after a visit to the surgery, another Statin was dropped. Needless to say, despite the medical benefits of using Statins, I'm no longer on them - and now have some serious holes in my memory.

“After reading your backgrounder it jogged a few cells in my brain and, holy shit, I can remember those heady days on the Fearless when I used to have half a Pussers suitcase full of SF books to fill those off-watch hours - and the fact that we used to swap books wholesale between us.

“So, all I need to do is find the right triggers and more of those holes could be filled - one can but hope!

“By the way, I also checked the NHS site about statins, which gives some useful info on possible conflicts with other medications, but nothing that I was taking or am taking now would have had any effect. I do have issues with some other medications: for my anaemia I have to be on Ferrous Sulphate (maximum dose daily 3 tabs, which is the minimum for me to stay at a

'normal' level) instead of the Ferrous Fumarate, which is considerably cheaper and now the required drug of choice, but not absorbed as well by my body.

“I've also found recently, through bitter experience, that I'm immune to the effects of Co-Codomol (beloved of junkies!) and have to take Co-Drydomol for pain relief - and I'm currently trying to keep it down to 4 a day, rather than the 8 I could/should be taking - along with the other meds. It's just a matter of my weird metabolism reacting to these drugs in a random manner!”

OTR is still with Sandra Bond as far as I know – though I want to pull it and re-write it (yet again) because it still has some wrinkles in it that I think could be done better.

Ah, the joys of Co-Cos. One time you could only get them on prescription. Now there's some kind of watered down version available over the counter – but they're nowhere near as effective. Thankfully, the days of local hospitals giving out the full strength version in bottles of 100 (thank you, Halesworth General Hospital, the day I snapped my ACL) are no more. These days, if anything starts playing up, I just have a rootle around Den's pills & potions and see what he's got, before I think about going down the Surgery.

Someone else who takes it easy (like a Sunday morning) is *Eric Mayer*, swinging us back to those two unavoidable facts of Life -Death & Taxes:-

“Some of your writing is awfully poignant this time. I'm sixty-five and just making plans for retirement.

“Started collecting the small private pension I get from my short stint in corporate hell many years ago, am newly enrolled in Medicare and about to apply for Social Security. I even told some of the people I work for to remove me from their contractor lists. And man did that feel weird. It just had a Lovecraftian wrongness to it. (My spellchecker does not recognize 'Lovecraftian' but it does know 'Cthulhu' strangely enough.)

What's even weirder is that the dictionary in this version of LibreOffice recognised Lovecraftian, but not Cthulhu. Dark forces indeed... Back to Eric:-

“I did retain one job I've been doing about twenty years, partly because it is specialized, and difficult unless you're used to it and I don't want to leave the fellow who's in charge and has treated me so fairly, in the lurch scrambling to find a replacement. Not that I plan to goof off. I'll finally be able to devote the majority of my time to writing. Mary and I have already started a sequel to our WWII mystery which is due out in January.

“This is all well and good except, as I mentioned I am sixty-five and Mary's older, and unfortunately true love stories can never end happily. You desperately want to avoid the pain of seeing your partner go before you, yet you don't want

to go first and leave your partner to cope alone either. Short of a meteorite suddenly crashing through the roof taking you both off at once someone is going to suffer. There's not much you can do but make appropriate preparations and try not to dwell on it. We own our house, have no debts, a little money in the bank and our expenses are low enough that our pensions cover them, so to the extent both of us will be able, physically, to survive alone, we're covered.

"Your medical tales gave me chills. I dread any sort of encounters with doctors and hospitals, although I dutifully go to my twice yearly checkups and regularly take the few pills I've been prescribed. What I fear most is not being old but being old and sick and too often those two conditions are inseparable. I watched my dad and grandfather go through years of misery and ill health. And to what end. At a certain age you never get better you just get dead. It is true my dad continued to work at his art until the end. When he could no longer hold a paint brush he switched to collage and every day my mom would help him out of bed and he'd sit in his studio, oxygen and all, working with the bits and pieces of wood and metal and colored paper and whatnot he'd collected over the years. He died with a collage, completed the day before, protected under glass on his work desk, needing only to be glued down.

"There is for creative people the consolation that we can almost always find something to do right up until the end."

As mentioned before, there's 9 years between Den and myself (which obviously makes me the toyboy & arm-candy of the relationship) so I suspect (but dread) that I will be the last to go. At that point I'm not sure what I'd do. For those who remember him, Ken Lake liquidated everything and went on a round-the-world trip. The finale of which was supposed to be him committing suicide by throwing himself off London Bridge. Not sure what happened to him after 1997/1998, but I don't think he ever got to the Bridge part of his scenario.

There again, I've always said that I'd end up halfway up a mountain in Peru, with a herd of Alpacas and a bloody good Hi-Fi. Probably gain me a reputation for being El Loco, but I've always been able to chew carpet and bullshit with the best of them.

