

The Drink Tank Issue 162



***Let us begin with one of my
Fannish Heroes makign his
Drink Tank debut- R Twidner!!!***

REDNECK POETRY

I ran into my frend, Lamar
“Bubba” Wordsworth-Yokum the other
day, & he confided to me, rather shyly,
that his Mormon frend had been doing
some genealogical research for him
up at Salt Lake City, & had confirmd,
that he, Bubba, was indeed descended
from WilliamWords-worth, the great
poet, being his 3d great grand nephew.

I said “Well now, U don’t hav to
be ashamed of those lyrix Uve been
writing. U can blame it on yr genes
from yr greatly great grand uncle.”

“Yeah,” he said but when people
see the hifalutin stuf he wrote, they
gonna think I’m a pointy headed
intelligent liberal, & wont even talk
to me no more. So I’m gonna rewrite
summa his stuff to be mor bonyfied
redneck, y’kno?”

““Whatv U ben workin on?”

He blushd & shufld his feet while
pulling a piece of g grimy rinkld paper
out of his his pocket. I reachd out to e
take it, but he puld back & gl glared at
me supiciously. “Ifn it aint no good, U
wont tell nobody bout it, will U?”

“Of cors not,” I lied, but he was

molified & handed it it over.

This is what he rote:

My hart leaps up wen I behold

A feeld of mustard grass,

Emrald green & gleemin gold.

Is that purty? U betcher ass.

He lookt at me, pleadingly. “Is it
any good?”

“Its good,” I said



***Put Down the Brush...
We Won’t Harm You!***

Taral Wayne

You know this scene from the
movies. The cops have the place
surrounded, and the frantic gunman
inside doesn’t know what to do. The
fatherly Irish chief of police takes up
a bullhorn and promises no harm
to him, if only the suspect will put
his gun down and come out with his
hands up.

Of course in real life that’s
just when they riddle him like Swiss
cheese, because some cop on a hair
trigger thinks he saw the purp reach
for his cell phone and call a lawyer.

I think life is hailing me with a
bullhorn right now. It’s saying, put
the brush... or the pen... or the marker
down.

In response to urgent pressures,
I made a New Year’s Resolution.
For 2008 I won’t be calling myself a
professional artist. Gawd knows I’ve
been calling myself one for enough
years that it’ll seem strange not to.
But if those years have taught me
anything, it’s that I’m not making a
real living.

It used to be just possible
to make ends meet. I did well at
conventions, had a reasonably brisk
mail order business, and served a

number of regular clients. Just as important, my needs were modest. But gradually all this has melted away, like a pleasant dream that fades when you wake up. A number of gradual changes had made my lifestyle untenable, not the least of which was the incredible growth of the number of artists in fandom.

Plain and simple, it's become a buyer's market. If one artist won't do gay porcine snuff, another will only be to glad to, and probably cheaper as well. You can get anything you want at a con for under twenty bucks.

But before you can sell at any price, first you have to be at a convention! Costs, border paranoia, and convention bureaucracy have added to my difficulties until, frankly, I no longer view cons as an option.

Publications seem to have fallen out of favour too. Unfortunately, the replacement wasn't the CD-Rom, as expected. The new paradigm was art downloaded from "chans", and home pages, and on-line art galleries -- as much of it as you could ever want, and the only limitation is your bandwidth and patience. Best of all from the fan point of view, it costs not *one thin dime!*

I still had my clients I thought, but time has a way of undermining the most stable assets. One lost his job, one his wife, another his home or maybe his mind, I don't know which...



Mark Bode Undercutting the Competition

As if having broke customers wasn't bad enough, the world turned upside down when the Loonie shot ahead of the Buck in a spectacular dash up to \$1.10 US in the Fall of 2007. While the Loonie has settled down to a value just around par, it's a far call from the day when I cashed a \$100 American check and banked \$140 Canadian. In a matter of a year I lost 40% of my income on top of other shortcomings.

I can't even claim my needs are simple anymore. In 1990 I could live on \$20 a week for groceries. I ate mainly chicken wings (which were dirt cheap then), and spaghetti. Grated cheese for the pasta was an option, and used sparingly. I kept all the lights off except one or two in the room I was in. The thermometer was set at a

brisk 68. I walked everywhere to save car fare, even the five miles downtown from Willowdale where I lived.

