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"Take the Elevator," by Steve Stiles

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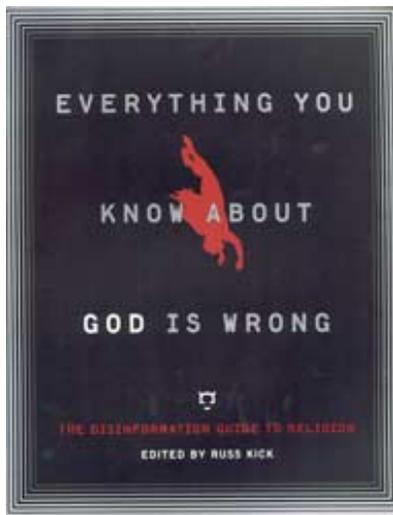
True terror is to wake up one morning and discover your high school class is running the country.

--Kurt Vonnegut

THIS ISSUE OF *eI* is in memory of Peggy Crawford, Les Flood, Joe L. Hensley, and Madeleine L'Engle.

#

What's New...? There are two things that I need to call your attention to with this issue of *eI*, both of them are very new and both of them, somehow, involve me.



The first is *Everything You Know About God Is Wrong*. A fat new anthology edited by Russ Kick and published by The Disinformation Company Ltd. My contribution to the collection is “Jungle Drums For the Evil I,” all about my experiences in Rio with Macumba, or Black Catholicism. It is available from www.disinfo.com.

It is a second volume in Kick’s megabook series following *Everything You Know About Sex Is Wrong*, where I was also featured.

The second thing is to announce that Alexei Panshin and Josh Wachtel have produced another excellent album for Radio Free Earth called *Available Light*. There are sixteen wonderful audience-pleasing tunes on this CD and it is highly recommended. It is available from www.radiofreeearth.com so go get it!

--Earl Kemp

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

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

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Mark Berry, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ajay Budrys, Graham Charnock, Richard E. Geis, Ed Gorman, Jim Linwood, Joseph T. Major, Michael Moorcock, Alexei Panshin, and Curt Phillips.

ARTWORK: This issue of *eI* features artwork by Steve Stiles, and recycled artwork by Harry Bell and William Rotsler.

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

--Kurt Vonnegut

...Return to sender, address unknown.... 24

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

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

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

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

Thursday August 2, 2007:

Very sly of you to switch the captions on the pictures of Bob Bloch and Walter Matthau, but not much of a service to 21st-century fans who barely know who Bloch was, let alone what he looked like. You are a guardian of our history, you know -- a true timebinder. You ought not to be capricious with it.

--Robert Silverberg

Friday August 3, 2007:



Thanks for your response, and for "capturing many of Bob's writings for posterity". I'm happy to share that No. 1 fan spot with you.

I'm sorry to say that I don't specifically remember you from my childhood, but there were many people who visited when I was young, and my Dad was delighted to spend time with fans, most of whom became friends, and I'm sure you are among them.

I did, indeed, click on the *eI* links and enjoyed them immensely and shall print out hard copies for my own enjoyment.

Thank you so much for thinking of me. I miss my Dad daily; he was a wonderful father, a wonderful person, and more than a parent, a friend to me, as well.

--Sally Bloch Francy

Sunday August 12, 2007:

All this entertaining pique about Shasta reminds me of one of the minor--perhaps I should say infinitesimal--mysteries of '50s SF that has tugged at my consciousness in idle moments for the past several decades. How is it that Raymond F. Jones' *This Island Earth* turned into a widely distributed and reasonably well-received motion picture, never had a paperback edition back then? (First pb was only a few years ago, from Forrest J Ackerman.) You'd think that somebody would have rushed to cash in with a movie tie-in edition. Was Shasta asleep at the switch? Or did they have no stake in the rights at that point and just didn't care? (In which case Jones and/or his agent must have been asleep.)