Mentioning Peru to old friend **Kevin K. Rattan** a few nights ago over dinner, his immediate comment had been "No fucking way!" Apparently there are things in Peru called Chicken Eating Spiders (alas, not the ageing remains of some South American punk rock band) – and Kevin is an arachnophobe of literally total psychotic proportions.

But then, not everyone is as barking (or Dagenham) as I am. Time for that

nice Mr **Brad Foster** again:-

"People die all the time, I've been told. But it does seem to be a rare thing these days to witness it in 'everyday' life, as you did at your office. My only experience was about ten years ago. We had moved my father-in-law into our home to take care of him after his medical condition got so bad even the 24-hour nursing home he was in just could not handle it. (No need for details, it was just one of those things we knew had to be done.) He was here for close to a year when one night, just after dinner, sitting upright in his wheelchair, he simply... stopped. Where once had been a living man, albeit one in bad shape, there now was simply an empty, non-living shell. A long life, suddenly just coming to an end.

"While, in the scheme of how such things can go, this was amazingly peaceful, I would prefer to never have to witness it again."

Oddly enough, when I read that, I thought to myself: Yeah, that's the way I'd like to finally shuffle off. I can picture it now – complete with some companion, who would repeatedly poke my corpse with a walking stick, saying 'Get to the fucking point, you moron!'



However, I'm not alone when it comes to work-related fatalities. Here's **Guy Lillian** – a man renowned for his Southern horsepitality, an' \$20-a-word vocabulary (extract from **The Zine Dump #36**):-

"The terrible incident segues into a reminiscence on Chuck's earlier encounters with the Eternal Footman – I was on hand immediately after a New York suicide (from 14 floors up) and this year actually saw the moment of death, so I know something of how he feels."

What still amazes me is that most companies call it 'Death in Harness' rather than Death at Work, but as **Rich Dengrove** proves, it can sometimes turn out to be what's often referred to as Misadventure:-

“Another example of shit happening is someone dying at work. I don’t remember anyone actually dying of some illness on the job in the thirty-five years I spent at the Department of Agriculture. Employees usually died elsewhere. However, I did see another type of death. I remember a group got stuck in the elevator. Although they were not the only ones who had gotten stuck, an anomaly was attached to this. At one point, it looked like if you climbed carefully, you could get back on a solid floor. Unfortunately, a woman tried that, slipped, and fell to her death way down in the elevator shaft. It was a one week sensation, and it got a write up in the agency newsletter. Then everyone forgot about it.”

But that’s the trouble with Life, the Universe and Everything, isn’t it? You get to that point in life when you start knowing more people below, than above ground. **Mat Coward** turns the volume control up to 11, and amplifies on that thought:-

“It’s just been one of those years when the only people I know who didn’t die were those who got ill, had accidents, suffered bereavements, or lost their jobs. One of those years (we all have them) when you just wish Alexander Graham Bell could have minded his own fucking beeswax, because no signal ever brings good news. My own health has been vile, and I haven’t got any significant work done. I shall feel better in the new year, though, I always do: the triumph of hopping over expedience.

“I shall look forward to the next issue. Ever since I told the postie my name is Not Known At This Address, I’ve been getting much more interesting mail.”

Time, methinks, for **Rich Dengrove** to change the subject:-

“Milt Stevens compares the system of fandom to the Rasbucknik, the currency of Lower Slobovia. It is worthless. However, Lower Slobovians keep spending it in order not to freeze to death. Dollars resemble it. They are no longer based on gold or silver, or anything else real. On the other hand, they give you a better benefit than avoiding freezing to death. Instead, people spend dollars because they have confidence that merchants will accept them. I imagine the same is true of pounds.

“If dollars and pounds are not worth much intrinsically, are awards worth any more? Do they really measure the best? Taral Wayne complains that those awarded for being the best are usually the favorites of cliques. The problem is what criteria do you use to determine the best? While people share some criteria, they do not share all of it. In short, a popularity contest is as good as any criteria for finally determining the ‘best.’ Thus, no one can blame me for supporting the Hugo, the Nebula, etc. – popularity contests as long as the winners belong to my clique. If they do not, I will denounce the result as the

product of cliques. And add if there is anything I hate, it’s cliques.”

“It does seem that whenever you read the books that have been chosen for the Nebula awards, you can only explain this choice by knowing how the choice was made, which is by twelve people in a smoke-filled room saying: “Ah, to hell with Sam [Samuel Delany], he’s no good, but nobody hates Harry, so we’ll give it to Harry.””

Does Tubb really feel the award system is as corrupt as that?

“Corrupt in the sense that it’s not honest. It cannot be honest. No one can read everything that’s going, and make an unbiased vote on it. I well remember when I was a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America. I was getting voting forms through the post at a time which was later than the date when I was supposed to return them. They’d taken six weeks on a boat, getting to me. So I couldn’t even vote, which was a convenient way of making sure that I didn’t. Now, I’m not saying that this was deliberate. But there was such a thing as Air Mail, and still is.’