While much of that is still true, I must admit my stomach has gotten the better of me. I like having the occasional pork chop, or pizza, and gave up water from the tap in favour of diet cola. But there's worse. I often pay more than a dollar for a book. Even used albums and movies on CD cost at least ten bucks. I have cable. I have the internet, though I didn't throw caution *entirely* to the winds, and only pay for a frugal dial-up connection. Tell me where you can buy a really inexpensive one-gig stick of RAM memory though? Or a colour monitor you can use for seeing the art you want to colour?

My back is also increasingly posing an expense. Those five mile walks that were once an inconvenience are becoming an endurance test that I no longer care to take.

As if all that wasn't bad enough, I've developed hobbies. Scale model die-cast cars are relatively cheap if you know where to buy them on-line, but they're like salted peanuts. You never have enough. A 1931 Lincoln K Touring Car? Gee, I don't have one of *those...* A 1950 Studebaker Champion? Not one of *those* either... And while ancient and medieval coins appreciate in value, thereby increasing my net worth, the fact is I'll never sell them to

take a profit. The weight of history in my hand is nearly priceless to me.

So rather like the government of the United States of America at the close of the 20th. century, I found myself spending far more than I was actually earning. Unlike America, I hope to do something about it.

If I cannot make a living as an artist, the question is what else can I do? There is happily an answer to that. I can write. Yes, yes, I know, stop groaning. How many times have you heard that one before, right? Anyone can write for a living. Just sit in front of the word processor and let the words pour out. Then wait for the checks from Tor and Baen to come in tomorrow's mail. It never turns out that easy, as any professional writer and many disappointed wanna-be's can tell you.

This is a little different because I have a captive audience of one. Unlike the picky so-and-so at Analog who holds your work up against the likes of Connie Willis and Terry Pratchett and asks why he should publish your untried effort instead of an established name, my customer is a guaranteed sale. I haven't even had to make substantial changes so far.

I've written for my client "E" before. His tastes are quite specific and horsie oriented, which poses something of a challenge to the author who doesn't want to write the same

story over and over. But fundamentally that's the job. As I look back on the four stories¹ written in the last three years, I recognize that the first couple were crap. The next I found a little distasteful but at least competent. I actually felt a little professional pride in the fourth.

Typically I've been paid from \$100 to \$200 for between 3,000 and 6,000 words. This is a little better than three cents a word, hardly Analog standards, but I run no risk of not being paid at all. There's value too in the practice, I'm beginning to see.

Around the beginning of the year I contacted "E" and suggested I write not just one or two stories this year, but as many as he wanted to read. "E" happily agreed, and if I can I'll write a half dozen more before Spring.

I'm putting the finishing touches on another, almost as I speak. "No Bet" may run to 3500 words, and although it's really much ado about nothing, it reads easily to me, and seems fairly amusing. It won't win any prizes, but it's a good start to my sabbatical year from art.

Okay, coppers! I'm coming out. I put my brush down, so don't shoot!

Let's hope 2008 doesn't riddle my hopes for it full of holes!

Win, Show, and Place -- Stories for "E"

My Little Pony! - Oct 2003 - 3059 words
Stable Work if You Can Get It - Apr 2004 - 5089 words (a sequel)
Pin the Tail - Mar 2004 - 4154 words
A Draft Notion - Nov 2006 - 5954 words
No Bet - Jan 2008 - est. 3500 words



Mark Bode Photo by Espana
Sheriff and HorseFire photo
from Tony Aborrola



13 Ways Our Computers Have Failed Us

by Brianna Flynt and Frank Wu

1. Our Computers don't have sex with us.

Source: Austin Powers, Firefly, Star Trek: The Next Generation

[Brianna] Last week on Valentine's Day, I made out with Frank and he was so not a robot. Also? My Palm Pilot alarm will vibrate, but it won't vibrate in the ways I want it to. Where are the machines like Data that are programmed in multiple techniques?

2. My laptop has never once calculated my odds for survival.

Source: Barbarella, Star Wars, Space: 1999

The odds of successfully navigating an asteroid field may be 3,720 to 1, but my computer has

never provided the odds of surviving a Nicolas Cage movie. This should be Microsoft's top priority for the next Vista service pack. Knowledge is power, and that knowledge could potentially save me from seeing the next crappy "Ghost Rider" or "National Treasure" sequel.

