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As for literary criticism in general: I have long felt that any reviewer who expresses rage and loathing for a novel or a play or a poem is preposterous. He or she is like a person who has put on full armor and attacked a hot fudge sundae or a banana split.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*

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**THIS ISSUE OF *eI*** is for and in memory of Althea Flynt, the highest paid female editor ever.

In the exclusively science fiction world, it is also in memory of John Paul Garcia and fellow Trufen member Torkel Franzen.

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

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Victor Banis, Ann Bannon, Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, rich brown, Chris Garcia, John Paul Garcia, Harvey Hornwood, Tony Jacobs, Earl Terry Kemp, Allan MacDonell, Todd Marion, Art Scott, Robert Speray, Peter Weston, Alan White, and Ted White.

**ARTWORK:** This issue of *eI* features original artwork by Schirm [Marc R. Schirmeister], and recycled artwork by Harry Bell, William Rotsler, and Dan Steffan.

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I try to keep deep love out of my stories because, once that particular subject comes up, it is almost impossible to talk about anything else. Readers don't want to hear about anything else. They go gaga about love. If a lover in a story wins his true love, that's the end of the tale, even if World War III is about to begin, and the sky is black with flying saucers.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*

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...Return to sender, address unknown.... 17

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

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

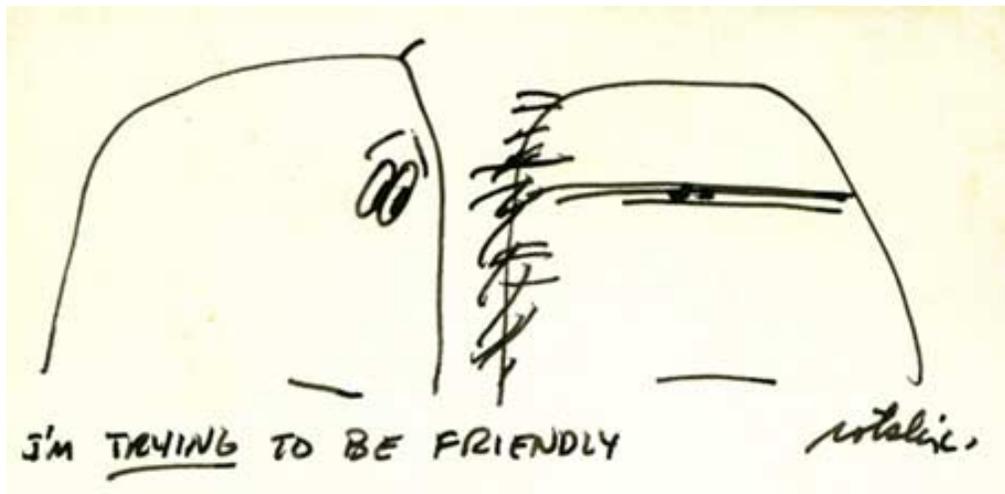
Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

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

**Thursday March 30, 2006:**

Everytime I put out a really good issue of *The Drink Tank*, you come along and put out an issue of *eI* that just makes it look like a hobo smothered in dog vomit.

I love that idiotically manipulated cover of *Lust Bandits*. Just a hideous reworking of the prior piece of work.



I love American propaganda films of WWII. There are a few from WWI that I've seen, silents of course, but they're wonderful, especially the ones depicting The Hun attacking American women. Nazi symbology is so instantly recognised. There's no question what you're looking at if you even see as little as the jodhpurs tucked into the high boots. Never saw any of those Naughty Nazis buchern. I thought that the *I Was A Nazi Flyer* cover was really artful. As far as films, there was one called *After Mein Kampf* that was released during the summer of 1941. It was outright saying what was going on in Germany at the time. As far as I know, the film isn't easy to find, but it has a lot of similarities to several of the political docs made about the Bush Administration.

I love *Weird War* comics. My Pops loves war comics, so I read a lot of those over the years.

*Metropolis*. As stunning a masterpiece as it is, I've only seen it on the big screen once. It was accompanied by the Alloy Orchestra and it was absolutely amazing. No other science fiction film, with the possible exception of *A Trip To The Moon* has had as much effect on both the written and filmed ways we deal with SF. *Frau im Mond* is a worthwhile film, nowhere near as powerfully done as *Metropolis*, but it's still really good. I wish I owned it on DVD, but I've only managed to get it on Netflix and I really should look into buying it.

Anything shot using ends given by Kubrick is a blessed production. I've never seen it, but I'm now making it my goal to watch it and then fully understand it. The little research I've managed since I first started reading the article has revealed that it's well thought of in the various communities of film that I've been running in. I loved the behind-the-scenes and stills from the flick and I really hope there's a longer (book-length perhaps!) piece waiting for me in the future.

The end of Victor Banis' article had me laughing harder than I have in ages.

What's funny is that one of the better Alternate Histories that I've heard about hasn't been written. A lass in BArea fandom was talking about it for years where the Nazis not only managed to wipe all the Jews off the face of Europe, but they build the Museum of the Vanished Race (or whatever they were going to call it) and the rebelling youth culture started to turn toward Judaica as a source of inspiration. I'm hoping she'll write it eventually.

Leni Riefenstahl, while probably a Nazi and certainly the one who shaped the way many Germans looked at as the perfect ideal, was a brilliant filmmaker. *Die Blaue Licht* proved that she was a fine actress and the rest of her documentaries were incredible and influential for generations. *Triumph of the Will* forced all Cinematographers to rethink the way they do things. *Olympiad* is a beautiful film, especially the weird diving stuff she shot. Now, was she evil? Maybe. Was she cozy with Hitler? Yeah, she was according to most folks who knew her and him. Did she have an amazing eye for scene and composition? Absolutely. The documentary on her, *The Wonderful Horrible World of Leni Riefenstahl* is a study in filmmakers walking the line when they're pretending to be hard hitting.

Strange thing is I've never read any French erotica from the period of the war, but I've seen a lot of it on film. The cheap film camera was widely available in France and they made thousands and thousands of erotic films during the war. They were cheap to make, they were often sold for almost nothing, and they've started to end up on DVD.

I wish I had known you were doing the Hitler Issue because I'd have sent you the script for my short film *Good Hitler*. In it, Adolf and Eva had a kid who was discovered in the bunker and secreted away to America where he got a black hippie girl pregnant. He grew up and when he learned what his grandfather had done, he sets out to right all the wrongs. He sends letters to every family that lost a member. He coaches a youth soccer team (The Highland Jumpers) and he works on impregnating 6 million Jewish women to "Bring Balance" to the world again. It's told as a mockumentary created to Larry Reeperstall. It's one of the more wrong things I've ever written. We're about to start shooting it this summer. Another very wrong thing I once wrote was that Cheech & Chong were working on the sequel to Spielberg's opus and calling it *Schindler's List II: Up In Smoke*.

--Chris Garcia

**Friday March 31, 2006:**

There is a small mistake in the “Curious Couplings 6” section in *eI25*. The beautiful ass on the still is undoubtedly the ass of Brigitte Bardot (not Brigette) as it was 40 or 45 years ago. The film is not *And God Created Woman* but *En Cas de Malheur*. I don't think this movie was ever released in the US. The same mistake was made in “Curious Couplings 1.” The photo was attributed by error to Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita*.

--Jacques Hamon <http://www.noosfere.org/showcase/>

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I just saw my Elmer Gantry piece on *eI25*. It looks great. I just want to thank you for including me on this issue. I will read the articles avidly and it is people like you who can and will defeat the Bushes, O'Reillys, DeLays, Kristols, and Joe Liebermans and all the corpsuits whose assholes they leach onto.

--Jay A. Gertzman

**Sunday April 2, 2006:**

I have checked out *eI25* and found it, as usual, to be a wonderful mix of what I find important. I speak, of course, of the articles on the “adult” paperback industry, and of the reminiscences of “my life in the porn industry,” but this time, especially, of the articles on Germany and the Third Reich. I also was in profound sympathy with your Bush-bashing. Here in Australia we have a prime minister and a government—but the prime minister in particular—with mouths firmly fixed to Bush's fundamental orifice. More to the point, in view of the way Bush is treating John Howard, I am reminded of a Grove Press edition of a novel by a Dutch author whose name I cannot recall in which a character describes another (this is what reminds me of John Howard) as 'the sort of arsehole who likes to lick the shit off the cock that's just fucked him'.



The Reich articles were necessary not only for their relevance to today, but also because people MUST be constantly reminded of just what horrors were performed under Hitler's regime.

One of the things I find quite unbelievable is the denial of the Holocaust. Which is why I particularly selected the sources for the images you published.

Samuel Fuller's *The Big Red One* is a great war (anti-war) movie with some of the most heart-wrenching scenes and images I have seen—and from which scenes the first montage was constructed. The “reconstructed” version of *The Big Red One* is available on DVD.

The BBC documentary on *Auschwitz* provided more images, and is a documentary I'd like everyone to see. My copy is the American two-set DVD version which has a narration by Linda Hunt, which she executes so beautifully—no histrionics, just a quiet matter-of-fact presentation which is therefore so much more powerful. The original BBC version had a British male narration which lacks the force of Hunt's measured performance.

The *Night and Fog* montage is from a short film by Alain Resnais (available as a DVD from Criterion in the US) which, because it too is presented in a quiet, unmannered way, becomes very emotional.

Finally, as regards Holocaust deniers, probably the best book I have read in the last year and half—certainly the most important—is Deborah Lipstadt's *History on Trial*. In one of her previous books she mentioned, in a passing paragraph, that 'historian' David Irving was a Holocaust denier. Irving sued her—but had the case held in England where the libel laws are different to those in the US, and where the burden lies with the defendant—that is, Lipstadt had to show that her description of Irving was factual. She wrote a book about the trial. She won, by the way.

I put 'historian' above in quotes because, as her book makes perfectly clear, Irving was anything but.

I mention the three DVDs and the book because I would like as many people as possible to see them and read it.

--Dick Jensen (aka Ditmar, Martin)

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...a nearly indescribable site: <http://efanzines.com/EK/index.html>. That's Earl Kemp's site. Do look at the many back issues there too, all well-indexed. Just call in sick to your workplace for the next several days. You'll have a seriously tough time prying yourself away.

--Rose Idlet, Black Ace Books, *Auction 103 Catalog*

### **Wednesday April 5, 2006:**

I just wanted to say how impressed I am with your ezine. I'm glad that you are doing it. I know it takes a lot of work, but what doesn't?

I read most of it this time (sometimes I just read the main articles of interest), and it was a great read.

Who is the guy that you quoted? Must be some radical commie pinko that should be in jail, with all that bashing he does of our fine president. I'll have you know that Bush served proudly for three months while in the reserves for the two years. And that goes for Cheney too, you can't accuse him of shooting his mouth off. Shooting other people's mouth off- yes! But not his own. Good Christian men who make this country great as God intended. God bless the rich (and the hell with everybody else). I can't wait to get to Heaven and be surrounded by people like Bush and Cheney.

--Attila

### **Thursday April 6, 2006:**

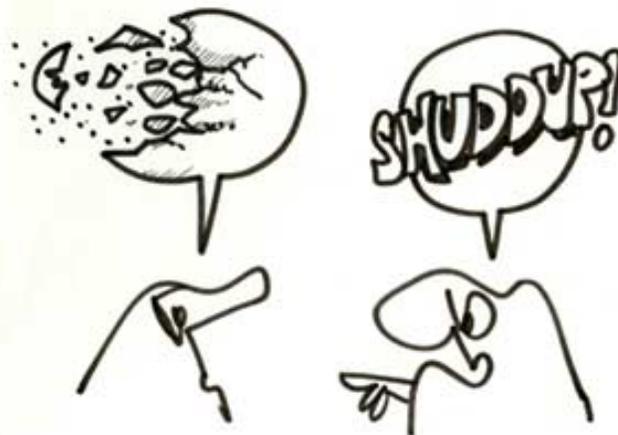
In *eI25*, Lynn Monroe says, "Or Dean Koontz, who is in heavy-duty denial about the 30 porno titles he wrote with his wife 36 years ago. Dean has successfully re-invented himself, and I sincerely believe that he sincerely means it when he swears he did not write those books, because I believe he thinks that 1970 Dean Koontz was a different person. Too bad they accidentally put his real name on *Bounce Girl*."

As a matter of fact, they "accidentally" included his wife's name as well. The byline was "By Dean & Gerda Koontz."

How do I know this? Because Dean sent me a copy when it was published, and inscribed it to me! At the time (late “60s) he was very proud of that book.

And a little background on rich brown’s “Two of a Kind”—

The version published (which you used) was not the version rich originally wrote. I liked the basic story, but it was much more crudely written. I told him, “Rich, you can use four-letter words in my magazine, but only in dialog. I don’t want any four-letter words in the narrative. That’s the distinction between literature and porn.” He took my advice to heart and rewrote the story. In the process he improved it considerably—not just in terms of “cleaning up” the narrative, but in terms of tight prose. The end result was almost Westlake-like.



I had it scheduled for the 50th Anniversary issue of *Amazing*, but, as rich told you, it got bumped. At the Very Last Moment, Harlan decided that he had to be in that issue, and he went over my head, calling up Sol Cohen. The end result was that Sol had him send the story directly to the typesetter and I didn’t have a chance to read it until I had the page proofs for it. This did not please me; I’d already rejected a story by Harlan (all about bleeding gargoyles and murdered nuns, as I recall) and I didn’t like being cut out of the loop like that. Nor did I like bumping what I thought was the strongest story in the issue. But I published it an issue or two later, and it was well received, for the most part.

--Ted White

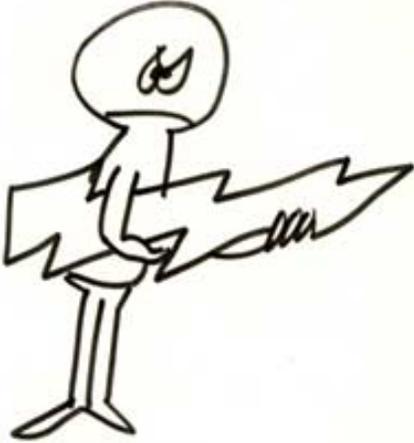
### **Saturday April 8, 2006:**

I have downloaded eI25, and will start a loc henceforth. It’s getting tougher to write locs for this zine, you know. Unless I really want to repeat myself (and I probably do that already), I’ll keep putting the same superlatives and excuses in each letter. If I don’t want to repeat myself, I’ll eventually get down to RAE, BNC. I’ll try my best not to go that far.

Great excerpts from *Capitol Hill Blue* and Kurt Vonnegut. (And Sandra Day O’Connor sums it up just right.) Makes you wish we could go back in time, before the 9/11 and Bush nightmares started, and do it all differently and better. Well, the US is still a great country, and it needs redemption in the form of a new president with higher ideals. It would be tough to do worse than Bush, and the whole world is wishing American voters can do better, to vote for as much a return to normality, law and civility as possible. Even up here, and in a few fanzines I get, I see the line “Bush lied. Thousands died.” In the future, I would like to read books about the Dubya presidency, and the comments historians make about it from the perspective of 2020, for example. One person I’d love to hear from, and I know I never will...I wonder what George H.W. Bush feels about the acts of his son? I know how much Americans love their country, and you must hurt in the deepest places. (Could Bush Sr. be an eventual buffer, to advise his son that he has finally gone too far, and to stop?) After Pat Robertson opens his big, ignorant mouth once too often, are even Republicans embarrassed by this age of fascism?

Chris Priest’s researches into Rudolf Hess are fascinating. So many mysteries and cover-ups, stories

for which we may never have any clarity. Will Britain make us wait until 2017 before giving up the secrets within the Hess file? Is there a Freedom of Information Act in Britain that might free up this information quicker? You never know what a late document will turn up about a person...look at the just-revealed gospel of Judas Iscariot, making his a loyal follower of Christ who was just following orders.



Somehow, the idea of erotica in France seems natural. A part of everyday life, and therefore, not exploited or abused. Perhaps it was lusted after once the German occupiers made such erotica verboten. This happens to things you want but are told you can't have.

A short time ago, I saw a documentary about the hidden treasures in Russian museums and depositories. One hidden item, revealed in that programme, was a chunk of skull attributed to have come from the skull of one Adolf Hitler. As far as the depository officials know, it is the only remaining piece of Hitler's body on the planet.

I think I'm done now...this was a tough issue. It is a shame that such opinion as Doug Thompson's must see light through web press, instead of through the pages of established print magazines and newspapers, and on television, all of which are saluting super-straight in the name of patriotism and higher ratings and sales. There are two years left in the Bush presidency, and only now are senior officials in Washington mentioning the idea of impeachment. They are being shouted down, but I think the noise for some punishment for Bush's abuse of power will increase as he gets closer to leaving the White House. Can't come soon enough, for everyone.

--Lloyd Penney

### **Tuesday May 2, 2006:**

I've been checking out *eI*, it not having crossed my horizons before. Interesting stuff. I had the pleasure of being Evan Hunter's British publisher for the last few years of his life, and sitting in this seat, I have to say I would have encouraged him—had the question ever come up—to deny his porn writing past. His determination not to miss a deadline even during the succession of operations which dogged his last three or four years was astonishing. And he succeeded, mostly.

--Malcolm Edwards

*[Malcolm, this steadfast duty to writing and deadline observing was one of the necessities of the early days porno writers. Scott Meredith, who agented most of the better "regular" hack writers of the day, was a past master at instilling those traits in his writers...it meant more money for him. —Earl Kemp]*

### **Thursday May 4, 2006:**

Well, Earl, I really gotta hand it to you: another superlative theme issue, and thoroughly enjoyable. And it also caters to one of my many interests, that of military history, especially regarding the Der Fuhrer and the Third Reich. Of all of mankind's many perversions, the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler is one of the most perplexing, but not totally non-understandable when one considers the situation in

Germany leading up to, through, and following WWI. Despite the man's many bizarre tendencies, one still has to grant Hitler a begrudging admiration for his ability as an orator, manipulator, and opportunist. The man certainly made the most of the situations he was in and created.