(Tedd Tubb, from Who Writes Science Fiction – edited by Charlie Platt – Savoy Books 1980)

And just when you thought the old True-Faanish Purity Test was nothing more than a nasty Fringe Fan myth, here’s **Taral Wayne** (from Broken Toys #44):-

“I was surprised a few days ago to get e-mail from R-Lorraine Tutihasi that demanded I correct a statement about voting for the FAAn awards. I assumed I had been accused of saying that there were restrictions on who votes to members of Corflu ... but I didn’t remember saying any such thing. I wrote back to correct what I thought was a faulty memory.

“It turns out that, in fact, such a statement was made in a previous Broken Toys. In issue 40, Rodney Leighton mentioned in a loc that that one had to be a member of Corflu to vote for the FAAn awards. Once reminded, I remembered that I had meant to correct that. But Rodney has a rambling and disconnected style of writing, and I overlooked the remark. There is no requirement to be a member of Corflu to vote. I believe the only restrictions are that the voter be a person recognized by the committee, be known to someone who is known to the committee, or be someone who can demonstrate some activity in fanzine fandom.

“Actually, when you think about it, that’s rather more exclusive, not less. And it is also terribly subjective. But it was either that, or the FAAns might fall to the dreaded bloggers ... just like the Hugos.”

But wait! What’s that old **EAYOR** curse regarding anyone’s name I type three times? Getting us right onto that time-honoured subject of fanzines, here’s **Milt**

Stevens:-

“In Enter At Your Own Risk #4, there is much consideration of the Platonic form of a fanzine. People who are considering Platonic forms usually go into caves and look at stuff on the walls. It’s something to do between conventions.

“For years, I considered that Yandro was the standard fanzine. All other fanzines varied from that basic model. Yandro had everything a fanzine ought to have. It had a cover, interior illos, editorials by both editors, a couple of articles, book reviews, fanzine reviews, and a letter column. It was printed on twiltone in the manner of the ancients and was published monthly. The Coulsons would apologize profusely when they only managed to produce 11 issues in a year. They were able to do so much publishing because they lived in Hartford Ciity, Indiana. I gather there isn’t much to do or see in Hartford City, Indiana.

“I also perceived that the true fanzine must contain a letter from Harry Warner. Years ago in the orient, I was visiting the fans in Tokyo. As a visiting fan, they showed me some of the local fanzines. Without pictures, it’s sometimes hard to determine which end is up in a Japanese fanzine. They also showed me a German fanzine titled Sol. After an evening of looking at Japanese fanzines, I found I could understand German perfectly. I thought about commenting that Sol looked like a fanzine, and smelled like a fanzine, but it couldn’t be a real fanzine. It didn’t have a letter from Harry Warner. Much to my shock, I discovered that it did. Harry Warner wrote LoCs to German fanzines in German. I never questioned his omniscience again.

“These days just about anything might be a fanzine. This year I got around to finding out what a fancast was. Apparently, they are what I would call radio broadcasts. I think one or two of them have won the Hugo for best fanzine. With 3D printers, there is no telling what may be a fanzine.

“Electronic fanzines have at least one big advantage over printed fanzines. Space. A year’s worth of incoming fanzines used to take up half a file drawer. Now they can all be put on a CD. Theoretically, this should make it possible to give a friend a whole year’s worth of fanzines without diminishing your own collection. Maybe we should think of doing that.”

Seriously, Milt? You think CDs are the way to go? I thought CDs were so passé – even DVDs. It’s all flash and thumb drives, mini-SD cards and The Cloud these days, dude, fer-shizzle.

I mean... Who would be stupid enough to put out fanzines on CDs? (*Now, where the hell did I put those copies of Phlizz #1 & #2 – the fanzine that was produced and distributed on an 8cm, 193Mb, Dycan CD-RW disk...*)



Phlizz – another word from the pen of Lewis Carroll. What worries me is that it was back in 2007, and I still have some of the blank disks left. There again, what’s in a name? **John F. Haines** chips in:-

“I suppose that if an editor calls his zine a fanzine, then that is what it is. I call **Handshake** a newsletter, though it carries little in the way of news these days (mostly reviews, and, increasingly, obituaries.) I didn’t want to call it a poetry zine, as that was not its original purpose, though it has developed partly into one.

