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You can tell this story as often as you want-people never get tired of it. If you have a perfectly ordinary guy walking down the street at noon, not thinking about anything, and he falls into a hole, that's bad fortune. He's down below the line. He struggles to get up out of the hole, finally makes it, and is a little happier when he is finished. He's faced something and survived. That's "Man in a Hole."

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros* 4, March-April 1968

THIS ISSUE OF *e/* is dedicated to my hero Barney Rosset and to the much-missed Avram Davidson.

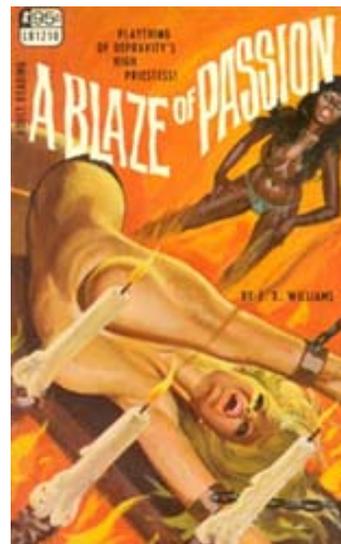
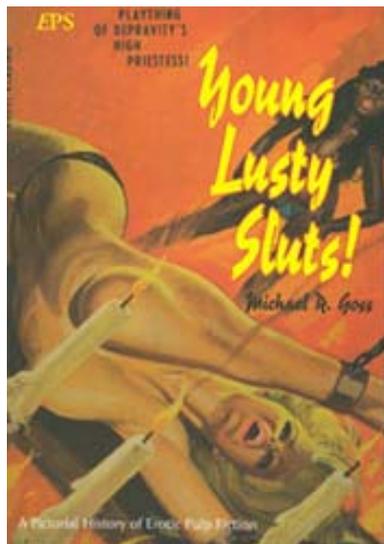
In the world of science fiction, it is also in memory of Hugh B. Cave, David Heath, David MacDonald, Peter McNamara, and Otto Pfeifer.

#

I would like to call your attention to Bruce R. Gillespie and the effort to Bring Bruce Bayside, a worthy cause to bring Gillespie from his home in Australia to the Bay Area next February for Corflu and Potlach. There is more about this effort on eFanzines.com and your donation to the cause would be greatly appreciated.

#

I would also like to call your attention to a book recently published in the UK. It is Michael Goss' *Young Lusty Sluts!* (below left). I call this book to your attention because there is a piece about me included in it. Goss interviewed me a number of times for this piece and also relied heavily upon the back issues of *e/* for his material. There were a number of photographs repeated from *e/* as well.



And, while we're at it, let's also check out Robert Bonfils' great cover painting (above right) for J.X. Williams' *A Blaze of Passion* (LB1210, 1967). It seems they liberated their cover artwork from some familiar place.

#

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

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *e/* whatever it is. And also, Dave Locke continues as *e/* Grand Quote Master. You will find his assembled words of wisdom separating the articles throughout this issue of *e/* where we will be revisiting the thoughts of Kurt Vonnegut this issue.

Other than Bill Burns and Dave Locke, these are the people who made this issue of *e/* possible: Victor J. Banis, Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, Cuyler Brooks, Avram Davidson, Jay A. Gertzman, Bruce Gillespie, Elaine Kemp Harris, Jim Haynes, Earl Terry Kemp, Dave Langford, Guy H. Lillian III, Lynn Munroe, Astrid Myers, Gregory Pickersgill, George Scithers, Robert Speray, Janine Stinson, Jon Stopa, Erik Tonen, Peter Weston, and Ian Williams.

ARTWORK: This issue of *e/* features original and recycled artwork by William Rotsler.

Since I've become rich and famous...many people have been curious about my sex life.
--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros 4*, March-April 1968

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The Official *e/* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

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

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

Wednesday May 26, 2004

Just back from Stockholm and Helsinki -- you will find the details in my next Nightstand novel, PASSION IGLOO -- and too jet-lagged to read the new issue in detail yet, but I gave it a quick skim and it looks terrific. Especially did I take the time to note your footnotes to my PORNOGRAPHER piece, with pleasure.

More later. Time for a nap.

--Robert Silverberg

Thanks, Earl. Don't know how you maintain the pace to keep creating this. Very nice
--David Stevens

Thursday May 27, 2004

As for *e/14*, I'm more impressed as I read each issue with the importance of letting people know that the borderline between "high literature" and popular writing is a silly elitist one, and that good writers, to make a living, crossed that border many times, and were the better for it.. The Lawrence Block piece is a great example. Your illustrations of the paperback covers of the various editions of *\$20 Lust* and *Cinderella Sims* are an interesting story in themselves. The Robert Silverberg essay, and your annotations, are excellent writing as well as essential literary history.

--Jay Gertzman

Did some skimming this morning. Its like salted peanuts -- can't stop reading the stuff. The Silverberg article, especially, fascinated me. A novel in 3½ days! Amazing. And *I'm* proud of 10-day work schedules on a novel.

Will these fanzines ever be put into book form? Would be so much fun to sit down and read this stuff in comfort rather than squinting at the computer monitor. I have a 19-incher, and that's even a strain on my aged eyeballs.

--Thomas P. Ramirez ("Tony Calvano")

Friday May 28, 2004

re: Deconstructing Larry (Block)

Great research job. Now, what about finding Bush's WMDs?

--Hal Dresner

A mutual friend, Bob Weinberg, pointed me to your *e/* fanzine with respect to the McCauley piece he sent you, but I've now printed out several issues and managed to spend an enjoyable -- though unproductive -- afternoon at the office reading through them. Great stuff! The various info I've read on Hamling is fascinating; Frank Robinson is also a friend and he's told me things about Hamling from time to time, but the amount of material you obtained from so many different sources and viewpoints makes for a terrific read! Congrats on a great mag. I look forward to the next issue.

--Doug Ellis

Monday May 31, 2004

FANDOM'S LICENSE
HAS EXPIRED?



I recently came across *e/* for June 2004, and a delight it was. It is so refreshing to read a fanzine not crammed with names of total strangers.

I enjoyed the references to Buck Coulson. I know that in later years he had cultivated the label of "curmudgeon," whether through self-designation, or at the instigation of others, I couldn't say. I never once had that impression. If anything, he appear to be one of the most rational and pragmatic voices I knew. As a folk-song purist he despised (perhaps rightly so) Bob Dylan, and I took special delight in needling him with headlines or news of Dylan's latest achievements.

I much regret that *Yandro* was given up, abandoned and permitted to become a footnote in fan history. It was one of the first fanzines I'd

read (in '57 or '58). I always cherished the memories evoked by those impeccable twiltone (or perhaps Granite) pages.

There are many valid arguments against Internet fanzines, such as accessibility, appearance, and the honest inability to clutch and bend the physical properties in your hands. All quite valid. Whenever my blood pressure takes a stratospheric plunge, all too common lately, my vision gets blurry, which is a common, although unwelcome side effect. It's a tremendous relief to download a fanzine and then enlarge the type enough to combat even my dwindling vision.

I've had very limited experience with the Greenleaf soft-core line. I did purchase, over the years, the Corinth Regency pulp reprints of OPERATOR 5, DOCTOR DEATH, SECRET AGENT X, etc. etc. I could never read more than a dozen pages of DOC SAVAGE before being gripped by extreme apathy, while I could endure a complete SECRET AGENT X, but never more than once a month.

--Mike Deckinger

Thursday June 3, 2004

I was delighted to see another fine issue appear at Bill Burns' eFanzines website. Considering how we would have loved to have had the colour photos and illustrations available in the past, doing fanzines on the web makes some things a lot easier.

That you would also use the zine to publicise the Bring Bruce Bayside fund is also most welcome.

One complaint by some about ezines is the lack of response, so I was pleased to see your letter column. Perhaps we should all change to running the locs as the first item in the fanzine, rather than the last.

I was pleased to see a letter from Juanita Coulson, who I had completely lost track of after she moved. I still have a couple of novels of hers on my shelves, which she kindly autographed at some stage. Buck was the person who did most of the writing to me, and because I didn't often get to filk song areas, I probably missed seeing Juanita as being as active as she was.

It is a real pity that Juanita's comments had to be about yet another exclusion act, albeit one in the past. Yet I wonder how much has really changed in fandom. Looking around in Australia, I see WASPs. Looking around US fandom, I see much the same. I can't think of more than three or four non-white fans I've talked to at conventions. Way back I used to see Elliott Shorter.

The last few lines of Juanita's letter, about her joy in music, remind me that after years and years of ignoring music (and I don't know exactly how I fell out of liking it - although the selections played on the radio and MTV may be a factor) I found myself buying a MIDI keyboard. Well, OK, it was cheap, and it may end up like the unused piano in many homes. But this new Macintosh came with a music generating program called Garage Band, and looks like it will be great fun. Well, maybe not for anyone who hears me practice.

It was good to note Dave Locke finally getting his material printed after all these years. While I am in an apa with Dave, I feel sure most of his fine writing appears these days in egroups of some form. My own encounters with Yahoo after they took over mailing lists were such that I'd never again look at anything being distributed via Yahoo. Add to that me dumping rasff several years ago within a week of starting to reading it again (Gary Farber sent me email), and I don't see much of the electronic fan activity.

Great reading (in some cases rereading) the accounts of how various people made money providing porn books. I think Tom Lehrer got it right. "Dirty books are fun." All the best.

--Eric Lindsay

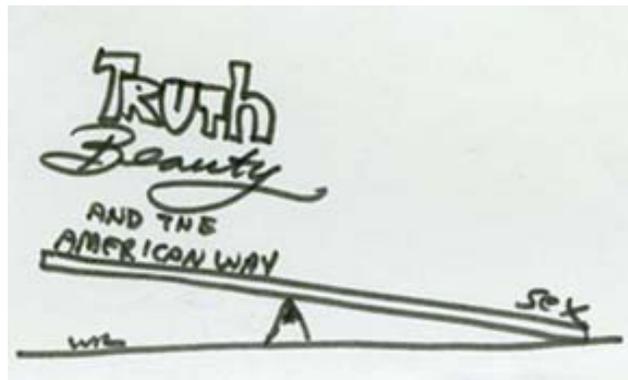
Friday June 4, 2004

Beautiful Stuff, great memory and memories. It'll take a few more days to read it all. Here I come - Blue Fox! You need to write a fictitious novel - Hemingway stuff.

--Robert Bonfils

Friday June 11 2004

Johannes Berg was also an old friend of ours. Of course, Worldcon was the only place we could possibly meet, and he couldn't always afford to go, just like us, but Yvonne and I did see him at Torcon 3. As always, jolly and cordial, and a pleasure to see. And now, he's gone, like so many friends. My best Berg story. I remember the Dutch Worldcon in 1990, when Johannes and his marauding horde of Scandinavians invaded the room parties that had to be held in the Congresgebouw because the hotels wouldn't allow such events in private rooms, and they sucked every drop of alcohol available, to the dismay and anger of some of the party mavens who were working with little stock in unfamiliar conditions. One of the final nights of the Worldcon saw quickly drawn posters for a Scandinavian bid party, and those who attended saw a ceremonial cart from the local Heineken brewery, and the cart held a 1000-liter tank of Heineken's best, with stacks of beer cups and five taps on each side. Hey, those Scandinavians weren't so bad after all, and the instigator of such a marvelous sight was Johannes Berg.



That was fun to get you in touch with Juanita Coulson. Happy to be of service.

Hi, Arnie. so, Plan to Dissolve/Destroy Fandom. So THAT's what .pdf really stands for! I jest..pdfs make collecting fanzines a little easier. They can be stored in .pdfs, and then on a CD-ROM for filing and possible future printing.

An interesting tale from Dave Locke. Wouldn't it be equally interesting to perform this as a Andy Hooper-style fannish play?

I don't think I've read anything by Lawrence Block .until now, anyway. So much of the writing here is outside of my own experience; all I can say is that like Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison and others, you've got to write slush before you can write good stuff. I'm glad to see that Block and Silverberg are willing to explore their own pasts and reminisce about their experiences.

--Lloyd Penney.

Wednesday June 16, 2004

The joy, the invigoration, of *e/* comes from all the past, dormant memories you are churning up with the articles and memoirs on the 60's and thereabouts. I lived through the time and was active in fandom then, so I can closely relate. For younger readers, it's but ancient history, and can't have half the tang it does for us. I've been scanning an issue a night or two, through the website, slowly savoring all the unearthed pleasures.

And your tales of incarceration are scarier than anything Stephen King devised, especially the

descriptions of what went on behind bars, how the authorities were driven to instigate this brutal sentencing. I guarantee anyone who did not live through Nixonian America could not possibly relate to any of this.

I'm reminded of receiving Paul Krassner's THE REALIST regularly, and cracking up over every issue, of Agent Oy Oy Seven in PLAYBOY, (as well as Hef's unending "The Playboy Philosophy") and of seeing Lenny Bruce in New York.

There are even fannish counterparts, like reading an hysterical screed from D. Bruce Berry and then wondering if this was the same guy who did all those flamboyant illustrations. Or the time Chicago fan Bob Greenberg stayed in my Newark apartment, and spent the entire night playing his amateur 8 mm films. Bob was on his way to see the Kuchar Bros. in New York, and from there, to fame and fortune in Hollywood. I learned later, much later, from Alex Eisenstein, that Bob was on the verge of making it big-time in the film industry, when a drunken driver viciously ended everything for him.

--Mike Deckinger

Friday July 9 2004

Earl -- I'm about half-way through your on-line memoirs and I have to say I am very fascinated, for many various reasons -- I have been ordering some Nightstand and Greenleaf books and copies of Hamlin's IMGAINATION as I go along (from on-line dealers).

Basically, Harlan Ellison is the reason I became a writer! -- there's a long personal story in that, which I will write some day. I had no idea you guys had that connection -- and oddly, his SEX GANG goes for \$700-1000 while I have found many of Silverberg's nom de plume titles for \$5 or so.

By this weekend, I should be through reading, and I thank you for the rich reading experience.

--Mike Hemmingson

Ernest Hemingway once said, "If you make love while you are working on a novel, you are in danger of leaving the best parts in bed."

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros 4*, March-April 1968

GUEST EDITORIAL:

Roaming Around Upstairs

Recycled artwork by William Rotsler

By Jon Stopa

Chalabi Busted!

The further we get into the Bush Administration, the harder it is to write satire. The news that Ahmed Chalabi is likely to have been an Iranian Secret Agent and Spy is a case in point! Ahmed Chalabi, the man whom the Pentagon wanted to rule Iraq (can you believe that!).

At last, there is a logical and reasonable reason for Bush's War! We invaded Iraq because the Iranian intelligence agency wanted us to!

Chew on that for a while!

What would a logical Iranian agenda be like?

1. Destroy Saddam. He's no good.
2. Destroy the Great Satan! (That's us!)

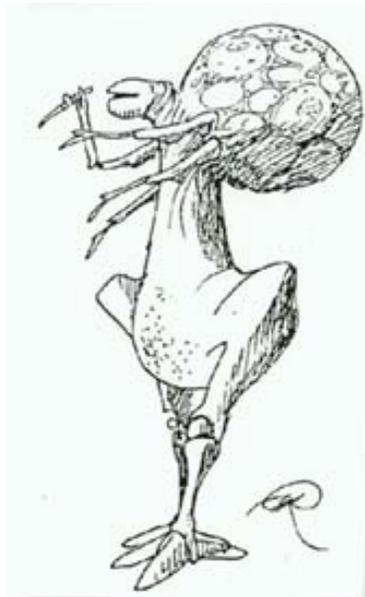
Just because Iran is a small country, it doesn't mean that it can't have big dreams!

Think about what has happened. The US has been enticed to invade Iraq by the false intel provided by Iran's agent, Ahmed Chalabi. He did it for years. He not only fooled Bush, he had fooled the New York Times, too! He gave the same false intel to countries all over the globe. Then when we checked with, for instance, the Brits, they said, "Yeah, we heard that Saddam has WMD. You did too?" Therefore, he must have them. This was one of the biggest, most successful ops, ever. And little Iran did it!

They managed to get the destruction of Iraq AND the cream of the really, really expensive American military at the same time. It only cost Iran the few million bucks they probably gave to Chalabi! Cheap!

Why would Iran do this? Well, whether it was that long Iran-Iraq War, or what, Iran just seems to have taken a dislike to Saddam's regime and, of course, the US, which is the Great Satan. From the Iranian point of view, the fact that the US smashed up its shiny, new army doing-in Saddam was a big plus!

Consider. All the other reasons for the war have fallen by the way--no WMD; no actual plan to bring democracy to Iraq; no al Qaeda link. Definitely no rose petals! We don't talk about Iraq being a terrorist killing ground any more (Bring it on!), or that we shut down Saddam's torture chambers. This leads to the obvious truth that we were tricked into invading Iraq by the Iranians' secret agent, Ahmed Chalabi!



Besides being mean to Saddam for the fun of it, why else would Iran want Iraq to be torn to pieces? Oil!

Yes, if Iraq gets split into three parts, the Iranians have the opportunity to get their hands on Iraqi oil! Add Iraqi oil to Iranian oil, and they'll have a really BIG chunk of the world's oil.

See, and you didn't think that the war was ALL about oil!

Falluja Gambit

At last, an exit strategy for Iraq that looks like it'll work! I call it the Falluja Gambit.



Jon Stopa, Earl Kemp, and Joni Stopa. Fanac.org photo by Ben Jason from Pacificon masquerade, Seattle, September 1961.

Please notice, it was troops in the field who developed it--Remember the brass saying the idea came from the bottom up? I bet those marines who were fighting around Falluja for weeks got tired of waiting for Washington to make up its mind and do something, so they figured out an answer, and just did it!

The reason why Bush hasn't been able to shake our foot free of the Iraqi tar baby is that every government he creates in Iraq lacks legitimacy. By definition. We are the hated, conquering invaders! For some reason, people who have often been invaded and conquered just don't like it.

The idea is, our troops surround a city, then blast the hell out of it. After we've driven the people together, local leaders arise, legitimized by their resistance. Then our Marines surrender to them and leave. Free at last!

The cheering locals now have a government with legitimacy, and we can withdraw from their territory. We move on, going from city to city, using these tactics to create legitimate governments! Things might not work out too well when we're gone, but if we back out carefully, we can leave Iraq before anyone notices.

Another answer to Bush's problems in Iraq would be to ask Saddam to take it off his hands. Good thing Saddam has survived his interrogation and imprisonment, so far! He should have learned his lesson, by now: Don't mess with a Bush!

UPDATE: The Falluja Gambit is now being used on the Shia! Our army has surrendered to al-Sistani. Threatening those shrines with damage by clumsy Americans, forced al-Sistani to act. Way to go!

Is Donald Rumsfeld A Great Defense Secretary, Or What?

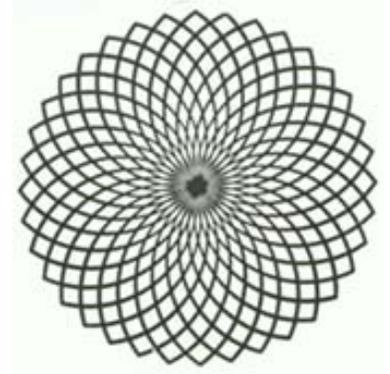
Rummy's War in Iraq is football thinking! Consider the taking of Baghdad as a touchdown, and you are on to it. In football thinking, when a runner passes his opponents, the opponents are effectively out of the action. So it was, when we ran all the way to Baghdad, Rummy obviously thought we had won. He forgot about the "bad actors," their open ammo dumps, etc., that we had passed. The bad guys just didn't realize that the game was over when the whistle blew!

AWOL's victory prance across the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln was his end zone dance. More football thinking!

When you see arrows on a history book map indicating the routes Hitler's armies took as they crossed Russia in WW II, they were showing the encirclement and destruction of huge numbers of Russian troops.

The Bush War arrows were showing plays and touchdowns! It has been pointed out that football resembles warfare; Bush's War in Iraq has given new meaning to that idea.

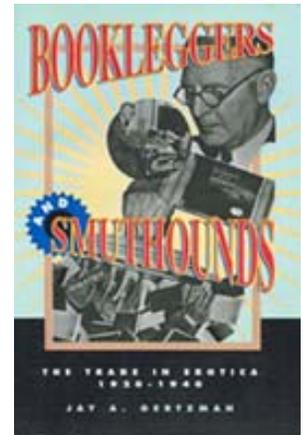
Just too many Sunday afternoons with a big beer cooler and a wide-screen TV.



One thing she left out was how dirty authors get-physically dirty.... You deteriorate, forget what day it is. It's like being in solitary. You forget to bathe and just get filthy. A free lance author just stinks sometimes. He's lost track and can't tell if it's the Fourth of July or Christmas.

[Jay A. Gertzman is a retired professor of English (Mansfield U., in PA). In 1999 he published *Bookleggers and Smuthounds: The Trade in Erotica, 1920-1940* (U. of Pennsylvania Press). The book is about the distribution and prosecution of erotic literature in America during the period between the wars, when an older reticence about sex was replaced by a growing need for expressing one's sexual desires. Technology, changing social and economic conditions, and the increasing population of the cities were important in understanding the erotica of the period. Jay is researching the entertainment center of Times Square during the period 1940-70, especially the place of the bookstores there in the "sleazy" and subversive atmosphere of 42nd Street. He has a website entitled "Times Square Smut" at <http://home.earthlink.net/~jgertzma/BkshopsOfTimesSq/index.html>

--Earl Kemp]



1950s Sleaze and the Larger Literary Scene: The Case of Times Square Porn King Eddie Mishkin

By Jay A. Gertzman

Throughout the 20th century, erotica writing and distribution was part of the larger story of American literature. Writers need money, and writing about sex for a prurient, horny, and eventually tumescent audience never deterred them. Nor was the result necessarily hack work. In Earl Kemp's ezine (see [e*I*11](#)), he provides several examples of good writers: Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison, John Jakes, Harry Roskolenko, and Cordwainer Smith, among others.

A New York bookseller contracted writers such as Gershon Legman, Henry Miller, and Ana's Nin in the early 1940s on behalf of an Oklahoma erotica collector who wanted to masturbate to a story he had never encountered before. Therefore he needed an endless supply. At the same time a group of writers produced type scripted pornography, which was reproduced and sold or rented at high prices. Some of its members, who also wrote for the Oklahoma collector, were Nin, Jack Hanley, Clement Wood, and Bernard Wolfe, later one of the first "beat" novelists (*The Magic of Their Singing*).



Jay Gertzman photo by Karin Thieme, dated August 2003.

It is not clear when this erotica combine started to work, but one of its productions was a set of stories, circa 1938, known collectively as *The Oxford Professor*. Gershon Legman says that Gene Fowler, one of several Hollywood members, wrote *The Demi-Wang* and *Nirvana* under its auspices. In the 1950s, one of the writers and editors for the Magazine Management group of "hairy-chested men's magazines" was Bruce Jay Friedman. He remembered that "Even the Rhinos Were Nymphos." When Star Distributors, Ltd., maintained a stable of New York based novelists to churn out their glut of hard core paperbacks in the 70s, one of their number, writing either under a pseudonym or anonymously, was Marco Vassi. Vassi's fictional explorations of pansexual energy marked him as a disciple of Wilhelm Reich.

Among the many talented Essex House novelists who wrote for that Milton Luros imprint in California in the late 60s, one has to mention a key figure in any discussion of American literary erotica: Michael Perkins. Perkins was one of the talented writers Al Goldstein hired when *Screw* began publication. Readers shocked by *American Psycho* would suffer coronaries if faced with Perkins' *Evil Companions* (1968). A group of East Village roommates engage in kidnapping, rape, necrophilia, and sexual mutilation. The book depicts a nightmare of sex and violence that replicates in its insanity the combat zones of Vietnam, urban ghetto riots, Hoover's FBI files and crusades, the Kennedy and King assassinations, police riots, and the Weathermen.



I am studying the distribution and prosecution of pornography in New York's Times Square of the 1950s. Eddie Mishkin, publisher, distributor, and bookstore owner, was a prime target for district Attorney Frank Hogan. In 1955, he had been called before the Kefauver Committee investigating the effect of pornographic materials on juvenile delinquency. Shortly thereafter, he and the Times Square booksellers to whom he distributed were enjoined from distributing a 16-volume set of hastily prepared typewritten and illustrated booklets entitled *Nights of Horror*, which focused on flagellation, torture, and bondage. In 1959, the police started intense surveillance of Mishkin's warehouse. He, his printer, and at least two writers were among those arrested; 17,000 booklets (43 separate titles) were impounded. The transcript of his 1960 trial presents detailed evidence of connections between a porn "kingpin," his primary readership in the gay and fetish subcultures, the Greenwich Village party scene, and some New York-based writers and artists.

Three writers were subpoenaed to testify against Mishkin. One, who wrote under the name "Justin Kent," was held as a material witness for over a month. Both he and a woman unfortunately named Leatha Hackshaw stated that Mishkin told them to write about "rough sex," with "strong lesbian scenes," "high heels," "perfume fetishes," "bondage," etc. He lent Hackshaw texts on sexual deviations, including Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, so that her stories focused on spanking, whipping, and the "weals" left in male and female flesh by violent foreplay. Many of the booklets were illustrated by the fetish artists Gene Bilbrew and Eric Stanton. In appearance, these publications suggested cheapness and unreliability, an impression reinforced by a five-dollar cover price for badly edited, cheaply produced, typewritten texts some of which were nicely illustrated, but with line drawings unrelated to the narrative itself. Sample titles were "Screaming Flesh," "Return Visit to Fetterland," "The Hollywood Spankers," and "Sex Switch." Newspaper reporters, prosecuting attorneys, and judges noted that the appearance as well as contents of Mishkin's booklets epitomized "dirt for dirt's sake," with no purpose other than to appeal to prurience to make as much money with as little expense as possible.



Edward Mishkin.

Inevitably reinforcing this impression was the kind of store in which they were sold. In Publisher's Outlet, The Metropolitan Book Shop, The Little Book Exchange, Square Books, and The Midget Book Shop one found rack-loads of cellophane-sealed, highly priced, paper-covered booklets, and nude and near nude photo sets, as well as prurient fiction, sexology, and girlie magazines. Eventually, in 1966 at the Supreme Court level, Mishkin was convicted and sent to prison. He was judged to have appealed to a "clearly defined sexual group" by titillating that group with the intent of making as much money as possible, at the same time ignoring state law that a publisher state his true name and business address in his books and magazines.