Usually, whenever the History Channel runs a new program/documentary about World War II, you can find me watching it. (My undeclared minor as an undergraduate at Iowa State University was Russian Studies, I took a few Military History classes as part of that.) The penchant for Third Reich documentaries on that cable channel has spurred my wife to nickname it the "All-Hitler Channel," although there are, of course, many non-Nazi shows.

That being said, you and your writers have explored aspects of Hitler that I have heard of before, but in much greater detail. I mean, the Linwood, Cartledge, Moorcock and Priest articles were wonderfully informative, to say nothing of enlightening, but "Erotica in France During the Occupation" is something that is unlikely to be found on the History Channel. Definitely a specialized interest, I'd say. Loved the article "Springtime for BushCo and Halliburton." The parallels between Hitler and Dubya are phenomenal, even downright scary, and the conclusion of "My Love Affair with Adolf Schicklgruber" hits home, too. Both of these fellas have some issues that need to be addressed. Let's hope our political system's checks and balances keep Dubya at bay until the next witless baboon moves into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. (No, I'm not politically cynical, not at all. . .)

Also, I continue to be entertained by your on-going feature, "Curious Couplings." If I can find them somewhere, someday, there are a couple old science fiction paperback covers that I remember are remarkably similar. Problem is, I can't remember which books they are. I vaguely recall one of them might have been an old Ace Double with an A. Bertram Chandler novel on one side, the cover of which matched something I saw again a few years later on a different book by a different author. Methinks some hunting is in order, but don't hold your breath.

--John Purcell

### **Friday May 12, 2006:**

It was really astonishing to read in the April issue of *eI* an article named "Erotica in France during the Occupation." I really wonder who could have had the idea to write an article about the same subject here in France.

--Jacques Hamon

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The humanist behaves well without any expectations of rewards or punishments in an afterlife. They served, as indeed my ancestors in Indianapolis had done, the only abstraction with which they had any familiarity, which is community. And that's been enough.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Star News* article, 6/00

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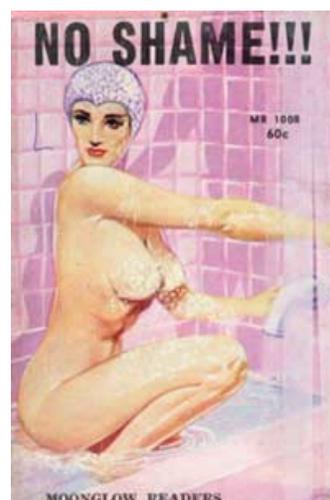
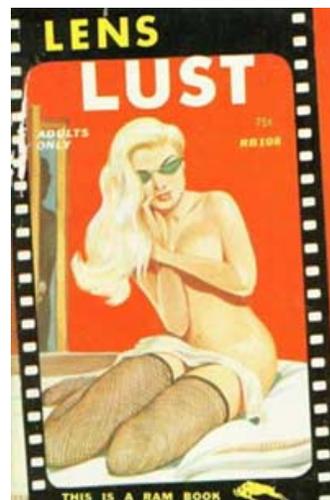
# Curious Couplings 7

By Earl Kemp

As I wrote in *eI19*, I have noticed a number of odd coincidences regarding sleaze paperback covers and other publications that have intrigued me. Some of them were reasonable and understandable, some of them were outright criminal theft, and some of them were beneath contempt.

What I propose to do is to run a few of them in some issues of *eI* to see if I can create real interest in perusing the venture. It is a participation project. You send me jpegs of your favorite duos to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and I'll take it from there.

Here then is the next set of examples of Curious Couplings. These four covers are from the collection of Tony Jacobs.



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We welcome your contributions to this series. Please email your jpegs to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and

thank you very much for participating in this novel and interesting exercise in futility.

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1492. The teachers told the children that this was when the continent was discovered by human beings. Actually, millions of human beings were already living full and imaginative lives on the continent in 1492. That was simply the year in which sea pirates began to cheat and rob and kill them.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions*

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## In Passing\*

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Victor J. Banis

“You sure you don't want to wait for a lift?” Chris was a fusser. “I'll be glad to run you home. It won't take me more than an hour to finish up here, maybe less.”

“Thanks. By that time I'll be tucked in bed,” I told him, slipping into my windbreaker.

“You're not worried about the bogey man?”

It took me a minute to sort that out. I hadn't heard him called that. “You mean the Slasher?” I asked. “Nah. He's after sweet young things, isn't he?”

“You could pass for twenty. You're not so old,” he said, and gave me *the look*. I knew why he wanted me to stick around, and it wasn't out of concern for my safety—though I suppose you could say he was thinking of my skin. It was flattering, but he wasn't my type. Anyway, in a sense, at least, I worked for him. He didn't own the bar, but there was the hierarchy to these jobs: he was bartender, I was just the lowly bar-back. I have a standing policy: don't shit where you eat.

“I'm not so sweet, either,” I said. I opened the front door and he came to lock it behind me. “Good night. See you Thursday.”

He looked longingly. Hoping, maybe, for a kiss. He got a smile instead. He was still looking as I started away, pulling the collar of the windbreaker up. The weather had been mild, but even in the summer, even in West Virginia, it can be cool at three in the morning.

It was not a long walk, anyway, and I liked the late night hours. I wasn't a daytime person. It had driven me to distraction when I lived in Los Angeles, all those sun-worshippers. My body couldn't take it. Ten minutes of toasting and I could feel my skin start to shrivel and all but hear the cancer grow. Besides, moonlight was flattering. All the songsmiths knew that. In its silver glow, I probably *could* pass for twenty, the way Chris said. I lived a lifestyle conducive to staying young. In the bright light of day, however, if you looked long and hard, the years sang out. I didn't like the tune.

I almost didn't see him. He was waiting for the bus, not out in the open, at the stop, but in a doorway. He must have seen me approach, however. He cleared his throat as I neared, and I slowed my steps even more and glanced in his direction.

“You don't know what time the bus comes, do you?” he asked. He moved a little out of the shadows, so I could get a look at him. I stopped altogether.



The lovely Victor Banis and the even lovelier Ann Bannon at the Paperback Show and Sale, Mission Hills, CA, April 2005.

“I don't think there is one, till morning,” I said.

“Fuck.” He stepped then into the light and looked up and down the street, as if a bus might make a liar of me, and then looked back at me, a look that suggested there was more on his mind than bus schedules. “What, six o'clock?”

“Something like that,” I said, and gave him the same sort of once over. He was cute, in a scruffy way, and young, and lean looking. Even in the dim light, I could see a nervous pulse throb in his throat, and the outline along one thigh made me think he might have been fondling himself to make it look enticing. It did.

“Guess I've got a lot of time to kill,” he said. He tried for a wistful look, but his eagerness belied that. It was plain what he was looking for, and it wasn't a ride—not on a bus, at any rate.

“Well, there are ways to pass the time,” I said, and smiled in the general direction of that telltale bulge.

He smiled back, even teeth flashing in the moonlight. “Live near here?” he asked.

“Not far,” I said, hesitantly. I didn't like taking tricks back to my place, and not only because it was so inelegant. If I was any judge, and I ought to be with my experience, he was one of those quasi-straight ones, who liked to get their rocks off, and could be unpredictable afterward, and I did not want the complication of getting him out of my apartment after our business was concluded.

He picked up on the hesitation, though, maybe a little too quickly. “There's an alley, just over there,” he said, nodding across the street.

“Too dark,” I said. “I like to see what I'm doing, and whom.”

He laughed, a laugh that sounded far older than he looked. “I know a place,” he said, and started to walk. I fell into step beside him and we walked a ways in silence. When he spoke, the question surprised me: “How old are you?”

“What makes you ask that?” I asked.

He shrugged and smiled. “I wouldn't want to get into trouble. You look awfully young. Younger than me.” Something in his voice, a hopeful note that he did not quite disguise, made me think that maybe he hoped I really was; maybe he was one of those who favored the “wee laddies” when he fooled around. Probably the “wee lassies” too; I doubted that he was really, gay; or, really out, in any event. Well, so long as he fulfilled my expectations, that did not concern me.

“That's very kind of you,” I said, glancing sideways to be sure he wasn't just pulling my chain. “It's the moonlight, I'm afraid. How old are you, since you've brought the subject up.”

“Twenty one,” he said, and then added quickly, “Twenty, but I'll be twenty one in a month.”



“What's your name?”

It was his turn to hesitate. There is a protocol to this kind of pickup, and it doesn't usually involve exchanging names; on the other hand, he had already introduced the subject of personal information, so he could hardly cavil.

“Garland,” he said.

“I'm Victor.” We shook hands briefly.

“In here,” he said, indicating.

“Here?” I stopped, surprised. We were at the gate to St Agnes' cemetery. The “old cemetery.” The new one, near the edge of town, was itself nearly a century old, built when this one had been filled to the point where there was no more room for graves. No one came here, except the occasional young boy on a dare, on Halloween night.

“No one comes here,” he said, echoing my thoughts. “It's private. And lots of moonlight. You said you didn't like it too dark.”

He was right: it was private. The old church stood dark on one side, and high stone walls enclosed it on the other three sides. I could only assume he had been here before, for similar assignments.

I shrugged—graveyards held no fears for me—and went through the gate before him. We strolled among tombstones. About half way back, I looked toward the street. No one passing there would see us this far into the cemetery. We might as well have been in our own little garden.

“This do?” I asked.

“Perfect.” When I looked, he was already tugging his pants down. I like a man who gets right to it. He perched atop a weather-worn tombstone, his trousers about his ankles now, knees spread wide, and I knelt on the damp grass before him, but when I put my hand down by his foot, to balance myself, it landed on something metal and cold. I looked, and picked it up: a switchblade knife. It must have fallen out of his pocket when he pulled down his pants.

He saw it in my hand. “Sorry,” he said. “I stuck it in my pocket when I came out earlier. It's that Slasher business.” He paused and added, “They say he goes for young guys.”

He swallowed hard, and I watched his Adam's apple bob up and down, but, really, he didn't look sorry, he looked excited. At any rate, surely the diplomatic thing to do was to suggest that I hold on to it till we were done, to allay any fears I might have, since I was the one who would be in the vulnerable position, but that did not seem to occur to him. He held out his hand for it, and I paused no more than a heartbeat or two before I handed it to him.

He was still as erect and as stiff as before—stiffer, I thought. Maybe that little business with the knife, thinking he had frightened me, was a turn on for him. It wasn't for me, but, in for a penny....

I put the thought of the knife from my mind, and concentrated instead on paying homage to that most ancient of deities.

There are few things to equal the thrill of a man spewing into your mouth when he reaches his climax—the taste of it, drinking the life force from him, feeling it renew your own juices. I always felt better for it, and younger—it was part, I am sure, of what kept me looking so youthful.

His was a powerful one, and I savored it, and not until he had finished entirely and I had drained every drop of it from him, did I even think again of that knife. I had been right, of course: he had not plunged it into my back while I knelt before him. If he were going to do that, it would be after his wants were taken care of, not before. His kind always got their rocks off first.

Now that he was finished, he was impatient to end our little liaison. He got up quickly, hurriedly tugging his pants up, tucking himself away, as if embarrassed to let me see what a moment earlier he had been more than happy to shove down my throat.

I half rose, too, and paused to look at the tombstone on which he had been seated.

“What did you say your name was?” I asked, standing in front of him, reaching my hand into the pocket of my windbreaker, fumbling for cigarettes that weren't there.

“Garland,” he said, a little surly, now that he had gotten what he wanted. I had been right, as well, about the type he was. It was part of what had attracted me to him, of why I had come here with him. I particularly liked the ones who wanted it so eagerly, and then were pissed off about it when it was over. That was my special turn on. “Why, what's it to you?”

“Oh,” I made a little dismissive gesture. “It's just, it is an odd name, isn't it? And such a coincidence, seeing it there, on that headstone.” I gestured toward the stone he had graced with his bare butt while I serviced him.

“My name? You're kidding.” He turned to look. The lettering on the tombstone was old and worn, and he had to stoop down and look closely to make it out. “Shit,” he said, “You're pulling my leg, you faggot, it says John....”

My methods are not the orthodox ones. The slashing can be done later, but I like to kill them quickly, one knife thrust, carefully placed to enter the heart, I know the exact spot, have perfected it with practice. The blood is still fresh that way, and perfectly useable, and the mutilation can be done afterward.

The beauty of it is, it is all so obvious that they never even look for the bite marks. He was the sixth since I had arrived in town and the reports of the deaths had yet to mention those two tiny puncture wounds on the throat. Why would they, when they have an obviously fatal knife wound, and all that business with the penises to distract them?

I would have to be moving on soon—with some regret: West Virginia was blessed with lots of horny young men who welcomed blow jobs, so long as they were anonymous.

But there was no shortage of towns and cities yet to be explored, and no shortage of young men like



this one. They were legion.

And I had centuries to find them.

- - -

\*This was written for Chris Garcia who correctly sent it to *eI* for publication.

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Say what you will about the sweet miracle of unquestioning faith, I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Mother Night*

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# Scratch and Sniff

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Todd Mason

*Hustler* was always at the periphery of my consciousness of skin magazines as a kid...it was definitely not around when I'd find my parents' copies of *Playboy* and *Playgirl* tucked away around the house, nor mixed in with the stash of more-explicit (probably Dutch or Scandinavian) porn magazines left by the previous residents in the house we moved into in 1973, with the extreme close-up photos of genitals during coitus puzzling to my 8-year-old self and my cohort (the more panoramic photos helped us dope things out).

I'd hear about *Hustler* in the news from time to time, but it was most in evidence to young adolescent me in its effects on *Playboy*, which followed up its reluctant display, post-*Penthouse*, of pubic hair with a post-*Hustler* display of women's genitalia...when visiting my grandparents, my step-grandfather's stacks of *Playboys* (and *High Societys*) certainly impressed me with this new liberty, and I'm not sure I've ever understood the reluctance to allow such imagery on the part of Hefner and company...why on Earth would someone who enjoyed the sight of a woman's body pointedly not want to see her pubis? What the hell was that?



Todd Mason

As a teen, my family moved to Hawaii, and the same second-hand bookstore, "Froggie's" no less, that had all these lovely *Fantastic* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction* back issues for sale did a small business in back issues of skin mags, as well; some of my high school friends particularly enjoyed picking up the most obnoxious materials they could find there, which for them meant copies of *Confidential* and its imitators and, definitely, *Hustler*. Between my casual browsing at the store and visits to my friends' houses, I got my first firsthand exposure to the magazine.



SECOND THOUGHTS

The cartoons were, indeed, obnoxious (says a man to the woman fellating him, "I didn't come; that was the discharge from my gonorrhoea infection."); the pictorials seemed always to feature women less attractive, to me at the time at least, than the more slick *Playboy* (though about as attractive on average as *Penthouse*, and without all the fog).

On one occasion, I served as a supporting player in a student film for a fellow named Chris Coad's high school drama class; entitled *A Really Awful Man*, iirc, it starred Jared Sanford, who has gone on to a slightly eccentric film career after a bit of singing with the band Poi Dog Pondering, and one of the ways the man was really awful was in throwing parties wherein his guests were invited to flip through his collection of tattered *Hustlers*...our classmate Maile Berger, some years before her service as associate producer of the miniseries adaptation of *The Mists of Avalon*, sat next to me on the couch as we populated this party scene and paged through copies with appropriate attentiveness. (The trip sequence of the film involved Sanford's character driving down a street and the camera panning from him leering to focusing out through the windshield, then turning on its side; a film of very modest ambition, it earned Coad a failing grade.)

*Not A Love Story*, the documentary, certainly focused a fair amount of its rage on *Hustler* and the

tendencies in magazine photography it encouraged; they had a bit of a point about the “meat-grinder” cover, certainly, but overstated nearly every other point they had...meanwhile, I was not quite aware of Theodore Sturgeon or Paul Krassner’s involvement with the magazine, but I did enjoy the coverage of the Falwell suit (and the eventual film about the circumstances leading up to the suit and its aftermath).

While *Penthouse* would spin off *Omni* and its extensions and *Gallery* would spin off *Twilight Zone Magazine* and *Night Cry*, *Hustler* would only impinge on my consciousness even more indirectly...and so up to yesterday, when a Philadelphia paper ran an AP report about the mainstreaming of porn and those who resent it, with a hook of the continued success of the original *Hustler* store in Ohio....

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“Television drama, although not yet classified as fine art, has on occasion performed marvelous services for Americans who want us to be less paranoid, to be fairer and more merciful. *M.A.S.H.* and *Law and Order*, to name only two shows, have been stunning masterpieces in that regard.”

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 1/27/03, “In These Times”

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# Painted Pussy

By Alan White

I finally get a chance to drop you a line and if I remember right, you once asked for *Hustler* tales.

I have a minuscule tale that hasn't been told in 28 years, so this must be the time to tell it.

And here it is:

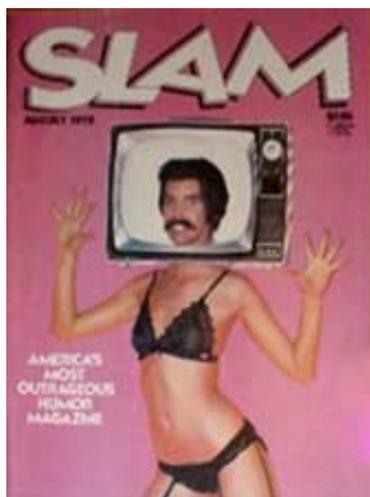
I couldn't pass up being an assistant on a *Hustler* photo shoot outside Palm Springs in August of 1978.

Monster fan and John Chambers apprentice Rick Schwartz worked for Peter David at *Hustler* and *Slam*, their short-lived adult humor magazine, on photo shoots where an odd makeup was needed.

Rick and I met the rest of the crew at a small motel used as our base of operations on a hot Friday night in August.