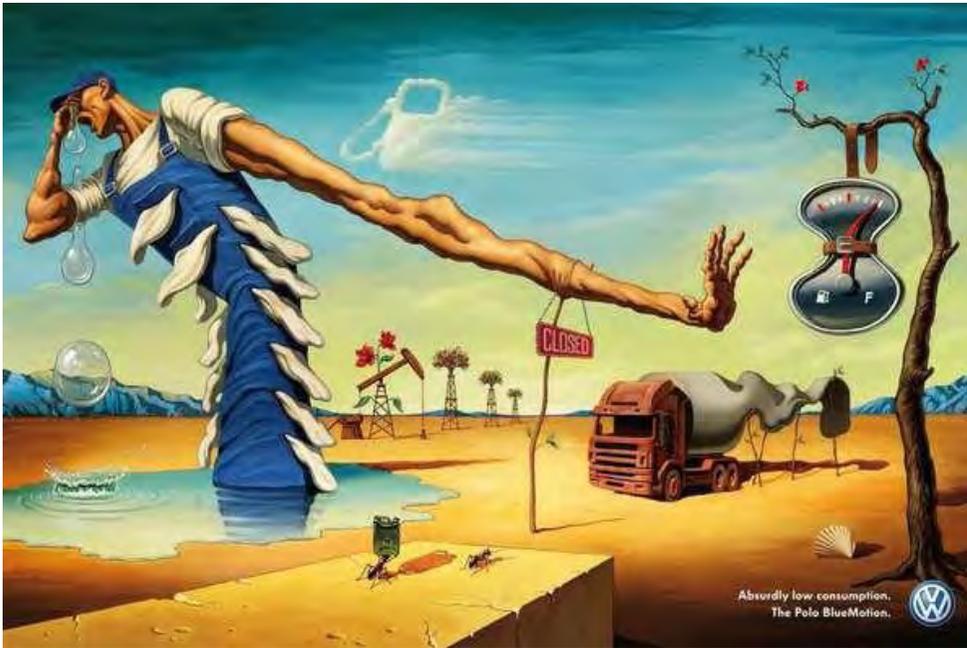
“An old friend of mine looked **Handshake** up on ye Interrubbish and discovered that I’d died in 2011. “What! Didn’t feel a thing, doc!” I quickly realised that something I forecast nearly forty years ago had now taken place. Going to the library and looking at their Interrubbish, I find that, as expected, American poet John **Meade** Haines did die in March 2011, at the age of 86. He’s the reason I use my full name as a writer, reasoning that the chances of there being more than one John Francis Haines writing SF poetry are close to zero. GIGO wins again.”

And bringing us back around to Fan Art, sort of, **Andy Robson** takes me to task for having a fag in the last issue:-

“In the last century fan art only needed a space craft, guys in space suits, a BEM, a cratered wasteland and occasional pyramid, with a randomly designated blaster and nothing more. These days fanzines are just as likely to need water-skiing kittens, the hanging gardens of Bable, bananas in pyjamas, mutant squirrels and drinks consumption pie charts from conventions. How is a fanzine novice supposed to know that? How does anyone have the inkling to draw that for their own pleasure? So, of course, it’s hard to find. Though surely it’s not as bad that you have to use Burt Reynolds photos with everything airbrushed out **apart** from the cigarette?”

“I’ve never seen 1600 ASA film – is it an artist’s mock-up? Though there was a Japanese tourist once with a motor-drive camera and gatling-gun flash contraption getting through a few boxes of 1200 film so maybe it isn’t a fiction.”

1600ASA is/was a genuine speed. I found an 8-shot roll of it just before we did a night transit of the Panama Canal. Brought the shutter speed down, no flash, and just played for photographic & light effects. Got it processed back in the UK and every photo had one of those stupid ‘wrong exposure’ stickers on it. Went back and demanded a reprint without the sticky crap, and got it for free – probably because there were only 8 shots, and it was easy enough to short someone else on their print run through the machines.



And so, as we turn into the home stretch, it's time to round 'em up and move 'em on out. Let's start the balls rolling with **Rich Dengrove**:-

"You spent some time in Gibraltar in the 1990s. Also you mention a language called Gibraltarian. Is it any relation to the language Llanito, which Wikipedia mentions is unique to Gibraltar. It contains some Andalusian Spanish, British English, Maltese, Portuguese, Genoese Italian and Haketia. Haketia being a language associated with Moroccan Jews, which, in turn, adds other words from other languages to the mix: a little Spanish, a little Hebrew, and Judeo-Moroccan Arabic. Thus, not only is Gibraltar's traffic confusing, as you demonstrate; so is its language."

Gibraltarian, as I remember it, was the biggest bastardisation I came across. Not only for the amount of wordage and expressions it has stolen over the years, but also for the seemingly indiscriminate way the words were thrown together. And yes, Morocco being just a 'short' ferry ride away – as the cigarette & contraband running smugglers travel – that meant you had an itinerant North African and Arabic labour pool which brought in all sorts of unique slang and degradation of pronunciation.

Sadly, when I left back in 1996, there was still no Social Services/Government Support payments for those Moroccans who had stayed and worked on Gibraltar for most of their lives.

Now, what better way to close the LoCs & Chains than with **Pete Young**:-

"I also like that your LoC was printed on the back of a Stevenage Borough Council car park notice – I had to read it through as well, just in case there was a fannish in-joke contained therein..."

Ah, yes, the recycling thing happens when I don't check what I've stuffed into the laser printer's paper tray. No hidden jokes, alas, except the monthly price of parking near to the train station has me in stitches on a regular basis - "You want me to pay how much just to park my car?"

For those not in the know, Pete is fairly international with his travels – though is based out of a place in Thailand, a country which holds some nice, and some sad memories for me, from around 30 years ago.