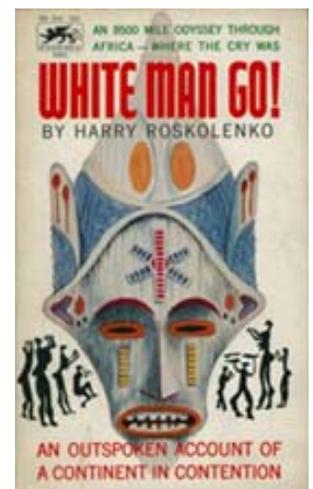


Mishkin's audience must have included members of the gay and fetish subculture in midtown New York. A large gay community had existed in nearby apartment houses from the 1930s. As New York's many daily newspapers reported the trial, they must have swallowed their anxieties as phrases such as "deviant fantasies" and "all morality done away with" were parroted. So was the boilerplate equating sexual deviancy and juvenile delinquency, current since the Kefauver Committee Investigations of the latter in 1955. It would be a revelation to find that one of Mishkin's writers was motivated by a desire to defy this kind of scapegoating. He or she might have written even in a sleazy digest-sized booklet--a story of alternative sexuality which included a warning that parents, teachers, and religious advisors reassess why their teenagers were ignoring them, and consider what young people learned about power and violence from looking around them as the Korean War ended. People had been dismissed from their jobs through blacklisting; alcoholism and divorce were increasing; school students were taught how to "duck and cover" in

case of atomic attack; and hydrogen bombs were being tested in the Western deserts. Meanwhile, ambitious senators and sensation-seeking dailies assumed the citizenry's best interest would be served by begging the question regarding the connection between borderline smut and tabooed sexual practices on the one hand, and juvenile delinquency and lack of moral "purity" on the other.

It's exhilarating to think that an iconoclastic, imaginative, and opportunistic writer ready to address himself to the patrons of some of Times Square's raunchy book stores would have honest motives for publishing a typewritten, salaciously illustrated sex story for a sleazy publisher. It would be published under a pseudonym. Appreciative readers could not communicate with him/her directly, but they might ask the clerk or owner of the store in which he bought the booklet if he had more by that author. This kind of interest would be more likely directed to an artist than a writer, but it could happen, which is one reason erotic books are published under fictitious "house" pseudonyms. Most of their writers were mediocrities, like Kent and Hackshaw. Maybe someday someone will discover that a particular piece of writing declared obscene because it was considered "smut for smut's sake" was the work of William Burroughs, John Reichy, Erica Jong, Patricia Highsmith, Kenneth Patchen, or Samuel Delany.

It's the kind of pipe dream to keep an erotica collector frustrated for three lifetimes. That said, there was one writer of considerable reputation, leftist leanings, experience, and talent who wrote at least three stories for Mishkin: Harry Roskolenko. A world traveler since he left home at 13, a Trotskyite active at times in radical causes, a member of the W.P.A. Writers Project, an army officer in World War II, a poet and novelist, Roskolenko had in 1952 published a book of short stories with the Woodford Press, the most successful of the late 1940s hardback faux-erotica sex pulp outfits. In the same year, the Padell Book Company issued his memoir, *Baedecker of a Bachelor*, and two years later a novel about a white man transformed into a black man, *Black Is A Man*. Both publishers were New York based, and distributed heavily to the Times Square market, Padell with pamphlets on police ju-jitsu, boxing, wrestling, hypnotism, dancing, and swimming, card tricks, and "How to Make Love," as well as a set of joke books. Their author, by the way, was Louis Shomer, who a decade earlier published erotica and sexology and was prosecuted by the Post Office. In the 1950s he was distributing stag films for Abe Rubin, one of Mishkin's mentors in the porn trade.



This is the only book by Harry Roskolenko that I ever worked on.
-Earl Kemp

Roskolenko (who oddly enough identified himself as Hyman Rosen, saying

that Harry Roskolenko was one of his many pseudonyms), first met Mishkin in 1954. His testimony implied that he had come to see the publisher to ask if he wanted a book. The pornographer accepted, saying, "spice it up." Apparently "I'll Try Anything Twice" (by "John Thomas") was one of Roskolenko's first "little booklets." "French Girl on the Stairs Parts 1 and 2" was written about 1957, about the time Mishkin conceived the project which got him arrested.

I haven't seen "I'll Try Anything Twice" or "French Girl on the Stairs," but the author apparently thought they were not hack work, and might even add to his reputation. The transcript records the following:

Attorney for defendant: And you find nothing of any value in the other types of books [those in evidence not by Roskolenko] . . . ?

Roskolenko: They are not literature to me.

Justice Galloway: Mr. Rosen, "French Girl on the Stairs" you consider literature, I presume?

Roskolenko: That's a serious book

Justice: That's what I thought.

Roskolenko: Outside of the pictures.



This drawing of a girl on a couch from "Dangerous Years" is by Eric Stanton.

The reason a professional writer would take on an assignment such as a Mishkin S-M story, as Earl Kemp has explained to me, is money. And Mishkin had the money to spend. He must have treated his artists and writers well, or he would not have been able to hire the premier fetish artists in New York at the time. He paid between \$100 and \$350 per story, according to testimony at the 1960 trial. For a single drawing, Gene Billbrew, who did illustrations for covers, got \$30 or \$35, and Eric Stanton, for interior work, got \$10 or \$15. According to the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index, \$100 in 1959 would be the equivalent of almost \$640 in today's currency. All these deals were strictly in cash, which changed hands in one of Mishkin's stores or in a bar called Dino's on 42nd Street. The IRS need never know. The work could be finished quickly, and subsequent assignments might mean not only groceries, but time to be spent writing instead of slaving at a menial job.

Where would a writer learn of this kind of opportunity? Word of mouth is the obvious answer. That was the method by which pornography and where to find it became known to potential customers. A professional writer was obliged to sniff out money as avidly as a horny man did his sexual outlets, and usually with a lot less guilt and furtiveness. There were several kinds of sources. Ms Hackshaw stated that under the name "Lee Morrel," she wrote two books "now on the stands," and had written TV scripts. Most likely not a habitu e, of 42nd Street, she may have heard of Mishkin from her agent. If the two books she mentioned were hardback sex pulps, like those "Justin Kent" had done for Gil Fox (The Vixen Press) or Abe Lieberman and his partner Arnold Hausner of Book Sales, Inc., then she would have had other conduits to Mishkin.

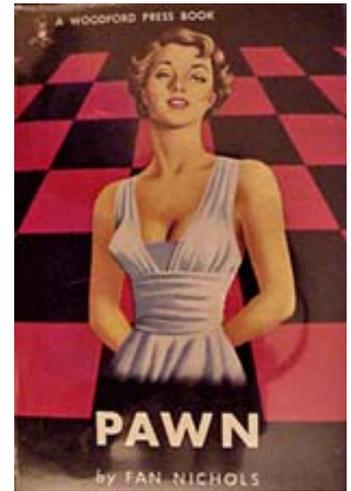
We know Mishkin and Lieberman did business with each other. Any one of the sex pulp publishers who followed the lead of the Woodford Press in the late 40s and 50s would have had their books distributed in the Times Square bookstores. Roskolenko published several works under his "Colin Ross" pseudonym with Allan Wilson and Moe Shapiro, owners of Woodford. As we've said, he also wrote for Max Padell. Roskolenko writes, "Under five pseudonyms, I wrote a variety of novels [in the 1950s] for various publishers." He states the number to be fifteen. At the same time, he was contributing stories and articles to many magazines, some literary (*Sewanee Review*, *New York Times Book Review*, *New Leader*), some general-interest (*Mademoiselle*), and some erotic. "I had learned the art of concocting in the men's magazines...where nothing worthy is confidential and everything useless is exposed; the

sacred is profaned by association, and the profaned made sacred material; for without the latter the circulation of these magazines would disappear. Whatever was the fatal flaw in the American male, these magazines had found it."



Harry Roskolenko in 1950.

It's possible that a needy writer might have made inquiries in bookshops themselves. The tourist bookstores carried various kinds of erotica as well as other kinds of literature, nonfiction, text books, pamphlets, and magazines; Padell was a chief wholesaler of the latter three genres. Owners and clerks would see the advantages of steering suitable writers and artists to a publisher who knew that their customers had the kind of impulses they would not try to restrain if a "just out" package were offered them. The more "hot stuff" around, the better for the bookseller's business, although not for the publisher.



The above were possible ways a writer or artist could become wise to a sleazy, underground, and possibly subversive employer. And he or she had to be needy, otherwise a writer might have balked at playing by rules considerably more akin to racketeering than anything else the literary life might lead one to. With Mishkin, who was in the numbers game before being schooled in pornography, payments were strictly in cash; inventory was secreted in a bunker-type room in the basement of his warehouse; the markup on the manufactured book was several hundred percent; the books appeared without publisher's identification and thus violated the state's General Business Law; the subject matter was considered, despite the absence of scatology and explicit descriptions of intercourse, to be "deviant"; and in case of police action the dragnet might, as it did in 1960, include the writer.

It also included one of the typists. One was put on the stand, and the name of the other was mentioned. The latter was Virginia Admiral, an artist and a close friend of Anaïs Nin, wife of the artist Robert de Niro (they are the parents of the film star). Nin mentions in her *Diaries* that she worked in a typing service to make money. Admiral may have been one of the typists for the stories written for the Oklahoma collector. Being part of Nin's Bohemian set, she may have been quite willing to type up other erotic writing, as she obviously was for Mishkin's printer. She may never have met Mishkin, but the connection is worth mentioning.

There was a final conduit to this kind of employer: contacts in the Bohemian subculture. Gil Fox recently provided investigative journalist Doug Valentine with a fascinating story involving the Greenwich Village party scene. A CIA agent named George White, who had a supply of LSD (the agency was experimenting with it at the time), posed as a "Bohemian artist" and joined Fox's set. He used the drug to facilitate his wife-swapping adventures, to which Fox himself and his beautiful wife Valentine tells us, were partial. White, Fox remembers, lowered the inhibitions of couples who caught his fancy by putting the drug into their food or drink. One can only speculate that among the guests at Fox's Christopher Street parties may have been Harry Roskolenko and one of the Woodford Press' meal tickets, Joe Weiss. Both men had reputations as having very active libidos. Weiss, as his novels attest, fantasized about spanking women. Fetishes and lesbianism were often the subject of Fox's own writing, and of other Vixen Press books. Vixen books would of course have depended heavily on the Times Square booksellers. Fox most likely did business with Mishkin. According to a California researcher, he certainly knew Stan Malkin, who owned Seventh Avenue's Liberty Gift Shop, and had part ownership in 42nd Street's Little Book Exchange.

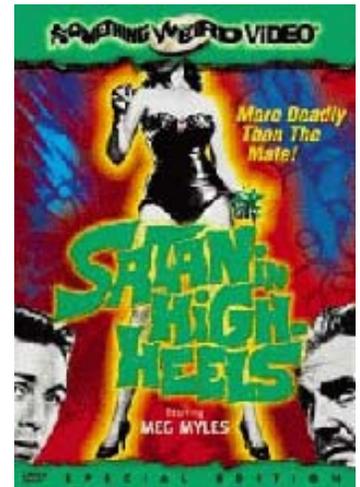


Malkin published sleaze paperbacks (*Wee Hours*, *After Hours*, *Nighty Night*, *Unique*, etc.). Some of these were by Gil Fox, who wrote under the pseudonyms of Dallas Mayo, Zane Pella, and Peter Willow (a shared house name). Eric Stanton did a lot of illustrating for Malkin, who was very generous with him and earned his respect and affection.

Other Greenwich Village social activities centered around the gay or lesbian subculture. Marijane Meeker's recent memoir of her life with Patricia Highsmith describes other writers of soft-core paperbacks with whom they spent time, discussing the assignments they had accepted from mass market paperback firms which realized the interest women as well as men had in lesbian novels. At the same time a surreptitious Midtown fetish and S-M scene was active. A publisher and distributor named Lenny Burtman was at the center of it. He and his wife, model Tana Louise, hosted swinging parties in their apartment. Burtman and

several associates financed the film *Satan in High Heels*, many scenes of which were shot there.

Mrs. Burtman appeared in his digest-sized magazines such as *Exotique*, "a new publication of the bizarre and unusual." Many copies were seized in police raids on Burtman's warehouse in 1958. *Exotique*, and other Burtman publications, were classified as deviant because of the leather, high heels, and attendant fetishes, to which the publisher appealed with stories, advertisements, drawings, photos, and correspondence from enthusiasts. Times Square bookstores carried his fetish booklets and magazines extensively, and his distribution system was more far-reaching than those of Mishkin or of Irving Klaw (whose booklets featuring bondage and flagellation were as notorious as Mishkin's). It is probable that both Bilbrew and Stanton attended Burtman's parties, if only because both illustrated Burtman's publications.



Also present were dancers, female impersonators, dominatrices, transsexuals, and aficionados of fetish clothing. Robert V. Bienvenue, who has recently prepared a dissertation on the sado-masochistic subculture in the United States and the business enterprises sustaining it, states that Burtman did extensive business with Klaw, Mishkin, and Shapiro. Unlike them, he was not only supplying furtive men with images which excited them for reasons they did not care to explore, but also filling the needs of people actively pursuing radical, deeply tabooed sexual alternatives. Burtman was a businessman not a creative artist, but he provided materials and a setting for an innovative and liberating style of expressing tabooed libidinous needs. Such an atmosphere may have lured not only dancers, actors, and photographers, but writers. The practical reason for the contact must not be lost sight of, for it would have been the same as that which brought them to Mishkin.

The urban entertainment or vice zones in which one bought erotica or porn are also integral to the creative imagination. So were the eroticized popular culture movies, music, stage shows, taxi dance halls, magazines, and books attracting people to city centers. Among the writers, artists, and film makers who have brooded upon Pre-Disney Times Square, are Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, John Reichey, Samuel Delany, Don DeLillo, Carl Hiaasen, Richard Price, Eric Bogosian, Reginald Marsh, David Fredenthal, Paul Schrader, Joseph Cates, Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, John Schlesinger, and Rem Koolhaas. In the Times Square bookstores and sex emporia danger, depredation, iconoclasm, and criminality were all present. That combination was a powerful lure.

So was the money that writers, as well as distributors and booksellers, could take home by meeting the demand for sexy books, magazines, and pictures. The result was some strange bedfellows and interesting collaborations.

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But I do expose myself in department stores... I have this raincoat...these chopped-off trouser legs sewed into the hem of the raincoat there...and I have shirt cuffs. I keep the raincoat zipped up and I have a whistle on a chain underneath, nothing else. I go into the department stores where these girls, brides to be, are just picking out their patterns-crystal, silver, and all that. They're there with the mothers and aunts and everyone, and I come in. You know, they are not used to having men come in there anyway and sort of all look at me and wonder what I'm doing. I pull out the whistle and blow it as loud as I can, then I throw open the raincoat...then I run like hell... For you who are going to write about me after I'm dead, that's one of the things I do.

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros 4*, March-April 1968

On Writing: A Personal Journey*

By Ian Williams

My goodness, Ian, I hope you get one or two more of those nights! What a way to close the year on Wegenheim, with this brilliant piece of writing about writing...Please continue!

--Bill Burns, Wegenheim, December 27,2003



Ian Williams and Rob Jackson.

It's one of those nights when I can't settle. Susan's not feeling too well and has gone to bed early, there's nothing on new on television that I want to see (not even on 100 cable channels), I'm not in the mood for a DVD or music, and I can't settle down with a book and I've been web surfing earlier. So I sit at my PC, open up My Documents and start skimming through a variety of unfinished stories and novels and background notes and synopses.

And I start thinking about writing fiction, why I wanted to do it, why I did it, and why I mostly stopped doing it

And this is it. It's about 8.30 in the evening and I'm going to take a short break to open a bottle of wine and then I'll begin. Who knows, maybe in the writing I'll tell myself something I hadn't realised.

(Break. Take the first slurp of some Hardy's Varietal Range Shiraz, a nice juicy reasonably priced--currently £10.00 for 3 bottles--strong red wine.) Note the lack of commas, there'll be a test later.

And here we go.

1.

I like writing, it's as simple as that really. I particularly like writing something which comes from me. By which I mean to exclude academic work, college essays, that kind of stuff, which was why I took to fandom in a big way when I discovered it back in 1970. I could pretty much write anything I wanted for fanzines and I pretty much did. Book reviews, poetry (in my very early days), conreps, slices of autobiography, fanfic (rarely: one of my favourite pieces was about the Surrey Limpwrist in the form of a dialogue between Ian and Janice Maule which I cheekily attributed to Maule himself, even as I sent myself up in it; it was short and, if you knew the individuals, very funny. It's strange how some things, often trivia like that piece, stick in your memory. Mike Glicksohn commented favourably on 'Maule's' writing.), book reviews, essays, etc. I don't keep a file of my fanwriting--there are a few, not all, of my fanzines in a box in the loft--and I've forgotten much of what I've written. Much of it is probably crap, especially as it was nearly all first draft, often typed directly onto stencil in the case of my fanzines. Now, of course, I view the first draft as merely the rough clay.

But what I really wanted to do was direct. By which I mean, write fiction, specifically SCIENCE FICTION.

I'd always written fiction since I first learned to write--crude stories based on comic heroes like Battler Britton. (We're talking early to mid 50's here, ladies and gentlemen.) I kept superhero sagas (and this was before Marvel), with me as the main character, going for years in my head as I walked to and from school. Adolescence and with it came a portable typewriter (thank you, mum) and typing skills (thank you, mum, a typist by profession), and screeds of fiction and the realisation that I couldn't write fiction for shit. Oh well, end of that dream, get on with life, and later, fandom.

(Punctuation is very important to the craft of writing. Just as simple thing as the placing of a comma in the last four words of the preceding paragraph was a very conscious decision. The obvious place was to put it after 'and', but I deliberately chose, for the effect, to place it before.) This has been an aside but I'll return to the subtopic later.

Then in the mid-70's I got an idea for a novel, wrote the first draft of 'Rider on a Stone Horse' and proceeded to drive all my friends mad for the next few years until it (quickly) became a standing joke. I still lacked confidence and asked Rob Jackson to collaborate with me as I felt he possessed the descriptive skills I lacked. This may have been true but the story ended up bloated and sluggish. I may write stuff that needs to be cut but generally my writing is fairly concise. I say precisely what I need to say. (Except with that sentence which is intentionally, as an example, redundant.) Thirty years on from the first draft I remain convinced that the plot, characters, and structure were essentially sound. What I lacked was the writing skill to pull it off.

Disheartened, I pretty much gave up writing fiction for a few years. I may have made stabs at other stuff during this period but if I did the manuscripts and the memory of them are all lost in time.

Then, ten years after the first draft of that novel, I had another idea. Utilise the British public (i.e. private) school story to do a realistic novel about paranormal powers. Or: a very British version of the X-men. This was roughly at the height of the Claremont/Byrne era, or it had only recently ended. So I wrote a first draft in about six weeks and felt I had something. Then I bought an Amstrad pcw 8256 word processor, the machine which might have had the most individual effect on my particular life. It made rewriting easy.

And it made it fun.

Now I began to learn how to write. My creativity was unleashed. While this first draft was going round the Gannets (my local fan group, not fans of mine, though I'm sure they were, but the sf fan group I started in 1970) I wrote another novel. It may have been a rewrite of *Rider* or a sequel to the new one, whatever. I did a rewrite, passed that one around and meanwhile wrote the first draft of yet another novel. Over a five-year period I wrote a total of seven novels of which the first drafts (around 50-70,000 words) took about six to eight weeks to write.

As you can imagine, this was an enormously creative period for me as well as probably the most psychologically damaging as I lived for writing and its aids--a constant flow of cigarettes and home-made red wine. But who cares, I was not only learning (with the help of others) the craft of writing fiction, I was also discovering what it was that I wanted to write about. The novel which became *The Lies That Bind* evolved into something far more subtle than I originally envisaged as I realised I was partly writing about the Outsider figure in society, but also how we allow society to mould us rather than becoming the person we would otherwise choose to be. There's also a sting in the tail as the hero fails. He succeeds as an individual but ultimately he changes nothing.

It was the only one of the novels to be published. Two became unpublishable when it was accepted as a teenage novel - I'd written it as an adult book and written two sequels. Another non-sf novel was unpublishable and, therefore, so was its sequel. The final novel was written as a hack adventure for the publisher Robert Hale which then dropped its sf line about the time I finished it. It amused me but it wasn't very good.

Only one of them was, I felt, worthy of being published. One of the things I learned was that my writing style loosened up when I wasn't writing about a character I could identify with i.e. the misunderstood but essentially good-hearted hero (feel free to blow a raspberry). So, under the influence of Jaime Hernandez's *locas* (and a couple of writers I can't now remember), I wrote 'I Was A Teenage Lesbian'.

Only joking. That wasn't the title. But it was the plot. I called it 'Tides'. It opens early in the morning on the beach by Dunstanburgh castle in Northumberland where drunk and depressed 18-year-old Debbie is draining the dregs of a bottle of whiskey as she reflects on the events that have brought her there. Three years earlier she is uprooted from London (where she presented herself as a working class hardcase) by her lecturer mother to a middle class environment in Newcastle (inverting the usual clichés). She makes friends but has a crush on Rachel an older girl who hates her. After a drunken Christmas party pass at her, Debbie makes the girl look a fool and then has sex with her boyfriend to convince everyone she's not gay. (This is a real oversimplification.) She has a difficult relationship with her intellectual and sexually active mother which is a major part of the story. Eventually Debbie and Rachel do become lovers but when Rachel goes to university in Newcastle she becomes involved with a radical lesbian group which does nothing for Debbie and they split up. Drunk and aggressive she confronts her mother and ends up hitting her. The novel ends with a reconciliation between Debbie and her mother on the beach and Debbie's acceptance of the person she's become.

About the time I finished it, Virago Press cancelled the publication of a novel by a writer they discovered was a man. *Tides*, I honestly believe, would have been publishable but for my sex. It was an honest sensitive story written for teenagers and I really thought it was as good if not better than *Lies*. I'd like to reread it but I don't have a copy as it was written on the long-defunct Amstrad, I chucked out my paper copy, and Gamma has (or more likely had) the only other paper copy. Unlike other writings of mine, I've never been tempted to reconstruct it. Maybe it was of its time. Certainly in the 18 years since, attitudes to homosexuality in this country have become more liberal and Debbie (being a bolshy bitch) wouldn't feel the need to hide it. Hell, these days she'd wear it as badge of pride and fuck anyone who had a problem with it.

1988. I started an Open University foundation course in Social Sciences. On the same course was

Susan. We got married that August. A couple of months later Simon & Schuster bought *Lies* and published it the following year as part of a new upmarket teenage fiction line which failed. *Lies* was the only title in the line which made it into the official best children's books of the year list.

By then I was living with Susan in her flat in a block owned by a housing association. Susan had three years leave of absence from her job while she did a full time degree - History of Modern Art, Design, & Film - at Newcastle Polytechnic. Apart from being involved in her college work (I typed up all her essays, helped her structure them and kept an eye open for incorrect grammar), we were both on the resident's association committee. I came home from a late night at the library to a general meeting to find I'd been elected chair. Several months later I was deposed in a coup, those involved did a crap job, tried to scrap the association but were outvoted and I was voted into the post of secretary deposing the mastermind who'd got me ousted as chair. But that's another story. The people on Susan's course were a good bunch and we went to several parties and do's, one couple becoming particularly good friends.

Writing? Who had time for writing? For the first time in years I was living a real life rather than the one inside my head. I'd also drastically cut down on smoking and drinking.

I did eventually find the time and inclination for writing but it wasn't easy. I wrote the first draft of a horror/social realism novel about a group of friends who lived in a block of flats owned by a housing association in a town that suspiciously resembled Sunderland. A few years later, after we'd bought a house, I became a born-again veggie and wrote the first draft of a teenage sf novel which utilised certain paranormal elements from *Lies* but was more veggie polemic. It had some good things in it but... I also wrote 10,000 words of a book on how and why teenagers could and should go veggie.

And that was pretty much my last gasp as a writer of fiction. It was pretty much the last gasp of the Amstrad. Since then... It's just after ten and I've drunk half a bottle of wine. We've had the facts, now it's time for me to reflect. But not tonight. Right now I'm too close to it, a little too affected by alcohol, a little too tired, and so far I don't think I've uncovered any insights into something that is important to me, that is as much a part of me as my love for cats. (A couple of nights ago we delivered some cat food to a lady who rescues strays. Her own pet was an elderly bulldog which lay sprawled out on the living room carpet. I knelt down next to it and began stroking it and scratching its ears and chin. After a couple of minutes it slowly lumbered to its feet and raised a paw for me to take. This has nothing to do with writing but it touched me and I wanted to share it with you.)

2.

One of the things I learned was the craft of writing and of writing fiction. I'm not pretending I mastered it, though I did attain a certain competency, but what I did develop was appreciation of the craft and an enjoyment of its practise. It didn't come easy and, as I said, I had a bit of help from friends and professional writers. Rewriting, which had once been such a chore, became a pleasure. Once that first draft was out of the way and I knew what the story was really about, I could really get down to the proper work of crafting the prose. The simple journeyman craftsmanship of varying the tenses, varying the structure of the sentences, the lengths of the paragraphs, knowing where to begin and where to end, the crafting of description and metaphor (the hardest of all, I found). Character and dialogue I tend to think you either get or you don't. You can work at it but if you don't have the understanding or the ear (or can create characters who can speak the dialogue you write) then you're screwed (and feel free to disagree).

To me, and I'm digressing again, the most important aspect of all in fiction is having a character that you want to know about. They don't have to be sympathetic or even good but they have to engage your emotions. I've put down numerous well-written novels because I just didn't give a fuck about the characters. You might want to strangle them or slap them across the face but at least they're involving you. But if you don't care about them then either the author didn't or simply didn't do a good enough job.

Good characters can get you through times of lousy plot but good plot can't get you through times of lousy characters - to paraphrase The Furry Freak Brothers. Me, I couldn't, I can't, write characters I don't care about.

Sometimes I think it's not just the craft of writing fiction that I enjoyed so much as that I enjoy the craft of writing English prose (as opposed to French or German prose, naturally, of which I know nothing). I enjoy using the English language in a written/printed form. Just today in *The Times* T2 supplement was a piece several thousand words long on the use of the comma. The writer, Lynne Truss, is the author of a current bestseller *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* on the use of English Grammar and I can't wait to read it. Actually, I'm going to have to as I've ordered it from Amazon and only afterwards noticed it takes 4-5 weeks to arrive. Anyway, I avidly and enthusiastically read these several thousand words about the use of the comma as I recognised examples of both excellent and appalling uses and of how its incorrect use can change the entire meaning of a sentence. Truss also writes about different theories on the use of the comma. Fascinating.