Sybil Danning hugs Alan White on his 40th birthday.



Larry Flynt's short-lived adult humor magazine *Slam*. "I remember Rick Schwartz telling me about sticking that mustache and wig on the cover girl." –Alan White

was an odd character, being from a wealthy French family and in the states solely to prove to her parents she could exist without their help. She was, however, convinced that during a photo shoot in Jamaica a voodoo curse had been placed on her and she would occasionally burst into heebie jeebies, claiming the voodoo "Got me."

Makeup call was 4:00 am and the job was to apply latex "Cat" appliances on two girls who would pose in the underbrush as some kind of girl-on-girl feral kitty action. One of the girls immediately had a fit when gluing the appliance to her face and ran screaming from the room, never to be seen again. The other girl, who turned out to be (she said) a sister of Sharon Tate, was just as claustrophobic, as she threw a fit and burst into tears. Fearing we'd made the trip down there for nothing, we found a few ludes made her more amenable to the situation.

About 8:00 am we ventured to a likely spot to photograph those solo kitty follies. Outside of the face-piece, nails, kitty ears, and some wild hair, she was otherwise in nature's own. And thus we spent an ungodly amount of time in the blazing sun -- six hours in the hottest part of the year, under the guns of a demoniacal photographer.

We were draping wet towels around the girl during film reloading, but none-the-less, she was clearly burned to a crisp, dehydrated, emotionally shot, and she collapsed on the spot.

That evening the poor cat-girl hid in her room while the rest of us shamelessly partied and carried on. I had taken a fancy to Nicole the hairdresser and thus spent the next few days in Palm Springs. She



Left photo: Painted pussy location shot outside Palm Springs, CA, 1978.

Right photo: Nicole, the French Hairdresser.

About six months later she gave it up and moved back to France where her parents bought her a boutique.

The pictures from the photo shoot were never printed in the magazine.

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“The Internet has already become for a fortunate few ('spiritual scuba divers', one is tempted to call them) a limitless ocean without bottom or shores. In whose depths one can breathe effortlessly—in and out, in and out. It is the habitat of the newest creatures to evolve in our part of the Milky Way—as enchanting and nobly bizarre as any giant manta or moray eel, say. They are recorded thoughts and feelings about what it is like to be a living thing.”

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 9/99

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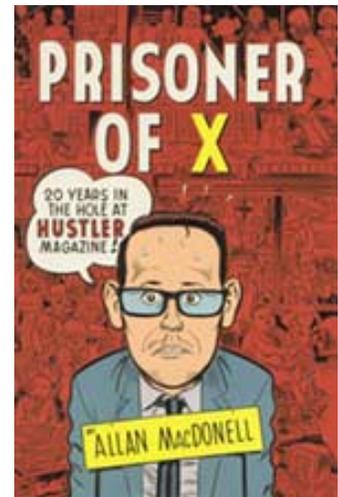
# Prisoner of X\*

By Earl Kemp

Early this year, Adam Parfrey, publisher of Feral House, sent me a note about the upcoming publication of *Prisoner of X*, by Allan MacDonell (punk rock activist, chronicler, and dropout), the just-fired, almost-20-year editor of *Hustler*. Naturally, being greedy and frugal, I wrote Adam back immediately suggesting that he send me a review copy ASAP. That's one way I save money by not buying books I can cadge for free...with a little blood, sweat, and tears going into promoting the title afterward (like now)...assuming that I like it.

This one I really like.

Adam Parfrey mailed me an advance copy of *Prisoner of X*. It arrived on Thursday March 23, 2006 as I was frantically trying to gather up my pieces to leave for the long weekend in Los Angeles for the 27th Annual Paperback Show and Sale. I wrote about this ["Living the Legend"] elsewhere in this issue of *eI*...rather I wrote of the event for Jacques Hamon and his incredible website <http://www.noosphere.org/showcase/> and reused it elsewhere in this issue of *eI*.



For me MacDonell's book was a real page-turner. While I had numerous things to do before leaving for Los Angeles, I simply couldn't put the book down. I read it all day Thursday and on into Friday morning before I could finish it and get back to the urgent task at hand.

As a last minute request of Adam Parfrey, I sent him an email message asking him to please pick up Allan MacDonell (who also lives in Los Angeles) and drag him to the paperback show if necessary. I *had* to meet the man. I had to tell him in a gushing rush of uninhibited praise how very much I loved his book.

And Adam did...and I did...and none of us could believe the warmth surrounding us for a few hours on Sunday after the paperback show had closed down for the year.

I think *Prisoner of X* is one of the very best books ever written from the inside out about the pornography industry of the last two decades. I found it to be a real page-turner and couldn't put it down. I point out that this book covers the last two decades for an obvious reason—I hope—that being my involvement with the industry had ended a full decade before Allan MacDonell's even began...a late comer (no pun intended) amid the lush fields of greenback green.

Nevertheless, the single thing that so glued me to the book was the astonishing similarities of our two tenures working at the lust mills of Southern California. In reality, almost nothing was the same from my 1961-1972 tenure to his 1985-2005 time shackled to the chief editor's desk. Certainly there was no similarity on the legal front. If anything, Allan had it much easier than I did in that regard.

Nowhere in his book did I find the bit about the constant federal surveillance that we at The Porno Factory had to live with 24/7. Not one single instance of not being able to use their telephones because of all the illegal law enforcement wiretaps. Not one single instance of not being able to receive the office mail until after the feds had opened, examined, and copied all of it. Not one single instance of

accidentally running into the numerous different federal agents dogging their steps wherever they find themselves anywhere in the world.

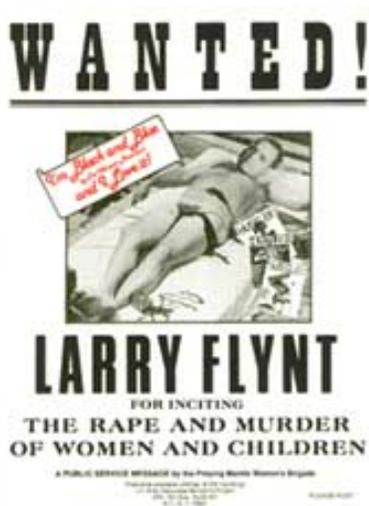
Really much easier than our times. Maybe not nearly as exciting, but certainly more sexual and drug-drenched in nature.

The memories of those times that Allan brought back for me were unbelievably wonderful.

Way back then when pornography wasn't available in every major chain hotel in the USA, in most major bookstores (cleverly hidden as literature of course), things were quite a bit different for everyone involved with producing that pornography or erotica or sleaze...under any other name, a rose is still a rose.

At the time, when we at The Porno Factory, otherwise known as Greenleaf Classics, Inc., thought of ourselves as being the Mercedes of the industry, there were some people working within the field who where so outrageous, so unbelievably audacious, as to be avoided at all costs.

Larry Flynt was at or near the top of that list of the terminally shunned.



He wasn't alone, of course. His fellow list members consisted of people like Ruben Sturman, Marvin Miller, Mike Thevis, and their sordid ilk. Most of them were criminals, plain and simple, playing the game by their own rules and running roughshod over anything or anyone that happened to be in their way. Eventually, some of them even died in prisons where they had been sentenced for real crimes, not for producing pornography.

The industry itself had nothing but contempt for those individuals. There were always groans of protest whenever even one of them would surface at an industry convention or gathering of any sort. They were definitely NOT colleagues...not contemporaries...just unwanted nuisances that had to be watched at all times and held at arm's length for fear of being victimized or much worse.

*Playboy* was THE man's magazine. *Penthouse* was a good copy with a more brazenly liberal attitude. *Hustler* was simply garbage. Every one of us knew that Larry Flynt would eventually kill the market for all of us...if not more.

How strange it is that, through time, one's attitudes and perceptions alter so much that things turn out very differently than anticipated.

That's what happened for me with Larry Flynt. Over time I came to appreciate the things he did more and more. That they were much more civic-minded and public-spirited and a great deal less sleazy didn't count at all. I actually admired the way Flynt handled himself in public, in court, and on the US political scene.

Then I respected *Hustler* for what it was, a no-holds-barred, blatantly blue collar beat-off magazine. The ultimate male accessory. And, at the same time, I viewed *Playboy* no longer as THE man's magazine but as a terribly distorted, not-too-well-disguised [excuse the expression] fag mag.

The men in *Hustler* were men and the men in *Playboy* were all closet frauds of some sort.

[Having lived in Chicago through the birth and initial success of *Playboy*, I viewed it very differently in the beginning years. I greatly admired Hugh Hefner then and I still do to this day and I am proud that Hefner calls me Earl when the occasion arises and that I freely call him Hugh. But I still, even then, couldn't find a real man in any issue of his magazine and, I knew that many of the people who produced those issues, made those photo shoots, did the makeup, the airbrushing, etc. were gay. Little wonder *real* masculinity never got through to the magazine subscribers.]

But I am drifting much too far away from Allan MacDonell and his memoirs of working with Flynt at *Hustler*, where this all began.

Among other things, and certainly the things that never ever entered into my porno-publishing career, were the salacious things concerning public personalities and prominent professional politicians that were revealed through *Hustler*. These are things like video of Jane Fonda wearing a strap-on dildo, Ted Turner, and a hired hooker having three-way sex with Turner plugged in (literally) as the centerpiece. Like another video of Chuck Berry playing with his dingaling and his special way of eating the byproducts of the hookers he patronizes complete with frozen, Tupperware'd leftovers for later repasts. Like offering \$1,000,000 rewards to anyone who would admit to sleeping with major-player Republican professional politicians. Like the exhaustive search to verify an illegitimate child alleged to have been sired by George Bush.

All those plus the extra special nuggets of unknown depravity associated with Larry Flynt, with Althea Flynt, and various other *Hustler* staffers, most notably the child molestation conviction of the artist who drew the continuing series of "Chester the Molester" cartoons and how he had another ballable child literally dumped onto him after his legal ordeal was over.



Allan MacDonell in his *Hustler* office displaying the \$1,000,000 reward poster.



Adam and Allan arrived at the paperback show in Mission Hills at the peak of the event. They made a tour of the entire show, all the exhibits, and the three different display rooms...and didn't find me at all. I spent hours, it seemed, running just a matter of minutes behind them trying to catch up. They had brought copies of *Prisoner of X* and left them on sale with one of the local exhibitors. Allan signed those copies for the people who bought them...and the two of them kept moving...always just a few steps ahead of me.

Finally, almost exhausted, I gave up and went to my hotel room to collapse.

The arrangements I had made with Adam just as I left for Los Angeles included dinner together on Sunday following the show. There would be Adam, Allan, my son Terry who just happened to be an ex-Hustler staffer as well (see his article "Prisoner of XXX, Jr." elsewhere in this issue of *eI*), and myself. Since I couldn't catch up with them, I decided they would have to catch up with me.

I had just began changing clothes...removing my "show" regalia and slipping into something a bit more comfortable...when they knocked on the hotel room door. I was shirtless and with my comfortable jeans hobbling my feet when Terry opened the door and asked them to enter. Just that way I gave

Adam a big hug and turned to Allan, his turn, his hug...this stranger I had never met but felt so very close to...and he responded in kind.

After I finished dressing, we began trying to decide on a restaurant for dinner. Because I had grown so tired from the events of the day, I didn't feel like a large meal, so I suggested a deli instead, and they knew where one of the very best was located.

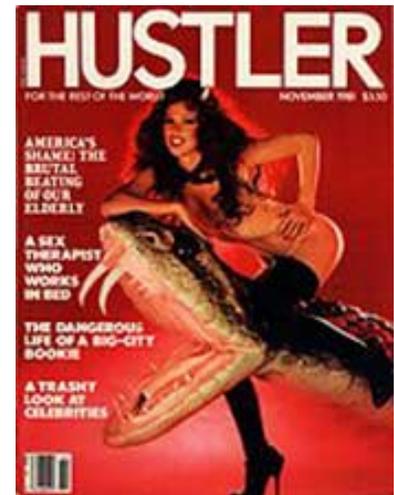
Brent's was the name of it, in nearby Northridge, only a short drive away from the hotel, and it was unlike any deli I had ever seen before. It was huge, and crowded, and there was a long line of people wanting to eat standing inside the restaurant and outside and stretching down the sidewalk. Nevertheless, we decided to stay there and wait for a table. A bit later, we were finally seated and placed our orders.

The food was some of the very best deli cuisine I've ever experienced and I had acquired quite a fondness for Kosher delicacies when I lived in Chicago...chopped liver being my all-time favorite, so that's what I ordered. I was served a huge mound of chopped liver married to a huge mound of superb egg salad...on rye...with a large pile of pickles, ripe tomatoes, red onion slices, and numerous other things.

The dialogue was nonstop with all of us trying to get a word in edgewise almost without success. Terry and Allan had many very common memories to share of mutual former *Hustler* co-workers. Allan and I had many very common memories to share of identical happenings almost 40 years apart. For all the world it was as if two of my sons, not one, were at that table sharing the tawdry tidbits of their extremely sex- and drug-saturated publishing careers.

When we left the restaurant, not a one of us had any doubts that we were somehow quite related and that we would have more family reunions in the future, hopefully at every one of the upcoming Paperback Show and Sales.

The irony of it all was, even though we had taken a number of cameras (digital and film) with us to Los Angeles, intent upon taking many, many pictures, in the excitement and rampant adrenalin rush associated with our family reunion, we neglected to take even one photograph.



Nothing but the memories lingers on....

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OK, now let's have some fun. Let's talk about sex. Let's talk about women. Freud said he didn't know what women wanted. I know what women want. They want a whole lot of people to talk to. What do they want to talk about? They want to talk about everything.

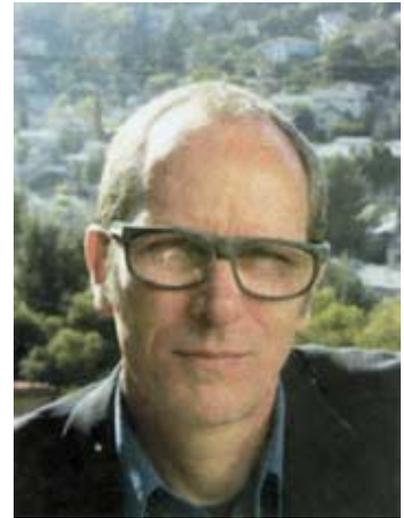
--Kurt Vonnegut, *God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian*

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## Snatches of Blue\*

By Allan MacDonell

My first trip to France as a *Hustler* journalist, during the spring of 1990, was made in the company of a bigger-than-life exotic dancer and blue-screen sensation, Sandra Scream. A California-bred beauty from upper echelons of the Golden State's founding families, with bolt-on breasts and a smile as wide and cracked as the San Andreas Fault, Sandra bonded with me as one of two Americans in a succession of mini-vans, restaurants, and hotel suites overrun with camera-toting, chain-smoking Frenchmen. We were both on the continent as guests of Hot Video, Sandra in her capacity as a star attention grabber, me as an emissary from *Hustler*. Christian Shapiro's reviews of Sandra Scream performances had always been enthusiastic, like the performances themselves, with one caveat. Sandra was among the maddening sub-breed of porn girl who refused to be filmed having sex with anyone other than her boyfriend. While chatting at the airport in Paris, I had intuited that she and the boyfriend might be on the outs. They had in fact broken up, but rather than signal the onslaught of Sandra's on-screen promiscuity, the faltering relationship precipitated the starlet's total absence from the blue screen.



Allan MacDonell

Irregardless of impending retirement, mincing Ms. Scream spun the Cannes Festival on its gonads. Lounging on the beach, boating on the sea, sauntering along the beachfront promenade, riding in a topless Cadillac through the clogged thoroughfares, dining at a shoreline café, everywhere Sandra Scream appeared, at each Hot Video orchestrated publicity coup, she stole thunder that had been set in place to crash for legitimate Hollywood royalty. Day after day, the Cannes newspapers featured full-color images of the fabulous American porn star decked out in a series of cleavage-boosting, hip-squeezing gowns. Whenever she ventured into the vicinity of legitimate Cannes Film Festival galas, Sandra created a camera slipstream and whipped up frenzied mobs. I'd never seen anything like it, and I still don't understand what all the hysteria signified. Walking past the red carpet at the Palais, while world-class thespians ascended the A-list steps virtually ignored, the less-than-subtle Ms. Scream pulled away the paparazzi like a powerful magnet drawing loose filings. Such an uproar flared among the massed spectators that a phalanx of armed policemen rushed to restore order, and perhaps to save Sandra from being lifted on the shoulders of the mob and paraded through the streets.

"We saw a great girl," enthused a glowing French grandma stooped but blissful. "A great girl."

Afterward, Sandra and entourage sat ensconced at the poolside café of the Majestic Hotel. The bar catered to a fairly young, nose-in-the-air crowd. Everybody lit cigarettes at the same time and exhaled. A leprechaun-like Hot Video editor crouched at the starlet's arm.

"What do you think of the French people? Crazy, eh?"

Sandra looked like the homecoming queen after the prom. The pressure was off.

"It made me wet when all those people started coming toward me. I thought, Oh, God. I'm getting my period."

Toward the end of our joint Hot Video vacation, Sandra and I were placed on the beach to stage an

interview. Nearly exhausted from a week of ceaseless veneration, Sandra lounged on a towel, basking in the playful touch of the warm breeze. The Mediterranean Sea sparkled in front of her, a deep Mediterranean blue. The Cote d'Azur sky was a brilliant, limitless, azure canopy above. It was like being in a whole different world, a world of our own, but not for long.

Sandra took off her bikini top. The beach was littered with women whose tits were flopped out right in the open. All kinds: big, little, perky, bouncy. The first shadow was cast by the boom microphone of a soundman. His partner blotted a sliver of sun, leaning toward Sandra with a camera.

“Does that belong all to you?” he hollered. “Can you give me some?”