We'd pulled into Bangkok, as part of a sales drive, and as such we were forever around the Embassy. This was back in the 1980s, when things were different – but during our stay, one of the old ex-pats and ex-Foreign Office people, Lord Anthony Boys, passed away. He and his wife were probably one of the few who gave me a glimpse of a past that the likes of Downton Abbey could never really depict.

In fact, if you were to Google his widow – the honourable Lady Boys of Bangkok – you can see what I mean.

And after that...

All that's left for me to do is apologise to Steve Sneyd – whose LoC became lost in a sea of kipple, and which will, no doubt, turn up again when I least expect it – and say those immoral words:

We Also Heard From – John Nells, Julie Goodison, Angie Walsh, Colin Franks, Jack Carver, Pete & Anita Presford, Tony Gee, Mal Brown and Rodney Leighton – plus any late arrivals post-production.

But **EAYOR** would certainly be remiss in its role as the **Official Counterfeit Goat Appreciation Society** magazine, if it didn't mention the following incredible album:

<http://musicformaniacs.blogspot.co.uk/2015/12/all-i-want-for-christmas-is-goat.html>

Bleat along to some of your favourite Christmas classics! And the money does go to a good cause as well. Mind you, there's probably not a cloven hoof in sight...

NEVER LOOK A GIFT ZOMBIE IN THE MOUTH...



As I have been repeatedly told by my darling better half, I am a cynical old git. More so of late when it comes to the likes of the writing game and the number of Competitions which have sprung up over the last couple of years.

Typical of these are the ones which email around the writers' groups with tempting prize monies – provided you're prepared to stick in anything up to £5 per entry. You see, I can't help thinking of the old gag in which a guy goes out to buy a horse, agrees with a farmer a price and then comes back the following day only to find the horse dead. Unperturbed, the guy sets up a raffle – Fifty pence a ticket, win a horse. He sells thousands of them. However, after the winning ticket has been drawn, the guy says to the winner: "Damn, your horse died this morning. Here's your fifty pence back."

It's just that I've seen so many "writers' groups" which don't seem to be in the National WG register suddenly deciding to hold a competition that I'm beginning to wonder where the horse actually is.

With that in mind, and having rummaged through an old short story folder, I read in Writers News about a call for submissions for an anthology from Library of the Living Dead Press. A Science Fiction anthology, no less – to quote the pitch line:

Rockets, Swords, and Rainbows: New Stories of Science Fiction

And I suppose, if I wasn't in that 'sort this junk out' mood then I might have passed it by. But in my usual 'It'll be alright, trust me!' blind way, I just thought of it as a market.

Until I joined the *Library of the Living Dead* forums – in an attempt to actually see what the back-organisation was all about.

So, okay, maybe the name should have put me wise, but I found I'd submitted a piece of SF to what originally looked like a specialist press. LotLD appeared to specialise in Zombie fiction.

Oh tempus fuggit!

For those with half an interest, the piece I submitted came from working with a Dave Perry poem (Breakdown on the Intergalactic Highway – winner of the 2008 Hilltop Press DataDump award) and was faintly touched on in here several years ago now (one character is a multi-organism lifeform.) It was provisionally titled *Hoppers*.

It does not have Zombies in it. It doesn't have dead aliens who come back as Alien Zombies (or Zombie Aliens – syntax, anyone?) and if anything it's more Life Affirming than Soul Sucking (not the name of an EMO/Goth band, thought on reflection – or not, if you're a bloodsucking vampire – it should be.)

So, having joined the forum I was left wondering if I'd done the right thing in submitting the now 6,200 word short rechristened *And Dream of Angels* to the editor (forum name Grinder, with an Avitar which is to die-and-be-reanimated for!)

[Sorry, he's been too long in the forum – Ed]

But then I considered all the hoops and hoo-har I'd put myself through. The MS/Typescript had to follow Bill's requirements, and so I complied thusly:

As per formatting instructions attached file is in RTF format, single spaced, single tab indent, no headers or footers, Courier 12pt, and total count appears to be 6,240

words (approx - varies from native Word 2003 DOC format to RTF format) I have also laid it out in US Letter size 'pages' rather than UK A4 size. Hope that is okay?

Deadline came, deadline went. Nothing. Then an email from Bill Tucker (aka Grinder) turned up in the mailbox:-

John,

Congratulations! Your story was selected to be published in *Rockets, Swords, and Rainbows: New Stories of Science Fiction*. A table of contents will be listed on the Library of the Living Dead forum and a contract will be emailed to you once the manuscript has been edited. Thank you again for submitting your story.

Bill



To be honest, I've no idea of how many submissions Bill had to wade through, nor their quality - but I know that section of the forum mentioned around three thousand before the thread was locked and closed. But it's nice to know I managed to hook something into the story to make it worth Bill's time, and LotLD's money.

Yes, they're buying some rights (rather than totally outright purchase in the case of most 'erotica' publishing) and having checked them out as far as I can they seem to be a very professional and up-front organisation which is branching out into other genres.