A recent addition to the city library stock was the *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*, a lovely extensive large format hardback several hundred pages long and I intend to spend several hours over the next few days dipping in and out of it.

Look, I'm not coming at this from the position of a knowledgeable pedant, though being pedantic is, I confess, part of my nature. I couldn't tell you what a subjunctive clause is to save my life; though I bet I can use one properly. Which isn't to say I don't have a good basic knowledge of grammar, of course I do. One of things I learned early on about writing is that you have to know the rules to be able to break them otherwise you just have bad writing and believe me you can tell the difference. Pedantry on the use of grammar is stifling and stultifying. The English language is flexible and constantly changing and you have to adapt - for years I hated the word 'proactive' but now use it casually, and appropriately - though God forbid we ever get to the stage where "apple's" and "pear's" denote plurals. And the word "strawberry's" makes me want to vomit. (I initially capitalised that final word for the sake of emphasis but decided it was both ugly and unnecessary.)

Bob Monkhouse, the famous British comedian, died (as this is being written) yesterday aged 75. He may well have been the last of the great comedians to come to the fore shortly after the end of the Second World War. He was certainly the best and most intelligent, far better than Eric Morecambe or Tommy Cooper, able to work on several levels from compere and quiz show host to being the finest standup comedian of his or any generation. He possessed immaculate timing and a ready willingness to send himself up. But more than anything else, he was a writer (he was also an sf fan, just ask Rog Peyton); he wrote gags but he worked on them and honed them till they shone - "I want to die sleeping peacefully like my father; not screaming in terror like his passengers". His two volumes of autobiography are also perhaps the best written of any showbiz star's. He knew how to use language in the service of his aims and did it, on his level, superbly. The reason I mention this, apart from a genuine sadness over the death of someone I admired and I admire few people, is to make the point that the effective use of English can be harnessed in many different ways and it is worth noticing how it is used in different contexts. I would suggest looking at political speeches by way of comparison but life's too short.

(Now I could have signposted the gag, my own small tribute to Bob, at the end by the appropriate use of a comma, however, I chose to let the sentence run on so that you'd be reading this one until you pause as you realise you'd just overrun a cynical smart-arsed remark. Or I could just be trying to show you what a clever little shite I am.)

After three years in a flat we bought the house we are currently living in. (Wot, no segue into a drastic change of subject? Well, no.) It hadn't much changed since it was built in 1926 and had been lived in for most of that time by the same person - we bought it from her heir - and it needed everything doing to it.

This is just a partial list of things we did or had done: garage built; kitchen extension built; one bedroom made into two; total stripping of all wallpaper and paint; complete replastering of all walls and ceilings; stripping and varnishing all doors; stripping and varnishing the bannisters; scrubbing with a wire brush and washing every square inch of floorboard several times following the replastering; rewired, centrally heated, new kitchened and new bathroomed; chimney breast removed; the garden relawned and replanted (only one flowering bush remains). Every spare moment of most of my spare time for nearly a year was spent at that house. Surprisingly I didn't even attempt a story about a bunch of paranormals who lived together and refurbished a house. Then came my veggie phase as detailed earlier.

About seven or eight years ago we started getting into helping animal rescues. The (true) old bulldog story was planted as a foreshadowing. Susan's parents had, for some time, collected stuff and, during the late spring and summer months, sold it at boot fairs, sending the proceeds to various national and international organisations like IFAW (world wildlife) and NAAVS (anti-vivisection). Turning 80, this had become too much for them so Susan and I took it over and not long after we heard of Wendy's Ark, a local animal rescue which we then started helping. This is a saga on its own so I'm cutting it very short. The upshot of it was in 2002 we opened a charity shop to raise money for Wendy and other local animal rescues (I'm treasurer and dogsbody) and a few months ago a new group dedicated to creating a permanent animal rescue in Sunderland was formed and I'm the chair.

So, as you can imagine, writing fiction has taken a backseat since then. What I have done is a series of false starts, mostly attempts at reimagining or reworking earlier material. I'd rewritten my very first complete novel, the old 'Rider on a Stone Horse', changing the title, back in my fever pitch of writing during the mid-80's; now, in the new multicultural millennium Britain, I saw a way to recast it, keeping the plot and characters, but changing the setting and subtext. The novel had initially been born out of nuclear fear and the student 'rebellions' of the late sixties and had been set in a post-nuclear holocaust setting. Now I imagined it more like a fantasy novel (though it wasn't) set in a parallel world where the followers of a Spartan Christ-figure fled to Africa and India and it was from these two continents that 'Christianity' emerged to conquer the world. There's a lot more to the background than that but it's of interest only to me. What is also important to me was that I'd revitalised a story I'd first conceived over 25 years ago. I sat down with renewed enthusiasm.

And gave up after about 15,000 words. I was just too familiar with plot and characters to keep it up for a third attempt (cheap sexual reference intended). I just couldn't do it. Much as I loved it I was bored with it. It might have been different if I could have changed the plot but essentially it was just the trimmings and I'd lived with it too long.

Something similar happened with the teenage sf veggie novel. The actual idea wasn't too bad, the plot was okay, and the characters were good (i.e. I liked them). What I thought I could do was tweak it a little. Originally it was a linear narrative with viewpoint alternating between heroine and hero. Now I had the bright idea to set this in the form of a flashback, a narrative being read by their teenage daughter. The daughter knows of two eco-terrorists who disappeared years ago after being involved in several underground wars and the meltdown of chunks of Antarctica, she just didn't know they were her (now-divorced) parents and what she reads is, essentially, an origin story accompanied by her reactions and conversations with her mother.

I wrote a few thousand words in a sharp spunky style and, once again, ran out of steam. Back to the drawing board.

I'd always been fond of an episodic novel, a sequel to *Lies*, I'd written set in The Home, a refuge/prison for paranormals who weren't up to scratch in one way or another. The longest story concerned a teacher whose wife has just left him so he jumps head first off a cliff and finds himself flying. Then his life gets really complicated. I thought I could rework it, sometimes radically, into a complete novel. There was only

one major character from *Lies* making a significant appearance so it would work as a standalone. This time I managed 20,000 words before running out of steam.

I looked over all this stuff from time to time and quite enjoyed reading it. It had promise, it wasn't badly written. It was - oh Christ - it was worthy. It is all in the best possible taste, leavened with humour, but about serious subjects. Worthy. What a godawful criticism.

Time to stand back, I thought, and look at what I enjoy. Okay, I read a lot of crime fiction. I just can't write it. I've tried, I just don't have the mind for it. I like comics--been there done that with *Lies*. I like lesbian porn. Ookay, passing swiftly on to... Horror movies. I love horror movies! I love horror movies with bad taste and a good sense of humour. *Evil Dead 2* rules! Peter Jackson's *Braindead* rules! *Re-animator* rules! *Return of the Living Dead Part 3* (trust me, it's a good movie) rules!

I'll write a totally meretricious novel in the worst possible taste. What do I need? Lesbians! Debbie my lesbian from *Tides* all grown up lecturing in sociology and hanging with a (she doesn't know it, cannibal) witch coven. Her lover is a heterosexual mixed-race Jewish lawyer called Rachel who looks like Halle Berry. I could use characters from that old horror/social realism novel, and that unfinished horror comedy I haven't mentioned until now. Debbie's been turned/is turning into a zombie and the happy couple have to travel the supernatural highways and byways of Britain to find a cure, and let's not forget the parallel worlds and the great surprise ending.

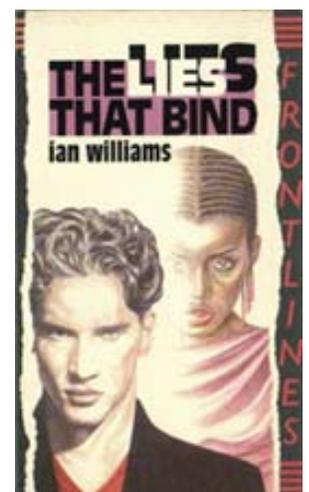
I wrote two chapters and they were both worthy.

I couldn't write bad taste even when I wanted to. I spent most of the two chapters outlining their relationship and realised I didn't have enough story anyway. Godly for things not done. I'm not against self-discipline, in fact I'm a very strong advocate of it, but I believe it's only of use when you're motivated. Writing, whether it's fiction or nonfiction, is a part of me and when I write I write for the love of it, for the enjoyment of the act of writing. It's nice if other people get to read what I've written, even nicer if they enjoy it and let me know, but at heart, when I do it I do it for myself and that will do me.

Last bit coming up now.

A few months ago I read my one published novel - *The Lies That Bind* - for the first time in several years. I expected to find it clumsily written, full of scenes which would make me cringe. To my genuine surprise, it held up well. On its own terms, as a contemporary teenage sf novel, it actually is pretty good and effectively written, it has a certain substance and it has meaning.

For most of us our achievements are small. We can't all be award-winning professional writers or acclaimed musicians or famous politicians. Our footprints in history are tiny and soon fade away. Our triumphs, when and if they come, are small ones. *The Lies That Bind* is my small personal triumph (thankfully not my only one), and that will do me very nicely indeed.



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*Written from December 3, 2003 to January 1, 2004. Revised from a Wegenheim posting. Special thanks to Dave Langford and Peter Weston for help with this article.

Getting An Education

By J.G. Stinson



Jan says of this photo, "I've given up gunslinging. As you can see, I haven't changed much in 20 years except for increasing my mass, which I am attempting to reverse, but slowly."

Readers are warned that this will not be much of a one-handed read, as I still have family alive.

Going through adolescence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with the social and political events of that era, I was more curious than worried about sex. I lived in an area of Maryland that, at the time, had very good libraries (public and school) and staff that must have been interested in the plethora of books being published that chronicled the women's liberation movement, the peace movement, the development of rock music, and the civil-rights movement. As a result, I could find just about any book I wanted on nearly any topic that interested me.

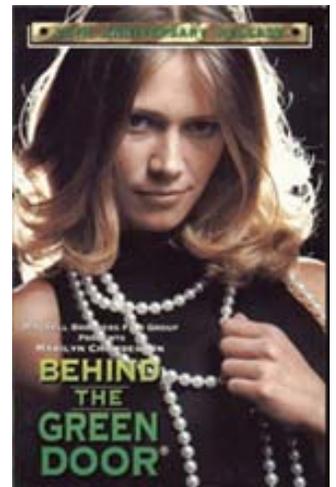
A brief tour of my romantic life reveals that I first got interested in boys in fifth grade, and started dating in 11th or 12th grade. Until that point, my short stature and chubby appearance weren't a guy magnet. But something amazing happened to me in the summer between my junior and senior year of high school: I grew a couple inches and lost 20 pounds, without trying. In my senior year, dates started, and then my first "steady" boyfriend wandered into my life (and wandered back out about a year later, may he rot in hell). By the time I graduated from high school, I had experienced my first love and first heartbreak.

That's the backdrop. Now, add to that the library haunting I did starting around 1970, during which time I read stacks of books all having to do with the topics mentioned in that second paragraph up there. One of them was the Boston Women's Health Collective's now-famous tome, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. What a mass of useful information that was to me as a young girl. Looking back, I feel privileged to have lived at the time when it first appeared; teenagers today take for granted so much of what was new and a challenge to the status quo when I was their age. I never had to worry about AIDS until after I had started my military service.

As I progressed from junior high to high school, I read more and more about sex. How the male and female bodies work, what drives sexual desire in both, the physical aspects of arousal and intercourse, and sexually transmitted diseases. I didn't want to pick up anything I didn't want, you might say. The mechanics of sex caught the interest of the scientifically based portion of my mind first. I learned a great deal from this reading, but it was all mental, and I needed something else, but didn't know what.

Then I found out about adult films.

I don't recall the first X-rated film I ever saw, but I do recall the first R-rated film I saw which contained a "sex" scene in it, and that was *Zardoz* in 1974. I can hear the groans from here, believe me. For those still blissfully ignorant, this was a 20th Century Fox film directed by John Boorman and starring Sean



Connery, Charlotte Rampling, Sara Kestelman, and John Alderton. The John Brosnan/Peter Nicholls-authored entry in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Clute and Nicholls, eds., St. Martin's Press, 1995 [with updates]) has some interesting things to say about this film.

"A future society is divided into 2 regions: the Vortex and the Outlands, separated by an impenetrable Force Field. Within the Vortex live the Eternals, immortal and given to a decadent aestheticism, while in the Outlands dwell the Brutals, including a group called the Exterminators whose job is to keep the population level down."

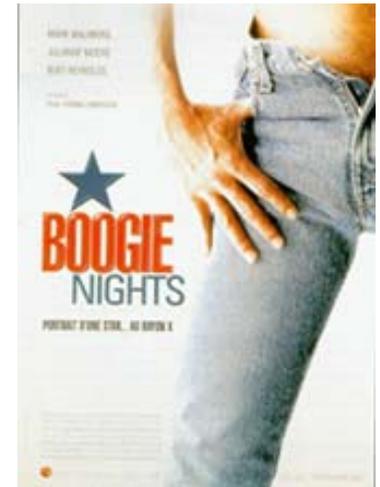


Aargh, indeed. I still wonder why Sean Connery ever took the part of Zed the Brutal Exterminator (sounds like a character from a Gor novel). Anyone interested in learning more about the scanty plot can read the Brosnan/Nicholls entry.

This was the first film I ever saw which depicted sex in more than a euphemistic way, and the sex scene was a rather violent one as I recall. I'd read enough SF by this time to realize that Boorman's story was old hat as far as SFnal ideas were concerned. The sexual content caught my interest because I'd never seen anyone "do it" on screen (or in real life, for that matter).

Thus began my education.

In college and then during nine years of military service, I saw X-rated films which I filed away in my mind for future reference. Some of those films were quite useful in my intimate experiences. Though I'd heard much about them, I never did see *Debbie Does Dallas* or *Behind the Green Door*. But I did see *Boogie Nights*, and that was another eye-opener. With the advent of cable TV, a plethora of adult-content programming became available, and I watched a lot of it. The deliberate vagueness here is intentional; like I said, I still have family alive.



What I learned from watching X-rated films:

1. Too much of anything gets boring after a while.
2. A lot of what's depicted in these films can be successfully employed in one's personal life.
3. They can be very, very funny.

For application in intimate situations, these three things taught me that variety is better even when repetition is asked for, that X-rated films which show lots of sex but no violent sex aren't harmful to the "normal" human being, and that there is some art to making a good porno movie - and it's based on humor that's finely tuned. I also learned that a lot of those apparently impossible *Kama Sutra* "poses" are actually possible.

Today, there's so much adult content in movies and TV that one can hardly avoid it. Because I'm a parent now, I monitor what my child watches not because I don't want him to find out about sex (he already knows from school health classes), but because I want him to have a healthy, balanced perspective of it. I intend to raise a boy to become a man who knows himself first, and has the compassion and generosity to learn about others as well. We talk about a lot of things, my son and I, and as he nears the teen years, I feel even more obligated to keep those lines of communication open.

X-rated films (pornography is such a pejorative term) and a wide range of reading material gave me the information I needed to make informed choices about what I wanted, how I wanted it, and what I was willing and able to give in intimate situations. I think everyone should have been so lucky.

My motives for writing are utopian. I want my country to be what it promises to be and what it can easily afford to be. It can be a much better country. I am enraged with the condition it is in now. I don't give a damn if pot is legalized or not. I'm not afraid to say "shit" in public, but I don't think it is a particularly useful thing to do. I will not weep if we never get a man on the moon.

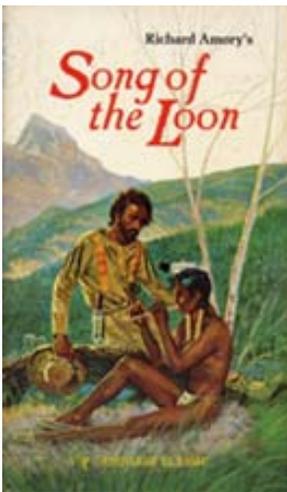
--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros* 4, March-April 1968

Love in Loon*

By Earl Kemp

One of the aspects of creeping senility lies within cherishing and fondling favorite old nostalgic fragments of the past. Many of them are evoked by watching old movies and, because I have so much time on my hands these days, I've been doing a lot of that.

Somewhere along the late 1960s, I encountered a rare and unique phenomenon in the form of an excitingly different manuscript. Bill Moore was the first reader at Greenleaf Classics at the time. He was one of those rare people who are so very good at their job as to become almost invisible, to me at least, but he was championed regularly by Pete Cooper, the editor-in-chief, because of Bill's insight and his right-on comments. If Bill didn't like the project, it never got anywhere close to an editor and if he really liked it, it got marked for my personal attention.



The particular manuscript that started a mini revolution in sleaze book publishing was an oddity named *The Song of the Loon*, written by an unknown Richard Amory.

In science fiction parlance, it was an alternate universe book. It dealt with a world where there were no females. None. Zilch. It never bothered to explain how reproduction took place or how replacement males came about, but that was all sort of minor. The emphasis in the novel was on the physical and amorous interactions of those males. It wasn't that they were making do with what they had; it was a natural condition for them and they evidenced no other concept.

It presented males, male sexuality, masculine forms and bodies, in a whole different way than they had ever been revealed before in literature, to the best of my knowledge at least. Before I had even finished reading the manuscript I knew that it would be really big as a book. I bought it instantly and began production on a first class presentation of it.

The writer Richard Amory turned out to be Richard Love, a schoolteacher in Hayward, California. The book was so different from anything that had ever been submitted to Greenleaf Classics before that he intrigued me and I invited him to San Diego to meet the editorial staff. I had done that on less than a dozen occasions before, when writers appeared to be so exceptional to the general rule that all of us who worked with them wanted to know more about them.

Usually, the problem was the opposite, fighting off the writers who wanted to come and visit us.

Richard Love turned out to be an extreme closet case. Not only was he a schoolteacher that, in the 1960s excluded even the thought and concept of homosexuality, but also he was using the standard obligatory married with small children as a front. He was absolutely terrified that he would in some way be associated with the book, revealed in his true identity, outed from his repressed sexuality, and fired from his job. He made all kinds of preconditions upon acceptance of his manuscript, the least of which was an absolute promise that in no manner would his position ever be compromised and that he was to be maintained totally separate from his book. And he got that, in spades...so much so that, later, his biggest complaint was that we "cut him out" of everything related to the book. Sometimes you get what you ask for, so the cliché says.

Not only that, he was offensively aggressive to every female he got close to, constantly leering (sort of like Robert Heinlein in that respect), hitting on them, pretend propositioning them, and in general randying around in what he thought was correct heterosexual posturing.

In other words, as a person he was really difficult to be around. The sort most people go way out of their way to avoid.

Because his manuscript was so exceptional, and the book so successful, we had to tolerate him and keep after him for more and more "sequels."

Then along came the movie people, sniffing after film rights. Sawyer Productions Ltd. purchased the film rights to *Song of the Loon* after some prolonged and interesting negotiations. I wrote of this, in part, in "Acres of Nubile Flesh" elsewhere in this issue of *el*.

Along the way, I was invited to the location shooting in Big Pines and Trinity Alps in northern California, and of course I went. In those days, I couldn't get enough of watching movies take shape, even the hard-core sets I was invited to during filming sessions, or especially those.

I found myself, on the set of *Song of the Loon*, surrounded by dozens and dozens of hunky high school teenage jocks hired to play the parts of Indians. They were also acres of nubile flesh, stripped down, full body painted, then covered by provocative, miniature loincloths.

The set was lavish and elaborate, an entire Indian village spread out along the shoreline of a river...teepees, tethered and loose animals, artifacts, fires in fire rings, and everything else one could imagine might have been in an Indian village. There was a large catering area where all those jocks were fed, along with the real cast members, the crew, and me...the invited guest.



I spent a number of days there, with those guys, getting to know them. I liked John Iverson ("Cyrus Wheelwright"), who played the top man, but didn't like Morgan Royce ("Ephriam Maciver") who had the bottom position. And then I went back to San Diego and to reality and the workaday drudgery of

producing an endless chain of masturbatory fantasies for our eagerly awaiting and turgidly aroused sleaze book buyers.

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A bit later I received an invitation to the Gala Grand Premiere of *Song of the Loon*, and made quick plans to attend the showing at a major theater (name forgotten) in Los Angeles already known for presenting gay films to a specialized gay audience. I had been in and out of the fringes of that world a few times, invited to special parties by some of our better selling gay writers. Victor J. Banis and Sam Dodson, who were partners at the time, were high on that list and often invited me to some of their affairs. There was also Walt Leibscher in Silverlake and I also visited, with Frank Robinson, some of his friends in Laurel Canyon (they called it "Boy's Town"). Because of those contacts, I wasn't totally surprised by the things that went on at the Gala Grand Premiere.

Sawyer Productions Ltd. had gone all out for the occasion, and that included inviting every prominent homosexual in Southern California not known to be hiding in closets. There was a master of ceremonies and many introductions of notables in the audience who went onstage and did minor skits or took bows to loud applause. I particularly remember Charles Pierce, who was the reigning drag queen of the era, a perfect Bette Davis, who did a mini performance. He was followed by Jim Bailey, the upcoming drag queen apparent, who turned out to be an excellent Barbra Streisand within a few years. And many other stars now long forgotten.

When they finally got around to showing the film, it was anticlimactic. The audience loved the picture, but what else could you expect from such a select crowd? (Somewhat like watching Bush perform before a crowd of hand-picked pseudo admirers, with him saying nothing and them going into well-rehearsed wild applause following his every third insignificant word. Almost as if they expected the populace to believe they somehow reflected the opinions of the expendable citizens that Bush routinely fucks over for the financial benefit of his owners.) There were constant cheers, and oohs and aahs as various different characters appeared on screen, especially if they were nude and full frontal, and there was a segment of the audience that equally appreciated the rear approach. In fact, the catcalls and cheers so intruded upon the soundtrack that most of it was missed entirely. By the end of the film, you would have thought that that crowd had seen the very best movie every created.

Boy, were they wrong!

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About this point in time, shortly after that Gala Grand Premiere, Richard Love underwent an abrupt life change. He was divorced and came screaming and swishing out of his secret closet like a mincing maricon. If he had any power, he could have been an equal to the all time ultimate faggot, John Edgar Hoover. Fortunately, he was powerless, but he nevertheless went on long, swishing rants about how he had been mistreated at Greenleaf Classics, and deliberately cut out from any participation in the film (including especially the script that he never wrote. I repeat this data because I have seen numerous websites claiming he was the scriptwriter. There is no writing credit attached to the film itself and it certainly looks as if no one worked on it at all).

And, the worst part of all, Love singled me out as being the sole person who would not allow him to participate in any of the terribly exciting events surrounding the book, or the film and its Gala Grand Premiere. Along the way, he gave me the grandest testament and seal of approval I had received up to that point in time. Richard Love said of me that I was much too heterosexual to ever understand the true meaning of love. To this day I still thank him for his correct and astute diagnosis.

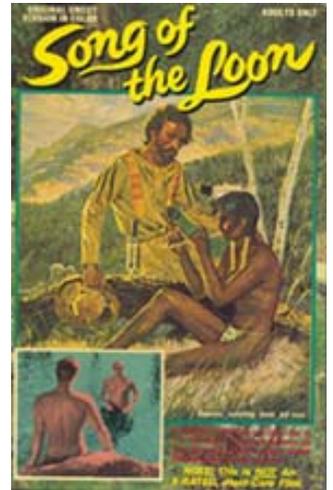
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Recently, some 30 years after the fact and out of curiosity alone, I borrowed a copy of the film and sat down alone, in the privacy of my own living room, and watched *Song of the Loon* from start to finish.

What an awful experience...what a dreadfully bad film. No part of it remains praiseworthy including the Eastmancolor processing. The acting is unbelievably stiff, awkward, and inept. The dialogue (erroneously attributed to a "script by Richard Amory") so banal as to be contemptible and delivered in a mock stodgy style that is difficult to describe.

In fact, I couldn't believe that the film had ever been well received, appreciated, or even momentarily applauded.

A total waste of my viewing time, all 89 minutes of it.



I hasten to add that there is no doubt that it was a significant milestone as far as gay liberation was concerned. Fortunately for Greenleaf Classics, the book far outdid the film in that regard and has been wildly and enthusiastically praised from all over the world.

(Curiously, the video I borrowed included a short film - with no reference to it anywhere on the video itself - starring the well-hung enigma John Holmes. The short about a bisexual long, named "A Problem of Size," immediately followed the feature. In it Holmes was seeking a sex partner without any luck. Everyone who saw his genitals ran from him in terror. Holmes was very young when it was filmed, not yet jaded and burned out by his phenomenal popularity and his staggering drug abuse. It was an interesting experience seeing it - the short film; I had seen *it* many times already - for the first time.)

And, the worst part of the whole experience was that there was no conclusion to *Song of the Loon*. It just ended abruptly without any resolution of any alleged ongoing plot string. Sort of like Sawyer decided that enough was enough at 89 minutes and the film was over and he could go back to loving his young hunk star again.

And, to my surprise, not one single frame of the portions I watched being filmed survived to appear in the flick. Not one frame. Not one naked high school jock with feathers in his hair and Max Factor Indian No. 5 up his ass. Not one glimpse of that huge, elaborate Indian village stretched out along the waterfront. All that was wasted effort, expensive but wasted. No way to make a movie, I suspect.

These days, thanks to digital video, no one has to work nearly as hard as they did in the 1970s.

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An Afterthought

By Victor J. Banis

I personally never had any sort of contact with Amory, which seems odd, since we certainly must have crossed paths. I heard at the time from other sources that he was a major asshole. I also heard that the movie was unwatchable. I hate to be a party pooper but I thought the books were hysterically bad. I think - very much so - that you did the right thing in publishing them and they were certainly very influential to our (my) cause. But if you go back and read them now, I suspect you will have much the same reaction

that you did to viewing the film. He was unbearably pretentious without, alas, the real talent to back it up. However, as I have said elsewhere, the books (like Joe Hansen's detective stories and - forgive me - the C.A.M.P. books; and so much of what Greenleaf published) gave us gays of the era permission to see ourselves in new roles, in a new light, and so much helped the gay movement as it was then unfolding.