The view of the deep, blue sea was cut off by roving journalists, notepads in hand. Snatches of blue were obscured by the legs of jostling photo buffs, a crowd of whom seemed to have sprung up from the very sand. The sea was lost behind a thicket of leering, shouting camera faces. Only the sky offered any escape. Cameras, hungry and ferocious, closed in above Sandra. The ring of scruffy photogs tightened. The ashes of their cigarettes hung perilously long over Sandra's face and breasts, spilling in, filling in the blue of the heavens. One cigarette burn away from panic, Sandra reached up to retie her bikini top. The mob howled its protest. I joined in with the Hot Video crew, surrounding Sandra and shouldering her through the throng to the safety of a private bar. The teeming mass hadn't made her wet this time.



Sandra Scream took off her bikini top.

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Q: “Based on what you've read and seen in the media, what is not being said in the mainstream press about President Bush's policies and the impending war in Iraq?”

A: “That they are nonsense.”

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 1/27/03, “In These Times”

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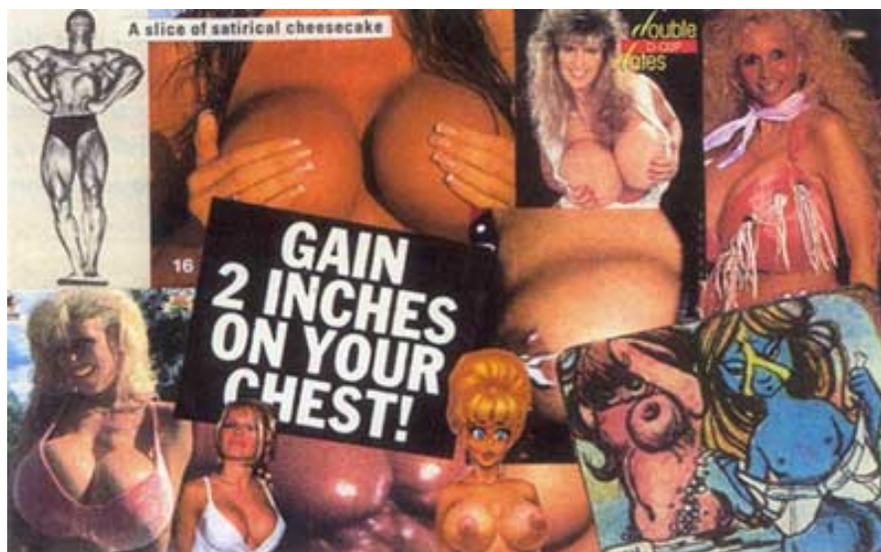
## Prisoner of XXX, Jr.

Collage by Marc Schirmeister

By Earl Terry Kemp

*My life and times at Hustler, etc.*

*Brief Memoirs of the Heir Apparent to Mi Familia, Cosa Nostra, or The Biz.*



Recently I met Allan MacDonnell, author of *Prisoner of X*, his memoirs about his twenty years working at *Hustler*. It's a great book, a hoot to read. I highly recommend it to anyone who has ever worked in any part of the business, and to anyone who has ever read an issue of *Hustler*. The man is very funny with a droll sense of wit. Over dinner we shared mutual recollections about working at *Hustler* for Larry Flynt, surprised that we knew so many of the same people, but had never met each other.

It wasn't as much of a surprise to me. After all I have lived most of my life intentionally under the radar and off the record. My brief time at LFP (Larry Flynt Publications) was done the same way. I came to work after everyone had left the building and left shortly before anyone returned. I made a great deal of money soaking LFP, working as a "freelance" typographer, doing work for them and doing work for myself with their equipment.

So much money that I was able to launder all of my income, and write off everything I earned as a business expense. I ended up not having to pay any income tax for several years. I suspect that even though I was a lowly unknown typesetter that I made more money than Allan did working at LFP at that time, and after tax time I'm certain that I did.

Talking with Allan brought back more than two years of fond memories living in Los Angeles and working at LFP. Where do my memories of working at *Hustler* begin? I started working at Sid's Typographers in Culver City in 1987. I had gotten tired of the underpaid world of typesetting in San Diego and had decided to broaden my horizons and look into working in Los Angeles.

In February of that year I took the three-hour-plus drive up to LA and interviewed at Sid's, they hired

me on the spot, doubling my current salary, and put me to work immediately that same afternoon. After a few months working there I had gotten bored with the LA scene in general and started to look for more work to fill up my time. I was making a god awful lot of money at the time, and realized that I could make even more.



Sid's Typographers, June 1988  
Fellow worker, UFO Ben, and Terry Kemp.

Since I got off of work at Sid's at 3:30 it wasn't too difficult to find another gig to fill in my second-shift. I found a part-time job as a typesetter for a local Catholic newsletter, working under two nearly twin sisters. I could never really tell them apart. I privately referred to them as Moron One and Moron Two. The "cute" near twins had some simpering names like Tina and Lena.

They had hosed up the newsletter, replete with the most mystifying, unworkable filing system possible. I was brought in for last minute changes while both sisters conveniently disappeared. Although they spent the night calling me to find out how I was doing.

I got practically nothing done. They decided to dump on me about this, I told them to fuck off. The publisher knew where the problem was and offered me their jobs, but I wasn't interested any longer. The prevalent fanaticism of the near-Moonite religious zealots working there (complete with photos taken with the Pope) was enough to turn my stomach.

In my brief two-three days working there, one of the sisters had mentioned an ex-boyfriend who worked at *Hustler*. Lo and behold, an ad appeared in the *LA Times* about this time seeking a typesetter for a local major magazine. I went to interview for the position.

I became somewhat giddy when I walked in the door to LFP and realized where I was and who I was going to be interviewing with. Memory flashes of sitting in the lobby at Greenleaf Classics almost twenty years earlier raced through my head. I half expected to spot publisher Bill Hamling stalking past on yet another rant, verbally kicking the shit out of his porn staff. Instead I looked forward to seeing good ole boy Larry, and getting to see one of his rants.

I was hired on the spot as a "freelance" typesetter, second shift, by a skinny black chick who was clearly in over her head and unable to produce the required results due to a thorough lack of ability that was apparent the first time I met her.

Right away I managed to set myself up with a seven-day-a-week work schedule, easily working more than 60 hours a week at LFP. I would come in during the second shift, and do the skinny black chick's work for her, cleaning up her daily abortions. I ended up working with David Buchannan, another typesetter at that time, and we became pals of a sort. There was another female working there, but she didn't last very long.

Dave would come in on weekends to soak up the overtime working on personal projects that had nothing to do with LFP, but during the week I was pretty much left all alone and had the run of the entire floor.

Wandering around at night I pilfered stacks of the various magazines available, stealing piles of all of the latest issues and taking them home to "read" later. I took even longer bathroom breaks powdering my nose. Generally I did as little work as I could. Since this was more than anyone else did, I was considered a god.

One night shortly after I began working there, while staying very late, a very young blond headed guy stuck his head into the typesetting room and introduced himself as Frank. He proceeded to hustle me up for a ride home that night. I was quite willing to oblige as I put in another three extra hours of overtime waiting for his shift to end.

We ended up cruising the darker, seedier parts of LA that night scoring a baggy of weed on a nameless street corner. We smoked ourselves into a blissful, unforgettable state, splitting up the remainder before dawn. Such was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

From that moment on Frank took me under his wings (very dark wings) and showed me the LFP ropes. After everyone would clear out of the building we would start our hours long, all night long, breaks in the computer room. Frank worked in the computer room performing database backups. This was a dull, boring job which entailed monitoring reels of computer tape and switching them out as they were filled with information.

The computer room was a sealed room, with its own special security system. Only Frank had the code to enter this room. It had its own ventilation system also. We would spend hours safely ensconced behind the thick metal security door smoking weed and snorting coke in that room, while going through the old paste-ups and negatives and photos of magazines past stored in a ransacked alcove. We were the kings of LFP.

Frank had a special "in" with Larry Flynt. He had started working for Larry as his bagman. Larry would fly him all around the world, loaded down with various illegal drugs, and Frank would deliver the goods. After Frank took a vacation back home he was promoted to computer room lackey upon his return to the dark heart of LFP.

Frank was a very enterprising young man. Aside from stealing as many magazines as he could and reselling them to friends, or trading them for drugs, he also was the front for "The Beast" (the actor, Ron Perlman) and processed his mail, forging autographs on photos for desperate fans.

Dave Buchannan was another enterprising Flynt employee. Dave ran a free ad in various LFP



My dear friend, Frank, 1988,  
Los Angeles.

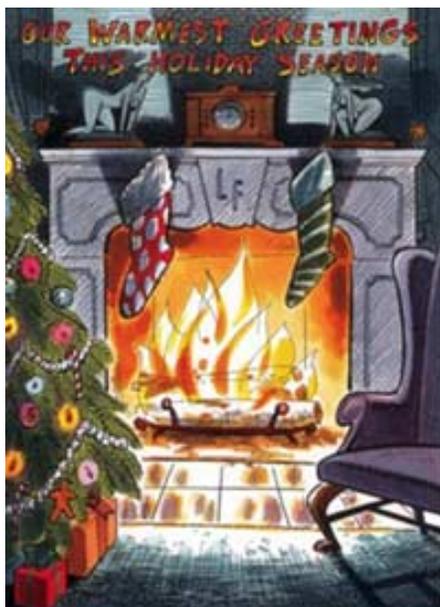
magazines offering his “How to win at Blackjack” pamphlet. When his stock would run low, he’d Xerox off more at work. He fronted the enterprise with a Beverly Hills fake address. He thought the fake address (in reality a post office box drop) added a cachet and sophistication to his ripped off product and brought in more revenue. I admired the enterprise but doubted the success. After all he never seemed to have any money, no car, and when we met, no girlfriend. Whatever he was earning was going (noticeably) up his nose.

Dave also built computers from scratch out of component parts, selling the finished product to fellow employees (along with other, more illicit, products). He had built his first computer system while in the hospital undergoing treatment for Hodgkin’s. After our first weekend working together (and telling me his life’s story) Dave hustled me into driving him around town.

It seemed for some unmentioned reason Dave had no car, no license, and no insurance. My job as his chauffeur began on our first payday together, when I drove him to the local Cash Your Check stall. We cashed our checks and raced over to his dealer spending most of our overtime soaked money buying coke.

As our weekends together developed we began to go to computer swap meets buying parts. I learned under Dave’s tutelage how to build computers. It was a lot of fun. We did all of this on the clock at LFP, including weekly 12-hour-long journeys around LA to those swap meets. No one ever noticed, no one cared. The nameless black chick (I forget her name) our ostensive supervisor, was too busy working her own clients and totally neglecting her job at LFP that she was grateful that any work got done. She had to be, as she was incapable of doing any of it.

Eventually she would even bring me her clients and have me do the typesetting for them, all the while keeping the profit for herself, but ripping off LFP and having LFP pay me for my time.



My only LFP souvenir, Christmas Card from 1988.

I first meet Morgan Hagen during my nights at LFP. Morgan was one of the original characters from Larry’s early days. He reminded me of a similar seedy porn writer, Vern Lundgren, whom I had met several years earlier, back in the late 1960’s, during my years growing up in the business. Vern was a

gonzo writer, always high on something. Eventually in a fit of boredom he pulled out his 9mm at the dinner table down in Ajijic, Mexico, and shot himself in front of family and friends. I noticed a lot of Vern in Morgan.

Vern was one of the rambling horde of porn writers in my father's stable when he ran Greenleaf Classics for Bill "We don't print Fuck Books here" Hamling.



Morgan was sleeping on one of the couches in a private office (not his) at LFP. Homeless and broke, as he explained to me, he still had his access to the floor. He had his clothes and things stashed all over, hanging behind almost every door, inside unused bottom drawers, and hidden behind cabinets. His secret stash included a very large pressurized bottle of nitrous oxide, very visible, casually placed behind a potted palm that every visitor passed everyday, which he liberally shared with all. I had a lot of fun with Morgan.

He would disappear at closing time (5:00) and come back four or five hours later righteously hammered. He always seemed to be wearing the same clothes, and they stunk, but not enough to keep the barflies he picked up away from him. He brought up the most interesting assortment of young females to the office, always managing to bring them by my office for a late night chat, showing off their more than ample physical "charms."

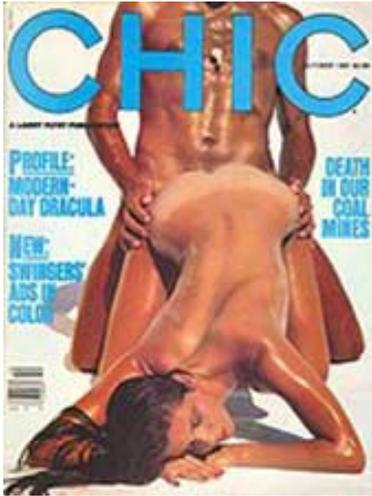
Eventually he turned his obsession with well-endowed females into another successful magazine for LFP when he talked Larry into launching *Big Busty*. Clearly many of the young females he brought by were lured into his clutches as potential "models."

"Come on up to my 'office' little girl. Just take off your top and let me take a few photos. I'll make you famous. Say, Terry, can you hold the lights a little closer!"

As my year at LFP progressed I got to know several of the editors and artists, practically anyone who ever stayed late. I did almost all the work putting together *Chic*, I was developing a name for myself inside the microcosm of LFP.

For a while it seemed that I was on the black chicks' good side. I trained her new hires. She brought in one idiot girlfriend after another. They could barely type, and knew nothing about typesetting, and none of them lasted longer than a week. I continued to do her work for her, including the work for her private clients. She began to dangle a position on the "staff" in front of me "if I continued to keep up

the good work.” But nothing ever came of it. After a few months of dangling it was transparent that the offer was bullshit. I made her look too good. She was never going through with her promise and arrange to have me hired.



About the time that everything fell apart for me at LFP Dave had gotten back together with his ex-girlfriend. Lo and behold it was the very same chick I had worked for at the Catholic newsletter. (Tina or Lena, I could never tell which one.) Dave began maneuvering, trying to get her a job at LFP. I argued against this, as she was incompetent. Dave had to agree that I was right, but he was fucking her, and that counted for a whole lot more than ability in his estimation.

Next Frank left LFP for good to return to his home state and go back to college. Something I was proud of, like he was my own son, or younger brother. I had finally convinced him after many a long session smoking weed in the computer room to return to college in order to make something of himself, not only that, to go for it with gusto and grab the brass ring. I guess I pumped him up enough that he decided to finally go for it. We stayed in touch and while he was

away Frank continued to send me regular monthly care packages of the finest weed.

Dave knew that I was doing the black chick's private clients work for her at LFP, on the LFP time clock. In a power move to take over the typesetting department he ratted out the black chick to the "bosses." She blamed me and fired me from my "freelance" position. She lasted a few more days before she was fired for her lack of ability.

For over a year she had been so busy doing her own thing that she hadn't kept up with the state-of-the-art requirements in the typesetting department, that coupled with a remedial skill level in typing brought her the old heave-ho when she was faced with doing all the work herself. My friend Dave told me the story of her quick demise with much delight, clearly proud that his power play had been so successful.

He was reluctant to bring me back on board after he was made chief typesetter; instead he brought in his girlfriend and her sister. After all, as he explained to me, he was fucking them both.

About a year later Frank returned to LA with a gang of college friends, all recent graduates. They had developed the most interesting system of indoor gardening producing some exceptionally fine weed which they had sold on campus. Now they were exploring the LA marketplace, determined to find their niche.

One of them, another Dave, got a job at LFP working in the accounting department. At the sacrifice of his nose and cheek ring he started to climb the LFP corporate ladder.

We became roommates and he provided me with a steady flow of magazines and insider LFP gossip, also some lasting lessons on the fine art of indoor gardening.



Terry Kemp on vacation, June 1988, visiting my old *alma mater*, UC Berkeley

We all parted company one day a year later when I returned to San Diego. The fun had gone out of our gang. Dave, Frank, and the rest of the boys had given up drugs and found ambition, the lure of money and alcohol was proving more powerful than being original and authentic. I couldn't really fault them for being sell-outs. It was clearly a part of their generation and something that had been reinforced in them while working at LFP.

By 1991 something had gone missing from the world. The charm of partying with the gang and regularly dropping acid with them had been dulled by a backdrop of endlessly boring dated Frank Zappa musical noodlings. Even home growing imported Amsterdam weed had become a business rather than a way of life. All the boys in our gang had begun to wear imported, expensive suits, and gaining an impressive (and irrelevant) knowledge of ties.

Something was certainly missing. They all had begun to believe in the myth of money. If a redneck cracker like Larry could make it big, certainly they could. If they worked for him long enough and studied him hard enough, certainly the world would be theirs. Wouldn't it?

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I'm afraid that I'm like Joe Heller. I don't vote anymore and that is terrible and I don't recommend that to anybody. Joe Heller never voted. He didn't want to be complicit.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, explaining why he didn't vote, National Public Radio, 11/6/02

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## Hustled\*

Artwork recycled Dan Steffan

By Ted White

On a Monday in the middle of August 1980, shortly after I'd arrived at my office at the National Lampoon Inc., Len Mogel, the publisher of *Heavy Metal*, asked me to step into his office for a moment and told me that my position as editor of *HM* was being eliminated. I'd get four weeks severance, and I was promised lots of "work" to ease the burden of unemployment, but Friday was to be my last day.

Emotionally stunned, I wandered out of Len's corner office and down the short hallway to the art director's studio-office, where I found John Workman and Dan Steffan. "I was just fired," I told them. They were both surprised and incredulous.

I felt like a rug had been yanked out from under my feet. I'd completed a year with the magazine (or would have by that Friday) and I'd been full of plans for the upcoming year. I'd been pleased with the changes I'd made in the magazine, and had gotten no hint that management was less pleased (the changes had been, after all, the reason they'd hired me). It was seventeen years later that I found out that Len had lied to me when he said sales under my editorship had not changed. John Workman told me when I met him at Lou Stathis's funeral that in fact sales peaked in 1980 and fell off again after my departure. But I didn't know that then.