Even a simple search on Amazon brings up an impressive back catalogue, with professional artwork and a paper based publication set up.

Okay, so it's probably PoD backboned, and doesn't have all the mainstream bells & whistles in place to push an SF product - seemingly its first or second SF project - but I'm still going to put it in my scribbler CV when it comes time to submit the new novel to agents and the like.

True, I still don't have any idea when the new anthology will be completed and ready for sale through the likes of Amazon, B&N, etc - and I've still to get a contract to see what it binds me to. But, hey, I'll sign it regardless, take the money and go back to whoring it on the corner of Literature & Hope ("*Bet you'd just love to run your eyes over my synopsis, wouldn't you, big boy?*")

[Sorry, he's been too long on the shores of Rejection - Ed]

But, for what it's worth, here's the opening of

And Dream of Angels

Apparently it's debatable as to whether I was hatched, birthed, or super-evolved in an A.I. Bio-tank. It was on account of the fact I don't appear to have any truly discernible navel that quite a few of the other coffin crews had taken to believing I was some sort of wingless Angel. Or, at the very least, some sort of similar, breedable variation. Anything other than Humanoid.

Which, of course, is what I am.

To me it doesn't matter. But to the rest of the lifeforms who seem to be forever hanging around Machinski's Port Bar and Diner it had been a point of discussion every time we landed for a stop-over. It hadn't been helped by Frankie, the 'captain' of our coffin. It had encouraged the myth by stating it had originally found me amongst the wreckage of an abandoned illegal splicer lab, way out on one of the Boundary planet outpost stations. It was total GIGO as I have solid memories of my birth crèche, parental guardian and the pains of pilot training.

But once the myth had been established, no amount of denials on my part seemed to satisfy the other crews' curiosities or imaginations. Mind you, Frankie can be pretty convincing, even though it looks to me like a large five-eyed multi-coloured octopus.

Sitting up at the bar, Frankie leaned towards me and tapped a sucker-rimmed tentacle conciliatorily on my forearm.

"Hey, don't let all these slime eating crust life get ya down, Charlie. I don't care if you're not one hundred percent pure an' true monkey boy, I'll still t'path to ya. I know some of the other sentients around here look down their whatever's at Hominidae - but, Hell, ya the best coffin flyer I've ever known."

I smiled and took another sip of my beer while reflexively checking on the others who were pulled up near us at the bar. Frankie can often be more than a little indiscriminate with its telepathic broadcasts, even when it doesn't want to be, and there have been times when other crews have taken offence at some of its less than subtle t'pathing.

<And from a little later on – Domino is a colony of sentient pre-cogs/analysts the size of large ants>

Back at the Port Bar and Diner, under Frankie's soothing empathy Domino had gradually calmed down, and after they had finally left, Frankie explained to me about their collective detachable reproductive system. I knew Domino was an all male collective, and in order to perpetuate the species there were also probably going to be all female collectives. And it stood to reason that, somehow, they would get together and create other, new, suborganisms which would ultimately go on to form collectives of their own.

"Ya see, it's like this. Their reproductive cycle only occurs once in their collective existence. The male collectives send the female collective of their majority agreed upon desire his/their representatives. In other words, their figurative balls. An' she/they then picks the balls she/they like the look of the best. It's only good manners ta return the rejected reproductive representatives with a thank you note. But, no matter how many ways ya try lookin' at it, it has still gotta sting. Right? But, in the end, it's all very civilized. No one initially knows who the sires will be, an' the gene pool gets a pretty random swirling for good measure. Here, I got some graphics somewhere in my cells."

I managed to block all incoming t'pathing before Frankie had found whatever it was it was thinking for.

Turning its head it blinked all five eyes in surprise.

"Hey! Don't bounce me like that. An' by the way, I've images of what you monkey boys get up to come ruttin' time, an' believe me, if I had anythin' approximatin' a stomach, it would be turned. For sure. Me? I'm just glad I'm totally complete"

"You're hermaphroditic, Frankie. No big deal."

"Yeah? No big deal? Well, let me tall ya, when somethin' turns round and says to me 'go screw yourself'? At least I can ask 'em if they wanna watch while I do."

<Okay, it's an old gag, but... >

Pre-Launch Crash & Burn

There is little that can be said about the state of the present economic climate that hasn't already been said in various other places, but sometimes it does come up above the parapets and pokes you hard in the eye. More so in the private sector, namely small businesses.

So when I received a notification that new information had been posted in the Library of the Living Dead forums regarding their proposed publishing schedules, I didn't click on it with a happy smile and joyful expression.

Yep, you can guess what's coming. Most, if not all, of the proposed LotLD anthologies have now been cancelled – and a casualty is one of my own pieces: *And Dream of Angels*. Dr. Pus (the man and financier behind LotLD Press) was very nice about it. In real life both he and Bill Tucker (aka The Grinder) finance the books themselves – and anthologies usually come in at around \$1,500 apiece.