Why did we see the books and the movie so differently at the time? For one thing, and it shouldn't be underestimated, we wanted to. And, we were a little drunk on the idea of new roles, new playing fields. Why not? These were heady experiences; and, the salt in the air from all the sea-changes that were coming probably got in our eyes. Oh, of course, some of the other things we ingested might have played a role, too. Hard to say at this remove. Anyway, I'm glad he wrote the books, grateful that you published them, and I will have teeth removed without Novocain before reading them again. But, to be honest, I feel the same way about some of what I wrote then. It wasn't all deathless prose. Only the mediocre artist is always at his best.

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*In memory of Richard Love who got everything he ever deserved. Special thanks to Robert Spray for the loan of the videotape and to Victor J. Banis for vetting this piece. Dated June 2004.

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"

Acres of Nubile Flesh*

Original artwork by William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

Where do they all come from?

Bodies all over the place, everywhere you looked, stumbling over each other trying to be next in line. Where do they all come from?

There was a while, back during the late 1960s and on into the '70s, when I was buying people by the ton. It sure seemed that way, at least. After Greenleaf Classics began buying magazines filled with photos of naked people packaged by outside contractors, I began growing annoyed with the types of people they were using as models. Somehow, they were doing things all wrong, I contended. They should be paying attention to what those people look like at least, and cleaning up some of them considerably ahead of time.

Naturally, I figured I could pick desirable people out as well as the next guy, and hopefully a little bit better while I was at it. I had no sooner begun contacting Los Angeles area modeling agencies when they started barraging me with telephone calls themselves. I had no idea there were so many modeling agencies in the entire state, much less in Hollywood alone. Each one of those agencies had loose leaf notebooks filled with Polaroid photos of naked people for me to look at...lots and lots of loose leaf notebooks. It was much easier that way, flipping the pages, looking at the naked people trying to smile up at me from within those loose leaves.

This one. Another. Damn, he's hung; hire him. The redhead...and on and on....

The next step was for some of those agents to invite me to visit their offices in Los Angeles and see how they operated. Because I was curious, and frequently in Los Angeles, I began stopping by some of those modeling agencies that I did business with and getting to know the people who operated them a bit better.

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The most astonishing thing about those modeling agencies, and it didn't matter which one you were talking about because they were all rubber stamp exact duplicates of each other, was the number of people just trying to get inside the front door and start working instantly...any kind of work. Outside on the streets, during those years, there was frequently a line of those wannabees, tomorrow's Really Big Moving Picture Stars, or used-up innocents waiting patiently for their moment in the spotlight.

Where do they all come from? All over the United States and some foreign countries, and each of them knows that they alone have that certain something that the world has been waiting for oh these long and uneventful years. *I am here at last!*

Most of those modeling agencies consisted of one large central room off which three or four at most small private offices opened. Besides the receptionist who doubled as a security guard, there were three or four other desks with busy clerks seated at them, writing letters, answering phones, and trying to keep up with whatever was going on around them while trying to not appear too voyeuristic.

The receptionist had the biggest and most difficult role of all; she had to stop everyone who entered that office and confront them. Most of them were actor or model types, just in town that morning after a long and grueling road trip and ready for the limelight. The receptionist had each one of them fill out a small reference sheet with things like names, addresses, and phone numbers on them. Then the receptionist would tell them to strip and stand on the line painted on the floor next to the wall facing her desk.

Those babes in the woods would gulp, blush, and quickly strip, leaving their clothes piled up right there on the reception room floor. They would stand naked and afraid right in the middle of all the goings-on in that office, all the people standing around gawking at them, the other newcomers in line working their way slowly into the office, ready for the sacrifice. Then they would walk to the wall, turn and stand on the line while the receptionist slowly took Polaroid snaps of each aspiring model...full frontal, full profile, full rear...and staple those prints to each applicant's filled-out information form.

And that was it. The end. 99% of those people never heard from that agency again. At the end of each day, most of those application forms and Polaroid photos were unceremoniously filed away in the dumpster out behind the agency's office. The remaining one percent, the irresistibly attractive beauty, the really sculptured musculature, the breasts to die for...are hired and started on their naked way to fame and fortune.

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The Crossroads of America complex in Hollywood housed two such agencies. On the street side, on the



Linda Lovelace was the first great star of mass media dating audiences for feature length sex films. Using her special talents, she made *Deep Throat* a world-class movie.

second floor, was one of the biggest and most active agencies in town. Naturally, time has done it to me again and I cannot remember the name of the agency or of anyone operating it. Just beyond them and opening into the central court of the complex was a second agency, and my memory fails me again on both that agency's name and its operators.

The thing I do remember is that Mel Blanc, the voice actor famous for Warner Brothers Looney Tunes cartoons, had a suite of offices just beyond the second agency. It was commonplace for Blanc, somehow interested in the nude form as is most everyone else, to drop in unexpectedly, frequently, and ogle the flesh while pretending to be just neighborly. Everyone around there seemed to like him quite a bit, but not for that reason.

The street-front, second-floor agency was operated by a middle-aged man who lived with a 16-year-old male lover who was featured frequently in his photo sets. The inner-court agency was operated by a male and female couple who were very attractive and very asexual; neither had a foot in reality. All these people would visit me separately and often at my office in Greenleaf Classics in San Diego and my residence in El Cajon.

The two males even talked me into my very first public nude outing. [I did not consider private party nudity among close friends as being taxing on my capabilities, but flaunting whatever there wasn't to flaunt in the general public was something else entirely.] This took place in the mid- to late sixties at The Swallows Sun Island Resort just outside El Cajon. It was a very large, well-equipped, nudist estate incorporating, among other things, a trailer park for full-time naked living. Years later I was surprised to discover that my dear old friend "Uncle" Milton Luros was one of the principal owners of the resort.

Later, Petey Dixon, my managing editor at Greenleaf, turned out to be a card-carrying member of The Swallows [a private resort] and I would go there occasionally with him and his guests. In time, looking at all those naked people became commonplace and did good things for my head. I only had to look at some of them and, instantly, feel much better about myself.

A couple of years after that, Black's Beach in La Jolla, California, became THE place to be on warm sunny days. Thousands and thousands of bodies of all sizes and shapes, in all their radiant glory, stretched out for miles along the sand, absorbing nature and acquiring sunburns in critical areas and ruining their skin forever. Holidays were especially nice because they brought out the best, biggest crowds of the best-looking people.

A ten minute stroll along that beach, hanging loose and easy, always made me feel rather adequate in areas that, without that comparison, often left me in doubt. I thought of it very much like bragging instead of clinging to the shadows. If mother could only see me now!

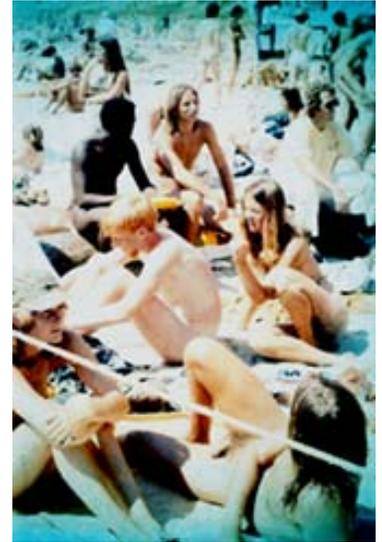


First Time out and about, standing beside my wonderful British Racing Green Triumph at The Swallows in El Cajon, CA. n.d. circa 1966.

#

Occasionally, and just for fun, I would insert photographs of personal friends without their knowledge, in the nude, into some of our various publications. Then, after the publication appeared, give them copies of it and point them out inside the issue. Without exception, every one of them was pleased with the surprise and passed copies of them around among their friends.

In a similar jest, I would also insert close-up photos of myself without showing my face into those books or magazines. At one time, most of the black cork wall on one side of my office was pinned with tear sheets of just me, and not one person working there knew it was me. I recall taking my cue for this from Alfred Hitchcock, who always inserted himself into each of his productions. I figured I could easily outcock Hitchcock, and I did.



The crowd at Black's Beach in San Diego on a typical afternoon circa 1970.

#

Around The Porno Factory, I became accustomed to bizarre and unique visitors dropping in on me, or more probably trying to drop in on me. I was very lucky in having Patty Lamb as my secretary who was excellent at diverting people away from me who should never be able to get close to me for any reason in the first place.

These people were, in the main, federal snoops or shills of some sort. They would attempt to get to me for the most outrageous reasons and some of them would have quite elaborate scenarios worked out ahead of time to cover most contingencies. The down side to this was, because I spent so much time around the San Diego courthouses, and with attorneys, judges, and law clerks, that I began recognizing a number of those federal flunkies on sight. It always amazed me that, as often as they had seen me, they never realized that I not only could recognize them but, in some cases, even knew which department or agency they actually worked for.

The few occasions when one of them would get inside my office (during regular business hours that is, I knew they had free, illegal access to everything when the offices were closed and locked up overnight) they would sit there across my desk from me and still not understand that I knew them and had seen them on many occasions...some even testifying under oath and telling federally conceived and dictated lies again and again with straight faces just the way they learned to do it in Federal 101.

Eventually I would send all of them on their way without giving them anything to hang me with...I hoped.

After so long a time, the feds finally figured out that they weren't going to get to me the way they usually managed to get to other people that they wanted to construct a case around (never mind evidence, they could always manufacture that).

That's when they switched to Plan B.

Plan B involved incredibly beautiful and blatantly available females. The feds would send them to me, again under the most ridiculous pretences, with instructions to "get close" to me. They routinely offered me sex in some not so subtle maneuvers. And all the while they were trying to brand me as some sort of sex peddler while they were doing their damndest to get me naked and into bed.

When Plan B didn't work, the feds switched to Plan C.

Plan C involved incredibly handsome and blatantly available males. The feds figured that if I couldn't be seduced by their bimbos, then I must be queer...and yes, that word was still in fashion then. The feds actually preferred "fag," but the FBI had already made that one a really bad word, thanks to Auntie Edgar Hoover may she rot in eternal Hell. Those male visitors were as blatant as the females with their offers of unrestrained sex right there on my office carpet. All I had to do was say okay.

In all my life, even taking into consideration every model I ever hired to pose nude for any reason, every big time Hollywood body I had ever seen exposed, I never saw people as beautiful as the feds had in their employ. There must have been entire squadrons of them in reserve, the very extra special beautiful males and females, willing to turn any trick however kinky or perverted, regardless of number of participants, just to "keep America free of filth"...

...like me.

In fact, I would have insisted that there was no way that people could be quite as beautiful as the ones maintained in federal stables. Not only that, the males were especially savvy and polished. They were intelligent, witty, and knew exactly what they were doing and how to best do it. Hookers couldn't. Nymphomaniacs couldn't. Only the federal body-for-hire crew could.

And each one of them went away from me unsatisfied, unloved, and orgasmless. Ah, the sweet rush of unrestrained lust...how devoutly to be wished.

#



Richard Robison on the set of *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, 1970.

Little wonder that, when Richard and Gale Robinson intruded upon my awareness, I instantly classified them as Plan D. Another federal entrapment attempt, their first duo fired in my direction, out to fulfill one of their agency's latest fantasies about little old sexy smut peddler me.

Just looking at Rick and Gale together, from the very first time I saw them, did some bizarre things to my head and my libido. I thought that they were not only very beautiful, but squeaky clean and overwhelmingly desirable. I could smell them, even taste them in my imagination. It was all I could do to keep from crawling right between them and becoming The Earl of Sandwich.

There have been times when I actually wished I was the person the feds needed me to be for them; that way I could have had a wonderfully exciting life.

I can't remember the first contact, or how it came about. I'm sure I rebuffed it as I had become accustomed to doing. Nevertheless, Richard persisted and, after a bit of time passed, began growing on me, as the cliché says.

Part of the problem was, he didn't have anything to sell to me. He wasn't a writer. He wasn't an editor. He didn't seem to care much about books or even magazines for that matter. I really couldn't understand why he professed so much interest in me. And then I found out what it was. I was to be his doorway to William Hamling.

Richard Robinson wanted to make feature-length movies for major venues and he wanted Greenleaf Classics to pay for them.

It wasn't such a bad idea, either. I had been thinking along the same lines for some time by then. It was obvious to me and a lot of other people that there was a ton of money to be made out there that had nothing to do with sleaze paperbacks that utilized most of the same material, ideas, and concepts contained in those books.

I knew for a fact that Milton Luros was moving rapidly in that direction. In his case, his thinking was taking him to loops and video. Loops being short sex films of the type shown in "private" booths in the darkened back sections of adult bookstores all over the country, all over the world, as far as I knew.

There had been a number of film producers sniffing around our backlog, looking for material to lease or steal. I had already begun the process of running standing advertisements in publications like *Daily Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter*, offering Greenleaf's library of resale rights for sale to the correct buyers.

Song of the Loon, our outstanding gay best-selling novel was already in negotiation to be Greenleaf's very first straight sex book film. I qualified that with "straight sex book" because a number of Greenleaf's less salacious products, notably Jim Thompson's *The Grifters* and Robert Sheckley's *The Man in the Water*, both Regency paperbacks, had already been optioned for filming.

Richard persisted on working on me to get me to work on Hamling to get Rick's dream moving toward reality. He did it by befriending me, and I willingly accepted him and Gale as just what they appeared to be, a beautiful, loving couple that meant me no harm and didn't work for the feds at all.

#

I had some monumental hang-ups at that time, in the mid-sixties; they had plagued me for most of my life. As most people would say, they began with my mother. She was somewhat less than perfect, with flaws all over the place and an egomaniacal mentality that was something to behold if one could glimpse inside her bizarre private world.

She raised me in such a sheltered fashion that I had very limited contact with my peers or contemporaries, and especially with my father, who she seemed to hate beyond any known reason and kept me, always, at a distance from him even within our own household.

My mother didn't like sex, apparently, and it wasn't a religious concept with her, she was so far beyond religion personally as to dominate it in her own imagination. And she played what in retrospect were extremely cruel hoaxes on me in an attempt to instill her personal philosophy of life into me. A philosophy that, by the way, changed at her slightest whim and was quite dependent upon which direction the wind might have been blowing on any particular day.

Her biggest canard, and the single thing that gave me the most problems until I finally outgrew it, if indeed I ever did, was designed to keep me within her sexless concept of reality. She did this to me from a very early age, as part of her sheltering [read "greedy holding"] of me, by repeatedly reminding me that I was different from all other boys.



Gale Robinson from *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, 1970.

There was something particularly disgusting and quite different about my body, she said. And, while she would never ever tell me what that horrible difference was, she would routinely imply that it was physical, and that I wasn't cast in the same mold as other infant boys. Something specifically to do with my gender, my sex organs, that were somehow so terribly distorted and repulsive that, for all of my life, I would have to be very guarded with myself and make sure that at no time, under no circumstances, could I allow anyone to ever see them...to look at me in the nude...to see that ugly appendage.

And, worse than that, I must never ever do "the single worst thing that any man can ever force any woman to endure."

Now, onto this and some of her other admonitions, I added my own. Mine were religious. While mother was not, and badmouthed most religious persons then (as she grew much older, she did a complete flip-flop on this, and began designating clerics as being almost Godlike), I went along with my contemporaries and attended church. And acquired all those additional Thou Must Not Have Sexual Relations and, above all, if I do, I Must Absolutely Never Allow Myself to Enjoy *IT!* That dirty act was only for having children to work for enriching God and The Church. Be fruitful and multiply and let that overpopulation destroy the entire world...in His name.

Despite my mother's restricting my movements as an infant and a child, I still managed to have friends and playmates and we still managed to do all the things that kids do together when they are unsupervised and that definitely involved looking at, examining, and experimenting with each other's bodies. Not one of my friends ever noticed my deformities in the genital region. But that was not enough to ease the burden that had already been laid upon me.

Without exception, every person within the erotic industry that I ever became friends with told me that I was the most morally repressed person they had ever met. That, of course, is what made me a superior sex book creator in the first place.

Stan Sohler did it to me when he moved over from Milton Luros' organization and began packaging skin magazines for Greenleaf.

Gary Sohler did it to me while trying not to laugh when he began packaging magazines for us.

My dear old friend William Rotsler did it to me too, but with a difference. He was the first person ever to shame me into stripping in front of total strangers. He saved parts of my life. He changed me forever. Little wonder I love him so.

Each one of them felt I needed to make radical changes in my thinking and acting in order to begin realizing the potential that they felt I needed to achieve.

Richard Robinson put the icing on that cake. He did his damndest to drag me out of myself physically and force me to really look at myself, and begin working toward my own liberation. That's why I will love him forever also, wherever he is. If he is.

There was even a time when Richard and Gale gave me a chocolate-coated sex toy. Her name was CeeCee and you can read all about her in "If You Could See Her Through My Eyes...." elsewhere in this issue of *e!*

I lost Richard and Gale somewhere back there a few decades ago when I went to prison and became a



self-punishing semi recluse after my release. I have spent much time, effort, and money attempting to find either of them again, only they seem to have dropped off the map in the mid seventies.

#

On one occasion, early on, Richard and Gale Robinson, with another beautiful couple who were obviously quite close friends of theirs, came to see me at Greenleaf Classics in San Diego driving a huge, flashy housebus. They insisted I leave the office and drive around San Diego County for the rest of the afternoon in a rolling cocktail party that I shall never forget.

They invited me again and again to their house in the Westwood district of Los Angeles where Hollywood Nights seemed to be endless with all kinds of really beautiful (but dumb, I hasten to ad) nude females and handsome hunks roaming in and out and into the endless pool party and on the air mattresses around their pool. Here I became acquainted with their preteen son and with Richard's father. I liked him very much and thought that he had a wonderful view of life. It was unusual for me to be involved with three generations of naked friends all at the same time in the same pool.

Rick and Gale would fly down to Guadalajara and be my houseguests in suburban Ajijic at my invitation any time I asked them to.

Those were heady days, intermixing with the crew of Bohemian, drug-reinforced writers and artists who called Jalisco Camelot and lived life to the fullest extent possible.

They even attended one of Linda DuBreuil's (and her son Johnny Poling's) parties with me and my son Terry. This was the fabulous pig roast made famous by "H.R.H. The Queen of Pornography" in [el12](#).

On one occasion, Gale and my daughter Eydie, dressed in the then current fashion of halter tops and hot pants, went shopping at Guadalajara's huge downtown all-purpose native market, *Mercado Libertad* (the name was later changed to *Mercado San Juan del Dios* but the locals, responding to the type of merchandise that more and more began replacing the local products, universally called it "Taiwan del Dios"). Just the two of them, casually strolling around, absorbing the atmosphere, and causing a riot.

In those days, women weren't seen in public in Guadalajara unless they were properly dressed, and that meant in a dress, not even jeans were acceptable. Anything the least bit risqué denoted that the wearer was a prostitute. On their very brief walk inside the *mercado*, they attracted quite a crowd. People began following them as they moved about, cat-calling, asking "How much?" Local women shoppers would approach them, touch them to see if they were real, and pinch their buttocks jealousy inside those tight-fitting hot pants.

Finally, they forced their way out of a crowd of around 50 people and fled for their lives back to the safety of civilization and an out-of-place art colony in Ajijic where it didn't matter what you wore, if anything.

Petey Dixon, Managing Editor of Greenleaf Classics, was there on at least one occasion when the Robinsons visited Ajijic. It was actually difficult for both of us to get away from Greenleaf at the same time. After all, someone had to make sure that all the work got done correctly. Petey was never the least bit reluctant to work his way through a tumble of bodies on my king sized waterbed.

Señor Pig 2

Linda DuBreuil was always a very classy lady.... Johnny [J. Eric] Poling, her son, took after her. Johnny was a delicate, thin boned, fair-haired young man, living with his family in Zapopan in suburban Guadalajara....

...Johnny introduced us to his pet pig, Señor Pig. Johnny had become intrigued with cooking a pig while doping and looking for pussy in Guadalajara. It was Linda's suggestion to him that he try his hand at writing porn [he wrote under the pseudonym of Eric Jay], and to facilitate that, he should get laid. As a part of that bacchanal suggestion, he had decided to indulge in a food, booze, dope, and sex orgy. So the fate of Señor Pig was decided. All that was left was to set the date of execution....

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"Have another hit, Señor Pig," Johnny Poling chortled again, slurring the Tequila-laden words. "*Uno mas, por favor*. No more booze, unless you toke."

With that, Johnny slumped forward. It looked like Señor Pig was going to win the drinking contest. Señor Pig had already out smoked, and out boozed, most all of the Hah-hah-Ajjic gang. This was quite a feat considering the phenomenal range of experience and practice among the gang, which included some of the most hardcore hedonists on the planet.

Rick and Gale Robinson were there, too. They had been lured to Ajijic, a suburb of Guadalajara, by that sinister, bearded editor, Earl Kemp.

Rick and Gale were Los Angeles entrepreneurs and makers of porn movies. At the time, as I recollect, Greenleaf was interested in moving on and expanding into a new genre. As part of the business maneuvering, my dad and I had visited several of the sets while they were filming. During the drive, and later, while driving around Ajijic and Guadalajara, we all had to work at helping Gale keep her clothes on in public, as she liked to flash the conservative locals.

#

...we all made the journey into town to Johnny and the awaiting fiesta for Señor Pig. When we arrived, we found that Johnny and his helpers had been hard at work preparing the pig. This entailed spending the night getting the pig stoned and drunk. When we arrived we all got to witness the final moments of that poor creatures life, before the assistant delivered the *coup-de-grace*....

#

During the drive back home to Ajijic from Linda's house in suburban Zapopan, Petey Dixon and Rick Robinson got into an argument over who could make the best margarita. The games began after we arrived home. First Petey would make a pitcher, and then Rick. Those who could still drink, and who weren't passed out, would sample and judge. The contest was called a draw, when Petey, who had long passed into the drunken oblivion of a staggering zombie, mixed one fatal batch, which crashed and fell, pitcher and all, and was so corrosive that it etched a permanent stain in the beautiful floor tiles.



So, we moved on to the wine. Finally, only Rick and I were left drinking. Rick from the bottle and I from my glass. Then I noticed that Rick was cheating, holding his thumb over the opening, and pretending to drink. Rick was very competitive and had quite a problem being drunk under the table by a fourteen-year-old.

--Earl Terry Kemp, excerpt from "Kill the Beast," 2003

My oldest son Terry was there, too, seeing things taking place before his very own eyes that, to this day, he still has doubts about ever having seen. I must have been a total failure as a father. No one ever invited me to any of those kinds of parties or took me all over Europe, in and out of every sex venue in sight, when I was still a teenager. Hell, they never even took me to the next state, much less to a party.

#

Just down the highway a few kilometers from Ajijic lies the small town of San Juan Cosala that was famous for hot water mineral springs. There were a couple of rather elaborate swimming complexes in Cosala that featured a number of different types of swimming pools, from warm to bet-you-can't-get-in-it hot. They also had large, private, enclosed pools for rent.

It was in some of those private pools, behind closed doors, that some of the more memorable partying went on. I can remember times when the staff of the resort, especially the room-service waiters, would stand in line and fight over who would be the one to bring more bottles of wine to our pool just for the very brief chance of getting a look at all those naked Gringos.

#

And Lo! It all happened. Hamling was finally convinced that it would be a good thing for Greenelaf to finance a feature length sex film for the general distribution trade. There were a number of adult movie houses in San Diego alone, including one huge downtown Pussycat Theatre and the Mitchell Brothers' Capri.

Vincent Miranda, owner of the Pussycat chain (he had 700 Pussycat Theatres in the USA at the time, most of them constructed from the ground up), was a San Diegoan and, coincidentally (one of the few who could afford it), a fellow client of the great and incomparable Stanley Fleishman. Miranda and I found ourselves thrown together from time to time socially and business wise. Vince was gay, but you would never know it, he was such a specialist with hetero films. He was also one of the greatest hosts I've ever known, right up there with Hugh Hefner. His parties, lavishly produced-sumptuous buffets, ice sculptures, margarita fountains, musicians, dancing, endless open bars --and opulently arrayed, were legendary, complete with plane loads of recognizable Hollywood types flown in to San Diego just for whatever occasion pleased him at the moment.



As easy as that, *Adultery for Fun and Profit* was born.

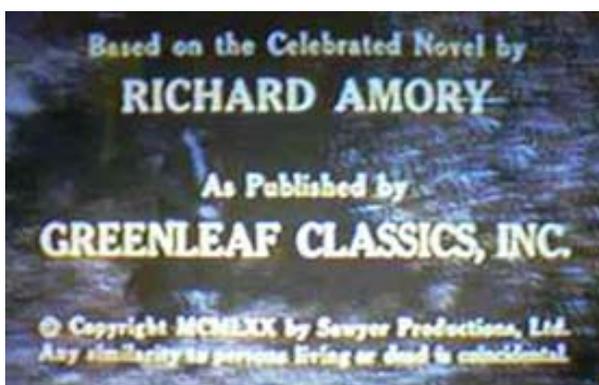
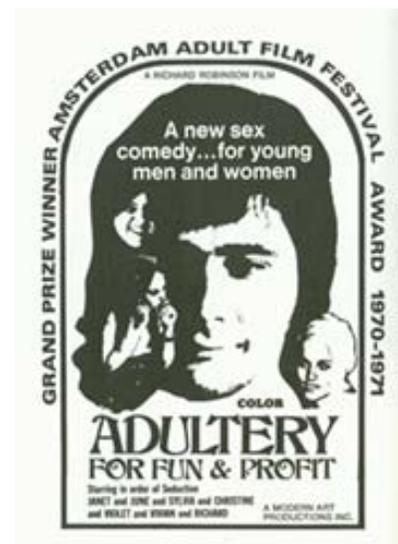
ADULTERY FOR FUN AND PROFIT (1971)

Directed by Richard Robinson (who also directed *Monteego*, a cannibal western, as well as Shelley Winters in *Poor Pretty Eddie*) This well made tightly paced blue movie won the Grand Prize at the 1970 Amsterdam Adult Film "Wet Dream" Festival (the first really big adult film trade show). "*Adultery...*" was one of the first five or so American explicit adult films to receive wide distribution, and is among the best of the "missing links" between 1960s exploitation and 1970s smut. "Richard has got it made. He's an ultra-cool sweet-talker who preys on women divorcing their husbands. Men actually pay him to seduce their wives, he lures the women into his web, and hires a photographer to snap incriminating photos of them. Goodbye alimony! Richard's cohort in slime is a sleazebag lawyer . He introduces the womanizer to a six-pack of sexed-up sirens (including Rainbow Robbins, star of *Motel for Lovers*). But lover boy gets a taste of his own medicine..."