--John Boston

Monday August 13, 2007:

It's an interesting question, and my guess is that the whole market for movie tie-in books hadn't really developed back then, other than maybe for really major Hollywood movies, which sf/horror films weren't back then (how times change). To take an example, I never knew until the *SF Encyclopedia* was being compiled in 1977 that *Destination Moon* was allegedly somewhat based on *Rocketship Galileo*...maybe not very closely based, but at least as closely based as the Bourne movies are based on the Robert Ludlum novels (to



take a contemporary example). Nor am I aware of contemporary tie-in paperbacks of, for example, *The Shrinking Man* or *Invasion of the bodysnatchers*. It was obvious, of course, that Penguin's editions of the *Quatermass* scripts were based on the TV series/movies, but I don't remember anything on the covers to illustrate the fact. Maybe *2001* was the first genuine major sf tie-in (in terms of sales numbers), but even with *2001* or *Fantastic Voyage* it was more a question of creating a novel which would in some way validate the movie, and if *2001* had been published by Gollancz as originally intended it would have had a nice plain yellow jacket (I used to have a copy of this, as it had been proofed up before the publication plan went belly-up; I think George Locke has it now). And as for lesser, or lower-budget movies, well, you'll remember the Vargo Statten *Creature From the Black Lagoon*, or the appearance of *20 Million Miles to Earth* as a one-off digest magazine companion to *Amazing Stories*.

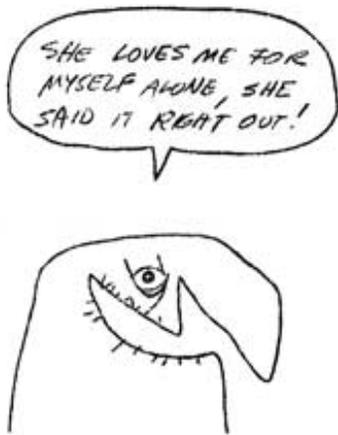
--Malcolm Edwards

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eI turns thirty-three, much like I will in a couple of months. I'm not having a party until I turn 33-1/3, since that's a much cooler age.

Again we open with the man Steve Stiles and a wonderful cartoon. I've been enjoying his stuff of late. Someday he'll win that Best Fan Artist Hugo, there's no question. When? No idea, but it'll happen.

I have some friends who love Victor Banis' stuff who will be getting *Longhorns* as a very nice birthday gift soon. I let them borrow *Spine Intact, Some Creases* and they loved it. I've already let her know so she can buy it herself. I've already gotten her a present! Charles Nuetzel's story of his Dad was good readin' indeed. There aren't a lot of photos of the old painted posters that he mentioned his Dad doing. I know there are a few, and the technique of painting posters for each theatre is still done in many of the Mexican theatres both in Mexico and the US. I wish I'd know because when I was going through old stuff from the Fox theatre in San Jose (now called the California) I know there were a bunch of old hand-painted ones from the late 1930s and early 40s before the standard printed ones became popular. I bet I've seen those California Missions pamphlets that Charles' Dad did art for. You see them all the time at Antique Dealers and Flea Markets. They go for a decent price. It does seem odd to have a father who would push singing as the fall-back position. Ray Bradbury is a guy who changes people's lives regularly, from what I understand. A guy I ran into while picking up a robot for the museum once told me the story of how Ray managed to turn him on to the writing of a fellow named Asimov and that led the guy to reading every Asimov book he could get, becoming interested in robotics and eventually founding a company. Ray never knew anything about it, from what I understand, but it was all his doing. I should probably buy *Pocketbook Writer* when money is back into the flow of things.



I swear I've read that Bloch piece somewhere before. But I'm fairly certain that *Ciln* was never in my Dad's collection. It's funny that Bloch's best point is the one about older recruits to fandom. The strange thing is we're seeing it change and now it's almost all older recruits to SF fandom unless they're 2nd (or sometimes 3rd) generation fans. I came back in 2000 and I immediately recognized that I wasn't a kid anymore, that there were things I could do in fandom now that I hadn't been able to afford when I was younger. But I still remembered what it was like to be 15 and loafing in the halls with my miscreant friends (with whom I still sometimes loaf in the halls with at present-day cons) and I try and be good to those kids. Show 'em a little respect.