True, the contracts were for direct buys (ie, one-offs of \$50 rather than some kind of shared royalties percentage deal) but it seems that the dentistry business (yes, Dr. Pus is a dentist in real life) isn't as profitable as it once was. And in reality even I know that a solo author with a viable novel is going to be less overhead/cost than a bunch of us in an anthology.

True, again, it would have been nice to run the project through again as a 0-percentage fee, equal percentage royalties (done via a PayPal account in order to help prevent \$/£/€ conversion problems) but it looks like both Dr. Pus and Bill are not prepared to alter their business model in order to try that out.

So, I'm now left with a piece of homeless fiction, written and accepted two years ago now, and done with a specific anthology in mind. The question is, does anyone know of any good (ie, as stable as possible in these unstable times) markets who are still open to submissions, and are willing to ante up the readies?

The other alternative would be to take on the project myself, working on the fact that Bill Tucker has already filtered out the 'substandard' submissions already, though I have to admit I really did dislike the cover artwork and the title. Yes, I know, that

probably makes me some kind of literary whore – but \$50 for 6,000 words was a good deal 2 years ago, regardless of what the proposed cover looked like. If anything, my sympathies are now with the artist who put the work in, and is now stuck with something which probably isn't recyclable. Unlike the short fiction.

-oOo- -oOo-

LET'S SKIP TO THE GOOD BIT

What makes a professional writer? It has to be someone who makes a living out of writing and publishing. It is having that compulsion to keep knocking the pages out, and the faith in the ability to tell a story – regardless of what that story might be. One novel doesn't make a professional. Apart from the fact that most publishers want a 2 or 3 book deal in order to show a return – because, when you get down to the bottom line, publishing is a business. And a business needs to make a profit just to survive.

That's not rocket science – it's common dog.

I've never been hungry enough to want to turn totally professional in regard to my writing. I suspect that, if things had been different back in the 1970s, then I would have done more to sort myself out and become more positive about the writing direction.

However, like any media business, publishing is always going to be down to Flavour of the Week. If you're hot, then you trot.

Which meant I shouldn't have been that ticked off with the assorted call forwards that ended with rejections. Or having chopped a manuscript down to meet a particular publisher's requirements (no more than 80,000 words max, less if you can do it) to find that the publisher was in the process of being bought out by a reprint company who had little or no interest in original unpublished material.

And although every publishing venture is a risk, if you're writing in the 'wrong' genre, then there's not a hope in Hell of you getting a commercial deal.

Well, until now that is.

The whole ePublishing 'explosion' was already starting to happen when I came to the trough with my first full length novel. Admittedly, it was still fairly wobbly on its new-found legs, but it was there.

However, being an old traditionalist, I considered it to be more a fad than a fact of life. It reeked too much of the old Vanity Press, and before long there was the likes of the Amazon Sock Puppet scandals that did little to give things credibility – not only because Stephen Leather had been a successful conventional novelist, but also because of the decidedly strange way that Amazon reacted to it all.

And then I finally got the Darley Anderson rejection from Keshini Naidoo,

handwritten at the bottom of a stock rejection letter:-

“We thought the writing, scene-setting and dialogue was very accomplished, but we were unsure that this would be an easy sell in the UK mass-market.”

I was being rejected by someone who not only hyphenated 'scene setting' but also 'mass market' as well?

The best rejection I received while submitting material to agents, was from The Ampersand Agency. An unsigned, undated, With Compliments slip that had a chutney smear across the bottom corner. It didn't have anything written on it, but I felt at the time (and still do) that any agency which couldn't give a shit, was not really the agency for me.

That was back in 2012. Since then I have decided that the only real route to do any publishing is to set it up yourself. Which was how Murderous-Ink Press came about.

Admittedly, it has been partially funded by porn – er, sorry, *erotica* – hence the sister imprint, Mansized-Ink – and the outlay has already involved 100 ISBNs – though with one each for regular paper, trade size paper and ebook, they get burned up pretty quickly.

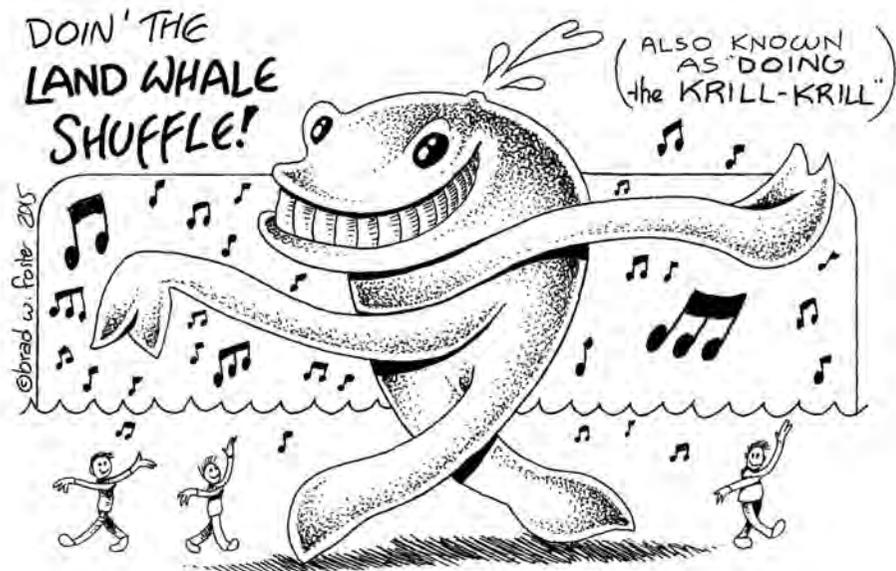
However, instead of it being a steep learning curve – and there are some obvious things I still need to learn how to do – it is possible to put together a professional product that, apart from a white (as opposed to an off white) paper, can stand its own against the likes of Random House, etc.