Later, after all the promises of "work" had been broken, I realized that I'd been fired as part of a cost-cutting measure that reflected the company's growing nervousness with *The National Lampoon's slipping* sales, but right then I felt that I'd been on a roll and had built up a lot of momentum, and that if I had to leave *HM*, I ought to find another magazine with which to continue. Better yet, I'd *start* a new magazine!

Sitting around in Lou Stathis's apartment with Dan Steffan, I rifled through dictionaries looking for The Word that would make the new magazine's title instantly communicate what I wanted the magazine to be, and we talked about whom to try to get for a publisher.

I found the title, and somewhere along the line Larry Flynt's name was bunted about.

Larry Flynt was a strange man who launched a publishing empire on newsstand sleaze from Columbus, Ohio. He turned a club, the Hustler Club, into a magazine, *Hustler*. In its first few years *Hustler* was a magazine in a class of its own. Slick, like *Playboy*, and full of full-color photography, like *Penthouse*, it had the raunchy, idiosyncratic editorial personality of a sex tabloid like *Screw*. It was Flynt who pioneered the use of mirrors to beam sunlight into the open vaginas of his models. It was Flynt who used a woman in her fifties for his fold-out center-spread—not a woman whose beauty was that of a woman ten or twenty years younger, but a woman who showed her age, who looked used, but who still had a gleam in her eye. And it was Flynt who ran photo-features on very young teenaged girls as well. And his cartoons—his cartoons epitomized the very worst taste. One looked at them with astonishment. *Hustler*, in other words, everything the "class" men's mags were not. It was crude, raunchy, and surprisingly *real*. It was a blue-collar men's mag. It catered to truck drivers rather than young professionals. And it was published by a midwestern redneck with less than a high school education. *Hustler* was an "overnight" publishing success, and Larry Flynt had money. He used this money in odd ways. He bought up other publications, including *Ohio Magazine* and the *Plains* (Georgia) *Gazette*. *Plains* was the hometown of the man who was then president of the United States. Then Flynt was shot on the steps of a courthouse where he was being prosecuted for publishing

pornography, and experienced a brief rebirth as a Baptist at the hands of the president's sister, with whom he professed great friendship.

Flynt was paralyzed below the waist and confined to a wheelchair after he was shot. In the mid-eighties, he was in the news with a crackpot campaign for the presidency, and obtained and released FBI tapes in the DeLorean cocaine case. (He cursed out the nine justices of the Supreme Court when they refused to allow him to represent himself, and was ordered jailed for contempt of court. Feisty guy.)

In 1980 Flynt was known as a man who wanted a publishing empire that stretched beyond the porno-sleaze of *Hustler* and its sister magazines, and a man who had some respect for the editorial independence of his non-porn publications. He had recently bought a pseudo-SF magazine (which specialized in SF film and ran a comic strip written by Forry Ackerman) along with its distributor. And he was rumored to be interested in doing a *Heavy Metal-type magazine*.

So, one afternoon later in my final week at *HM*, I wrote Flynt a brief letter. I said I'd heard he was interested in doing a *HM-type magazine*, and I said I could offer him almost the entire staff of the magazine. I gave him my Virginia address and phone number.

I heard nothing more about it for several months. Then one afternoon in the middle of November the phone rang. The female voice identified herself as *Mrs. Flynt's secretary*. My letter had somehow surfaced. Mrs. Flynt, who was running the magazines these days, was curious about me, and had decided she wanted to meet me. Would I be interested in coming out to Los Angeles so she could see me?

Mrs. Flynt was Althea Leisure Flynt (the former Althea Leisure, who had worked in the original *Hustler Club* and had probably done more for some of the customers than just serve them drinks, and who had married the boss early in *Hustler's* publishing career), and in the aftermath of Larry's shooting had taken over much of the day-to-day work in running his business. (Flynt, in constant pain from his legs, was taking large quantities of drugs that left him unable to concentrate on details. Later he had an operation that cut his nerves and ended the pain, but left him incontinent. I strongly suspect that he was no longer capable of sexual enjoyment either, which has its ironies.)

In short order, Mrs. Flynt's secretary had arranged for me to fly out on November 18th for an afternoon meeting. Mrs. Flynt took care of the tickets.

I was met at L.A. airport, after some delay, by a friendly man perhaps ten years younger than I who was driving a big black (but slightly scruffy) Lincoln Continental. He took me to a Beverly Hills hotel and checked me in, bought me lunch, and drove me to Century Plaza. Century Plaza is an office-tower complex. Flynt had the 38th floors of both towers. The editorial offices (and the Flynts') were in one tower, and the business and accounting offices were in the other.

When we arrived, only a few moments before my scheduled appointment, we discovered that Althea was not there yet. She was at a recording studio, it turned out, supervising a recording project. She was,



I was told, a good singer herself. She was described to me in tones almost of awe. In any case, we had some time to kill.

The man who'd picked me up had been hired by Paul Krassner, my old friend from his *Realist* days, who had briefly been editor of *Hustler* during one of Flynt's ambitious periods. Few of those hired by Paul were left, it seemed. He turned me over to one of the senior editors. (Gosh, I wish I could remember their names, but....) This guy was even younger—in his late twenties. He also wrote thrillers, and spent much of his time while I was in his office talking on the phone to his agent in New York. During one extended phone call I picked up one of his books and read a little of it. Trashy.

After an hour of thumb-twiddling in the senior editor's office, I was offered a tour of the Flynt Publishing offices.

Basically the floor had the elevators and a reception area in its center, and individual offices around its outer walls. The area between, roughly doughnut-shaped, was open and continuous, but sectioned off into areas, each area serving the production of one of the three or four “men's” magazines Flynt published. The women who worked as secretaries, clerks, etc., at desks scattered through this open area were all superficially attractive, but in a sleazoid, gum-chewing sort of way. Listening to their chatter I was struck by the fact that they, like the editorial staff, seemed to have Midwestern, working-class origins—unlike virtually everyone else I've ever encountered in publishing. No sophistication here!

The walls in this open area were decorated solely with artwork—or photographs—from the appropriate magazines, all blown up large and framed like artworks. Thus, one might glance at a glossy, slick, colorful photograph that sprawled across four or five feet of wall, only to realize that one was staring at a larger-than-life-size blowup of a female torso, legs invitingly spread, labia moist and open, clitoris pink, erect, and spotlighted brightly.

Other walls were used as layout boards for a current issue, full-sized pages, Xeroxed, blue-lined, or just roughly penciled, arranged in four or five tiers across ten feet of wall space. Everywhere you looked, there were photos of nude women displaying their genitals. I wondered what it was like to work in such surroundings every day—especially for the women.

By now Althea was more than two hours late. Apologies were made to me by her secretary, her secretary's secretary, and several editors, all of whom spoke of her in deferential tones. I was shown her office and Larry's office. Larry's was furnished in lavish period-French-style drapes and furniture and looked like a museum display. It was apparently rarely used, since Larry never came in.

I wandered through all this in an increasingly numbed state. Early on I'd tried to be friendly and conversational with the people to whom I'd been entrusted, but each of them had a faintly sleazy quality, a quality which made ongoing conversation difficult.

I'd gone out to see Mrs. Flynt with the hope of getting enough money to set up operations for my magazine in Northern Virginia, and I'd worked out a rough budget to present her. But each of the people I talked to seemed to assume that if anything came of this meeting it would mean my relocation to Los



Angeles and my establishment somehow in their present offices. As the day wore on, I began to regard this prospect with increasing distaste, if not actual horror.

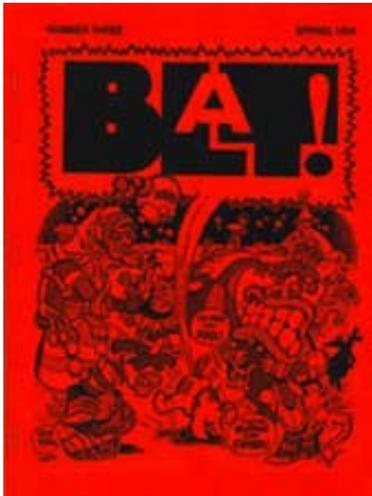
Then, finally, Althea was there and ready to see me. We went back to her corner office.

She breezed in with a cassette in her hand and said, "I want you all to hear this." She handed the cassette to one of her male flunkies and he put it into an expensive tape deck that was part of an equally expensive stereo system. "Listen to this!" Althea exclaimed, and we listened.

It was ostensibly a rock song, the melody line vaguely catchy but anonymously ordinary. The words were not ordinary. They described, in lascivious detail, an S&M encounter. I can recall only the refrain: "I knew he was mean when he reached for the Vaseline!"

"Is that you, singing?" one of the flunkies asked.

Althea preened herself, but admitted it was not. As soon as the song ended she demanded that it be played again. The tape was rewound and we sat through it again. As we did she'd comment on a particularly well-turned phrase in the lyrics. Everyone smirked knowingly at the transparent allusions and laughed at the sniggering parts. Althea did a little dance, working her hips in a bump-and-grind, to show her pleasure with the song. .



*Blat* #3 cover by Steve Stiles.  
Courtesy Robert Lichtman  
Collection.

It was only after we'd heard the song twice that she and I were introduced, and I could tell already that this had only a faint chance of becoming a working relationship. I had been unable to work up sufficient enthusiasm for the smarmy song, and was probably already registered in Althea's mind as a Dull Fellow at best.

She sat behind a large desk. On the wall behind and above her was a painting, a portrait of her. In the painting she was a beautiful woman, her expression quiet and dignified. I kept glancing from the painting to her and back to the painting. In life she lacked the painting's finer qualities. Her features were somehow coarser although still the same. I decided it had to do with her expressions, the way she looked when animated. She still looked like a B-girl; her expressions tended toward a sneer and I can no longer remember whether she actually chewed gum or just looked like she was. I wondered whether she was aware of the contrast between the painting and herself, playing off that contrast by having the painting positioned where it was, or whether she had the ego and the naiveté to believe it was a true likeness.

We talked for forty-five minutes. She told me she was thinking of doing a "rock and roll magazine." Did I like rock and roll? I said I did. She said it was her new enthusiasm and that she was really into it, producing records and everything. She hadn't, she said, known much about it until recently, but she was a fast study (something her editors had stressed) and learned fast. How about that song on the cassette, huh? I said it wasn't my type of rock. She asked me who I like. I named a half dozen groups. She'd heard of none of them, and waved them away as unimportant.

She was thinking of using some comics in her new magazine. What did I think of that? She described a magazine with a comic section stuck into it. She'd seen my rock issue (October 1980) of *HM*. Kinda like that stuff, she said, only better.

I tried to trot out my own ideas. She sidetracked me by asking me questions about *HM's* sales. I told her what facts I knew, based on the weekly distributor's reports Len had shown me. I knew mostly percentages rather than hard numbers. She stopped me, placed a call to someone in distribution and asked for all the numbers on *HM*. Minutes later the call was returned and she scribbled down some numbers on her pad and began telling *me* how *HM* was doing. Much of what she said contradicted what I'd said, leaving me wondering whether this was all a stunt, a device to impress me, based on previously accumulated data of doubtful accuracy, or whether in fact she had a direct line to the facts and Len had been leading me on. It was not until my 1997 conversation with John Workman that I realized that Althea had been jiving me, yanking my chain in order to assert her dominance over me. The claims she'd made to me were totally wrong.

It didn't matter. The effect was to Put Me In My Place. I tried to sell her on the enormous market possibilities for a properly promoted adult comic magazine ("Think of all the people who liked comics when they were kids, and who would buy an adult comic if they knew it existed!")—one of my beefs with *HM* being the lack of promotion for the magazine—but she cited *HM's* sales (declining, according to her) as if they were the ceiling, the most an adult comic mag could expect in sales. "If that's all Matty Simmons can sell," was about the way she put it.

It ended with my promise to send her a written proposal and my resume. I knew even as I was telling her I'd do it that I would not. It really didn't matter whether she liked my proposal or wanted to hire me, because I had no desire to work for her or her organization.

She must have reached the same conclusion, because instead of driving me back to my hotel, they pointed me out the front door to a cab stand, and washed their hands of me. I was on my own, free to get back to the airport the following morning by cab, at my own expense. Worse, when I got home I found I'd been billed for the needlessly expensive hotel room.

That evening I got in touch with Sandy Cohen (none of the other people I knew in LA. answered their phones), he took me out to dinner, and after we'd smoked a little I delivered myself of an impassioned tirade against the Flynts and their organization. I was surprised by my own vehemence as I summed up the surroundings and the people on the 38th floor of the Century Plaza. "They're all scum, Sandy," I said, my voice quivering with outrage I hadn't realized I had. "Dim people brutalized by the blatant, explicit pseudo-sexuality of their environment. Too dim to have any imagination, too dim to realize what trash they so proudly produce! And *Althea!* Amazingly unintelligent, but *canny*, in that way such people have. She knows how to manipulate people, and she's got everybody up there, man and woman alike, twisted around her little finger while she plays adolescent ego games! Boy, they sure left a bad taste in my mouth!" And Sandy nodded encouragingly and let me get it all off my chest until I'd calmed down and was able to hold a normal conversation with him once more.

## **Postscript**

The foregoing piece was written about ten years ago, probably for the never-published *Gambit 57*. Rereading it refreshed my memory of those events in late 1980—and my overpowering distaste for Mrs. Flynt. She's dead now, having committed suicide in her bathtub after learning she had AIDS.

It will do no harm to name the title I had selected for my proposed magazine. It was *Neon*. Chrysler is now using the name for a car. \*Sigh\*....

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\*Reprinted from *Blat!* No. 3, Spring 1994 with permission of Ted White, who has made minor and obvious revisions. Special thanks to Robert Lichtman for furnishing the cover scan and text for this

article.

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Q: "What targets would you consider fair game for a satirist today?"

A: "Assholes."

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 1/27/03, "In These Times"

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[We receive several hundred stories in submission to *Fantastic* every month, but it's a refreshing change to open an envelope and find, instead of a story, a 3,500-word explanation of why a story was not enclosed. —Ted White]

## Dear Ted\*

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Rich Brown

Feb. 4, 1983

Dear Ted:

I can only assume from the tone of your letter that it was written after my announcement in the Science Fiction Writers Group bulletin that I had decided to retire and would never write another science fiction story. The friendship we've shared over these past 20-plus years (not without occasional brickbats) gives you the right to ask what no other science fiction editor can—that I abandon this seemingly senseless retirement to write, at the very least, one more story for you.



rich brown (Dr. Gafia)

I know, as you say in this letter, that my name on the cover would boost the sales of *Fantastic* by at least 10,000 copies. I know *Fantastic* needs that boost. Above all, I know I owe it to you. Because you're my friend. Because you were best man at my wedding, published my first story, defended me too many times to count in the fan press, in the SFWG and its predecessor the SFW A. Because of all the times you've helped when I really needed it. Even because, in asking for my help, you did not allude to any of these things and easily could have.

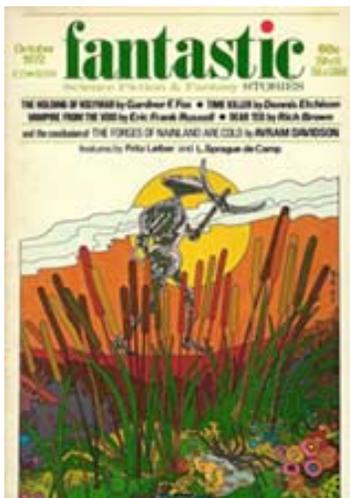
But I just can't do it. (I know you well, Ted; as your eyes hit this paragraph, the old paranoia flares up, and you say to yourself, "He means he *won't* do it." No, Ted. Can't. Absolutely *can not*. A matter completely beyond my control.)

I've had a dozen letters from editors since my announcement went out. Most of them saying "Don't do it, Rich—don't give up the field" and some of them, like your letter here, just asking me for one more contribution. Doubleday, Ace & Co. even offered to double my advance—to \$40,000 a book—if I'd just continue the Lord Lynn Jommar series. I have answered them all negatively. So it's not money, and you're not alone, Ted.

I haven't explained myself to anyone—just kept to the tone of the announcement that I've decided not to write anymore. I don't think I need explain myself to anyone except, possibly, you, because you're the only person with any right to expect an extra effort from me. If this "retirement" were just what it seemed to be, and not what it actually is, you'd have a story from me to plug that hole in *Fantastic* to read this morning instead of this rambling ill-constructed letter.

Let me emphasize one thing: As fantastic as the things I'm about to tell you are, they are absolutely true. And as true as they are, I know that if anyone tried to tell them to me, before they happened to me, I would not have believed them. So if it's easier for you to think that I've just deluded myself into *believing* they're true, feel free to do so, because I'd rather have you think I'm crazy than that I had betrayed you.

I have to start at the beginning. It was June or July or August—one of the summer months, I forget which—of '74. I was still just a fan then, half-heartedly working (when I had time) on an sf novel and a couple of sf stories that I thought had merit, but mostly involved with putting out a fanzine. I “kept my hand in” writing would-be sf more to attend writers group meetings than anything else. Based on the writers group which you founded and which, if memory serves, launched you, and Terry Carr, Lee Hoffman, Alex Panshin, Calvin Demmon and Dave Van Arnam on their/your writing careers, the idea was still that mutual criticism might launch any or all of us into just such a career. “Us” being myself, Arnie Katz, Steve Stiles and, of course, Warren Brick.



Anyway, on That Fateful Morning (whichever one it was), there was a large manila envelope in my mailbox. At first I thought it was just a thick fanzine. But it turned out to be a manuscript instead, 50 double-spaced pages of a thing called, fer CRYsake, “Priestess of Vishnu.” A little puzzled, I looked at the return address. I swear to God, it was from *Astonishing Stories*. A pre-World War II mag which had folded before I was born. And as plain as day on that manuscript, it said “By Rich Brown.”