Richard (who had long since become Rick to me) and I became even closer friends, once the project was actually in the works. We evolved into a good-cop-bad-cop duo that worked wonders for both of us. Whenever he needed something, he would get me to hardass it through, and whenever I needed something that he could help with, he would be the bad cop for me.

As an example, when it became time for the final negotiations for the rights to produce *Song of the Loon*, Richard sat in on the dealings as my back-up advisor. [Because I have forgotten the name of the man who bought those rights, and the movie version of *Song of the Loon* is a Sawyer Production, Ltd. film, I shall call him Sawyer.] At one point in the discussion, Sawyer who was buying the rights, made his final offer.

I turned it down flat and told him to triple it or the discussion was over because, as I said, "It's only money." Sawyer conceded and paid the amount I had asked for, along with some other demands including arbitrary things like one full screen credit "based on the best-selling book from Greenleaf Classics, Inc."



Outside and away from Sawyer's office, Richard broke up laughing and "It's only money" became a frequent tag-line passed back and forth between the two of us as a private joke for a while.

I went on to spend a week with Sawyer on location watching the filming of *Song of the Loon* in the remote wilderness in the Trinity Alps and Big Pines in Northern California. I wrote about this film briefly, with some location photography, in [e18](#).

Shortly after that, Sawyer set up a rather elaborate part-time residence for himself in the Ajijic suburb (odd to think of small villages having suburbs, even then) of La Floresta. It was a classic gay residence complete with elaborate nude statuary and lots of penises.

After my visit to the *Loon* filming, I moved on to a sound stage in Los Angeles to watch parts of the filming of Richard's *Adultery for Fun and Profit*. I became familiar with the whole process of how feature

films were made in those days (pre-digital, pre-video) and got to know some of the crew very well indeed.

In both cases there was quite a bit of drug use going on, and the financial backer of the films was expected to pick up the entire tab for that, as "catering overrides." There was pot and coke all over the place in the sixties, falling out of the trees it seemed at the time, and raining down on the set and the crew who all meshed and intermingled rather freely.

Between those two films, I had just about enough naked high school jocks pretending to be Indians and naked Hollywood bodies writhing in pretend ecstasy to last me for a long, long time.

#



Another photo of Richard Robinson on the set of *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, 1970.

When it came time for Richard to arrange distribution of *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, I sat in on a number of negotiating meetings with him as his bad cop, hardassing the discussions. It was turnabout time.

Much of that was done with Lou Sher, of Sherpix, at his home in Beverly Hills. It was Sher who eventually did the theatrical distribution for *Adultery*, but it took a bit of time and lots of discussions.

Before then, Rick and I flew to New York for meetings with a couple of other potential film distributors with much experience in the adult movie trade. We flew first class, of course; Richard insisted that it had something to do with appearances. At one of those distributors, we were shown *Pink Narcissus* (finally released in 1971 by, of all people Sherpix) in their private screening room.

It was one of the most unique things I had ever encountered. To begin with, it was a one-man production. Literally, one person made the entire movie including all the sets and everything else involved with it. It was a home movie, shot in 8mm and the theatrical release print was blown up to 35mm to accommodate the existing

projection equipment in most theaters. I had never seen that done before and was surprised at how well it turned out in the extreme enlargement it had to undergo...a bit grainy but what the hell. It was a homosexual fantasy of one man's ultimate desire and it was quite literally mostly done in shades of pink. Not exactly my or Richard's cup of tequila but destined to become at least a gay landmark just down the timeline a bit.

Film distributors are always eager to run their films, in their private screening rooms, for anyone they think can help send money their way. I've encountered this not only in the USA but all around Europe as well.

Flying back to Los Angeles (not San Diego, my boss Hamling wasn't even aware that I was involved with Richard in the distribution end of his business) on a 747, I abandoned Rick and spent the entire flight with Mary Travers in the upstairs first class cocktail lounge. I had met her once before, flying BOAC from London to Mexico City (though she and her toyboy exited the flight in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic). The coincidence was too much



This photo, from the set of *Adultery for Fun and Profit* clearly shows how much fun the cast had during the filming. Dated 1970.

to ignore. We had a delightful trip getting drunk together while she told me all the deep, dark secrets of Peter, Paul, and Mary [one of them a born again religious freak and the other a convicted child molester]. They had been a favorite group of mine for years, ever since "Lemon Tree" became a hit. I first saw them perform together years earlier while I still lived in Chicago. Mary was quite a gal in those days. Fuck was her every other word.

#

Richard Robinson, who produced and directed this whallop of Southern sickness (the best fucking kind) [*Poor Pretty Eddie*] got his start three years prior with the boner inducing *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, highly regarded as one of the few true missing links between 60's sexploitation and all out hardcore porn, *Adultery for Fun and Profit* is a great look at an effective film with hardcore sex thrown in. Richard plays a Dick for hire who porks soon to be divorcees, all the while taking snapshots for their husbands who want to beat the alimony wrap, it's all well and good until Richard takes a gig from a future divorcee for a change. She hires him to bone the hubby! Man, they sure don't make 'em like that anymore.

--Brains on Film - Reviews

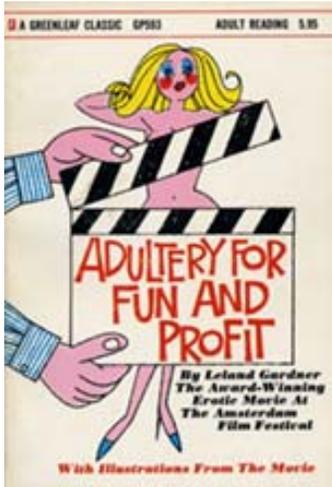
As had been my habit for years, I decided ahead of time to produce a book about *Adultery for Fun and Profit* for Greenleaf Classics. This was done, coincidentally, at the same time I was producing *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* [about which much can be found in previous issues of *e/*]...a most exciting and thrill-filled period of time. In fact, *Adultery* (the book) wasn't completed until after I had resigned my position with Greenleaf Classics and left the company. For that reason, some parts of who did what to which were unknown to me both then and now. Petey Dixon, stepping into my shoes as I had planned from the very beginning, was the final editor on the project.

Despite that, I find that I am a character inside the book, at least standing off stage and calling most of the shots from there. There are references indicating that I sent the writer to Richard to cover the filming and to write the text portion of the book. There are references indicating that I sent the photographer to shoot the stills to go into the book. For that purpose, frames excerpted from the film would not serve.

And, I have no memory of sending either of those people to work on the project. In fact, I can't even determine who they were, the writer or the photographer, since neither is identified inside the text.

The writer did something quite odd, though, he wrote Richard Robinson out of the story and substituted an anonymous "Mike" as the name of the guy in charge. [This was further confused because the protagonist's name in *Adultery* was Richard, leaving people to wonder if the reference was to the actor or the filmmaker.] All this in spite of the fact that there are numerous photos of Richard Robinson inside the book and his name is all over the place. Had I edited that book I would not have allowed that one to slip past me at all. However, the writer did a really good job with what he had to work with, intermixing what is alleged to be his personal observations with portions of the final shooting script...in order to pad the text out enough to fill the space allowed in the book.

There were many photographs of behind-the-scenes activities and on-screen lovemaking that used up lots of those book pages, a few of them repeated here for old time's sake.



The cover of the book itself sports one of Harry Bremner's excellent comic type drawings.

The story, as told in the book, includes the happenings surrounding the "sneak preview" showing at an adult theater in downtown San Diego. I quote from the text:

On the 18th of November, 1970, some four hundred men and women gathered in STUDIO II, a moving picture house dedicated to art film and those films slightly beyond the understanding of average audiences. They had come in response to an invitation to view the premiere of a new and not quite completed picture; new in the sense that it treated with some finesse a subject that had been grossly shown many times before, and new in the sense that for an hour and nine minutes, that particular segment of San Diego's multi-thousand population was going to witness the product of Mike's genius.

Lights were dimmed; film rolled. There was flimaging, luxeming, and dorfing, all carried by a well-directed plot with honest male chuckles - and a few feminine giggles - at the end. It ended in tumult and loud applause. Applause for Mike, because he had taken a debatable subject and turned it into an artistic film.

The crowd quieted - except for a few tried and true who stayed behind to "bust" the film. Bust being a term known by all and appreciated by only a few.

So *The End* is not yet. No arrests were made, because the police were unsure of their footing. They confiscated the unfinished film, and settled for the limp position of "harassment," which is translated by the film's backer, its producer, and its legal department - which isn't cowed by local ordinances, loud talk, or the shrill voices of Ladies Clubs - into money.

#

The theater, Studio II, where the sneak preview was held, was literally packed with law enforcement personnel from a number of local and federal agencies, but we had grown to expect things like that at Greenleaf Classics. Almost the entire staff of employees was there too, after all, they shared a part in the whole experience as well as I did.

Among those cops was one San Diego Police Department Vice Squad officer named Ruby. He had become such a presence in our awareness that, around our office, we referred to him as "Miss Ruby." He was something else...so uptight he could hardly bend over to tie his own shoes. It became a thing of amusement for me, upon encountering him, to force him to identify himself and spell his name for me as if I didn't understand that it was Ruby. He would actually shake and shudder standing in front of me, flushed very red faced with embarrassment or shame at being so close to a known sex purveyor. I suspect that, inside his imagination, I was the biggest pervert and most active fucker in the whole county.



And, I did it to him every time I encountered him, pretending that he made absolutely no impression on me at all. He was a tsetse fly buzzing around an elephant's ass to me. He was livid that I could pull the routine on him time and again. His one great moment of glory came on an occasion when the San Diego

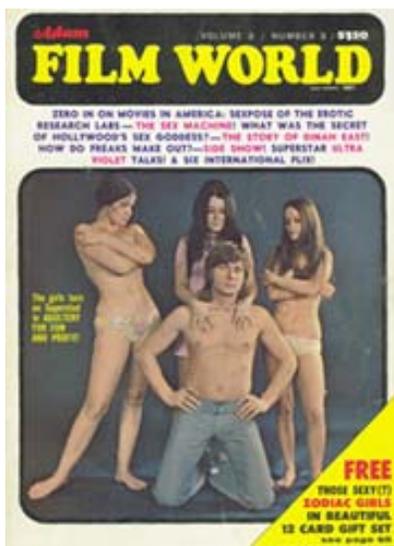
Police Department Vice Squad, pushed onward by the feds of course, pulled a raid on our Mission Valley offices and pilfered through everything openly that they routinely pilfered through clandestinely overnights when the offices were closed and locked.

Their efforts got them nowhere at all. Stanley Fleishman thoroughly pounced on them and they backed off completely from whatever effort they were attempting to push forward.

And, as the unknown writer wrote in *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, "The End is not yet."

On to Amsterdam....

#



The June 1971 issue of *Adam Film World* featured *Adultery for Fun and Profit* on its front cover. [A photograph of Frank Harris is on the cover. Frank played "Richard," the stud-star of *Adultery*, surrounded by some of the ladies who get to sample his charms while he gets paid for going to bed with them.] Inside the magazine there is a ten-page spread on the film, including many stills from the movie and a blatantly pointed puff piece directed at Richard Robinson personally.

There was also a stock publicity handout formal photograph of Rick used with the article, and many quotes attributed to him.

The anonymous conductor of an interview with Richard had this to say about him:

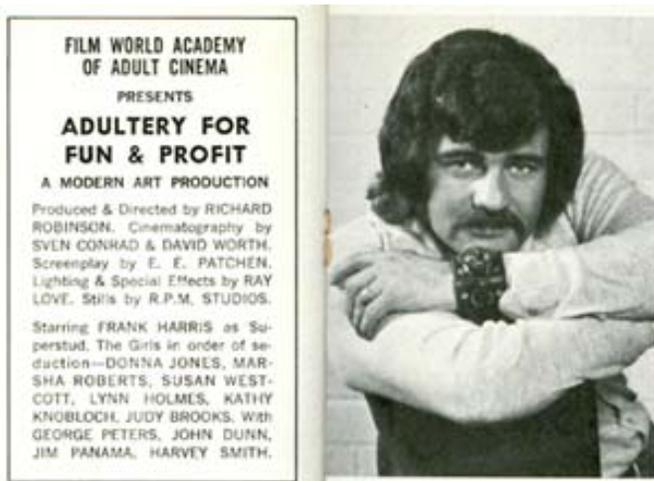
Robinson "got out on his own limb and produced and directed his idea of a quality sexploiter, and this first film venture, *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, captured the Amsterdam Film Festival Award for X-rated

movies and the Greenleaf Classics Award!"

Now that's a first. In all my years at Greenleaf Classics, we never made one award to anyone in our name. Score a second self-awarded trophy for old buddy Rick. *It's the Hollywood way.*

The interviewer continues: Robinson "considers his style of sexploitation feature as a healthy form of sexual escape that involves the audience by its strong story line, its production values, and its sensual development."

He quotes Richard as saying, "I consider the film as a woman. As a director I'm intent on seducing you. A kind of game is being played between us - a game like that of a man with a very attractive woman he'd like to take to bed!"



The interviewer continued: "...his film was given a sneak preview in San Diego and the audience gave it a standing ovation and called for the picture to be run all over again!"

Richard himself goes on to say:

"...we are catering to couples, to a guy and his wife, to go see this movie...."

"Everybody is sexually oriented in some way, whether they admit it or not...although they may never do it...but they will think about it, whether they admit it or not...."

#

The following year, when Rick was well underway with major photography for his next feature film *Monteego*, he invited me to visit with the cast and crew on location in the middle of nowhere outside Blythe, California. My son Terry and I readily accepted and hurried out to that desert nowhere.

We spent a delightful bunch of days renewing old friendships with Rick, the crew, and the new cast members. As I recall, the film (credited to a Gale Robinson script) was really oddball...a sort of hodge-podge Western about a fantastically beautiful black slave girl captured and held for lustful reasons.

Much of the flick, what we witnessed being filmed in the outback of the nowhere and down a railroad track to nothing, had the captive slave tied up spread-eagled inside a boxcar where her clothes were carefully shredded to reveal just the good parts. There were numerous takes, just to get the right footage, of her being flogged.

Everyone wanted to get close to her, including me, but she was really reclusive and kept to herself at all times when not on camera. I wish I could remember her name but I can't.

She also avoided participating in any of the routine partying that went on after hours in the motel that was mostly occupied by the whole crew. I suspect that it took some time for that motel and its staff to recover from the unique but customary happenings that went on after filming ceased for each day. The bar tab alone must have been phenomenal.

I never saw the finished film that I understand was released under a few different names, as were most of Richard's other films.

Richard Robinson Filmography

[a.k.a. Richard P. Robinson; Rick Jr.]

Marriage and Other Four Letter Words (1974) (as Rick Jr.)

... aka *Marriage and Other Strange Things* (1974)

Poor Pretty Eddy (1973)

... aka *Black Vengeance* (1973)

... aka *Heartbreak Motel* (1973)

... aka *Poor Pretty Eddie* (1973)

... aka *Redneck County* (1973)

... aka *Redneck County Rape* (1973)

Bloody Trail (1972)

... aka *Monteego* (1972) (original and USA video title)

To Hell You Preach (1972)

Adultery for Fun and Profit (1970)

ABC's of Marriage, The (1970)

- - -

*For Rick and Gale Robinson, love forever. Special thanks to Robert Spray for help with this article. Dated April 2004.

"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"

Wet Dreams in Paradiso*

By Earl Kemp

So there I was, fresh out of Studio II in downtown San Diego and the sneak preview of the rough cut of *Adultery for Fun and Profit* where all of us law abiding types from Greenleaf Classics were hassled by a bunch of law enforcement types, exactly as I wrote about in "Acres of Nubile Flesh," elsewhere in this issue of *el*. At about the place where it said "*The End* is not yet."

Now I'm going back into the Greenleaf Classic book about that movie for a final snip of text:

The following week, in gloriously sexy Amsterdam (like in dike), the film was entered in the world's very first International Stag Film Festival. Sponsored by SUCK, the first European newspaper, the fair was called Wet Dream Film Festival and ran from the 26th through the 29th of November [1970]. On Friday, *Adultery for Fun and Profit* was shown to a capacity crowd in the downtown Leidseplein Theatre. The film received a standing ovation and prolonged applause.

In the judging, the film was awarded first place in the feature-length category over such entries as Grove Press' Events and Olympia Press' Barbara (which was resoundingly booed). In all, entries from twelve nations were judged, the Grand Prix award going to Denmark for a short documentary on bestiality called "A Summer Day 1970."

This quotation comes from the very end of the book, but it doesn't tell the whole story. In fact, it doesn't even tell the correct story, but that, as the cliché says, is another story entirely.

#

It was my birthday [November 24, my 41st], and it was going to be one hell of a year, a decade or more for that matter, following as it did the publication of *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* the 11th of that month. I had every reason to suppose that something awful was staring me right in the face and about to whomp the bejesus right out of me at any minute.



Little things like that should never be allowed to get in the way of real-time partying. Fuckface Nixon had become incensed when he saw the first copy of my ode to his rampantly illegal dictatorship and had begun riding me pretty hard behind the scenes. He was just about to go apeshit on me, judging from the way the feds were lining up at his criminal orders and starting to take aim at me.

The embarrassing fiasco that had been ongoing far too long in Vietnam was starting to worry more and more people - sort of like they're reacting to Bush's personal Holy War in Iraq these days - and he - again like Bush - felt that he could do anything, however illegal, simply because he had the power to do so, to continue killing all those innocent women, children, and geriatrics. Nixon didn't even bother to call them "insurgents" because he at least knew what that word meant, unlike Bush. Nixon was, after all, only having us killing "gooks" to save America from their evil deeds and everybody knew damned well that they had no weapons of mass destruction in the first place. Hell, they didn't even have oil that could be siphoned away secretly or an infrastructure to recreate for the obscene financial benefit of Vice President Cheney and the bank for which he stands, Halliburton.

It could even be my last time around, unless I got very lucky and a little reason or, heaven forbid, justice prevailed. The only thing left to do was enjoy it while I had it, and there's no place like Amsterdam for doing just that.

But first, of course, a mandatory swing by Copenhagen to visit my old friend and sleaze partner Ib Lauritzen at A/S Bookman, and his delightful wife Bibsa. I had always found that a rewarding thing to do, once I'd slipped out of jet lag and felt almost coherent.

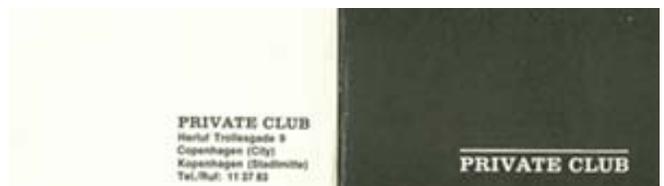
Part of my problem, besides the growing paranoia about how Nixon's reaction to my book would impact my future, was the added dollop that I was lugging around, by hand, a pre-release print of *Adultery for Fun and Profit*, and I had no idea how that would play going through all the customs checkpoints I would pass before actually reaching Amsterdam with that amusing little piece of hard-core pornography in my charge.

Because of the timing, I had to hand carry the can of film to Amsterdam where *Adultery* was entered into competition at the Wet Dream Film Festival in only a few days. Actually, my biggest worry was how to get back into the States with the film after the festival was over.

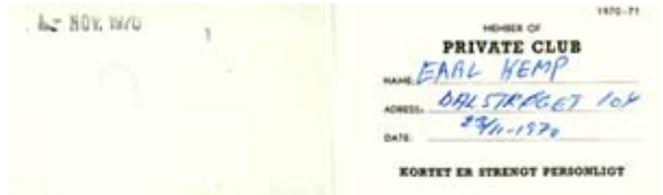
In the past, the feds had worked me over pretty thoroughly at times, when I would go through customs with simple little things like books...all words no pictures...unless it was only that they couldn't read and only looked at pictures. I mean things like strip searches and anal probes, as if they thought I was hauling some good stuff around inside there. I couldn't have endured some of their taunts and jibes directed at my body in order to intimidate and humiliate me if I hadn't known how very wrong they were all the while they were doing it. I was always prepared for the very worst every time I got near a one of them.

#

For my birthday, Ib Lauritzen gave me a membership in Private Club, a nice, upscale sex venue in Copenhagen that was not open to the general public. Then he took me there. It was the first time I had ever been to a live sex club, though I had heard a lot about them. I wasn't prepared for the ambience of the establishment or the high quality of the performances that went on there.



Before then there had been a few times when I had actually seen people having sex, but they were all amateurs, and the cast and crew at Private Club were thoroughgoing, accomplished professionals.



There were a number of showrooms and different things going on inside of each. Ib had a favorite he wanted me to see in one almost small showroom, where the main event was to take place. Ib and I entered the room and found seats in the front row, of course; why waste it? There were somewhere less than 100 seats in that room, rather comfortable theater seats at that, arranged in two rows around the four sides of the room, leaving ample space for movement in and out of the room and without blocking any exit doors. In the middle of the room, surrounded by those double rows of seats, on the floor, was a mattress covered with a clean, fitted sheet.

When it became showtime, an attractive couple in their late twenties entered the room and took a pose atop that mattress. They were fully dressed and, as I said, both of them were quite attractive. They appeared to be in tip-top shape, healthy, and obviously enamored of each other and, beyond that, totally oblivious of the spectators surrounding them on all sides. This had always been startling to me, that anyone could actually do what they were about to do with strangers watching them close up and in living color. I had always felt that the average stag film watcher had no concept of how many people it took to make the flick before them...standing around the actors and watching them avidly.

Without any preliminaries or dialogue, the star couple began undressing and caressing each other as they did so. Then they moved directly into the dance.

Calling it a dance was the only way to adequately describe what they were doing. I felt as if I was in the audience at a classical ballet, their movements were so fluid and sensual, so calculatedly artistic. There was nothing the least bit tawdry about either of them or their performance. To say that it wasn't exciting would be a lie, but that excitement was wrapped inside so much classic movement as to be almost ethereal.

You could have heard a pin drop inside that room, the audience was so quiet, completely captured up by the beauty of the whole thing. I would never have believed it had someone told me ahead of time that this was the way it would be.

Because of Ib's local connections - he seemed to know everyone around Kobnhavn in those days - he readily introduced me to the owners of Private Club, some of the staff, and then the two star performers that I had just watched making love on the floor right at my feet.

They were a couple of course, not married, and they had been living together for some length of time. Fortunately both of them spoke a little English and I was able to spend some time with them interviewing them about their lives, their performances, and their aspirations. I was very surprised to learn that they gave four performances a day on regular days and seven on holidays and for special events.

Afterward, they told me, they went home and practiced. Little wonder their movements were so precise, so calculated, and so totally inspiring. On the best day of my life I could never perform as they had even once, much less four to seven times not counting what went on at home just for the two of them.

I was almost reluctant to leave one of my most favorite cities after a night like that, and head on toward the Netherlands.

#



Earl Terry Kemp at the second World's Fair of Sex, Copenhagen, April 1970.

1970 had already been one hell of a great year for me. I had accomplished much more than I had ever dreamed of. I was a real traveling giant it seems. I can't even remember the numbers of times I was in and out of the USA, and that didn't even count Mexico. Earlier in the year I had attended the second World's Fair of Sex in Copenhagen, with my son Terry who, at 14, was getting a Grand Tour of Europe. Ib Lauritzen figured prominently in that, of course.

Then there was the usual Frankfurt Book Fair later in the year and this one was very special, thanks to Jim Haynes. For a year or so I had been complaining to him about the way I reacted to the treatment I received any time I was in France, particularly Paris, which somehow always felt bigger than life. They literally hated

Americans because of the awful things we were doing in Vietnam in the name of the Pentagon and for the munitions manufacturers. It got so bad that I began denying my nationality whenever possible. I pretended to be Canadian and the difference in the way they treated me was like night and day.

On one occasion the year before, Peter Cooper (Editor-in-Chief of Greenleaf Classics) and I stopped by Paris over my protest, because I knew what to expect but Peter didn't. One evening we were going out for dinner and before leaving the hotel we stopped by the concierge and asked him to recommend a restaurant. He was very condescending and gracious, smiling broadly. "Of course," he said. "In fact, I'll write a note to the *maitre-de* recommending you." And he proceeded to do just that.

As we left the hotel, Peter opened the note and read it. He knew French, but I did not. The note said, "Pierre, I am sending you two Americans. Please serve them a bad meal." And it was signed "Gaston." Needless to say, we didn't even go close to that restaurant, but the incident was commonplace in Paris during those terrible blood stained killing years.

Jim Haynes promised me that if I would put myself in his charge, he would show me the real Paris, on one condition: I would have to lecture to some of his English language classes on my rant subject of "Pornography as Political Protest." Because I was well into that routine, around the Universities of San Diego County, legal classes, and the law enforcement community there and elsewhere, I readily agreed. Even though I had none of my lecture notes with me, I supposed I could fake it out for the youth of Paris.

Jim changed the whole face of Europe for me, giving me a fresh new perspective that fit much better than the one I had acquired all on my own. We took a leisurely trip via train, on the Trans European Express, from Frankfurt all the way to Paris. It was a very nice train but not quite up to my all-time favorite, the New Tokiato Express out of Tokyo, the fastest train in the world. [I had acquired a high interest in different types of trains from George Scithers of Owlswick Press, an old science fiction friend of years standing.]

Paris was opened up for me like a book. Jim knew everything and everyone, it seemed. We went to a number of publishing company offices and talked with editors and publishers (after all, I was on an expense account and it had to look legitimate however much I was goofing off). Then we slipped into Jim's personal specialty...Paris of the phenomenal expatriates of my youth. Jim knew about them all,

and their haunts and the things they did and enjoyed the most. We went on a Henry Miller tour one day, and a Gertrude Stein tour the next. We ate in their favorite restaurants selecting their favorite dishes. I felt as if I was right among my contemporaries for the first time in my life.

Then we did Jim's second best thing...ogle showgirls. Jim really liked girls, a fact that came resoundingly clear to me when he guided me through Amsterdam's unique red-light district where all the prostitutes are displayed like merchandise in department store windows.

In Paris, it was the nightclubs that held the most desirable females, some even partially clothed and costumed. I recall particularly an evening at the Alcazar. We entered the establishment through the stage entrance and mingled with the cast and crew for a bit, and all those incredibly garbed, gorgeous showgirls. Then we went up into the rafters-on "catwalks"-directly above the stage, for the greatest possible view of the entire lust filled show.