3. Where are the medical droids?

Source: Star Wars, Star Trek: Voyager

I have an X-Acto knife scar from 1982 and despite my begging, my Dell Dimension has never made it all better. It's not like this was an attack from a killer wampa. Where's 2-1B with his Bacta tank when you need him?

4. Our Computers don't fight wars for us.



Source: Resident Evil, Terminator "The Sarah Connor Chronicles", Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women

My Apple G5 has never once given me pointers on fighting zombies, and it's certainly never murked a T-888 for me. How bogus is that? I want a computer that will protect me, the future leader of mankind, and even sacrifice itself if necessary in a pit of lava. I also want it to do it with a non-Microsoft operating system.

5. My iPod has never once shed its exoskeleton and strolled around with its electronic innards hanging out.

Source: The Terminator, Alien.

That one time I was hit with an exploding gas tanker, my iPod proved to be highly disappointing. It didn't resurrect itself as an indestructible killing machine. The screen just blinked with that lame Apple logo. I want an iPod so tough it would have to be crushed in a drill press.

6. Our Computers have never once sent us back in time.

Source: Terminator "The Sarah Connor Chronicles," TimeCop

I rented "Gigli" back in 2003, and my Palm Tungsten C wasn't able

to send me back in time to rectify this terrible, terrible mistake. The horror. If Palm ever gets around to releasing a new OS, a time-travel application is a must.

7. Our Computers don't instigate wacky adventures.

Source: *Star Wars, Alien*

C-3PO had his memory wiped by Captain Antilles after "Revenge of the Sith", but I don't find that necessary. Everything my TiVo shows me is eminently forgettable. I want a TiVo that will crash me onto the surface of Tatooine with the stolen Death Star plans.



8. Our Computers don't make critical fashion choices for us.

Source: *The Jetsons*

When I got dressed this morning, I so was not run through a conveyor belt that dressed me and styled my hair. Instead, I was cruelly forced to pick from random shiny shirts scattered on my floor. I want a computer that will tell me if plaids and stripes match.

9. My Honda's inboard computer has not once gotten the car airborne.

Source: *Back to the Future II, Blade Runner*

The government conspiracy to keep flying car technology from the public continues. When will this shadowy cabal of lies crumble? I want a Honda Accord that will let me fly just like the De Lorean DMC-12 with the Mr. Fusion hover car upgrade. No more excuses, because two-dimensional driving ranks as major mega-boring.

10. My cell phone refuses to call down the dropship from the "Sulaco".

Source: *Aliens*

My coworkers Ferro and Spunkmyer were violently massacred



by Aliens while trying to rendezvous with my APC last week. It was real tragic. But the real tragedy was I had to wait 20 minutes for the bus afterwards. I want a cell phone that will come through in the clinch and bring down the other drop ship from the "Sulaco". If possible, I don't want to have to crawl through miles of tunnel to get a signal.

11. My work desktop has totally failed to predict the stock market.

Source: *Heinlein's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*

Don't tell my boss this, but I spend my work days surfing BoingBoing.net, Perezhilton.com, and the occasionally interesting "Drink Tank." Imagine how much more time I'd have to surf if I were a billionaire!

I want a computer that will cheat the stock market and help me get some of that delicious America Sauce.

12. My iPhone has never opened up portals to other dimensions.

Source: *Sailor Moon S*

Sailor Mercury has a three dollar calculator from Claire's that can open up portals to secret dimensions. And that was back in the 80s before the Series of Tubes existed! Can't my iPhone transport me to a dimension where the "Star Wars" prequels didn't highly suck?

13. In times of distress, my laptop fails to toss off witty catchphrases.

Source: *Terminator, Terminator 2, Terminator 3*

That one time before I crashed into the police station, my laptop didn't dispense a half-witty catchphrase that strode through the ages. It wasn't even wearing horribly dated 80s shades at the time. I want a laptop that recites 404 error codes in an Austrian accent. If possible, I'd like it to do it with none of the maddening timeline errors of the Jonathan Mostow Terminator 3.

O great and powerful Computer, when wilt thou cease to fail me?



To Repair Man

by Jay Lake

Ever wonder why barbecue joints always show a pig on the sign? Me neither. I mean, if those Twilight Zone aliens showed up to serve man, would there be a happy picture of Emeril Lagasse on their restaurant signs? Homie don't think so. Like the t-shirt says, if God didn't mean for us to eat animals, why did He make them out of meat?