Do you know how the average science-fantasy hero, confronted with the impossible, always gives himself the little “I’m-crazy-or-I’m-not” speech? Either I’m crazy, he says, or I’m not. If so, they’ll be along to lock me up soon; if not, then this is actually happening just the way it seems to be and I’d better react to it as if it were real.

I didn't give myself the speech. Because impossible things *just don't happen*. Except in science fiction stories. But I don't live in a science fiction story, I live in the real world, and impossible things don't happen in the real world.

So I just stood there with the sun coming down and the manuscript in my hand. Completely stunned. As far as I can recall, I thought, and said, nearly a dozen times, “Now what the hell is this?” I laughed a couple of times and nearly cried once.

But then I seemed to be able to piece it all together, to find a logical explanation: Warren Brick.. Our practical joker. (Remember how, at Phillycon, you and I and Warren and half a dozen other fans and pros got on the subway at about midnight, and as we got on Warren said in a loud, clear voice, so the other passengers could hear, “Hey, what do you think these people are going to do now that a bunch of queers have gotten on the train with them?”) That funny son-of-a-bitch. He was pulling a practical joke on me. Very elaborate, too: Complete with a pretty realistic looking “rejection” slip from *Astonishing*.

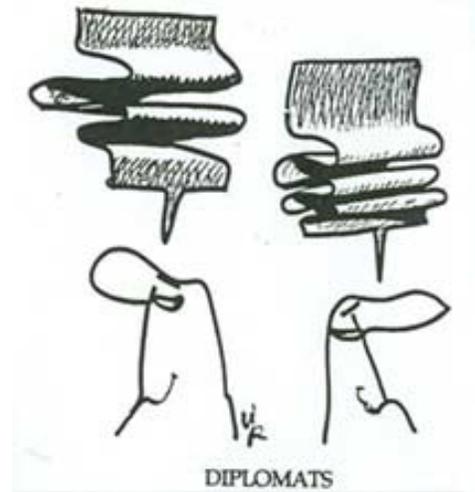
I like practical jokes. Even if they're pulled on me. And to show Warren that there were no hard feelings, I decided, I'd “read” the thing at the next writers meeting, then he could tell everybody that he'd actually written it and explain the joke. We'd all have a good laugh.

At the writers meeting, Warren—as much as everyone else—was unsparing in his praise for “Priestess of Vishnu.” You know Warren's three expressions: Smiling, deadpan and serious. Warren was serious. More important, as I started to read the story to those assembled, I realized—as talented as Warren was and is—that he couldn't have written it. It was too good. Despite that gawd-awful title. A little pulpy, it was a fantasy-love story, tastefully done in the mode of *Green Mansions*. The writing was smooth, as poetic as good Zelazny, the characters were vivid and very believable and the story-line was strong if a bit off-trail. The opinion of the group was unanimous: If I couldn't sell that story (“but give it a new title, Rich”), there was something wrong with science fiction.

I had no intention of submitting it, of course, because despite what it said on the manuscript, I had not written it. But since I couldn't explain it logically to any of the members of the group, I didn't try. I just said I thought it still needed a little work, and I went home that night a little crazy, a little angry, a little confused.

Two days later another manila envelope showed up with another story “by Rich Brown”—but with two important differences. This one was bounced by *Astounding Stories* but had a personal note of rejection by John W. Campbell (that's right, no “p”) in which he acknowledged that it was a “beautiful story” but because it “contained a number of errors of science fact” it was not *Astounding's* kind of story. The other difference was that it was a shorter story and had been sent by first class mail, rather than “book rate”—in other words, it had a postmark. Ted, the postmark was July 12, 1940!

So *then* I gave myself the science-fantasy hero's speech: Either I have flipped out, or this is happening, etc., &c. But still I did nothing.



Well, actually, I did do one thing: I checked with the Post Office to see if there was any way to fake that postmark. A postal clerk assured me that there was no way it could be done, and when I showed him the postmark on the manila envelope and told him I'd just received delivery, he made a crack about how poor mail delivery service is in New York. Har-Dee-Har-Har.

A week passed before I received another short story. Then nearly a month went by before, plopp, a novelette arrived. A few days later, another short story.

A number of factors influenced my decision to start sending the stories out. The most altruistic, I guess, was that they *were* damned good stories, stories which deserved to be printed and read. To paraphrase Burbee, they Had Something To Say—and they said it well. If I just sat on them, sf would be deprived of some of the best stories ever written in the genre.

The least altruistic reason involved a number of realizations I made about myself. You see, I always wanted to be an author. I wrote a story, in first or second grade, about a boy in the first or second grade who wrote a story about a boy in the first or second grade who went on to become an author—that was the whole plot of the story. I was John the Baptist, prophesying my own forthcoming. I wrote from that time onward with the idea that, eventually, I would be an author.

The trouble is, Ted, I never wrote because I wanted to create; I wrote because I wanted to be an author. More particularly, as I grew up, a science fiction author. In other words, my drive was not the drive of an artist but of an egoist. I wanted the acclaim of my fellow men for having created, but I did not want to create.

It seemed as if my most devoutly hoped-for wish, in some manner too mystifying for my comprehension, had been granted. Do you look a gift horse in the mouth?

“Priestess” became “Titan's Promise”—that's right, the very first thing I ever sold you. When I got that first check I was as elated as if I had written it myself. In the week that followed, during my spare time, I didn't have time to read the manuscripts that came in, either of them, because I was retyping a

novelette to send to Ed Ferman. He bounced it, but you took it. I *did* sell my third story to Ed, however.

To begin with, I was mightily frightened on two accounts. The first was that I couldn't quite discard the "prankster" theory. If not Warren, then someone else. Since it was obvious that anyone with this writing talent would not be sending their stories to me under my by-line, but instead would be submitting them for professional publication, it occurred to me that, whoever this jokester was, he might be recopying old sf stories by someone I'd never read. If true, someone would surely notice—and I'd be branded as a plagiarist. The second fear was that someone would surely notice what I thought was an obvious discrepancy—the fact that, while I'd written a few enjoyable articles and an occasional parody that won me praise as a fan, I had never written anything anywhere near as good.

But as you well know, Ted, no one ever accused me of being a plagiarist. That theory has long since been scratched.

I was puzzled, at first, as to why my second fear never actualized itself. The answer, I've decided, is that I never wrote sf for the fanzines, and while I surprised a few people by being good at it, it was not enough of a surprise to arouse any suspicion. It's certainly easier to believe that I "found my medium" in sf than it is to believe in some utterly impossible, space-time warp, perhaps to some alternate universe, which delivers up magnificent manuscripts to my door.

Once I started selling regularly, I quit my job. Inside of six months I sold a story to every magazine I'd ever hoped to sell a story to, including a number of slick sales to mags like *Playboy* and *Knight*. Ed kept after me to plug holes in *F&SF*, you filled an entire issue of *Amazing* with my stories (under several pseudonyms) and had enough left over to print in *Fantastic* and *Stellar*, Terry Carr was after me to do stories for *Universe*. Doubleday wanted me to do an anthology.

I was invited to join the Science Fiction Writers of America and the committee of the next World SF Convention was after me to take part in a panel discussion. When I went to fan-club meetings, I was no longer Rich Brown, the fan who put out a fairly good fanzine, but Rich Brown, the fan-turned-pro who was doing some awfully exciting stuff. Femmefans offered to sit in my lap. Among other things.

It was the sort of notice, acceptance, dreamed-about self-image that I had always wanted. It was an ego trip come true.

The mss. came in steadily. I'd say about 25 per cent just had to be retyped. The rest required editing: Sometimes very minor, occasionally major, and infrequently a complete restructuring. Some of the latter never sold: Even before the coming of the great manuscripts from the sky, I'd been a fairly good editor, but a ghost writer I'm not. Still, for the sake of my own ego, I have to maintain that a small fraction of the creativity that has appeared under my by-line in the past ten years has actually been mine.

For a while I wondered if perhaps all professional writers had a pipeline of stories coming in from the past. I think I preferred to think that it was so; it helped me cover over the few regrets I had about doing what I was doing. But later, at an SFWA gathering, I saw Harlan Ellison remove himself to the back of the room to knock off a 20-page original story because Tom Purdom, of Paperback Library, as bugging him about finishing up one more for an anthology that was overdue. That story won Harlan a Hugo and a nomination for a Nebula.

I guess that revelation pretty well explains my one-sided feud with Harlan, doesn't it? As hard as it is for me to admit to, even now, to anyone else, the fact is pretty obvious to me that all the enmity and disdain I've poured into professional and fannish print against him is because he actually was the creative person I had to pretend to be. Poor Harlan! Behind those half-hearted replies he's made, I'm

sure there's a hurt soul: In his heart of hearts, he knows we should be brothers, not enemies. But I can't claim that brotherhood: It belongs to another me, an alter ego, a self from some other dimensionality. His dimensions are too big for the real me, and realizing that, I hate myself. Hating myself only made me hate Harlan more.

I really do have to apologize to Harlan. Soon, too. But I'm digressing, I see.



In those ten years, I only had one real scare: For three months my mailbox was empty. That was in '76-77. There were no manuscripts coming in for editing or retyping and Doubleday was after me for two more original stories for the anthology I'd contracted to do for them. Worse, I had no immediate money coming in and my rent was overdue. Colleen and the kid and I were just barely hanging on with the money she was making; I'd splurged my last big check to attend a regional sf convention (at which, as I recall, I took the opportunity to knock Harlan's writing ability). But I kept my head about me and claimed that I was suffering from writer's block. I got back a comforting note of understanding.

The package that finally arrived contained not only a book-length work but enough short stories to fill a good-sized anthology. I met my commitments, and the book, *Death Shall Have No Dominion*, won me my first Nebula and Hugo, as well as mainstream critical acclaim.

I don't have to go on and on and on about all these kudos; you know the rest, and so does anyone who calls himself an sf fan. "My" stories, if anything, got better and better, and the awards and invitations to speak more prestigious.

Ah, I know you, Ted White, know just what you're thinking: With all this undeserved acclaim behind me, I have finally seen how hollow it all is. At last, I see the error of my ways, and I have decided not to continue this sham. However, just one story will help *Fantastic* over that hump, so if I could just—

No, Ted. I can't. Not won't; can't.

I have not lived with these fantastic events for ten years without developing some theories. The main one is science-fictional, and for all I know is riddled with inaccuracies. But it does tie the ends together, which is necessary for my sanity. It goes like this:

Somewhere, in some alternate universe in which *Astounding's* late editor spelled his name without a "p," a person named Rich Brown lives at the same address that I live at in this universe. (Ever wonder, with all my success, why I never moved from here? Now you know.) He also lives 30 years behind me; my rough estimate is that his 1940 is my 1970. By now, he's reached 1954. Unlike me, he *is* an artist, and a devoted one. For about ten years now, he's been writing magnificent science fiction which I sell in my timeline because he's too far ahead of his time in his, but he keeps on. My God, what devotion! He must hold himself together with a part-time job (although I hope, I fervently hope, that he's perhaps independently wealthy) because his output, besides being magnificent, is fantastic. Every week or few days he trudges off to the mailbox and drops in his latest new manuscript.

Something happens to that manuscript. I don't know what or where or how, but something happens to it. Somehow, like an amoeba, on the way back from whatever editor happens to be rejecting it, it splits in two—and one of the pair gets into our universe, gets delivered to me. (I can't imagine him continuing

for long if he never received a manuscript back in the mail; I therefore assume that he *must* get them returned.)

He just keeps on writing, striving to create something beautiful, not knowing how fantastically successful he is at what he's striving for because he's never had recognition. (Okay. An occasional “keep it up” on a rejection slip. That much recognition.) Pouring his heart and guts into everything he does, controlling it all with a talent that cannot be denied. Ten years of rejection are as nothing to the man; the artist within him will never—I repeat that, emphasize it, *never*—give in to defeat. It is just not in the animal.

Those are the dynamics in play, as I've come to believe in them. Of course, I could be all wet, you understand: It all might just be an Act of God. Or the leprechauns. Or the Good Fairy. Or all or none of the above. I've just tried to invest some science-fiction-type logic to it all.

Something that I never expected, but should have, really, happened about four months ago. I received a letter-sized envelope from what I assumed to be a romance-type publication. Chortling to myself, I opened it, half expected an invitation to write a true confession.

It was from Romances Publications, however, the publishers of *Planet Stories*. They've accepted “Priestess of Vishnu” and have offered to publish “anything—and we mean *anything*—you care to send to us, even if it's only half as good as this.” Of course, you and I, Ted, know it'll be even better. That letter, the first of many similar letters that were to follow, also contained a check, dated 1954, for \$85.

I hope that's Good Money on the Other Side. If it isn't, I know he'll be getting the kind of money his artistry and devotion deserve pretty soon. Remember, I've “lived” his success over here, and it has been a privilege. I somehow sense that he is a much better person than I am; I just know he won't abuse his position as I did.

But you can see why I can't—not “won't”—give you another Rich Brown story. At least not the kind you really want, the kind *he* writes.

As for myself, while I took it bitterly at first, I am now resigned to the inevitable. I've been offered an editorial position at Random House, handling their sf line. I still have royalties coming in from the books and stories that are already in print; and the editorial side of things is were my own *real* talents lie.

Frankly, Ted, I haven't even got a suggestion as to how you can fill that 3,500-word hole in *Fantastic*. It disturbs me, to be sure, because you were counting on me to come through for you, but it doesn't disturb me a great deal. You're an excellent magazine editor, the best science fiction has. And that's not a left-handed compliment, either (even though you're the only magazine editor we have left), if you think about it—the fact that you've kept three mags going, when all those around you have floundered, is testament to your ability and ingenuity.

I'm sure you'll think of something.

Best Wishes,

—Rich Brown

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\*Reprinted from *Fantastic*, October 1972 with the permission of Rich Brown. Special thanks to Curt Phillips for supplying the text of this story plus the *Fantastic* cover scan and interior artwork.

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We are human only to the extent that our ideas remain humane.

—Kurt Vonnegut, quoting Kilgore Trout, *Breakfast of Champions*

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

## An Alien View of History\*

Artwork recycled Harry Bell

By Peter Weston

The more I look at recent history, the more convinced I am that someone, or something, has been pulling the strings. Time-travellers, or aliens from another star? Let's go with the most likely explanation—we're in quarantine (which explains the Fermi Paradox) and being manipulated by an advanced interstellar civilisation.

Not exactly a new idea, I know. Some science fiction writers have come amazingly close to the truth, but then, that's a risk the aliens took when they created science fiction as one of their key tools for changing the world. Yes, that's right, Hugo Gernsback was an alien front man!

I don't know if the alien themselves live among us, or whether they "imprint" suitable humans with the concepts they want to put across. But in the latter case, the thought of "scientifiction" must have been implanted in Gernsback's brain so strongly that clearly he could think of nothing else until the day he died, 30+ years later. Why? Because the aliens *need* science fiction; it has already taken us a long way forward, and it is still the most convenient mechanism through which we can be drip-fed with the ideas they want us to take up.

But these aliens play rough! Jack Finney put it well:

"The twentieth century, Si, should have been the best, the happiest, the human race ever knew. We were on our way in those first early years! And then the great change occurred. Something that sent us down another path. Into a war nobody needed."

That's a quote from *From Time to Time*, where Simon Morley's mentor, Rube Prien, says the Great War was an unwanted war, a foolish war that could so easily have been averted, and explains the events that caused the outbreak of hostilities. It's certainly strange that at this and every other turning-point of recent history, things seem to have turned out in the worst possible way. So I think the origins of World War I go back much further than 1914, back into the previous century, caused by alien interventions into human affairs.

Because I believe we are in very much the situation described by Iain Banks in his "Culture" novels, and you'll recall his explanation for the "Contact" Section, in *Player of Games*:

"Contact uses individuals... it puts people into younger societies who have a dramatic and decisive effect on the fates of entire meta-civilisations"

Occasionally they get it wrong, as in *Look to Windward* where interference by the Culture has accidentally set off a major war. In the book they are suitably apologetic, but I think Iain was fudging the issue. In reality—in our world—the aliens know there's nothing like a good war to speed-up progress. And war is what they have been giving us for the last two hundred years!



Peter Weston in Turkey in 2006.

The most obvious intervention in human history? Undoubtedly it was with Napoleon. Look at the evidence. He was a “little man’ who came from nowhere, yet possessed such incredible charisma that no-one could stand in his way. He climbed to power with dizzying speed, completely wrecked the existing order in Europe, and then conveniently and mysteriously “died” soon after his job was done.

‘Ah’, you may say, “but Napoleon lost at Waterloo.’ Of course he did! Look at the reports from the battlefield. Why do you think the Emperor experienced “unnatural torpor” (in the words of historian Andrew Roberts) on that crucial Saturday morning, 17 June 1815, and then split his forces by sending Marshall Grouchy off with 33,000 troops on a wild-goose chase, just when he needed them the most? Because he knew he *had* to lose!

Who knows how the aliens calculate these things, but my guess is that somewhere around A.D.1600 they chose Britain as their best bet, and contrived to start off the Age of Science and the Industrial Revolution. Hard to say for sure, but I suspect Isaac Newton was the agent responsible. On this reckoning, two hundred years later Napoleon’s role was to act as a catalyst, to break up the old political structures of Europe, and to pressure Britain (through nearly 20 years of continuous warfare) into accelerating its industrial and social development. Maybe for a while they might even have thought France would amount to something, but realised it was too backward, too much of a peasant economy. So in the end they stayed with Britain, and Waterloo was a set-up. The poor French never had a chance!



The United States is part of this picture. As the historian Bernard Bailyn put it, “one had to be a fool or fanatic in early January 1776 to advocate American independence”. Yet somehow, within a matter of months, the mood changed and revolution was declared. Why did they get so carried away with all that stuff about “liberty’ and “freedom,’ when the American colonists were already the most free and most liberated people in the world? One character in particular is particularly suspicious, and that is another “little man’, Thomas Paine. As Bill Bryson says, “he was as unlikely a figure to change the course of history as you could imagine.” In Britain he was an unwashed, tumbledown drunk, a failure at every trade he had attempted, until he took ship to the colonies. He got off the boat a raging, passionate advocate of revolution, whose eloquence influenced Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence. I think the aliens were starting another strand, planting some new ideas about government into an isolated society and creating a back-up to their long-term plans in Europe.