Earl, your Wet Dreams memoir arrived here this morning and it was fun walking down Memory Lane with you. From my point of view, your report is very accurate. One or two items might need correcting: Jean Shrimpton was not an actress, but the Super Model of the 60s and 70s. She was also the girlfriend (at the time) of one of the *Suck* editors, Heathcote Williams (a poet and playwright). The Alcazar is, alas, no longer in existence. I was a Professor of Media Studies and Sexual Politics at the University of Paris 8 at Vincennes (a suburb of Paris) and taught my classes (as you know) in English. My students had to pass a special English examination to be able to enter my classes.

--Jim Haynes, email, May 12, 2004

I also remember the students in Jim's English language classes at the Vincennes campus of the University of Paris...fresh and young and energetic and filled with not-yet-crushed hopes for the world. I will never forget one Algerian student telling me that his ultimate hope was that in his lifetime he would come to know a world without frontiers. That's "borders" for the non-French-speaking people. A world where citizens just went about their private business without the interference of dictators and would-be dictators trying to tell them how to live their lives and what intimately personal things they could or could not do.

[The Vincennes campus of the University of Paris held an ironic special meaning for me. It had been, originally, the huge estate of the Marquis de Sade. It was on that property where de Sade had been imprisoned for a very long time because of his own writings of "Pornography as Political Protest." Portions of that tale were told exceptionally well in the film *Quills*, starring Geoffrey Rush as de Sade with a supporting cast of excellent players. The film is highly recommended for this reason.]

I wonder what the Algerians think about Bush these days? And the way he thinks of women, about how he needs to crush and repress them and keep them subservient, barefoot, and pregnant. It is especially that pregnant part that is destroying the world as we know it. Overpopulation will be the end of everything, not "terrorists," not "insurgents," not "evangelicals," not "rapturers." Pure, simple financial greed cherished by the corporations who own America's professional politicians outright, will be the thing that destroys everything. Their course is set and unalterable.

See how easy it is to slip into that "Pornography as Political Protest" lecture again and again?

I could never thank Jim Haynes enough for, finally, giving me the true Paris.

#

Amsterdam had been one of my favorite stopping places for a few years. So much so that I even had favorite restaurants there (my most favorite Indian curry restaurant of all). I had favorite stores in Amsterdam, and a few favorite people. Henk Prinz, a literary agent, Ib Lauritzen's counterpart in another country, had been of much help to me in the past. It was Henk who took me on my first tour of Amsterdam, stopping at all the obligatory places like the apartment building where Anne Frank had hidden from the Nazis, and places like that. It was also Henk who tried to get me to piss into the canals at the edge of the sidewalks in downtown Amsterdam like the locals; only I could never do it.

Some of my other friends there were relatively new, except for Jim Haynes. I had met Jim in Frankfurt a year or so earlier and become fast friends with him. As a good old boy from Louisiana, and me from next-door Arkansas, we more or less spoke the same language, modified Southern drawls, and shared some of the same secret lusts. His position as Professor of Media Studies and Sexual Politics at the University of Paris gave him ample time to roam around Europe and turn up every place there was something book-related going on. That's what drew the two of us together in the first place.

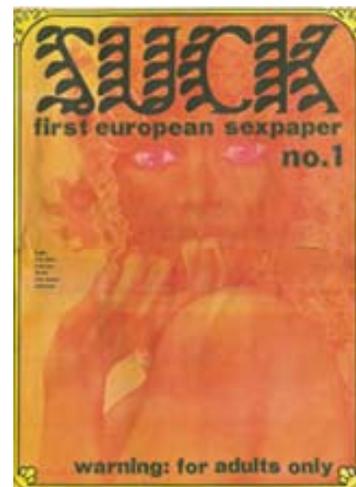
And, it was through Jim that I met Bill Levy and his lovely partner Susan Janssen, a.k.a. Purple Susan. The three of them, plus Willem de Ridder, produced a charming little newspaper named *Suck, The First European Sex Paper*. I was an enthusiastic subscriber for the entire run of their publication.

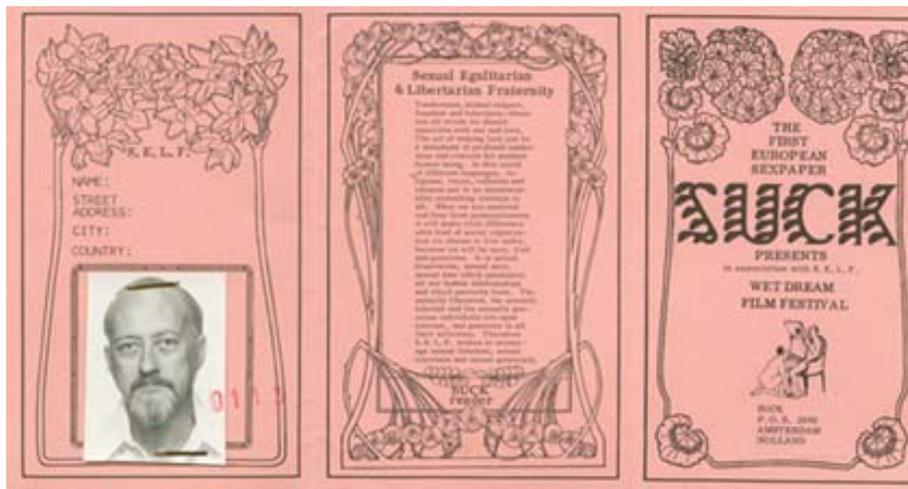
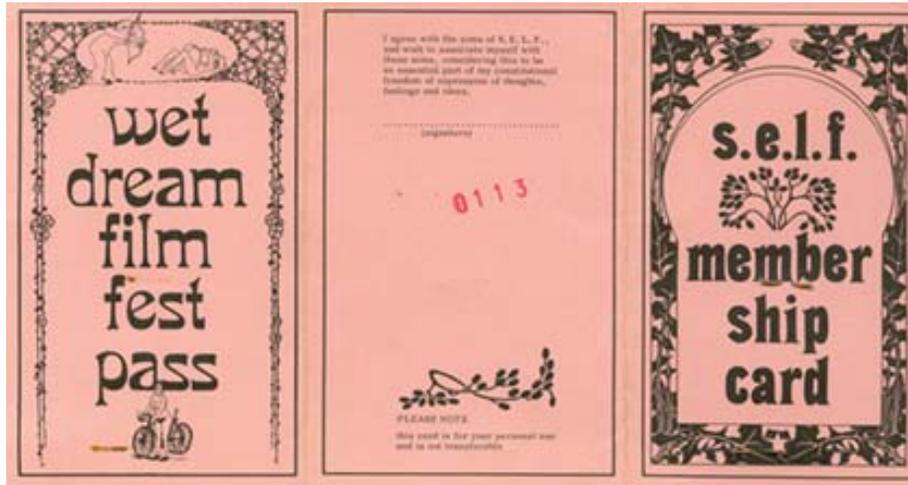
It was because of Haynes and Levy that I was going to Amsterdam on this occasion in the first place, lugging that heavy can of film as I did so, to attend their Wet Dreams Film Festival. *Adultery for Fun and Profit* was entered into competition at the festival and it would be the first public showing of the sex flick besides the sneak preview that had taken place only a week earlier in San Diego at theater Studio II.

Jim had promised me that Wet Dreams would bring together all the better-known erotica producers from Europe and some of them from the USA as well. Plus many of the star performers, publishers, distributors, etc. And was he ever right.

Even before I left San Diego for Europe, and after people had heard that I would be attending the festival, they began asking me for special favors. Sawyer, who had produced the film of Greenleaf Classics' best-selling *Song of the Loon*, asked me to take his representative in hand and lead him through the Amsterdam thrill ride as he had never been there before. He was speaking of Tom De Simone, who Sawyer was sending there to take random film footage of whatever was going on. He felt there might be a good documentary in it for him to string together afterward.

I had never met De Simone before arriving in Amsterdam for that event. He turned out to be a nice young man from Los Angeles, all alone and working without real direction...plus lugging around one of those awful big heavy commercial film movie cameras and a lot of extra film. He had so much to carry that he almost didn't have room for personal things like clothes. I did all I could to help him maneuver all that bulky stuff around, once I had unloaded that heavy can of film that I was in charge of.





The moment I was checked into my hotel, I went straight to Bill and Susan's apartment that doubled as the *Suck* office and the Wet Dreams headquarters. I was so happy to hand that container of film over to them for the contest that I could have shouted in relief. I felt I had been walking crooked because of the heavy weight involved and, once free of it, I couldn't straighten up for quite a while.

It was my first meeting with Bill and Susan, and with Willem, their Art Director. It was like old home week though, because I had already been in correspondence with all three of them long before the show. *Suck* was one of my favorite publications of that period and I really admired their guts and attitudes.

Willem, it turned out, was a special treat because he was The Man with the special treats. In no time at all he had turned me onto Paradiso. It took a while for me to figure out that he had an ulterior motive; he was part owner of the establishment...and was it ever aptly named.

Paradiso, a private club, was a "drug den" in street parlance, where cannabis reigned supreme, but that was only the good part. It was a decommissioned cathedral, or rather the shell of a former one. Inside of that shell everything had been stripped out down to the bare walls. It still maintained the shape of a traditional Catholic church building, an array of really good stained glass windows here and there, but beyond that it had been turned into something useful for a change. Paradiso. I hastened to join up and become a card-carrying member...it was my kind of place.



At the far end of the building, nestled between the overhead balconies, where the religious services had previously taken place, was now a large stage. There were light standards and huge amplifiers and everything else necessary for some really good rock concerts. There were a number of bands that rotated in hourly shifts throughout the open hours so there was always some great music going on.

[As time progressed, Paradiso evolved into The Venue in Amsterdam for live music performances. Major name groups from all over the world routinely played there. There are numerous "recorded live in Paradiso" albums all over the place these days. It was a special thrill to be in on the know very early in Paradiso's life.]



These three views of Paradiso show the building itself between two interior shots of the type of rock concerts that are performed there regularly.

At the front end of the building, near the entrance, there were several concession booths lining the wall. Here they dispensed all manner of munchies and liquids and, the house specialty, any kind of pot you can name and a bunch you never heard of and every one of them was better than anything you had ever gotten close to before in your whole life. And cheap. And right there. And, just in case you came unprepared, there were other concessions selling paraphernalia for the truly fortunate.

They had literally everything you needed to get right with God, assuming He hadn't yet left the building.

I remember that there were no seats anywhere, just about half a city block of floor space. Here and there in groups and as individuals, people just sat right down on that hardwood floor and filled their pipes or rolled their joints, lighted them, and began toking away. The smoke was heavenly incense dedicated to

almighty hedonistic damn almost legal pleasure.

I knew I was home the minute my butt hit that floor and my lighter flared.

You could just lie back flat on that floor and enjoy the music from the band onstage and the images flashing around all the walls and the huge, high-arching ceiling of the once-upon-a-time cathedral. A large number of projection machines of different sorts constantly shot out streams of mixed media images across every flat surface of the entire building. It was incredible and a delight to watch the images flashing and overlapping. Here would be an old black-and-white monster movie of some sort and over there a slide show of flowers in time-lapse bloom. Documentaries on various subjects, practically anything you could think of to pass away the time.

My paranoia kept me constantly looking over my shoulder, behind my back, all around me, trying to find where the feds were watching me from. I had grown so accustomed to their presence tailing me, that I knew they had to be there somewhere, but what the hell, when in Rome do as the Romans.

#

One of the main reasons I participated in the Wet Dreams Film Festival, besides exhibiting *Adultery for Fun and Profit* in the competition for feature length films, was to meet my No. 1 H*E*R*O. When Jim Haynes told me that Barney Rosset was also going to be participating in the event, I knew there was nothing that could keep me away from there.

I had never met Rosset. I had admired him for years. I had spent some of those years ripping him off and taking a hell of a lot of money directly out of his hands, only I wasn't doing any of that deliberately and it was nothing personal and he was still the single person within the entire erotica industry, world-wide, for whom I held a heavy load of genuine, worshipful respect. I was going to meet him at last.

We lived and worked in different worlds, Barney and I, because he was in the uptown, classy book industry, producing volumes that anyone would be proud not only to own but especially to have produced. I, on the other hand, was in the degenerating downtown, dirty book industry, better known as the periodicals trade, and I was producing volumes that people read only once then discarded after the pages got too sticky for comfort. Barney's books were forever and my books were, by definition, destined for a lifetime of only 30 days. Imagine my surprise, many decades later, to discover that people were paying hundreds of dollars, even thousands, for single copies of some of those 50- to 75-cent beatoff books.

Rosset was doing things exactly the way I wanted to do them but wasn't allowed to do. He made me feel quite proud just to think I was a sort of bastard relative.

Barney and I were constantly in competition for the same exact book titles at the time, and the only real saving grace was that we existed in those different worlds. I don't mean that he was in New York City and I was at the far opposite corner of the States in San Diego. I mean he was the respected boss of Grove Press who flooded bookstores with some of the very best of Maurice Girodias' shoddy, unprotected output...starting with My Man Henry Miller.

I, on the other hand, was the notorious smut peddler from Greenleaf Classics who flooded newsstands, bus stations, gun shops, liquor stores, and sleazy area adult bookstores with almost the exact same product...Maurice Girodias' shoddy, unprotected output...starting with My Man Henry Miller. At times it was touch and go to see who would hit the marketplace first, me or Barney. I called him Barney and thought of him that way...even though I respected him beyond reason, I felt especially akin to him. We walked the same streets in the same manner for the same reasons. What's not to like about him?

I got my books from the bus station.... It was in bus stations, of course, that I discovered D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller.

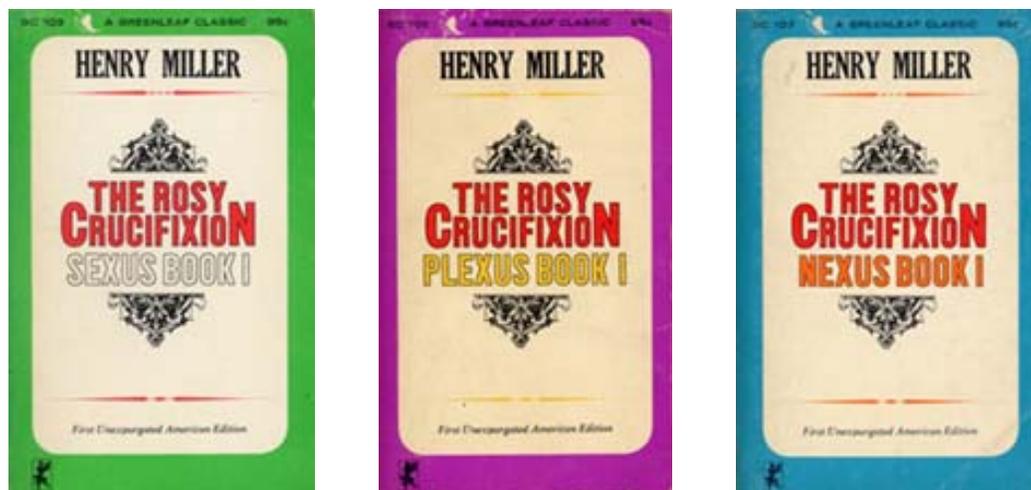
--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros* 4, March-April 1968

I had even gone to the extreme, on two different occasions, of living inside our then typesetter's shop and literally hand setting two of the Miller books, working straight through without even stopping to sleep or eat, in order to beat Barney's on-sale dates for those titles. Fortunately I had the help of my first assistant who got as good at hand setting as I had become by then...that's Peter V. Cooper. Prior to that, neither of us had ever touched a piece of type, much less sat those pieces into any kind of coherent order. It was quite a learning experience for both of us and needless to say, we beat Barney on sale with both of those books by a wide margin.

Barney was quality and we were crap...and the twain was just about to meet.

...what do you suppose the dirtiest book in [this library] is?... You would say it was sex. Lots of people have thought that to write a sexy book is an easy way to make a lot of money but it hasn't worked out that way. Henry Miller has written probably the sexiest book in [here], *The Rosy Crucifixion*. You can't write a sexier book than that but it doesn't sell well. So there is something more to it than sex.

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Teaching the Writer to Write," *Kallikanzaros* 4, March-April 1968



#

Old Buddy Al Goldstein from *Screw* was there in Amsterdam as well. I had known him and his ex-partner Jim Buckley from the very beginning of their salacious enterprise. I even made a couple of special trips to New York early on just to meet them and spend time with them. Anyone doing the things they were doing just had to be friends of mine. I liked Al especially, but Jim was already moving on when I first met

him.

Al would take me to his various apartments (I think we did four of them in one day), show me around, and ply me with superior dope. He was a gadget and trinket man in those days...buying up every plaything he ever thought he might want to have some day. He stuffed those apartments to overflowing with all those toys and possessions that he rarely had time to look at, much less to use.

It was a real pleasure meeting with him again in Amsterdam. Al and I would go walking around, chain-smoking Sativa joints and taking pictures of everything in sight, of the festival attendees, and of the festival itself. He took the very best portrait shot of me that I had seen up until that event. It's gone now, somehow lost in the shuffle of time, along with all those other wonderful photos that I managed to take myself.

Many years later I reconnected with Al, but time had taken too heavy a toll on him and his memory. He seems like a different person these days, burdened with strict rules and disappointments enough to sink a battleship and relegated to some heavy supervision and periodic in-the-bottle pissing. Only not then, not at Wet Dreams, where we shared those mighty fine joints walking around downtown Amsterdam.

#

I continued to do all I could for Tom De Simone, as he and I smoked some exquisite Indica doobies, and he reminisced about his 14-foot-tall pot plant out in his back yard in Los Angeles next to his garage. We lugged that damn camera and film bag all over town, in and out of restaurants and Paradiso and everywhere else.

I never did learn if Sawyer's projected documentary ever appeared about Wet Dreams that Tom was filming snips for.

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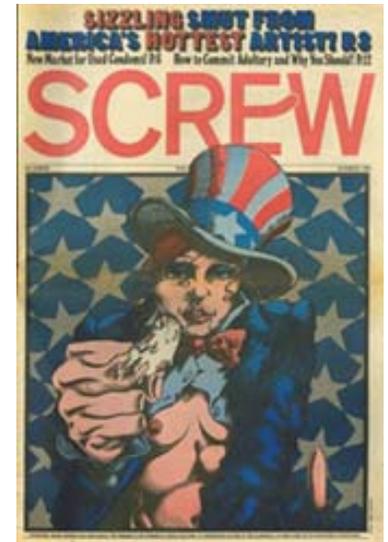
It wasn't all play, of course. It never is. I had work to do while I was there, networking with various industry professionals. My time was really split between that work, partying with fellow attendees that I wanted to party with, and slipping away to Paradiso every chance I had to do so.

On one day, I think it was a Saturday, Willem de Ridder came to me and told me to be sure to be at Paradiso that night by midnight, that a very special happening had been arranged in connection with the Wet Dreams festival. Naturally, I did just as he suggested, getting there in plenty of time to make sure I was thoroughly ripped before midnight.

Then, precisely at the stroke of 12, every projector in the place switched over to hard-core pornography and washed the entire interior of that once church with full color and up close sexual activity. There were stunned gasps coming from the crowd of Paradiso members who had not been clued in on the happening and, immediately after that, loud applause and cheers.

The surprise religious ceremony continued for almost an hour before the projectors slowly ran out of celluloid ecstasy.

#



I finally met Barney Rosset, my hero, and he was actually rather nice to me. I don't know what I had expected but it wasn't that. I felt for sure he would be resentful of me, and ignore me, but he did neither. He was as nice as he could possibly have been.

Maybe it was that he didn't really realize who I was, but that seemed highly improbable. (There is an East Coast/West Coast bias that permeates everything in the USA. Neither coast gives the other any credit for any reason.)

We spent a bit of time together, sitting around, having drinks and bullshitting, trading lies and truths with Al Goldstein, Fatima Ingram ["Didi Wadidi," a gorgeous Frankfurt model], Germane Greer [*The Female Eunuch*], and many others already forgotten. We did that a couple of times during the festival, enough to send me away from Amsterdam, when I did leave, with the thought that I had been right in my estimation of Barney from the very beginning. He still is my No. 1 Hero, with an upper case H, to this very day.

The festival itself was very much like an industry trade show that goes on all over the world for every kind of product that exists. As far as I could tell, the real industry leaders were actually there, in person, and delighted to meet and greet their known counterparts from elsewhere. Everyone had such common goals and expertise that they all recognized and accepted. Everyone was part of one big family and enjoying the reunion as much as they possibly could.

#



A lovely vision of beauty, Jean Shrimpton, the British Super Model and cover girl, was at the festival. She would enter and leave quietly, but it was impossible not to notice her, she was that desirable.

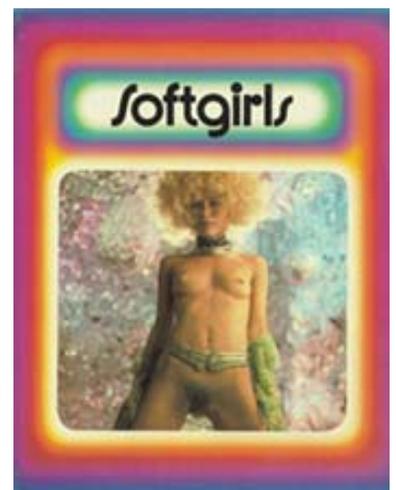
One of the more interesting things I did during the festival, when I could slip away from whatever was going on, was to go visit the studio where *Softgirls* [featuring Rosy Rosy, Didi Wadidi, Brumbar, and one other male] was photographed for Zero Press. Bettina von Heuenstein and Jan Lue Verrou figured prominently in those photo shoots as well. At one point during Wet

Dreams, Didi Wadidi and Rosy Rosy took me to that studio and proudly showed me where they and some of their friends had posed for the torrid pictures inside *Softgirls*. I managed to hold on to my copy of *Softgirls* all these years just because of her; it is inscribed "With love, Didi Wadidi."

Needless to say, being in the company of two such lovely ladies at the same time was very inspiring indeed.



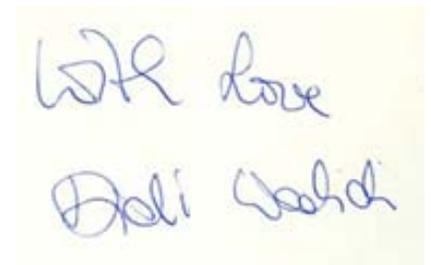
Barney Rosset in his Grove Press office, New York, circa 1970. Courtesy Astrid Myers/*Evergreen Review* Collection.



Didi Wadidi on the cover of *Softgirls*.

The studio was lined with aluminum foil, as were a number of special props like a huge ball over which the models would pose for arched-back pictures.

Jan and Bettina insisted that I go with them to meet some of their friends who were rather anxious to break into the erotica posing end of the industry. Everyone seemed to think I was the doorway through which one had to pass before becoming international porn stars. I had no reason to disillusion them. I felt as if I was inside a loft with a bunch of patriots preparing to do battle with invading Nazi storm troopers [Homeland Security??] who were expected to appear at any moment. I felt so old, surrounded by all those beautiful, available, just barely legal bodies.



#

Back at the Leidseplein Theatre in downtown Amsterdam where the films were being shown in competition, I was amazed and amused to discover that the *Suck* crew had arranged some very extra special things to thrill and delight the spectators. Not films, not slideshows, but people doing ironic and unexpected things. For instance, during intermissions or between films, nude men would push refreshment carts up and down the theater aisles with even more nude females sitting astride those carts. They chanted, "Pussy, cocks, group action," like barkers hawking their wares. There were also people deliberately costumed in unexpected garb throughout the theater, raising numerous questions: nuns in full habits, priests with white collars, intermingling with the unworthy masses. Irony to the maximum amount.

Thanks for Coming

So I went back to Paris and started contacting filmmakers, journalists, private collectors of pornography, of erotic movies, and then I started contacting people in Amsterdam who might be helpful. We managed to rent a cinema and the Amsterdam Film Museum agreed to help us with Customs and what-have-you. And the word got out.

The first Wet Dream Film Festival, which took place in the autumn of 1970, was a very, very big success. All of Amsterdam wanted to go, but people came from Rome, Tokyo, New York, London, Brussels, Paris; from all over Europe they came. We sold out immediately - we could have sold out many, many times over. The festival had an incredible warmth and everybody had a very, very good time. We had a kind of 'Who's Who' jury including Germaine Greer, Jay Landesman, Richard Neville, Michael Zwerin, a wonderful model from Germany, Didi Wadidi, and Al Goldstein, the editor and publisher of *Screw* magazine in New York.

#

Richard Neville arrived at the Wet Dream Festival with what he took for a genuine stripper and part-time prostitute who flabbergasted him completely by begging to be beaten. When he got home he found out that it was all a put-up job. The purpose of the put on is unknown. Richard has never pretended to be sexually sophisticated and after his performance in *The Body* he better not.

#

One thing I did regret about *Suck* is that we never had a cover with a naked Jean Shrimpton on it. From the first, I believe that Jean was right behind what we were trying to do. She attended the first Wet Dream Film Festival, she was at the first ever *Suck* editorial meeting, she had an amazing collection of erotica. Of course she was a bit nervous about this coming out. Here we have this representative of the sixties, this angelic image who was on the

cover of *Vogue* and who was a role model for millions, and at the same time very concerned with sexuality, and with sexual images and erotica and sexual repression. It was a great shame that because of her position we had to keep it quiet. Now we can talk about it, ten years later, but at the time can you imagine Jean Shrimpton on the cover of *Suck* in the nude? There would have been an explosion.

--Jim Haynes, Excerpts from "Amsterdam, Chapter 5," dated 1980.

There were several things shown in the Leidseplein that were not in competition. I specifically remember a documentary of the Rolling Stones' Altamont, California concert. That was the one where the Stones hired the Hell's Angels bikers to be their security and, somehow, a few people wound up dead during the Stones' performance.

There was also a film starring Mick Jagger in which he appeared totally nude with close up frontal shots. No biggie. And other things that were as easily forgotten.

My memory tells me that there were happenings at venues other than the Leidseplein as well. I particularly remember live stage performances involving different skits put on by different groups. One in particular, something to do with chicken fucking with live chickens onstage, was presented by the Vienna Theatre of the Absurd. It was particularly entertaining.

As for the films entered into competition, I saw some that I could easily classify as personal favorites. For me, the biggest thrill of the whole festival was the delightful animated *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, a German animated film by Christie Eriksson that was awarded the Walt Disney Memorial Award. The animation and color was so perfect it exactly matched my memory of the original Disney film and of Natalie Kalmus' long forgotten but wonderful Technicolor. I thought it was hilarious watching all seven of the dwarfs doing Snow White at the same time. It was a wonderful ten minutes and I'd dearly love to see that film again.