So I got me a little workshop down by the county line which I got the bright idea one day ought

to be the shape of a car. They got those big Cat dump trucks out at the quarry, about the size of a building each. Pops McGinty backed one into a trench a while back. They had to get the dragline to haul it out, and it's been up on blocks ever since. This gave me an idea.

When I ran into LeFarge drinking down at the Coon Dog, I made my move.

"Brandy," I said. His real name was Brandeis, but nobody called him that except the IRS and his probation officer. He also was the site manager for the quarry. "You going to do anything with that busted out Cat dumper Pops wrecked?"

LeFarge stared at me with his squinty eyes. "You got any idea what the parts value on that thing is?"

"Not a clue. I mostly work on Fords. I don't want none of that shit anyway. Just the body shell."

"Could sell it to the scrap cutters for good money," LeFarge mused.

I toyed with my Lone Star, the cold beading out on it like flop sweat on a twenty dollar hooker. "Could fix your pickup for free the next two years."



“You got a tow truck that big?”

“No,” I said with a laugh, “but you do.”

Two weeks later it showed up in three pieces on some heaver hauler flat beds down from Luling with new buckets for the drag line. I paid the drivers off with beer and reds, and got me a fine new building. Took some doing to get it in place, but my service bay is under the dump bed, and my business office is in the cab.

Big Yeller, they're calling me down at the Coon Dog now. Weird part is I'm getting some real goddam strange repair jobs in. Just this week feller came by with a Dymaxion car. Least that's what he said it was. I got my doubts — old Bucky Fuller never did put laser turrets on his, I don't think.

Feller asked where he could get some good haunch around here. I sent him down to the Long Pig.

???

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Letter Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my loyal readers

And so we begin with Mr. Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

The Drink Tank 159, 2008
Annish! (160) and 161. How do I get
behind so quickly? I blame you! (And

your Little Thing, too... I sound like the Wicked Witch of the West.) Details to follow...

And as always, I am ready to follow!

159...Out of your hidey-hole? Are you one of the groundhogs who said there'd be an early spring? If so, you are an endangered species, my friend...our groundhogs up here (best known here is Wiarthon Willie) said there'd

be an early spring, and we've had the snowiest February in 55 years. Guess not even the groundhogs can account for global warming. I wouldn't mind a little bit of that right now.

And my prediction was that Spring would arrive on March 21st, 2008!

We are going to miss you at Corflu, but sounds like the Costumecon gig will be fun. Costumecon was in Toronto some years ago, and we offered our services, but when we next asked when the convention was coming, we were told it had happened a few weeks earlier, and where were we? A complete lack of communications, and Kevin Roche is not making that mistake, good to see. The closest we've got to a furry convention here is an annual camp-out in Algonquin Park, and I believe there's now a furrycon in Montreal.

I think there's one called Canfurence (or somethign like that) that is in October in that part of the world...and I only know that because there were fliers at FurCon and not because I am a furry!

Will Britain know what hit them when you go to Orbital next month? I definitely need to get your trip report. Planning to print your trip report, or put it on eFanzines? Little of both, perhaps?

And do you really think I could do a printed report? Since it's looking



like it'll be a long report (the lead-up stuff that I've written so far is almost 20 pages), I don't think it'll be financially possible to print the report. I think I'm going to have to do something like offer it by eMail or posting to anyone who donates to TAFF for the first few months and then release it to the wild. I'll probably have to print a few copies to recover the bounties, though.

Researching how to do you laundry when you get back home? If possible, we find out if our hotel or a nearby hotel has a laundry room, and we take a little time to do the

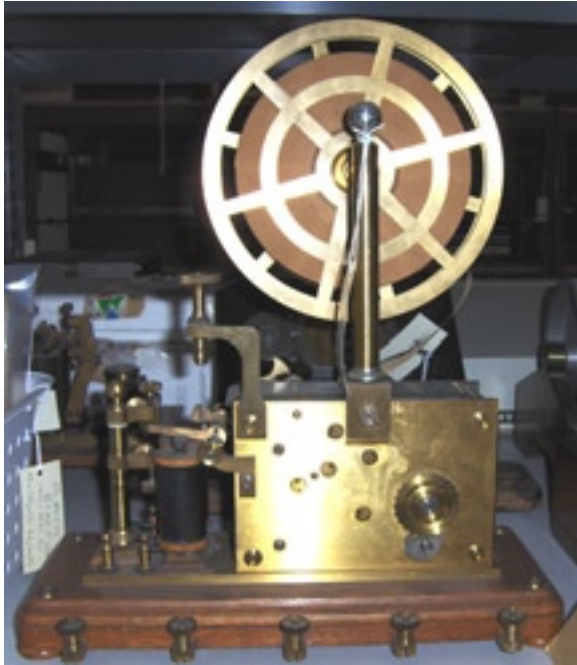
wash, and we return home tired, but not having to do the laundry, and our luggage is full of clean clothes.