(You’ll notice that our friend Napoleon, quite uncharacteristically, sold-off the Louisiana territories to President Jefferson for a knockdown price, thus giving the U.S. a big push on its way to world power status. Another part of the Plan, perhaps, to create another powerful, industrialised society which could give some competition to Great Britain).

But by the late-19th century Britain was too strong; it had no rival. It was time to stir the pot again, this time with Chancellor Bismarck of Germany. His role was absolutely pivotal in turning the cultured North German states into the militarised German Empire, in seizing Alsace-Lorraine and igniting a bitter enmity with France, and most of all by providing thoroughly bad career guidance to the future Emperor, Wilhelm II.

Actually, I think the aliens might have had to tinker with this one a bit more obviously than usual.

Wilhelm's father, the Emperor Frederick, was friendly with Britain—Queen Victoria was his grandmother—and showed alarming signs of wanting to introduce parliamentary democracy. So, very conveniently, he suddenly contracted throat cancer and died early. And young Wilhelm was born with a withered left arm, giving him all sorts of interesting complexes which could be triggered by our alien tormentors when the time was right—in 1914.

So that's four major points of interference leading up to the Great War; Newton, Paine, Napoleon and Bismarck, but it didn't stop there. Oh no! We made a lot of progress during those four bloody years, with major technological advances and massive social changes, the collapse of the European empires and the emancipation of women. But to keep up the pressure, another charismatic 'little man'—Lenin—was planted at just the right place, at just the right time to produce the Russian Revolution, another highly 'unlikely' event. And then came the most drastic intervention of all with the agent we know as Adolf Hitler who, just like Napoleon, could safely be relied upon to lose in the end after having demolished the existing order.



So, this leaves us with the Big Question: Why? For what reason would an advanced race wish to put humanity through the torments of the last few two centuries, during which time so many millions have died? Could we at the mercy of a bunch of interstellar sadists, who manipulate our lives as a vicious form of *entertainment*? I don't think so. Rather, I think the true picture is more like the scenario explained by "Robert Randall" (Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett) in their 1957 novel, *The Dawning Light*. Here it is Earthmen who have destabilised a planetary culture, and when asked why, they reply:

"We had conquered the stars. And ourselves. But we lacked friends. And we lacked conflict. Within a few thousand years we would stagnate and—eventually—die out. We found you. We needed you—and you needed us. But unless your people developed on their own they would have been so overwhelmed by us that we could never be equals. So we had to smash your culture—force you to learn to build anew".

I said earlier that war accelerates progress, but that doesn't just mean technology, although this has developed at an incredible pace in the last fifty years, with revolutionary developments in our understanding of the universe. Look also at the political and social changes since, say, 1900. The empires have gone, and so has the repressive power of religion. Gone, too is the very idea that one people should rule others, that any one race (or sex!) is superior. Hopefully, large parts of the world have overdosed on war, so that the very idea of committing ground troops in more than the smallest numbers can bring down governments, and major international conflict is pretty much unthinkable.

Autocracy and totalitarianism is discredited, democracy is in the ascendant. There are still pest-holes and trouble-spots but we are learning how to deal with them, groping our way towards an understanding that no nation can be allowed to threaten others, or even to terrorise its own people. We have population pressures, but we are trying to contain them. We understand the fragility of the ecosphere and we may—just—gain sufficient knowledge in time to save it.

I wonder if, left alone, most planetary cultures never get this far? Maybe it's hard to start a self-sustaining industrial society. Without intervention by the Contact Section would Earth have stumbled on for endless centuries of wars and conquest, famine and epidemic, and all the time breeding uncontrollably until resources were exhausted and the window of opportunity forever lost? The

Twentieth Century was bad enough, but maybe our alien benefactors know that the alternative would ultimately have been far worse.

Science fiction? It's a vital tool to show us the way forward, to warn about the pitfalls and illustrate the promise the future holds. And, of course, ultimately to prepare us for Contact. That's my theory, anyway. But we're not there yet. Watch out for "little men" with charisma; they can be dangerous!

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\*Expanded & revised from an article which originally appeared in the "Helicon-2' *Programme Book*, 2002.

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"You aren't what we would call real sociable," one trooper said.

"How come you got a car with four doors?"

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Deadeye Dick*

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## Living the Legend\*

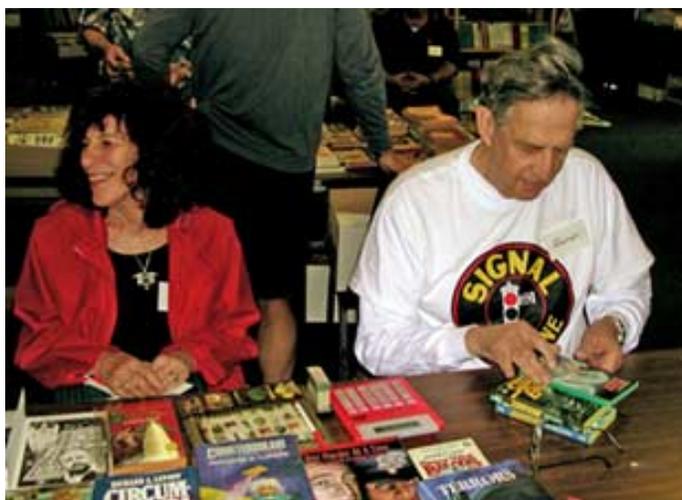
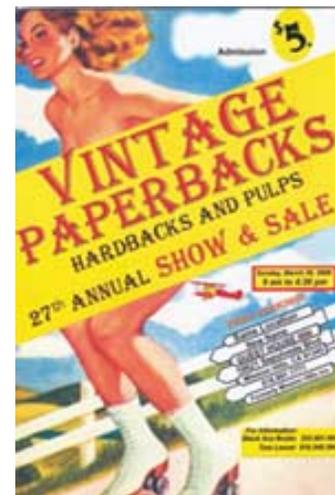
By Earl Kemp

In my redundant solitude, when I am just by myself alone...only me...I realize anew how difficult it has been all along...an alien from an unknown world adrift among the Earthlings, terrified of being discovered as a fraud at any moment. A life of pretense and unreality.

My son Terry told me, "You were Peter Pan, adventuring through Neverland...and we got to watch and participate."

I never really knew who I was, when I was, only much later after I was or had been. At times I'm still confused about which me is I. Fortunately the better me fit nicely and I can slip into any of them without the slightest provocation.

One of my favorite mes is the I I become for the annual Mission Hills Paperback Show and Sale, or LAPB for short, and I really like being there with that me whenever he shows up. And, this time as a special treat, I asked my son Terry to come to the show with me, and to help with the tedious driving and to take pictures to use with this article. Because he knew a number of the people personally who would be involved with the show, he readily agreed to the long weekend driving back and forth from Arizona to Los Angeles, and immersing himself in some old and new friends.



Pat and Richard Lupoff.  
Photo by Earl Kemp.



Lynn McGuire, daughter of the great  
cover artist Robert McGuire.  
Photo by Earl Kemp.

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When we arrived at the host hotel the first person I met was Art Scott, who agreed to take extra photographs for this article. I've now known Art for several years and he has been a constant source of assistance and really good pictures, many of which have appeared in previous issues of *eI*.



Frederik Pohl and Earl Kemp.  
Photo by Earl Terry Kemp.

The March 26th show, the 27th annual issue of the event, attracts people from as far away as the UK, regularly, to enjoy the festivities and...hopefully...wind up with at least one very sought after, very rare vintage paperback book. In addition to the public that attends this event, there are booksellers and other exhibitors from all over the US, as well as a large number of invited guests who are there for the purpose of signing those books for the collectors who, in some cases, wait hours in long lines just to get a signature of...well, just think of your favorite writer, or artist, or editor, or....

The show itself takes place in three large display rooms at the guest hotel. Scattered among the exhibitors with table after table of rare books, magazines, original cover paintings, and various other related items are tables where the guest signers sit to sign books for all comers. This is always on a Sunday from roughly 9 am until 2 pm, by which time everyone involved with the event is beginning to wilt a little from the frantic pace of whatever has been unfolding before them.

Some of the people who attend the show arrive in Los Angeles days before it happens, prowling a circuit of used book stores looking for that elusive book...that one last title to complete the run...to finish out the collection...to put an end to the endless search for more and more very special paperbacks.



Karen Anderson.  
Photo by Earl Terry Kemp.

The show is sponsored by Thomas Lesser and Rose Idlet, of Black Ace Books, no stranger to science fiction fans. On Saturday evening, at Lesser's house there is a reception for some of the out-of-town booksellers and signers who get the rare tour of a house filled with paperback treasures and original cover paintings beyond the wildest imagination of the most adept hack porno writer. The conversations, the networking, the oneupsmanship is very exhilarating.

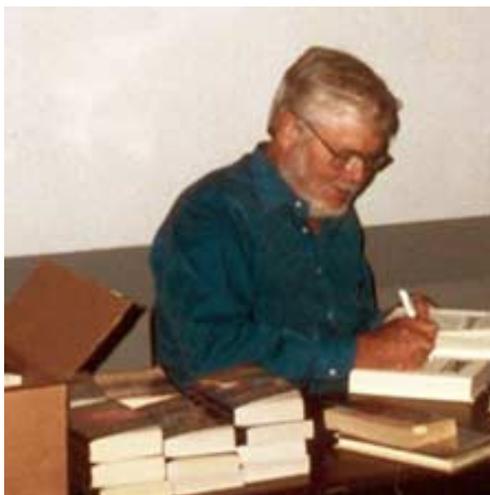


Terry O'Neil, a *Weird Tales* specialist.  
Photo by Earl Terry Kemp.



Ann Bannon and Earl Kemp.  
Photos by Earl Terry Kemp.

The interplay between the booksellers and the bookmakers is wonderful to watch and to participate in because the group is so homogenized. It's exactly like attending a favored, small science fiction convention where you get to spend time with everyone there that you want to, growing even closer together because of that. It is not at all unusual to see lunch or dinner tables in nearby restaurants with as many as a dozen of the show participants seated together. This especially for Saturday and Sunday nights.



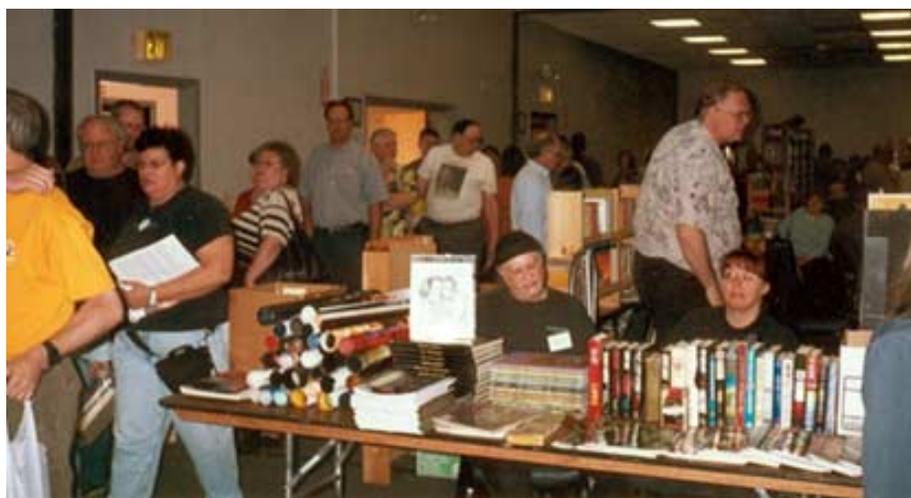
Gregory Benford signing books for his fans.



Mel Gilden and David Gerrold.  
Photo by Earl Terry Kemp.

The host hotel itself furnishes a lavish breakfast buffet. This year they had something new, a waffle-making machine. Besides that there are a variety of sweet and bread rolls with all the spreadings. Toasting machines of different types, cereals, orange juice, coffee, tea, milk...I can't remember all of the things available.

Within easy walking distance of the hotel, in Mission Hills, are a variety of eating places, delis, bars, and anything else you can think of.



The line waiting to meet Gregory Benford.  
Photo by Earl Terry Kemp.

Some of the signers at this year's show were: Karen Anderson, Ann Bannon, Gregory Benford, A.I. Bezzerides, Gary Brandner, Stuart Byrne, Louis Charbonneau, Arthur Byron Cover, Denis Etchison, Joanne Fluke, Laura Freas, Bill George, David Gerrold, Mel Gilden, Donald Glut, Barbara Hambly, Jim Harmon, George Clayton Johnson, [little old me], Rochelle Krich, Michael Kurland, Mike Lester, Laura Levine, Richard Lupoff, William F. Nolan, Charles Nuetzel, Zoe Ohl, Frederik Pohl, Frank Thomas, and Harry Turtledove.



Gary Lovisi, publisher of *Paperback Parade*, Maurice Flannagan, publisher of Zardo Books, UK, and Bruce Taylor, former owner of San Francisco Mystery Bookstore.

Photo by Art Scott.

Regular signers, absent this year because of illness and greatly missed, were: Robert Bonfils, Ray

Bradbury, and Forrest J Ackerman, among others.

For me, this year's highlight was when I met Allan MacDonell, ex-editor of *Hustler* and author of *Prisoner of X...* a highlight that deserves its own special handling elsewhere. Needless to say, he was a very unexpected delight and signed a number of copies of his just-published book while he visited the show with his publisher, Adam Parfrey of Feral House.



Ray Torrence, Terry Stroud, Paul Willis, and Bruce Brenner [www.vintagepbks.com/](http://www.vintagepbks.com/).

Photo by Art Scott.

think by magically entering upon the mythical bubble they imagine surrounding me, they can somehow acquire some of whatever it was they think I had some of half a century before. I love them.

I give it to them. I sign their books...some titles that I haven't seen myself in decades, things I don't even have copies of...books, photographs, fanzines, articles in other people's fanzines...anything I once ever had any part of producing. I pose for photographs with them. I talk and joke with them as time allows. I have the feeling they go away from me reluctantly and with warmth and pleasure as if their time had been well spent and that they will remember the brief moment...the half dozen words...for a very long time if not forever.

The ultimate place for an egohog....

Thank you, friends, one and all.

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\*This is for Jacques Hamon <http://www.noosfere.org/showcase/> . Special thanks to Earl Terry Kemp and Art Scott for taking photos for this article.

My biggest disappointment was that Robert Speray, my guide through sleazebookland, was unable to attend this year's show.

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I always allow myself to feel very special during this show, a sort of once-a-year day. *Hey, me, are I doing okay?* Most of the people I see, either participating in the show or just attending it for personal reasons, let me think they think I'm special too. They treat me with a respect I haven't been accustomed to in decades. They lean in closely and listen intently on my every word, and appear to want to hear even more.

Now and then one of them will touch me slightly, as if they aren't sure they're even doing it and if I'm really there or not. I receive the message that they



Ron Blum of Kayo Books San Francisco and the fabulous Lynn Munroe, both of whom are well known to the science fiction crowd.

Photo by Art Scott.

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My soul knows my meat is doing bad things, and is embarrassed. But my meat just keeps right on doing bad, dumb things.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Bluebeard*

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# The Golden Age of the Dirty Book\*

By Harvey Hornwood

Andrew Shaw. Don Elliott. J. X. Williams. Don Holliday. Clyde Allison. Tony Calvano. John Dexter.



Harvey Hornwood in 1965.

If these names ring a bell, you're probably of an age to recall the 1960s, and you probably have (or once had) a certain interest in—to put it elegantly—erotic literature. For in addition to being the decade of the hippie, social protest, and LSD, the sixties were also the golden age of the dirty book.

Sex novels—books written primarily for purposes of titillation, as opposed to “legitimate” novels which contained risqué passages—had been around before, but they were either “underground” publications or were extremely cautious and highly euphemistic in their treatment of sex. (A standard device in these books was to turn a sex act into a metaphor and describe the metaphor, e.g., “She remembered when she was a little girl eating an ice-cream cone. How she loved to lick it all over, run her tongue across the top, then open her mouth and...” etc.). But in the sixties things opened up, and porno paperbacks poured out in abundance. Among the earliest and most numerous of these were a series of small, luridly covered volumes originally called Nightstand Books, and later by other

names as well—Midnight Readers, Ember Books, Pleasure Books, etc.

All these books were published by Corinth Publications, a company which grew out of several smaller outfits and which later became Greenleaf Classics, an offshoot of which still exists. Started by an ex-science fiction editor named William Hamling, the line actually began in late 1959, and in a few years was putting out about sixteen books a month. Almost all these volumes had brief two-word, or at most three-word, titles, the vast majority of which contained one of a short list of buzzwords: “Lust,” “Sin,” “Sex,” “Passion,” or “Flesh.” And almost all of them were signed by one of a group of seven or eight writers, including those listed at the beginning of this article.

These books were startling for their time—even though up until the mid-sixties, when the Supreme Court opened the way for further freedom in publishing, and Corinth underwent a number of changes, they were still what we would now call soft-core. Four-letter words were banned; standard euphemisms such as “lance,” “staff,” or “moist womanhood” were still used to indicate sexual organs—and even those most gingerly; and the sex was much less graphic than it would later become. Still, the books did describe sexual acts, copiously and with a relative lack of inhibition. The men were randy and tireless, the women generally eager if not wanton, or, if innocent virgins, soon joyously introduced to the pleasures of the flesh. The books were about sex, and everybody enjoyed it.

Well—not always. There was another side to the Corinth books, as well as those of other companies. Many of them had a sadistic bent—the sadism almost exclusively directed toward the female characters. Those books featured scenes of rape, bondage, degradation, and torture. Today, of course, this type of erotic writing is in disrepute, even among many who defend pornography in general; but at the time it seemed to be accepted as just another form of titillation. Certainly it sold as well as, if not better than, the straight stuff. And it was written as well or as badly, depending on the writer and his talent.