Peter Flemming, who I knew as the producer of *Color Climax* magazines in Sweden, was awarded the People's Porn Prize for a number of his short Eros films. I had known Flemming to produce exquisitely detailed films with incredibly pampered and meticulously maintained models. Really world-class erotica.

The Blast From the Past Award went to Jean Genet for *Un Chant d'Amour* that had a running time of just under half an hour.

The Suckers Award went to Falcon Stewart for his one-minute film, *Banana*. I thought it was rather hilarious myself.

Contrary to the quotation up above from *Adultery for Fun and Profit* that "Grove Press' *Events* and Olympia Press' *Barbara*" were left out in the cold, I don't even remember *Events*, and Olympia Press was awarded the Limp Cock Award for Walter Burns' 90-minute, black-and-white film.

And, the legitimate first prize, the Wet Dream Grand Prix Award, went to Ole Ege and Shinkichi Tajiri for their 30-minute documentary about Bodil Joensen, the well known Danish animal lover, called *A Summer Day 1970*. Bodil had been featured in a large number of magazines and short films as she did her thing in the barnyard. I had seen them all over Denmark, the USA, and elsewhere.



Bodil Joensen on a very good day.

By mixing commercial films with others which could defend themselves in law as having artistic merit, the organisers [of Wet Dreams] successfully undermined the idea there is any difference between blue sex and blue art and showed the impossibility of the censor's job.

--Robert Hewison, *The Guardian* (London), December 3, 1970

#

When I returned to the States from Amsterdam, I had quite a shock waiting for me at the airport. Nothing happened. None of the usual foolishness that I was accustomed to receiving from Customs as I reentered the country. There wasn't even a minute's delay as I still hand carried that heavy can of really hard-core pornography right back into the United States and right back to the Greenleaf Classics offices in Mission Valley San Diego.

Little did I know that the feds already had arranged to acquire [read "manufacture"] everything they felt they would need shortly to put me away for as long as they wanted to.

Then the biggest surprise of all happened. Somehow, without my knowledge, *Adultery for Fun and Profit* had been awarded the Grand Prix for the best feature-length film shown at the Wet Dreams Film Festival...at least that's what happened according to my buddy Richard Robinson.

Not only had he self-awarded that prize, he had a trophy made and the posters and advertisements for the film proudly declared that it was the overall winner. I was stunned at Rick's audacity. When I confronted him about his devious deeds, he just laughed.

"In Hollywood," he said, "we do this kind of thing all the time."

When I insisted that it was somehow fraudulent, he continued with, "No one will ever know. Trust me. Just you watch and see."

And, old buddy Rick was right. No one knew the difference and, worse yet, no one seemed to care. Score one more for Hollywood.

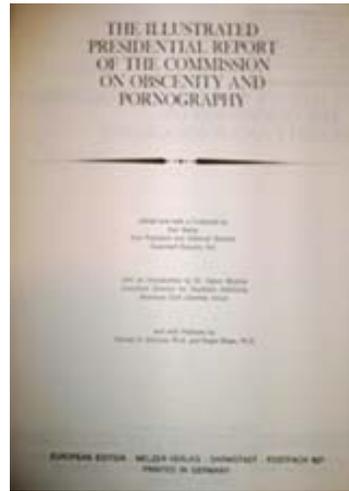
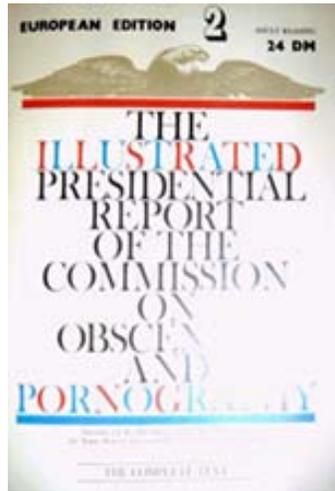
Certainly Lou Sher didn't care. His experience with *Adultery for Fun and Profit* through his Sherpix distribution was enough to make him sign on as a major sponsor for the 1971 Wet Dreams Film Festival, an event that unfortunately I was much too occupied to attend, thanks to my federal indictment.

#

There was a sort of postscript to Wet Dreams.

Jim Haynes and Willem de Ridder came to visit me in San Diego early in 1971. Jim was there as a courier arranging permissions to reprint *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* for Melzer Verlag in Darmstadt, a Frankfurt (my favorite German city) suburb.

Erik Tonen of Antwerp furnished these jpegs:



I do not have a copy of this German edition of my very best book.
--Earl Kemp

While he was there, Jim took the opportunity of making a deposition in my defense that was filed with the federal court as part of my trial for "conspiring" to mail obscene matter. Jim testified in that deposition that I had been visiting him in Paris at the time the alleged and later convicted brochure advertising Illustrated was prepared and mailed. And that during those truly exciting days as his guest in Paris, I lectured to a number of his English language classes on the Vincennes campus of the University of Paris.

He shouldn't have bothered; the feds didn't need no truth or facts, just convictions.

While Jim and Willem were visiting me, they wanted me to take them into Mexico. Everyone who visited me in those days wanted me to take them into Mexico, so of course I did.

As we passed the US Customs checkpoint and entered into Mexico proper, Jim Haynes looked at me and Willem, and said, "My God! It's tangible. You can actually feel it in the air all around."

"What?" asked Willem.

"Freedom," Jim said. "It's here, just outside the borders of the United States."

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*For Bill Levy, Susan Janssen, and Willem de Ridder, and especially for Jim Haynes: "Roll another one, just like the other one." Dated May 2004.

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

A: "Assholes."

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

"If You Could See Her Through My Eyes...."*

By Earl Kemp

CeeCee was every guy's dream come true, wrapped up in a stunning, eye-stopping package, and she was mine. She came gift wrapped, complete with a card wishing me all the best with my new present. No one ever gave me a CeeCee before. No one ever even gave me a person before, for that matter.

She was a gift from Rick and Gale Robinson who felt I needed a little "loosening up." They had been trying to do that for me without much success for months by that time and weren't about to give up so easily. They were part of the Hollywood crowd, and so was CeeCee who, besides being a damned fine hooker, happened to be a close friend of theirs as well. Among other things, Rick produced and directed a full-length porno film for Greenleaf Classics and somehow had become my friend along the way.

I had watched Rick at work smoothing his way through everything that confronted him, and kissing-ass like the real Hollywood in-crowd does so well. Only thing is, I never once thought that Rick was kissing my ass or trying to work me for some kind of deal, and that's important. I always avoid people I feel only want to use me. Rick and Gale were friends. We partied in San Diego. We partied in New York City, first class all the way, conspicuously flaunting it and reveling in the power that made it possible in the first place. We partied in Los Angeles and we partied - man, how we did party - in the Guadalajara suburb of Ajijic.

They were a lot of fun, and almost always surrounded by a number of people who were like minded, especially on their own home turf...lots of really beautiful people who ran around naked most of the time and were all "actors" or production people or agents and "models." They were always filled with industry gossip and stories about which star was doing which Best Boy and how it was getting done. About tips and hints of upcoming auditions....

I had never seen CeeCee before she was given to me.

"Any time you come to Hollywood," Rick said, "just give me a call a day ahead. CeeCee'll pick you up at the airport." I had gotten in the habit of using the Hollywood-Burbank airport because I so disliked LAX. It got me closer to wherever I was going anyway and, in those days, you could actually move around town a bit on the freeways. You didn't even think of the time as being delayed while driving.

"I want you to really use her, Earl," Rick said. "Don't worry about a thing, just relax and let go and fall right into it...."

#

I mentioned that CeeCee was a real stunner, an almost perfect toy trophy to be proud of and to show off and to "really use." It was the first time in my life when I had, on my arm, anything as traffic stopping as she was. I really got into it. Just being seen with her made me feel incredible the way people looked at her, and envied me.



La Baker was my fairy godmother of choice. This photograph was taken in Paris in 1929 shortly before my birth.

We would go to restaurants (CeeCee had a fondness for Mexican), a kick-back bar off Wilshire that she particularly liked, nightclubs like the Whisky on Sunset, things like that. And for the first time ever I really felt like the King of Pornography with CeeCee on my arm and everyone looking at me. Now and then we would even encounter recognizable movie star types face to face and they would be staring, thinking, trying to remember who I was and where they knew me from and, inside, I would be grinning from ear to ear.

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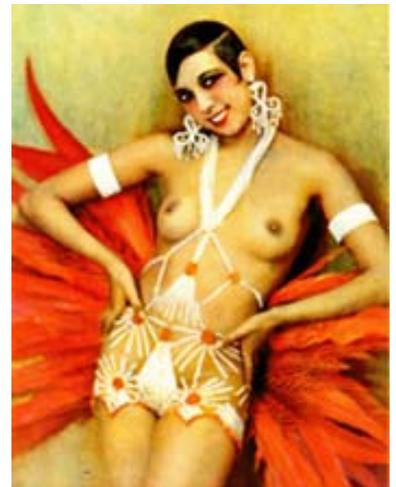
I have this mind thing that, when the time is right and I really want it, I can convince myself that I've slipped in time and wound up where I wanted to be in the first place. It was Paris 1929...my God-given birthright.

I was perhaps Paul Colin that day and she was on my arm. In the background a relentless jazz beat pounded away, like a passionate heartbeat. La Baker! Josephine! Mommy! And everyone in the place was looking at me the way I like it best. One of my most favorite, most often relived fantasies; that and how incredibly good we were at it.

#

CeeCee wore her hair piled high atop her head and cascading down in falls over her shoulders in back, little sparkling things randomly dotting her hair like tiny diamonds. Her eyelashes were long and frequently fluttered noticeably and, whenever we were out in public like that, never for even a second wavered away from my face, which she held in the most rapt adoration and with totally undivided attention.

Her breasts were always held up and forward, her cleavage alone (and she loved to show it off this way) was droolable where, now and then, faint traces of moisture would glisten and beckon adorably. Her waist was Hollywood perfect, and so were her hips, without an ounce of excess anywhere. When we went out to be seen, CeeCee favored long, flowing, body-gripping gowns that sort of looked painted on. Her hips moved with just the right amount of sway, gently nudging against mine with every step-to make sure that everyone noticed-and seemed to be radiating heat you could actually feel for several feet around us.



La Baker as I first knew her, circa 1950.

When we entered the room there was an abrupt moment of silence that seemed to linger a bit and little rustles while everyone turned-even the most jaded-in our direction. Every head. Every eye. Hail to the King!

CeeCee really knew how to put on a good show. If I were paying, I would sure be getting my money's worth.

Afterward, after we had eaten or listened to some live music or had a drink or two, we'd move on to the next stop where it would start all over again just like the last time for me and Josephine. I knew I could never get enough of it, just me and this incredibly stunning black Hollywood hooker.

#

When it was all over for the night, the showing off and the being seen, sometimes we would stop off at

her favorite bar near Wilshire for a nightcap. Whenever CeeCee was letting down, she liked to sip slowly on a Rum and Coke made with dark, aged rum and forget about whatever ails the world or dumps personal problems on her that she has to resolve. She was friends with George, the bartender. (He was Mexican so I suspect it was really Jorge, but then she wasn't really a CeeCee either.) Then we would head on to wherever "home" happened to be for the night and where absolutely everything changed and CeeCee, my Josephine, the toast of Paris, darling of the ball, consort to the King of Pornography, dropped her glass slippers and turned into Cinderella again.

Everything about CeeCee, all the things that were so attractive, so desirable, so stunning, all came off.

Without the fancy clothes and Frederick's lingerie, the wig, the eyelashes, the padded push-em-up bra, the sultry makeup...there stood little Cecilia Tubbs from Idabell, Oklahoma.

Her real hair was an unruly mat that she kept short all the time. Her breasts were just ample, and nothing to stare at, but her nipples were proud and pointy. Her skin that was the color of coffee au lait was marred by a few stretch marks, but which of us is truly perfect? Her pubic hair was the biggest surprise of all, thick and coarse and it kept reminding me of a Brillo pad though that was only in my imagination. Little pink gleamings between the lips.

The palms of her hands and soles of her feet were as white as mine, but there the similarity ended and viva la difference.

In the dark or with the lights on, it didn't make any difference, because in my mind the CeeCee I was seeing was more often than not Josephine Baker and at the same time she was the one everyone else had seen, not the nappy little kinky head bobbing up and down on me like that but the long, flowing black tresses falling over her sultry back and sensuously swaying hips.

In the dark or with the lights on, CeeCee kissed it and made everything a whole lot better. Rick and Gale sure got a lot for their money.

#

As it must to all good things....

Three months later, CeeCee was alone, seated at her favorite bar sipping a Cuba Libre and talking with her friend George. There were a few customers in the bar; there always is, but it was early yet. Nearby, at a table, two guys were drinking and talking.

One of them was a bit bigoted. He kept making loud, rude remarks about "niggers" and "whores" that were obviously aimed in CeeCee's direction.

George told me later, after it was all over, that CeeCee did her damndest to ignore the loud-mouthed sonofabitch, only he was unrelenting. Finally he got so pissed off that she was ignoring his taunts that he stood up and walked up to where she was seated at the bar.

"I need some poontang, baby," he said, and tried to touch her breast.

George said he couldn't believe how it happened. Right in front of his face, he said, CeeCee reached over the bar, picked up an empty Coor's bottle, and banged it down whack atop the bar. The bottle shattered into some real gnarly fragments and without flinching, CeeCee turned to her taunter and whack, whack, whack shredded him to ribbons right there at the bar.

"Motherfucker!" CeeCee said...according to George.

And all that goodness was gone in a single flash that took less than a minute to accomplish. And CeeCee was gone and Cecilia convicted of manslaughter, however provoked, and "I've got some friends inside...."

- - -

*In memory of Rick and Gale Robinson, CeeCee and Cecilia; "Wild thing, you make my heart sing...."
Dated October 2000.

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

A Poem for Ted Cogswell*

By Avram Davidson

Word has come to this imbiber
That Cogswell lacks a rhyme for Leiber.

(Tap the tambour, beat the drum,
To this poor pass are poets come.)

What! Breathes there one of fickle fiber
Who cannot find a rhyme for Leiber?

(Strum the cythern, pluck the lyre,
Cogswell's got us all on fire.)

From Ceylon's shore to Pass of Khyber-
Om mani pad me hum for Leiber!

(Blow the bugle, wind the horn,
And curse the day our craft was born.)

If I were a bear I'd rather hiber-
nate than lack a rhyme for Leiber!

(Rub the rebec, blast the trumpet,
Parting, pat the proxy strumpet.)

"Farewell," say to all such weiber;
"Cogswell wants a rhyme for Leiber!"



Avram Davidson at PittCon. Fanac.org photo by Billy Joe Plott dated September 1960.

(Hum, harpsichord; and dulcimer, sing clear-
Inspire a proper rhyme unto mine ear.)

He jibeth ill, it ill befits that jiber,
That whoreson rogue who saith, "No rhyme for Leiber!"

(Sound the serpent and the loud bassoon
Finish up this thing full soon.)

We don't need Wiener or his cyber
To provide a rhyme for Leiber!

(Peal, o bells; and echo, organ-
Cogswell, kindly face Miss Gorgan.)

And from the sacred banks of Father Tiber
"Pax vobiscum, Fredericus Leiber!"

"*Basta, bambini!*" loud and clear is heard,
In nomine Johannes XXIII.

Alack! that Ted, to diddle Fritz
Hath addled all our sorry wits!

One thing more: Who in the Hell
Knows a rhyme for "Ted Cogswell!"?

- - -

*Reprinted from *PITFCS, Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies*, Advent, 1992

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

[Avram Davidson was a very special person. Just the sight of him coming into my view and approaching me was enough to brighten my entire day. He seemed to radiate goodness and good will. I found him to be generous to a fault and always ready to share a personal anecdote, a plot line, a freshly baked bagel, or what have you. He greatly broadened my appreciation for kosher cuisine.

#

My good buddy Howard DeVore tells a tale on me that I hope is true. According to Howard, during ChiCon III in 1962, I decreed that the Hugo Awards Banquet would be a formal occasion. Shoes, coats, and neckties were mandatory for all males. Howard swears that, at one point, I physically lifted Avram's beard to determine if he was trying to subvert the tie rule, and he was not.



Avram Davidson

It was my pleasure to lift anything of Avrams, considering how often he had lifted my spirits over the years of his entirely too short lifetime.

photographed by Guy
H. Lillian III at the
SFWA, Berkeley, CA,
on March 14, 1970.

Hail fellow well met!

#

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

Rounding up the Shaggy Dogs* The Short Stories of Avram Davidson

By Bruce R. Gillespie

'Avram Davidson? Who's he?' That's been the reaction of several people when recently I mentioned I would be talking about his work. The answer is in the anthology, *The Avram Davidson Treasury*, edited by Robert Silverberg and Grania Davis. Reading it set me reading every Avram Davidson anthology I could find. Thanks, Alan Stewart, for lending me some that I did not have. And thanks, Grania Davis, for the energy she has invested in recent years into revealing the range of Avram Davidson's work.

Avram Davidson was born in 1923 in Yonkers, New York, and died in 1973 in Bellingham, Washington, in poverty. He was in the US Navy during World War II, and on his way home, visited China and, later, Israel during 1949, the year of its birth. He had returned to America by 1950.

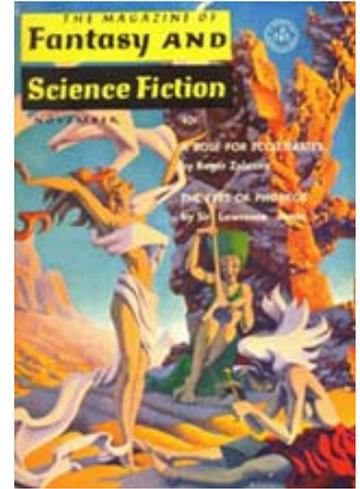
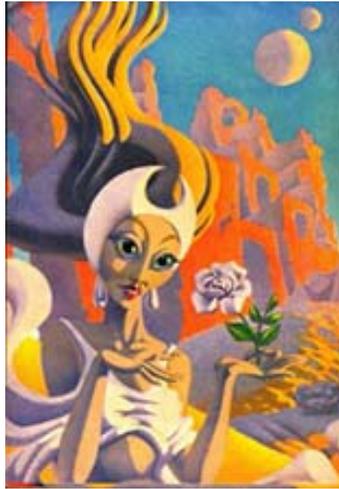


Avram Davidson n.d.

Beginning in his late teens, he became a strict Orthodox observer of the Jewish faith, and his early stories appeared in magazines, such as *Jewish Life and Commentary*, primarily directed at Jewish audiences. In 1954 he sold his first genre fantasy or science fiction story, 'My Boy Friend's Name is Jello', to *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and in 1958 made his name with a story called 'The Golem', also in *F&SF*. This tells of an elderly couple, sitting outside their suburban home, who are approached by a golem. They do what anybody would do: wrote on the golem's forehead and set him to work mowing the lawns. Davidson's other enduring successes from that period include 'Help! I Am Dr Morris Goldpepper' (1957), which tells of a dentist captured by aliens who force him to fit them with upper plates so they can move to America and claim welfare, and 'Or All the Seas with Oysters' (1958), which is based on the wonderful notion that safety pins are the pupae and coat hangers the larvae of bicycles. In his introduction to the story in *The Avram Davidson Treasury*, Guy Davenport tells of students in his writing classes who have handed him garbled versions of the same idea, not knowing where it has come from. Not many SF stories become urban legends.

Davidson led a restless life, constantly trying to find a house cheap enough to fit his income, or other sources of income to finance his writing career. From 1962 and 1964 he worked as by far the most interesting editor that *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* has ever had. While he was editor, his introductions would sometimes grow longer than the stories they were meant to introduce. As editor of *F&SF*, his most memorable achievement was publishing Roger Zelazny's first hit story, 'A Rose for Ecclesiastes', accompanied by the finest SF magazine cover ever, by Hannes Bok. During this period, he was living in a village in Mexico. All the paperwork involved in editing *F&SF* was at the mercy of the

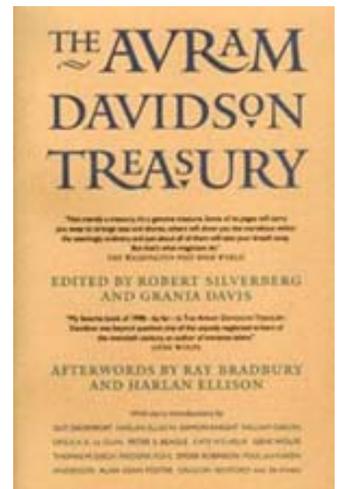
Mexican and US post offices. Later, Davidson lived for a while in British Honduras, now called Belize, before moving in and out of rooming houses all over the west coast of America. During this period he published many short stories and sixteen novels, but never made any money.



That short biography contains the essence of the Avram Davidson legend: that he was an eccentric man who never made a cent because he wrote quirky stories that make people chuckle. Discountable; not regarded as one of the giants of SF. If such a legend grows up around an author, people stop reading that author, which is what

happened to Davidson during the seventies and eighties. I also stopped reading him. Therefore, like most other SF readers, I missed out on the fact that year by year Davidson's work kept improving. Some of his very best stories were written just before he died.

It was not until I read *The Avram Davidson Treasury* that I gained any idea of the complex reality of Davidson's life and the true worth of his work. *The Treasury* is a particularly valuable resource, because of the care taken in its selection of stories and the range of writers chosen to comment on individual pieces. In his Foreword, here is co-editor Robert Silverberg's recollection:



Even though Avram had seemed to materialize among us like a stranger from another world, there in the mid-1950s, it turned out that he was in fact a New Yorker like the rest of us . . . Indeed he had been active in New York science-fiction fandom in his teens-co-founder, no less, of the Yonkers Science Fiction League. (I find the concept of a teenage Avram Davidson as difficult to comprehend as the concept of the Yonkers Science Fiction League, but so be it.)....

Born in 1923 - that means he was only thirty-five or so when I first met him at that unspecified party at an indeterminable time in the late 1950s. Which is hard to believe now, because I think of thirty-five-year-olds these days as barely postgraduate, and Avram, circa 1958, bearded and rotund and professorial, seemed to be at least sixty years old. . . .

So we clustered around this curious little man at our parties and got to know him, and when his stories appeared we bought the magazines that contained them and read them; and our appreciation, and even love, for his work and for him knew no bounds. He was courtly and droll. He was witty. He was lovable. He could be, to be sure, a little odd and cranky at times (though not nearly as much as he would come to be, decades later, in his eccentric and cantankerous old age), but we understood that geniuses were entitled to be odd and cranky.

Here Silverberg gives me the clue to all of Davidson's work - that he was born old and wise, except in aspects of his personal life. But that's not quite the impression he gave when his stories first became well known among SF fans. Because of the success of such stories as 'The Golem' and 'Dr Morris Goldpepper', he was regarded as an oddball genius, rather than a real genius. His oddest stories are his earliest, and their eccentricity often made it difficult for readers to see their brilliance. In the late fifties

and early sixties, he really hoped to sell enough fiction to become a success in the field, so he wrote too many stories of the wrong sort. Many of his published pieces of that era were six-page sting-in-the-tail stories, clever but unmemorable.

However, if we want to judge the true ability of Avram Davidson, we do need to start at the beginning of his career. Take his first fantasy story, 'My Boy Friend's Name is Jello', published in *F&SF*. Its first paragraph is Joycean stream-of-consciousness writing, not at all the sort of thing one finds in SF magazines of the early fifties. A man is suffering from a disease, which he calls Virus Y. We have no idea who he is, where he is living, how he caught whatever he caught. 'Oh dear, how my mind runs on. I must be feverish. An ague, no doubt.'



How time flies! (Above) Bruce Gillespie is seen in his workroom in 1979 and (below), after purchasing a few books, in 2001.

The second paragraph begins: 'Well, rather an ague than a pox. A pox is something one wishes on editors . . . strange breed, editors.' The story has switched direction entirely. Will the story be about sickness or editors?

The third paragraph begins:

'In front of the house two little girls are playing one of those clap-handie games. Right hand, left hand, cross hands on bosom, left hand, right hand . . . it makes one dizzy to watch. And singing the while:

*My boy friend's name is Jello,
He comes from Cincinello,
With a pimple on his nose
And three fat toes;
And that's the way my story goes!*

There is a pleasing surrealist quality to this which intrigues me. In general I find little girls enchanting. What a shame they grow up to be big girls and make our lives as miserable as we allow them, and oft-times more.



The narrator then speculates about people who criticise Charles Lutwidge Dodgson for his attitude to little girls. Is *this* the direction the story is taking?

Only in paragraph four do we return to the theme of paragraph one: illness. If this story were a piece of music, its procedure might not be puzzling. It's quite common to introduce three different phrases at the beginning of a piece, with the knowledge that the listener will allow the composer, at leisure, to stitch them all together. When a writer of fiction does this, we often don't see how the themes are stitched together. We say that he or she is writing a 'shaggy dog story', which the *Macquarie Dictionary* defines as a 'generally long and involved funny story whose humour lies in the pointlessness or irrelevance of its conclusion'.

Davidson's narrator begins to talk to the little girls, who are playing outside his window. In turn, this leads to speculations about the other people in the hospital, or whatever, in which he is staying. He mentions a Miss Thurl, who brings in supplies. Rain falls, gradually washing away the chalk marks of the girls' game. Miss Thurl brings him tea.

A new theme emerges on page three of the story:

I thank whatever gods may be that Mr Ahyellow came in just then. The other boarder (upstairs), [hah! at last we discover that the narrator is living in the front room of the bottom floor of a boarding house] a greengrocer, decent fellow, a bit short-tempered. He wished me soon well. He complained he had his own troubles, foot troubles . . . I scarcely listened, just chattered . . . Toes . . . something about his toes. Swollen, three of them, quite painful. A bell tinkled in my brain. I asked him how he spelt his name. A-j-e-l-l-o. Curious, I never thought of that. Now, I wonder what he could have done to offend the little girls? Chased them from in front of his store, perhaps. There is a distinct reddish spot on his nose. By tomorrow he will have an American Beauty of a pimple.

All those shaggy dogs, the themes, are starting to be mustered. As this happens, they are becoming part of one theme. The narrator lying in bed works out that the girls outside are junior sorceresses. One of their other calling games blesses a boy friend named Tony, 'who eats macaroni, has a great big knife and a pretty little wife, and will always lead a happy life . . . that must be the butcher opposite; he's always kind to the children.'