I found a service that's cheap enough and will pick-up and drop-off. Since Eastercon is right in the middle of my trip, it's a perfect time!

I think this upcoming US election will be historic because there's an awfully good change the next president will be female or black, and given the smelly, ancient politics of the Bush regime, anything new will be a change. I kinda hope that Barack Obama gets the nod. John McCain may be experienced, but I think American will not vote for More of the Same. We might have our own election to worry about soon, depending on whether the Harper government falls on its budget or its desire to stay and fight in Afghanistan.

And the winner will be the one who least infuriates the Conservatives in the US. Obama could win, I really believe that because if Hilary gets the nod (and there are things that make that more likely happening) every Hard Right and Right-of-Centre voter will come out and support McCain...even if he had a piece on the side!

My loc...Panasonic shortened my assignment, so I'm done at the end of this week. And, at Yvonne's



suggestion, I am going to take a month or two off. This will allow me to catch up on my sleep, polish my resume a little bit, check all the website, and do some networking with a couple of professional organizations I've just joined. Yvonne left Diageo Canada, who said they didn't have any guarantees of work beyond six months, and went to DuPont Canada, who treated her so badly, she left them, and went back to Diageo, who were pleased to have her back. We both hope she'll be at Diageo for a good, long time.

A good thing for Yvonne! And if you need any tips on proper networking, I've been told I do it well!

Good to hear from M and SaBean...get better and stay there.

And, a happy pregnancy to SaBean.

I got a call from SaBean yesterday from Santa Barbara. The family is enjoying their time at the Old House (the New House burned down last year and it'll be a few more months before the New New House is finished) and they're flying to Helsinki in a few days because Manny is flying out there and they'll be showing him around. They might try and make Eastercon if they're feeling up to it, but it's never easy to travel with The Twins and a Pregnant woman!

160, the Annish! Hard to believe it's only been three years. Feels like an eternity! HHOK... My grannies wouldn't have known what fandom is, or even know why we might collect so much stuff in one place. The few comic shows I've seen are usually just big dealers' rooms, and minimal programming. Not being a comic collector, the shows aren't really to my interest, although, the new comic con on the block around here, the Paradise Comics Comicon, does intrigue me. Captain Carrot? There's lots of discussion about the return of Captain Carrot in alt.furry on Usenet.

My Granma would have known what fandom was, but she wouldn't have liked it. She didn't even like me reading comics when I was a kid. And now you've done it...I'm gonna

have to go to alt.furry and see what they're saying!

Leigh Ann and LoungeCon. That I can handle. I haven't been to a decent relaxacon in years! Eric Mayer and I may be screwing up fanzine fandom with my loc postings to LJ, and his quick comments. Some people don't like it, but some will remember that when fans corresponded with each other through the pulps, Forry Ackerman and Jack Darrow said why do that, let's communicate directly. And now that we have LJ, why communicate through the fanzine, let's do it directly. I won't give up the fanzines, but the communication through comments on my locs via LJ add a new dimension to fanac.

And I will gladly chair LoungeCon as the ultimate relaxicon: no program, everyone's a GoH and there's a Fanzine Lounge next door to a ConSuite next door to a Gaming Lounge next to a Room Party. That'd be my kind of con! Very good point. I get behind on LJ, but keep pretty current on eFanzines, so there is that. It's the amount of info to process that's different.

161...Great essay by Taral. Ah, what a wondrous gift tae gie us, tae see oorsels as ithers see us... I think I have my Rabbie Burns aright...

Ach! that woon's nah f'r de likes ah me!