These writers seemed to be incredibly prolific, turning out an average of two or more books every month. And a few of them actually did. But some of the names that appeared on the books were “house names,” pseudonyms not assigned to any particular author, but used for a variety of different writers. And even these were not always consistent. In addition, Corinth could be careless, sometimes assigning one writer's book to the pseudonym of another. Occasionally, one name would appear on the cover, and another on the title page! To add to the confusion, it was not unknown for two or more writers to collaborate on the same book. One writer has told the story of how he and two others wrote a novel during a lengthy poker game, each of them in turn dropping out to dash off a chapter, then handing over to the next.

Even so, there is enough consistency in the products of a few of these pseudonyms to show that they did belong, mainly if not exclusively, to one author—at least up to the middle of the decade, when some of the early writers quit, and their pseudonyms were assigned to others or used as “house names.” In at least one case, that of “Tony Calvano,” the same writer appears to have been at work into the seventies. Unfortunately, Calvano's work is not the best; his writing is awkward and irritatingly mannered, and the tone of the sex in his books is often sleazy and unattractive—he seems actually to feel that sex is dirty, that carnal appetites—especially in women—are degrading, and that anything other than conventional missionary-position sex is truly perverse.

In fact, there's no denying that a great percentage of the Corinth output, in common with most pornography of the time and since, is poorly done. Bad writing, awful dialogue, porous or nonexistent plots, inconsistent characters—all abound. Not to mention a perhaps more perplexing lack of true erotic feeling—or the ability to communicate it—despite the prevalence of sex. But what is truly surprising is the fact that a certain amount of this material—a small but definite amount—is of far better quality than the genre, its hasty composition, and its generally low standards would lead one to expect. If one could wade through enough sludge, one would find the occasional treasure: good, entertaining prose, dialogue that sounded real, involving stories, rounded characters—even, sometimes, good sex.

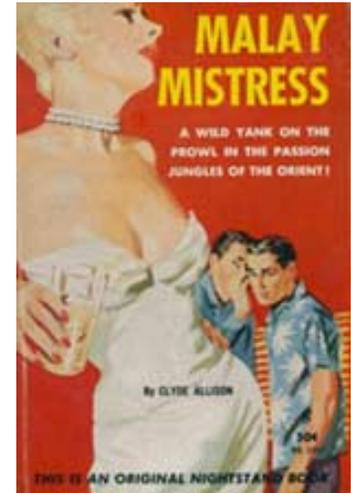
As this would indicate, not all the authors who scratched out a living writing sex books were hacks. A number of them had real talent, and some of those have subsequently become successful and famous. Among the writers who in their leaner days are known to have written for Corinth and/or other sex publishers are such figures as the science-fiction writers Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, and Marian Zimmer Bradley; mystery/crime writers Donald E. Westlake and Lawrence Sanders; and the successful movie and television writer Hal Dresner.

Though some of these people have been more or less definitely connected with the pseudonyms they supposedly used, this is a chancy and misleading undertaking, due to a paucity of known facts, the unreliability of some of the authors, and the aforementioned inconsistencies. The most we can say with certainty is that some of the pseudonyms did belong more or less consistently to one person, and that, while such hastily produced and copious work is necessarily uneven, a few of them show a recognizably higher quality than most. Of these, the most interesting, in my opinion, are “Andrew Shaw,” “Clyde Allison,” and to some extent “Don Holliday.”

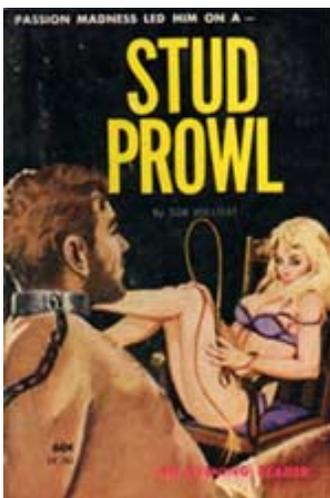
“Clyde Allison” is a storyteller. His protagonists are most often amoral con men or schemers who narrate their own first-person tales in a cynical, entertaining, often funny style, and who generally end up paying for their sins, either in prison or in more subtle ways. Though his heroes are always thinking

about sex, they seem more genuinely interested in it than does their creator, who dutifully drags in his sex scenes, sometimes by main force, but who is obviously more interested in getting on with his story. When Allison is at his best, the reader doesn't mind; the sharp, deft prose and entertaining plots carry him happily along.

An example of Allison in good form is *Malay Mistress* (1961), a swift and absorbing tale of an American oil prospector in Borneo who gets involved with local smugglers and an exotic woman looking for hidden diamonds. Rounded characters and an amusing style make this a good read; but though there's lots of sex, the author's heart, as usual, is not really in it. Even less sexy, but still one of my favorites, is *Lust Doll* (1964). (Though "Don Holliday" is credited as its author, the book is unmistakably Allison's.) In this one a typical Allison hustler, a public relations man for a big Miami Beach hotel, schemes to save his job through a blackmail plot involving a sexy starlet, her husband, and ex-husband. The scheme ends in the ex-husband's death, and the PR man loses his girl but keeps his job—all the time wondering whether it was worth it. Though not all of his books are as well constructed as these two, Allison is always readable and seldom boring.



"Don Holliday" is a more problematic case; the material is wildly uneven, at least partly because there seems to have been two or three people writing under that name in the early-sixties period. But in books such as *Wanted: Sin Men* (1963) and *Passion Ransom* (1965), Holliday writes with real feeling about simple, small-time people, many of them petty hoods and gangsters, and their women, in a tough/tender style, sometimes mixed with semi-absurd comic effects, which can be both hilariously funny and strangely touching. In *Wanted: Sin Men*, five escaped convicts have a series of encounters with violence, romance, and irony before coming to bad ends. (Holliday is less than sympathetic with the criminal justice system. In *Stud Prowl* (1963) he writes of the police: "... it was far better to beat an innocent man than to beat no one. That...was basic police doctrine." And *Wanted: Sin Men* ends with the lines: "Yeah, death is fairer than justice. Death has no rubber hose.") In *Passion Ransom*, as his small-time crooks try to outwit each other for small stakes, their women blunder through as best they can. In spite of some of the funniest deadpan humor to be found in any of these books (the sequence of the G-string in the stew is a classic) the reader is left with an intense empathy for Holliday's not-very-bright people trying blindly to survive but "helplessly drowning in the way that things are."



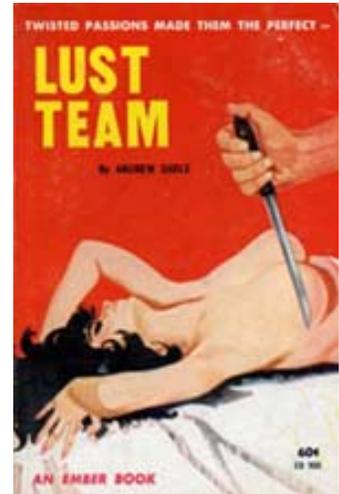
But to my mind, the most consistently interesting of these authors is "Andrew Shaw." At his best, Shaw can do it all. His writing crackles with authority; he can be funny, moving, informative—and even erotic. In spite of the fact that his descriptions of intercourse tend to be couched in purple clichés (heavens bursting, earth exploding, sun blacking out, etc.) he does have a rare sense of how to convey the sexual tensions that arise from character and situation, and therefore his eroticism is generally more effective than that of most writers in the genre.

Shaw is often self-reflexive; he is fond of stepping out of his narrative role to address himself directly to the reader, to comment on his own story, or even his own writing. "The cab took me down Broadway to Times Square, which was lit up like a Christmas tree high on pot," he writes in *Lust Damned* (1961), and then adds, "which is a hell of an image, even for a book like this." But most often, by pointing up what he's doing he seems to be exhorting the reader to appreciate it with him. "I'm having fun

doing this,” he seems to say. “Let's enjoy it together.” In a less skillful writer this could be irritating and even pretentious; but with Shaw it usually works.

Even in his less successful books (which are numerous; judging by his output, he must have turned out books with almost unbelievable rapidity, and often it shows in slipshod structure or a lack of focus) he is nearly always smooth, sure, professional, and eminently readable. His dialogue is savvy and realistic. And when he cares about his story and his characters, so do we. In novels like *Lover* and *Trailer Trollop* (both 1961) Shaw shows his ability to portray varied characters and their emotional reality in an absorbing story. One of his best books is *East Side Sinners* (1963), in which he deals with a cross-section of New York types and their relationships, binding them together skillfully but subtly with the underlying theme of emotional avoidance.

Shaw also often indulged in the darker kind of erotic writing referred to earlier. One character in *East Side Sinners* is typical of this side of Shaw: a petty thief who becomes gradually but helplessly addicted to the practice of sadism. A recurring motif in a number of his books (*Crossroads of Lust* [1962], *Shame Club* [1963], *Lethal Lust* [1964], etc.) is that of a couple who become caught up in this type of obsession, go off on a wild spree of torture and murder, and end by either destroying themselves or being hunted down. Perhaps the most interesting treatment of this theme is *Lust Team* (1963). Here a vicious sadist and criminal becomes emotionally entangled with a hitherto “respectable” lesbian who comes to share his tastes. They fall in love—Platonically—and even marry, then set off on a cross-country binge of rape and killing, until they are shot down by the police. What is most amazing about this lurid tale is that Shaw makes these people real, and involves the reader in what happens to them. The highest form of writing is that which creates some amount of emotional connection in the reader with even the least attractive or sympathetic of his fellow humans. Shaw actually makes us care about these monstrous people and their strange love.



Although Corinth may have been the most prominent and prolific of the paperback sex publishers of the sixties, there were a number of others which also produced the occasional book of above-average quality (and often even shared some of the same authors), among them Bedside Books, Midwood, Beacon, Monarch, and Brandon House, as well as any number of low-budget fly-by-night outfits. All these books, of course, have virtually disappeared, to be found only on the shelves of collectors, or hidden away in dusty back rooms of second-hand bookstores; while the few sex books still being published are so rigidly formularized and aggressively indistinguishable as to preclude either erotic interest or literary quality. The X-rated film and the VCR, among other things, have relegated the pleasures of erotic reading to a lesser place. But there are those of us who still remember....

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\*Reprinted from an original appearance in *Penthouse Forum*, May 1990, with the permission of Harvey Hornwood.

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This is what I find most encouraging about the writing trades: They allow mediocre people who are patient and industrious to revise their stupidity, to edit themselves into something like intelligence. They also allow lunatics to seem saner than sane.

— Kurt Vonnegut

[In April, Chris Garcia and I planned to run this article in this, the June issue, of *eI*. We thought of it as being a special surprise for Chris' father and wanted it to appear while he could enjoy it and the egoboo he deserves. Only John Paul surprised both of us and couldn't wait. He died on May 12th. Chris and I decided to go ahead with our original plan in honor of his father. Following is John Paul Garcia's last instance of fanac. —Earl Kemp]

## Dying for Fanac

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By John Paul Garcia (typed and proofed by Chris Garcia)

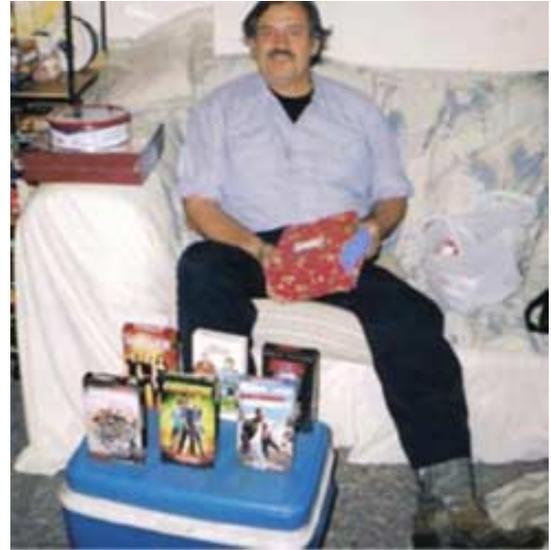
I'm fifty years old, and I'll probably not make it halfway to sixty. You see, I got this cancer, it started as ass cancer and has since moved on to other areas, and I'm dying. No, don't worry about me, I'll be fine. I've got an ace up my sleeve. My son, Chris (I'm sure you've heard of him) has convinced me to finally write all my little stories down in these notebooks he drops off every month or so. And since it hurts too damn much to do much of anything else, I write in them and when Chris gives me a new one, I hand him my old notebook, filled with all the crap that a guy thinks about as he's staring down the barrel of a gun with bullets that travel far too slowly.

But this isn't about me dying, it's about fanac.

I first heard of science fiction fandom in 1962 or '63. I was living in Watsonville, California, a little agricultural town in Santa Cruz County. Dad worked at an asbestos plant (and yet he's still kickin' at 70, the lucky bastard) and would bring home a couple of pulp magazines and a comic or two for the kids. It was in an old issue of *Analog* or *Astounding* that I first heard about Worldcons, though it wasn't until 1968 that I made it out to one. It was BayCon, the 1968 Worldcon in Berkeley. I went with my friend Jaime. We were both 13 at the time, but we both could have passed for twenty. We watched the SCA do their tourney and I took pictures. We played poker, including a hand or two where big pots came my way and we had money enough for a bottle of cheap wine and a top-notch dinner.

That was also where my fanzine collection started. I got maybe ten of them and I started reading them on the ride back to Watsonville. I'd read every page by the next night. I still think about those first ones, about the way the ink on them smeared onto you when you read them with a glass of milk before bed. I had those same issues until about 1989. Those were the hardest to lose.

When I discovered that I was ill and started getting treatment for the cancer, I thought about all the stuff I'd done wrong. I certainly did Carol wrong. We were young when we got married and I never made a strong enough attempt to stay faithful. I did okay by Chris. I introduced him to the good shit. From me he got wrestling, science fiction novels, smut (yeah, I knew you'd read them!), comics, fanzines, and movies. From his mother, he got history and art. I didn't see Chris much after he turned 14, sometimes only once or twice a month and a couple of times maybe twice a year, but he was always out there being a better version of me. He told me that I was his "there but for the grace of God go I," which is a perfect example of why Chris should have his teeth kicked in once in a while.



John Paul Garcia

I don't dwell much, but I do wish I'd stuck with fandom. I wish I'd found a way to stick around, to get to know some of the folks I'd been reading all those years. I knew a few of them, Bjo's run of *Shaggy* was one of my favorites and I met her a bunch of times. I introduced Chris to her as "The Woman who saved Star Trek" at WorldCon in 1984. Marion and Walter were friends for a while. I think I stayed with them on one of the few trips I took Back East. I never met Robert Lichtman, Ed Meskys, Earl Kemp, rich brown, or Ted White. I knew the way they wrote, but I never met them.



One night, maybe three weeks after Chris muscled me into filling out these fucking notebooks, I made a list and handed it to Chris. It was full of names of people in fandom I wanted to meet before I snuffed it. Chris came back and told me that Harry Warner, Terry Carr, Bruce Pelz, Walt Willis, and Walt Daugherty were all dead, but Forry Ackerman, Dave Kyle, and Art Widner were all still kickin' around. Who'd have thought that the three of them would out-live a guy who was born in 1955? I ran into Forry again last year. That was a good time as we talked about the old mansion. I saw Harryhausen a week or two later. I'd only met him once, when I went to a private screening of *Clash of the Titans* and my friends and I managed to convince him to come for a late night snack with us afterward. He didn't remember it, but he appreciated seeing me and talking about Willis O'Brien.

One of the reasons I've been telling the doctors no pain meds is that I want to remember these days. They've offered morphine, and on many days that would be a good idea, but I'd never have the chance to remember what it was like kicking little bits of dirt aside to uncover what I can of the fandom I left behind. A guy stole my last cartons of fanzines in 1989, after I got hit by a car. I had been living with my girlfriend (who was about to give birth to my daughter, Bailey) and I had been making a living as a carney. I'd drive with the carney from town to town, run one of the booths, and come back with a few hundred dollars. On one of those trips, the cartons with my zines in them disappeared from the truck. *Gone, Daddy, Gone*. He found Jesus, tracked me down, and handed over the ones he still had. *Niekas*, *Granfalloon*, even a copy of *SpaceShip*. I had about 35 fanzines back, and I've devoured them. None of them are in very good shape, but since I don't have anything else to leave behind for Chris, these'll do.

My last convention was L.A.Con in 1984. Chris and I went to it together, Carol stayed at home. We had a great time, and I still remember the costumes and the *Night on Bald Mountain* presentation. They showed us some movies, I think *Buckaroo Banzai* was one of them. We wandered around and had a great time. Then we went to Disneyland. It wasn't long after that that Carol tossed me out. Along with my 8-Tracks, my paperbacks, and most of my zines.

It's not an easy road to follow, but it led me here. I've waited some 40 years to write my first anything for a fanzine, and you're reading the last of them, I bet. I've got one plan: Westercon 2007 in San Jose. I was livin' for my fiftieth birthday for two years and I made that, now I've got to make it another eighteen months so that I can go to my seventh Westercon and see what's happened since I've been gone.

I'm betting there'll be a lot of faces I recognize, even if I never spoke to any of them. I've seen a few



cons over the last few years, never staying long, just stopping by, but this'll be my last big score. Chris loves that phrase, so I figured I'd steal it.

They keep telling me scary numbers: "You've got six weeks, Mr. Garcia.."

"John, I'd be surprised if you make it to New Year's."

"I don't see your body holding out for another month," and I've beaten them all back like a kid fighting for his first porno mag.

So, this represents the whole of my life's written fanac. I hope you've enjoyed it. I've got two pieces of advice: Always find a seat in a chair in a hallway where everyone walks by at the con. That's the best way to see the real thing. Second, don't save hotel receipts if you're cheating on your wife. No one's going to reimburse you.

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The Church of God the Utterly Indifferent.  
—Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan*

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