The narrator is a sensible chap. He takes out two dimes and flings them out the window. He thinks:

Too bad about Ajello, but every man for himself. Listen to them singing away, bless their little hearts! I love little girls. Such sweet, innocent voices.

My boy friend will soon be healthy.
He shall be very wealthy.
No woman shall harry
Or seek to marry;
Two and two is four, and one to carry!

It will be pleasant to be wealthy, I hope. I must ask Ajello where Cincinello is.

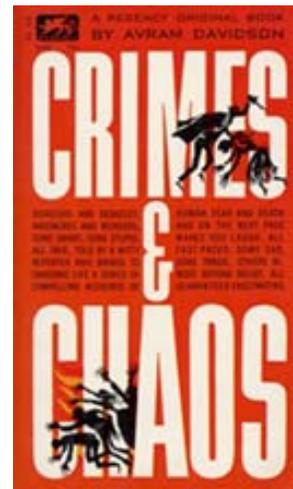
Three and a half pages, yet here is the heart of Davidson's genius: his shaggy dog stories metamorphose into lean wolf stories. In musical terms, it's a merry mini-sonata that Mozart might have written. Like much of the rest of Davidson's fiction, it also proved to be autobiographical. Davidson's relationships with women seem to have been uncomfortable throughout his life, except for his short marriage to Grania Kaiman who, even after many years of remarriage to Steve Davis, calls herself Grania Davidson Davis. He never became wealthy. I get the impression that he was sick a lot. He lived in lots of boarding houses and rented houses. He often gave dimes and dollars to unlikely people, especially when he was himself down and out.

'The Spook-box of Theobald Delafont de Brooks', the last story he wrote, appeared just after his death in 1993. It is sixteen pages long, rather than three and a half pages. When you finish it, you feel as if you've read a novel. Yet it is also, in essence, the same story as 'My Boy Friend's Name Is Jello'.

For an Avram Davidson story, 'The Spook-box' has a fairly straightforward beginning. The main character earns his living by collecting rents on old properties owned by old Miss Whittier. For this

privilege he is allowed free rent, which for him is the difference between survival and poverty.

The narrator is a con artist. He is quite proud of the way he can fool Miss Whittier into giving him privileges that enable him to make a bit of money on the side. He has one advantage over other people who might have tried to take advantage of Miss Whittier's vagueness: his name, Theobald Delafont De Brooks. In the world of this story, which is slightly off to one side from ours, Theobald De Brooks and Grosvenor Delafont de Brooks had been presidents of the United States of America. When people meet the narrator of the story, they assume that he has some close relationship with these presidents or their descendants. The main character assumes the same thing. There is one catch: nobody from Delafonts or the de Brookses will admit that he is part of the family. He keeps sending letters to his putative relatives.



No invitation to come boating or swimming at Muskrat Sump. No invitation to go golfing or riding at Parkill Ridge. Oh well. Take what you can get. Hope for the Big Chance. Keep your powder dry. And-say-don't knock it. On the strength of the Story Number One, Theobald De Brooks . . . floated into a job offered by an uncle . . . not much of a job, but it kept them in groceries and off Relief. See?

This is the only Avram Davidson book that I ever worked on.
-Earl Kemp.

Where are the shaggy dogs in this story? We keep bumping up against famous names, or at least, names that the main character believes are famous. Theobald has spent his life surrounded in a cloud of family history, but the cloud never quite turns into rain. As people keep telling him, 'If your name is De Brooks, why ain't chew rich?' Early in his life, he asked his father, 'How come all we've got are the names?' Nobody has an answer to that. His father remembers one possible connection, Phoebe Fisher De Brooks of Fishkill, New York. A letter for a reference that would enable Theo to obtain a scholarship 'for the benefit of native-born American boys being of Holland Dutch descent' brings only a letter to the effect that 'Miss De Brooks was absolutely unable to be of assistance even in regard to distant family ties, and that she hoped that Theobald would meet with all the success to which his merits might entitle him'.



Bruce Gillespie in 2000.

Theo becomes a jack of all trades, distributing cards that claims he is in Real Estate and Business and Financial Management. His name, his heritage, forever hangs around his neck, promising a chance that never comes. Theo's story meanders. He tells the story, gleaned from a newspaper, of the 'Missing Treasure of the Patriot Patroon', a member of the De Brooks family who sought to rescue a treasure from advancing British troops during the Revolution. A month later, he turned up, 'tired, hungry, muddy, bloody, and exceedingly confused'. It was not clear whether or not he still had the treasure. All that connects the main character with the old treasure is a scrappy old letter he owns-his only actual connection with the De Brooks.

As Theo's hopes continue, his life winds down. He is offered a chance to join a club of people who feel they have distant relationships with old America, but turns it down:

TDD, after a lifetime of ungratified hopes and increasingly entrenched disappointments, was no longer really sure of what he really wanted. But he was sure that it was not become a part of a would-be cabal of unpensioned former railroad

telegraphers, retired secretaries of down at heel institutions, bankrupted salesmen of the bonds of obscure municipalities: seeking to revive the ghost of the Know Nothings and secure for themselves a share of the openings for US vice-consulates and inspectorates of intestate properties, to which their descents from militia officers of the War of 1812 obviously entitled them . . . -Was that how he seemed to others? he wondered-and the wondering of it give him a very sharp pain whenever he thought about it: and, after that, he thought about it often.

Here is the heart of the story, written in prose as chewy and delicious as any to be found in American short fiction. It tells how one man gradually comes to have a clear idea of himself, after living a life of illusion. What is of most value? To read a lot of Avram Davidson is to find that old objects and ideas are valuable, but they can also trap someone, as Theo De Brooks is trapped. At the time Davidson wrote this story, he was old and sick and poor, and must have known he would soon be dead. His life must have seemed to him one of 'ungratified hopes and increasingly entrenched disappointments'. For other writers, writers much less gifted than him, the main chance usually arrived at least once in life-a movie sale here, a bestseller there, a story that keeps on selling. But for a writer, there are no guarantees. Therefore this story is the tale of coming to terms with a life lived in hope but without guarantees.

The story ends as the main character is finally offered his main chance. The old patroon's treasure chest (or spook box'), never opened, is traced to Theo, as the only surviving relative. He is the only person who knows what it might contain. When he opens it, he finds that the old ancestor had, during that lost month in his life, sold the jewels and gold rumoured to be in the spook-box, in return for a box full of Continental money. Totally worthless paper. Theo asks himself:

Had he not wasted his life on a dead claim to a dead name? Was there not, waiting in the chest, one message of great worth? *Lay thy burden down*, it seemed to say. It had to say *something*, didn't it?

This is a very moving story, all the more because it is not clear what the shape of the story actually is until the last page or so. Also, it's very funny. It's not sour humour. It is rueful humour, a comedy about one man's self-delusion. But it's not a gloomy story, because Theo invests so much energy into his life of delusion, which had given meaning to his life. In the end, he can laugh out loud at himself.

As I said at the beginning, Avram Davidson seemed old to his contemporaries. In 'My Boy Friend's Name Is Jello', the ritual of the girls' pavement game is centuries old. It's a piece of traditional magic that happens to touch upon the main character. In 'The Spook-box of Theobald Delafont De Brooks', the main character is afflicted by an ancient association of names, which he takes to be fortunate, but proves to be curse of his life. Avram Davidson wrote an entire book of articles about old things. Called *Adventures in Unhistory*, it displays his immense wealth of knowledge about all things ancient, demonstrating how most such knowledge is based on mistaken observations. The legend of the mermaid may or may not be based on sailors' observations of the manatee; the legend of the werewolf may or may not be based on ancient experiences of rabid wolves; and so on. Davidson kept vast notebooks of his discoveries about every possible subject.

Given that immense learning about the past can often lead a writer to commit unreadable pedantry, why do Davidson's stories seem fresh? Why does Davidson the writer never lose control of his shaggy dogs?

A quick answer would be: because every page of a Davidson story raises a chuckle. The whole is funny because all the minute parts of the story are funny. What, then, delights Davidson? I asked Elaine this. She said, 'He loves writing about people.' Why are Davidson's observations about people more interesting than those of many other writers? Because Davidson values people who are usually forgotten or despised by other people, and often by other writers.

Most of Davidson's characters are middle-aged or old. Some of his best stories are about feisty old women. In 'Where Do You Live, Queen Esther?' (1961), an old servant, mistreated by the people she has served for many years, takes a wonderfully ingenious revenge, using a nice little bit of traditional magic. In 'The Woman Who Thought She Could Read' (1959), an entire neighbourhood gangs up on an old woman who can foretell the future. They do not listen to what she has to say; they think she's a witch; and the narrator becomes her betrayer.

That's a sombre story, as is the beginning of 'Crazy Old Lady' (1976). In introducing the story in *The Avram Davidson Treasury*, Ethan Davidson, the author's son, recalls when he was fourteen and living with his father in a house shared with a blind man.

Avram liked to move every few months, and I became accustomed to living with all sorts of people. Most of these people had something unusual about them . . . One was even a crazy old lady. Even when he lived alone, he sometimes brought in homeless derelicts or confused young people. Avram was sometimes irritable. But he often also displayed quite a bit of compassion.

Eighteen years have passed. The number of people who are poor, elderly, and live in bad neighborhoods has increased tremendously.

The story itself is just an elaboration of that proposition, until it reaches its end, and we discover the delightful way in which the Crazy Old Lady solves her problem of keeping a roof over her head while avoiding the criminals who have moved into her neighbourhood. In writing this story, Davidson has dramatised one of his major themes, the deterioration of American thought and culture during the last thirty or forty years. Much of this deterioration has happened because of America's insistence on forgetting what was important in its past. To Davidson, the past is usually more complex and humane than the modern, and allows more possibilities for living the good life. This is the opposite of the prevailing weight of opinion in SF over the last sixty or seventy years: that the past is better than the present or future because there life is simpler and less complicated than it is today.

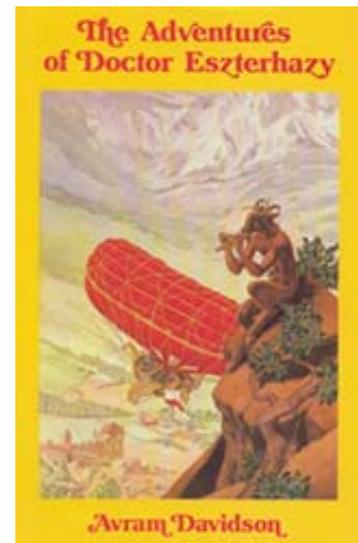
In the extraordinary Dr Eszterhazy stories, collected most recently as *The Adventures of Dr Eszterhazy*, Davidson writes about his true home of the spirit, the Triune Monarchy of Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania, a mythical empire he says existed somewhere in middle Europe before the First World War. Its rickety political system unites not only the Scythians, Pannonians and Transbalkanians, but an endless variety of other peoples and tribes, who have little time for each other but pay allegiance to the eccentric King-Emperor Ignats Louis, friend and patron of Doctor Engelbert Eszterhazy, who has five doctorates, immense wealth, and can leave no puzzle unsolved or piece of magic uninvestigated. In these stories, Davidson has done what we often like to do when writing or reading fantasy: relate the adventures of the person we would like to be. Doctor Eszterhazy is a loosely disguised Avram Davidson, but a Davidson with the money to follow his interests without needing to kowtow to editors, the connections to enable him to travel widely and meet all types of people, and the wisdom to solve problems while staying modestly in the background. Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania is a wonderfully crazy place, full of people who survive through complex compromises and gimcrack arrangements. Davidson writes about Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania with such affection and detailed knowledge that he seems to have felt it to be the country that America should have been. I won't single out any stories, except to recommend them all, and hope you can find a copy of the Owlswick Press anthology, *The Adventures of Doctor Eszterhazy* (1990). Savour the geniality of Davidson's world view: his belief that all people are intrinsically interesting, and everything is forgivable but self importance.

However, 'Polly Charms, the Sleeping Woman', the Eszterhazy story that's in the *Treasury*, is one of the most puzzling stories I've read, and solving it is not helped by Gene Wolfe's introduction, which is as gnostic and puzzling as you would expect from Wolfe. Anybody who offers me a sensible account of the

meaning of the ending of this story, with or without Gene Wolfe's help, will earn my undying gratitude.

If it's still available, *The Avram Davidson Treasury* is a carefully edited and valuable resource when beginning to read this writer. Few of the people who introduce the individual stories tell us much that we can't work out for ourselves, but some, like John Clute, in his introduction to the story 'Dagon', are really useful. *The Adventures of Doctor Eszterhazy* would be my next recommendation.

A recent anthology, *Everybody Has Somebody in Heaven: Essential Jewish Tales of the Spirit*, edited by Jack Dann and Grania Davis, has all of Davidson's early sketches and learner stories, which appeared in *Jewish Life and Commentary* in the late forties and early fifties. Even the slightest of these sketches, which are usually about Israel and the Adriatic countries in the late 1940s, are vivid and perceptive. Did Davidson ever write an uninteresting sentence? I doubt it. He was always brilliant, funny, and perceptive; in short, a great American writer whose stories are still to be discovered.



#

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#

Whenever Crocodiles Appear

More on Avram Davidson

Usually I avoid anything that resembles show biz, but once a year I write and deliver a paper on something or other for Melbourne's Nova Mob, which just keeps on going and going, 31 years after it was founded by John Foyster. I don't like giving papers, but I like the stimulus of being forced to write at least one essay per year. I wish I could avoid giving the paper, as people have to look at me instead of

me looking at them. March's Nova Mob was worse. I couldn't see *them*.

At the March meeting, enough people turned up, and the weather was sufficiently warm, that we took our seats into the back yard of the Brunswick residence of Lucy Sussex and Julian Warner. There was a catch. Although the hot weather hadn't broken, the days were getting shorter. I began reading my talk. About half way down the first page, I realised that shortly I would have to cut it short or start making it up. I could hardly see the pieces of paper. I kept going. Suddenly the reliable frame of Julian Warner loomed at my side. He was carrying a portable lamp. When he switched it on, I could see my pieces of paper again, but I couldn't see anybody *out there*.

When I had finished, and I could see the Nova Mobbers again, I realised that not only had many turned up who late last year were presumed lost, stolen or strayed, but we had even gained a new person (Ros Gross, who reviews for my magazines from time to time). That was my little shot at show biz for the year. I wish I could remember all the post-talk discussion. I do remember that Ian Mond, who observes Orthodox practice as strictly as did Avram Davidson, asked what was specifically Jewish about Davidson's fiction. How would I know? I enjoy the American Jewish humour found in American popular culture, such as Woody Allen's scripts, or the work of certain Jewish fiction writers, such as Stanley Elkin, whose stories remind me greatly of Davidson's. But it's not my culture, and some of the fascination of reading Davidson is seeing America from an alien viewpoint. The only clue I have can be found in Peter Beagle's tribute to Davidson ('Avram and G-d'), in the anthology *Everybody Has Somebody in Heaven*:

He used to tell me long, ridiculously involved shaggy-dog stories in Yiddish, always assuming (or pretending to assume; who knew with that man?) that my command of the language was vastly more fluent than the handful of words and phrases that it is. But for all the twinkles and nuances that I missed as the jokes tumbled by me, one line, appended by Avram to a particular fable, is with me still, clear and cold and amused as the first time I heard it. 'Don't ever believe that we Jews were chosen by God to be his people. We volunteered.' (p. 145)

I get the feeling, to answer Ian Mond's question, that the most Jewish aspect of Davidson's fiction is their form - the shaggy-dog story.

Everybody Has Somebody in Heaven is in many ways as stimulating a collection as *The Avram Davidson Treasury*. It doesn't have all the A. D. classics, as the *Treasury* has, but it is a small encyclopedia of unexpected insights - about Jewish life in general; about the startling multicultural experiment that Davidson found in the fledgling Israeli republic; and about Davidson's own fiction. For instance, here's his account of the genesis of the Doctor Eszterhazy stories:

Gradually it came to me that there had been an empire in Eastern Europe which had been so completely destroyed that we no longer even remembered it . . . that being an empire, it had an emperor; that the emperor had a wizard; the wizard drove about the streets of Bella (BELgrade/ViennA) in a steam runabout; . . . that the emperor's name was Ignats Louis; and that the wizard's name was . . . was . . . was Engelbert Eszterhazy . . . I sat down at the typewriter, and in six weeks wrote all eight stories of the first series. No rewrites were ever even suggested . . . Everything came so clear to me, the bulging eyes and bifurcated beard of Ignats Louis the fatherly King-Emperor, the teeming streets of the South Ward of Bella . . . and all the rest of it - came so clear to me - that now I recognize that I did not at all 'make them up', that Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania did exist!' (p. 209)

After I had written the talk for the Nova Mob, I realised that Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania was not only a picture of America as Avram Davidson would have liked it to have turned out (further evidence: 'Take Wooden Indians', one of Davidson's most complex and deeply felt stories, as well as stories he's written

about pre-Civil War New York) but it resembles greatly the picture he gives in *Everybody Has Somebody in Heaven* of Israel in 1949: a vast throng of disparate peoples, hating each other most of the time, but willing to put up with each other in order to found a new commonwealth.

Avram Davidson was an idealist - a pestilentially prickly one, if I can believe all the stories told about him - but many of his ideals are also mine. My favourite piece of Davidson's writing can be found in Carol Carr's remembrance of Avram Davidson in *Everybody Has Somebody in Heaven*:

In 1983 my mother died. Avram:

For your pain and sorrow, I am painfully sorry. There is, however, I have noticed, usually, a certain measure of relief. And for whatever relief you feel, feel therein neither pain nor sorrow. Flow with it. Resume the voyage, float, float; and whenever crocodiles appear, whack them on the snout with the paddle. (p. 153)

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*In memory of Avram Davidson, keep whacking those crocodiles. --Bruce Gillespie, dated 11 March 2001. Special thanks to George Scithers of Owlswick Press for help with this article.

-Earl Kemp.

Some critics take issue with me because I make my points and discuss my ideas with jokes, rather than with oceanic tragedy.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 9/18/02, McSweeney's

Bombachos, Bigotes, and Bustos*

By Avram Davidson

It is always an odd experience, I suppose, when a writer sees his work in translation for the first time. This happened to me over ten years ago, but it didn't really take. A story of mine, published in a rather obscure and tiny magazine in New York, was almost at once picked up by an equally obscure and tiny magazine in Holland. They paid me nothing, they asked no one's permission, they never even sent a free copy (I got mine by another mysterious accident), but they spelled my name correctly. This was the only part of the story I could check, the text - with its endless series of double oo's, like the mooing of Holstein-Friesian cows, and the continuous and rocky appearance of j as a vowel - baffled me.

Nevertheless, I did write and ask them for copies. I never got any answer and I never found a Hollander who had ever heard of the magazine (it was called, I believe, Moorish - again, the bovine note) and I have sometimes wondered if the whole thing may not have been an elaborate practical joke. Perhaps it wasn't really even in Dutch at all. How would I know?



Avram Davidson n.d.

So I really account *Volumen 18* (no date) of *Coleccion De Misterios Ellery Queen*, published in Mexico, as my first experience in seeing a work of my own in translation. It would seem to me that of all the

proper names, real or synthetic, in the English language, most certain to be mispronounced by one who speaks only Spanish, "Ellery Queen" is the mostest. This, however, is Queen's worry, not mine: I have my own, one of which is that the single copy of *Volumen 18* was my total payment for the Mexican rights to the story. That, and the honor of being *publicado* with such distinguished names as Agatha Christie and Alejandro Dumas. Miss Christie and I, in fact, shared the same translator, Maria Elena A. de Iglesias. I have learned to be very wary of literary ladies with three names, they always foul me up - at least lady editors with three names always do. Once I was asked to submit a novel by a lady editor who only used the usual two, and - lulled by this - I complied. But sure enough, don't you think that in the letter, which accompanied the rejected MS, she used the third? Very likely Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite had two other names about which she had never let on to Sisera.

But Sra. Iglesias was a translator, and I had no prior experience with translators-or *almost* none. Anyway, Spanish is not Dutch - I had two years of high school Spanish and a year in college. What if that was all Before the War? It was more than Rawlinson had to start with (if I have it right, all he had to start with was "So-and-so the son of Such-and-such, the King of Kings").

The title was flawless. "El Icono de Elias" captures every nuance of "The Icon of Elijah." I couldn't have done better than that myself. But in the first paragraph was the first problem. There *had* been a reference to the city of Nicosia on the island of Cyprus, but Nicosia was gone - Maria Elena A. had erased it with a stroke of her pen - unless that was it, disguised or rendered anonymous as *la ciudad de Chipre*. If Mrs. Iglesias is going to go around insisting there is only one city on Cyprus she can expect some very stiff communications from the Ethnarchy Council, to say nothing of EOKA. However, I will concede that *pantalones bombachos* sounds much more vivid than "baggy pantaloons." The adjective is particular-it almost compels you to laugh. You can hear the street urchins cat-calling "*Eh, bombachos!*" Droll, isn't it? The only thing is, the story isn't supposed to be droll. And who has the heart to laugh, with Nicosia ground into oblivion? And why has the "small, dark Maltese" on page 2 been transformed into *un muchacho maltes*? I wonder about Señora Iglesias. Is she afraid of dark people? Or small people? Or only of small, dark Maltese people? - unless, of course, they are merely *muchachos*. Another thing - she doesn't like camels. "Camel-bells" come out as *Campanillas* - twice. After all, sheep, cows, goats, and cats also wear little bells - what's it hurt her if I specify these were *camel-bells*? *Quien Sabe*? Unless it is an ancestral dislike of Moors...because "the nine-and-ninety Attributes of the Almighty recited by pious Moslems" is reduced by her to "*los Noventa tributes del Todopoderoso*." The Sacred Name, has, indeed, a reverend and powerful sound, but what *can* the translator have done with the missing nine Attributes? And, later on, there is reference to "the hermit Prokopics" - she makes him out simply as *Procopic*. Might have been the man who delivers the milk. I think that what happened was this: Maria Elena saw the word "hermit," it made her think of "desert," in the desert live camels, camels (silent ones - no bells) are ridden by Moors - before the thought was fully resolved, she had struck out "hermit," secularizing and urbanizing poor Prokopics forever.

Of course it isn't - it never is - the translator alone: the *language*, the *language*! I shall not complain because "bleakly" comes out as *con indiferencia*. My bookseller, however, has my commission to buy that well-known *roman*, *Casa de Indiferencia*, by Don Carlos Dickens. *Ninfas, con descomunales bustos* - thus, "Nymphs, with huge bosoms." Well, I don't know. *Descomunales* isn't, somehow, a word I can associate with bosoms. It has a sort of economics ring to it, if you follow me. The Enclosure Acts, the sale of public property - *that* sort of ring. But not bosoms. The nuances fail to cross the border again, when "Colonel Eggerton, who is being retired," appears as "*coronel Eggerton, que se ha jubilado*." The Retired British Colonel - we all know what *that* means. But - *jubilado* - that's something else, indeed. Instead of knickerbockers, *bombachos*, and dancing in the streets, probably with castanets and great shouts of "ole!" and women with *descomunales bustos*.

Another thing I can't quite see, though I suppose Mrs. Maria Elena A. knows best, is the translation of "kilts" as *enaguítas*. Perhaps it's the diminutive that does it, but to me *enaguítas* sounds like some kind of little cakes which are eaten at fiesta-time. Lady-fingers, maybe. The edible note sounds again when "a

delightful man" comes out as *un hombre delicioso*. One thing I never preach, I never preach cannibalism.

There is a theological aspect to the translation as well, Mrs. Iglesias, despite the promise of her name, is not quite up, it would seem, on certain differences between the Eastern and Western rites of the church. "Golden communion spoons," *par example*, she converts into *calices de oro*, and the "Thrice-Holy" into *La Santisima Trinidad*. And the phrase, "in old Greek miniscules" is tossed out altogether - like Nicosia. *Por que?*

But these are small prices to pay for two words which set me dreaming in 3-D. For lack of knowing better I would have assumed that the Spanish for "mustache" was *mustachio*. But it isn't. "Black mustache," I now realize is *bigote Negro*. And with this I saw a vision. A silent moving picture, a sleepy plaza in Old Mexico. Suddenly a man runs down the street, waving his arms and shouting wordlessly. On the screen, in real fancy letters; *BIGOTE NEGRO!* At once the place is in an uproar - women run about with much waving of *mantillas*, chickens flutter, and all in a gallop and a cloud of dust come a group of horsemen, firing noiseless rifles and waving big *sombreros* and scooping up the girls and the poultry. Laughing between his black mustache and with the prettiest girl struggling at his saddle is *Bigote Negro*, the outlaw Chief. Noah Berry could have played the part. But nowadays? - what with the pretty-boys, the songsters, and the Stanislavsky method - nobody. But, for me, there he is and there he always will be, in between Villa and Zapata: *Bigote Negro*.

Art criticism in Mexico ought to be much brisker than here, if this translation is any evidence. Even though I wrote "wretched modern daub" I admit it sounds rather peevish and shrill, and certainly it altogether lacks the full-bodied heartiness of *un mamarracho moderno*. This carries conviction. It sounds like one of those words, moreover, which was originally a proper name - like boycott, shrapnel, and sandwich. I'm convinced it is so. I see him quite clearly - Gustavo-Adolfo Mamarracho, who painted his hopeless paintings during the old Porfirio Diaz administration. He dragged out his inoffensive (from any but an artistic point of view) existence on the charity of his mother, a widow, who called him *Gogo*; and he had a maiden sister, Maria-Farmacopa, quiet, plump, and pale as wax. Poor old Mamarracho! I should like to have one of his paintings, with their ill-mixed and glaring colors and hopelessly confused perspective.

The rest of the translation proceeds smoothly and more or less without distraction. The sonorous quality of the language might very well convince another, as it has half-convinced me, that the Señora's Spanish version is the original, and mine merely a pallid effort into English. So what if mine *does* have camels, miniscules, and Nicosia-all missing in hers? How can they compare to *Bigote Negro*, *Mamarracho*, and the jubilation of *el coronel Eggerton*? Well, they can't, that's all. If I am ever in Mexico I fully intend to look up la Señora Maria Elena A. de Iglesias. And while we drink our chocolate and nibble on the *enaguitas deliciosas*, I shall ask her what the "A" is for.

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When writers crack up, when they really end up in the nut house, is when they can't do it any more.
--Kurt Vonnegut