The perfect combination for the American presidency, IMHO, would be President Obama and Vice-President Clinton, with good ol' boy Bill as advisor. Obama would learn all about Hillary's connections, and decide to go with them or avoid them, his decision. A black president would settle race relations, a female VP would settle gender relations, and America might get the good parts of the Clinton dynasty without the negative parts. Should Hillary become president, she might learn some better ways of doing business from a presidential neophyte like Obama. What do I know? The big American networks forget how many Canadians watch them, and how many Canadian networks cover the race from an objective viewpoint.

And for me, it's Obama with VP Bill Richardson, but that'll never happen.

If you're thinking of a Canadian section of San Jose, there must be a Tim Horton's, a Swiss Chalet, a Timothy's Coffee Shop, a Brewer's Retail and a small shopping mall with all the Canadian stores we're familiar with here, like Canadian Tire. We'll party like mad on July 1, and if you're good, we'll let you come over to party with us. Just don't ask about "aboot", because we'll look at you as if your brains fell out of your ear.

And Canadian Tire money will be

legal tender! I've written to the San Jose Metro about it!

And now, let's discuss Chris Garcia's Little Thing. All the terrible things you have done to Leigh Ann, you horrible person you. I wonder if a fanzine was the kind of apology she was looking for? I would have thought bonded servitude was more up her alley. Oh, well, what do I know...I'm in the doghouse so often, I got it furnished. I expect that after we've all read this zine, we can imagine Leigh Ann saying, "Thank you for that little thing, Chris, but if you think that we're even, you've got another think coming..." Is the end of the apology or the beginning?

Leigh Ann has kindly forgiven me and sent more stuff!

Caught up again, at least for a few hours. Take care, and we will miss you in Vegas.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

And a great big thanks to Mr. Canada!

A certain TAFF something I didn't think about. I will arrive at Heathrow on the 14th of March and leave on the 30th. Looking at those dates, it doesn't seem like anything unusual. There's the London Book Show one of those weekends. Then I looked closer and realized something...

I'll be in the UK for St. Patrick's Day.

How does one celebrate the day in the UK? Is it the drunken blow-out it is 'round these parts? Is there a Tiki Bar anywhere on the British Isles that I could go and celebrate? I must know!





[Previously: Nearly a decade after I quit working for the horror magazine I'll disguise slightly by referring to it as **The Dark Tide**, a former colleague alerts me to claims of substantial and systematic plagiarism from genre websites...]

The movie journalist making the accusations – let's call him Melvin Lipshitz – had apparently stumbled across this literary larceny when he noticed a copy of that month's *Dark Tide* in a New York record store. The cover promised an in-depth feature on a particular sub-genre of German *noir* for which Lipshitz considered himself something of an authority. It was when he noticed an eerie similarity between the text credited to the magazine's editor and his own published work – the kind of similarity you only get with clones, copiers and carbon paper – that the

Deutschmark finally dropped.

Within months, Lipshitz and his team of investigators had worn their search engines ragged typing out chunks of *Dark Tide* text and seeking online matches. Astoundingly, huge numbers of reviews – more than two hundred by the last count – set off alarms, as did material published in an adult video magazine helmed for another publisher by the same editor.

Tempers flared. Threats of legal action were floated. Vague apologies and offers of future paid work were rejected. Lipshitz even intimated he was writing a book about the affair, but twelve months in, his campaign began to look less like a journalistic probe than some form of obsessive compulsive disorder.

So far, so Google, but the next phase

of this story is by far the least palatable. With *The Dark Tide* promising to clean up its act – and providing every indication of having done so – Lipshitz faced a stark choice: wind up his website and bathe in the glow of a job well done, or expand his remit to keep the crusade alive. Bet you can guess which way he went.

There's a guy I know I'll call Colin. He's a freelancer, specialising in horror cinema, and he joined the roster of *Dark Tide* contributors about five years after I jumped ship. So far as I'm aware, he's never swiped a single sentence during his stint there.

Ah, but Lipshitz considers that the mere fact of his continuing to seek paid work from Britain's leading news-stand horror publication flags Colin as a "loyalist". Moreover, everyone whose byline appears between its covers deserves to be both interrogated about their journalistic standards (one particular exchange regarding the industry-led procedure of several reporters interviewing actors *en masse* and then writing up the result as individual conversations revealed just how out of touch with reality Lipshitz really is) and called to account for the sins of their occasional employer.

There's a word for this species of mania: witchhunt.

To be concluded