Yes, there are other things I need/want to get in place – a dedicated website, an eCommerce/eShop in order to sell MIP products. Kindle, Createspace and Smashwords are fine, but they all take a slice – and I still need to feck around with the US Tax exemption procedures in order to free up various monies (Smashwords are holding my money until I can get the right US tax codes I need – and the whole process is designed to piss people off, rather than try and make things easy.)

But, until then, I have various people who are prepared to edit, proof, and suggest. I have my little coven of Beta Readers, and I have generous people such as Sue Jones, who did the little illo on the left for free, and which has become the Murderous Ink Press logo.

And who knows? Maybe, once all the mechanisms are in place, and fully functioning, I'll start to bring new writers to publication – in the same way micro-breweries are selling beer, and what Bill Butcher and I did back in the late 1970s....





Congratulations!

You-all have been do – do – *doin'* the *Neutron Dance!* [*The Neutron Dance!*] in the fabled *Ballroom That Time Forgot* – aka that Great Pina Collider more commonly known as *EAYOR #5*. All *EAYORs* are directed and produced by the fimple ningers of the pseudo-mythical old Sod Particle himself, Chuck Connor, who can be easily contracted by any of the following unprotected means:- Email - chuck.connor@gmx.co.uk

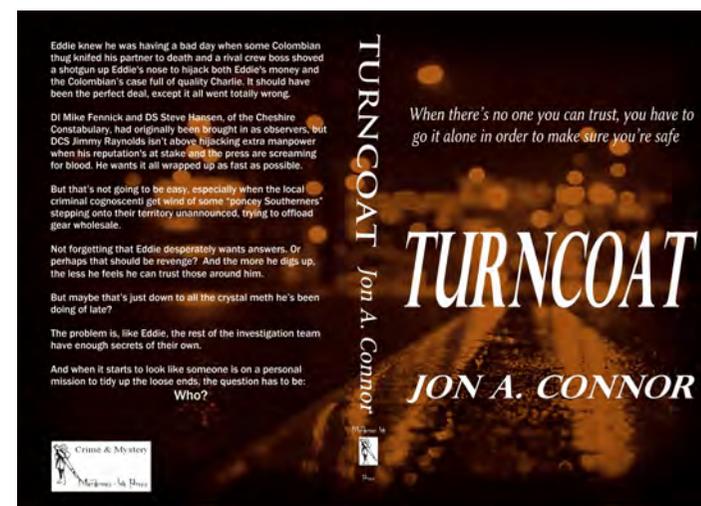
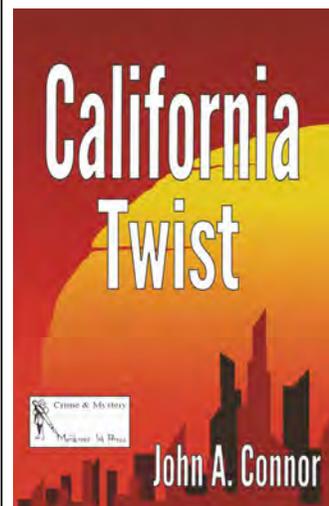
Or via the vagaries of snail-mail, using a correctly stomped anteatr, scent to:-
85 The Paddocks, Stevenage, SG2 9UF, UK/GB

Art Credits

Front Cover	Weird Fishes (Photomanipulation) Joe Moore 2010
Page 3	Unknown – sometime before 1996
Page 5.2	Catch a Falling Star (Photomanipulation) Astel Pay 2011
Page 6.1	Self Portrait (Acrylic/wash/felt pen) Theo Tin 2013
Page 9.1	Internet
Page 12.1	It's The Surreal Thing (mixed media) Chrissie Cole 2008
Page 12.2.1	Car Smush John Purcell 2015
Page 13.1	Internet
Page 16.2	Tundra Comic Strip 2015
Page 19.1	Old VW advert Page 20.1 An Ex-Zombie (Library of the

Living Dead 2010)
Page 21.1
Page 23.2
Page 24.1

I Want Your Brains (Library of the Living Dead 2010)
Murderous Ink Press logo Sue Jones 2011
Doin' The Land Whale Shuffle! Brad Foster 2015



And with that, all I can say is

Goodnight out there,
whatever
you are....