

Ray X X-Rayer #123

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And Nothing To Watch But Flying Shark Movies

For years I've been tolerating the same problems with my apartment. Now someone else would move out but my options are limited with a fixed income, no big bank account, no car. Also this location is convenient, a short walk to downtown and also on the bus route if I need to travel some distance.

Recently I had to spend a few days outside the city at a motel in a semi-civilized area. There was more for me to do downtown, places I could go and hang out like the library,

but to get to downtown that was a one hour – two mile walk usually in the energy-sapping heat. And the motel location wasn't a good spot to catch a bus. My landlord didn't mention he would reimburse me for travel (taxi cab) and meal expenses outside those I could make at home (apartment kitchen was unusable). (Yes, I kept all my receipts for my out of pocket expenses.) I made sure that he was paying for the motel room.

The motel was OK, standard. At home I don't have cable TV, just OTA (off the air) channels, but that selection is better than the motel cable channels. I'm not into seeing someone on the hunting channel shooting a pheasant with an arrow. The wounded animal is flipped up on its back, legs twitching in the air, while the Great Nimrod smiles.

The motel cable selection did include the Syfy channel. This channel was once called Sci Fi but they had to get cool and artsy and call it Syfy even though it still shows the same low budget crap. I don't pronounce Syfy as sci-fi but as sif-ee like in syphilis.

Of course I'm stuck with the one weekend when Syfy was foisting a Sharknado movie marathon. For those of you not blessed with such knowledge sharknado – shark tornado – is a sci fi concept with freak storms picking up hungry sharks and dropping them on land where they attack and eat people. The other variation is flying sharks ripping off body parts while zipping by.

There are four movies based on this premise. Such potential for variety. How did just four movies cover all the possibilities?

Usually I enjoy bad movies, amused by their outrageousness, but with my situation I wasn't in the mood.

To take a break from such entertainment abnormality I made sure each morning to go downstairs for the complimentary breakfast. I would sit at one table by myself, alone. Around me were summer vacationers, couples and families. People with traditional lives.

Normalcy.

Fight Or Flight

Over at his fanzine, Fadeaway, Robert Jennings has mentioned the problem of Too Much Stuff. TMS occurs when various items pile up but these items have some value, it's not easy to just toss them out.

In Richard's case he is not only a SF/fantasy/OTR fan but also a dealer. I'm just a fan and while I haven't accumulated the mass Richard has I still have a surfeit of stuff.

This is one reason why I haven't moved away from this apartment after suffering through the same problems for too many years. The problems would be fixed – or so it appeared – and I avoided another Big Move.

Other people have commented Plattsburgh, NY apartments are overpriced as compared to those in other communities. Someone who moved here – and is now leaving – told me that he was upset that he was paying \$500 a month for a place that included fleas. He had to spend more for a decent dwelling unit even though he didn't need a lot of space and lived alone.

But it looks like I'm going to have to move. No notice yet from the landlord but I expect my marching orders when he hears that I filed a complaint with the building inspector's office. Of course I'm in the right – I can document the details – but being in the right and having facts on your side means nothing when you're dealing with a system built upon the Golden Rule: He with the gold makes the rules.

For decades I've been stuck in the classic fight-or-flight situation with this apartment. After getting crapped on once too often I've decide to fight.

So I'm faced with another apartment search in Plattsburgh, NY. The last time it was so enjoyable.

I called phone numbers listed in the classifieds. One woman refused to rent to me because she only rented to females. Another man refused to rent to me because I was single. His "justification" was that single couples didn't stay long but married couples did.

Discrimination? Of course. But do you fight it and have a good chance of winning?

Don't forget the Golden Rule.

False Flag

Besides uploading this zine to efanazines.com I also send it out via email to subscribers through the TinyLetter newsletter service.

As usual with other XR editions #122 was re-formatted for TinyLetter and I thought it was ready to go. I hit SEND and – nothing. The newsletter is frozen in the queue. The following message greets me:

"Your account has been flagged by our abuse prevention system. Our team reviews all accounts for Compliance with our Terms of Use. If your letter has not been send after 12 hours, please reach out to our Support team with the username for your account."

So I investigated and learned about TL's Omnivore program:

"If you are notified that your account was flagged by our abuse prevention system, it doesn't mean we think you're a spammer. It means that Omnivore has detected something that flagged the account for review. (Omnivore was created to maintain MailChimp's sending reputation by analyzing vital data to protect the email ecosystem, and now it does the same for TinyLetter.)"

I emailed TL about the matter, not bothering to let 12 hours pass. I had things to do besides waiting to see if they had time to look over my submission. They replied my newsletter/zine was OK and I could send my latest edition, the block had been removed. Curious about the problem I asked what triggered the flag. But I never got a response. (TinyLetter readers: more BS like this and I'm dropping the service. It's a pain to redo each issue to fit its format.)

I suspect it might have been something seeming offensive instead of spammy. Probably the image I used to illustrate my piece, Attack Of The Blood Bay Lamprey Zombies. I would reprint the photo to show you but I might get flagged again by Omnivore. (Maybe I'll get nailed for using the abbreviation BS.)

The image depicted surface garbage in the notoriously polluted bay in Rio, Brazil where the Olympics are being held. In the foreground there was a plastic baby doll floating in the water, broken. Maybe Omnivore jumped to a conclusion, thinking I was using the image of actual baby parts floating in the bay.

Omnivore should be put on a diet. It should stick to veggies and skip the meat.

MailboX

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RE: XR #122

Hi Ray,

Don't give up on your screenplay yet. You have to go see the latest Mad Max to realize that nothing is off the radar of Hollywood shlockmeisters. In other words nothing has

changed much. I just got 9 Puppetmaster movies on two DVDs. I like to get the going out of business films rather than wasting money on the latest big deal.

The most horrible film I ever saw was called Moro Witch Doctor, we had swapped our ships supply of pretty good films to Adak and they slipped us this bummer. Black and white and filmed in the dark with no lighting, I should have said I watched it because I saw almost nothing except a few random patches of lighter darkness. The clops may have been the results of adding a new soundtrack but such odd touches are what converts these films into classics like the house doors of the flying saucer in Plan 9 did.

Elvira has decided to let it all hang down. Cassandra Peterson has no desire to Cosplay the character at 65 so we bid her a fond and tearstained farewell. I'm sure the next incarnation will be a guy of some odd ethnicity and stranger sexuality unless Ghostbusters latest is a flop.

Keep on Keepin' on!

Dave

RX: I wonder if Cassandra will make one more appearance in Penthouse, au natural again.

As for a guy incarnation of Elvira she did work with a couple of female impersonators, Christian Greenia and Patterson Lundquist. The three judged the contest to pick the next Elvira. The winner April Wahlin became the first official female Elvira impersonator. She made some appearances but now Greenia and Lindquist are the only ones still continuing the tradition. Or so Wikipedia tells me.

Note To Future Historians And Archivists

The previous issue, Ray X X-Rayer #122, had the wrong footer info. I forgot to change #121 to #122. Sorry for the confusion. Maybe someday I'll publish a typo-free edition.

– END XR #123 –