You gotta keep these kids thinkin' straight. I totally agree with Bloch's main point: that you should come to fandom looking for nice people and a good time and everything you put in you get back. Fandom's been very very good to me and I try to give back as much as

I can.

The Bob Toomey article had me until the part where he claimed that Sid Coleman walked out of the fight scene in *Hard Boiled*. That's just too unbelievable. There's no way that ever could have happened. Keep tryin' Bob! You'll never fool me! I do have to say that Sid can pull off a white suit, though.

You mention *This Island Earth*. I know there are purists who will say otherwise, but the only good thing about *This Island Earth* was the MST3K version of the film. It was truly awful. The first time I saw it was the regular film and to this day I have no idea what was going on. I read the Jones book a few years ago and it's decent. Not great, but good enough.

The Shasta stuff is just great. I'd heard that Farmer story once or twice (including hearing Phil tell it on tape from 1968) but I had no connection to the fact that it was Shasta that had been the group that scrod him. I really wanna find a copy of *Slaves of Sleep* now. I'd never seen that cover before and it's just amazing! I've read maybe half a dozen of the books on the list. Good stuff one and all.

A great issue as always.

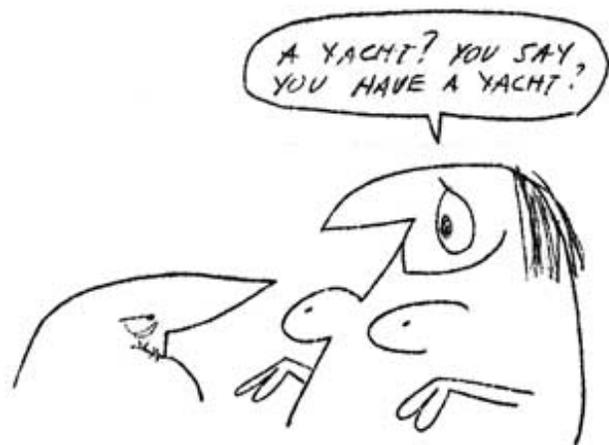
--Chris Garcia

Sunday August 19, 2007:

Good issue, especially the Shasta coverage, which cast me back into the teenage years, when I longed to fondle the hardcovers and could even find some in libraries. I showed my moral stature by not stealing them. Yet those legends, Korshak etc, linger in memory. So I moved on to fondling girls.

Toomey on Coleman is insightful. "A fellow of infinite jest, of course," puts it well. The Hobbes quote is 'Nasty, brutish, and short,' not 'mean' -- which makes the joke even better. The first time I heard that kicker, "With these words, Thomas Hobbes described (a) Life and the lot of mankind, (b) Harlan Ellison, (c) Sex with Harlan Ellison." I like to died.

Sid has a wit comparable to Willis, but alas, wrote little. You'd do the world a favor if you'd root out the half dozen or so review columns he wrote for *F&SF* and reprinted them. They still are the best commentary on the late 1960s & early 70s sf field, and wittily to the point.



Looking forward to the new issue. Alas, I'll miss you at the LA paperback day again, as I'll

be diving in the Galapagos. But! -- I'll then go to Costa Rica and see Gregg Calkins after all these decades.

--Gregory Benford

Sunday August 26, 2007:

It is time for me to tackle *eI* 33. Wish me luck...

Straight to the lettercol. Ah, there's that Garcia guy again. Doesn't he have any work to do? I like Ray Nelson's artwork, too and wish I could see more of it. Hey, Chris, you want to try and get a hold of Matt Groening and see if he was indeed a fan? Would be neat if he was, and if so might explain a lot about The Simpsons...

Greetings to John Purcell, you unworthy newbie, you... Nope, that's me, at 30 years in fandom this December. Don't hold it in, John, tell us how you really feel... And, hello to Robert Lichtman...a fanzine column in a promag would definitely be an addition, and help dispel how some pros and readers feel about fandom. There's got to be someone out there who might like your column, and I'd like to see it.

We write to express ourselves, and take part in this fanzine thing. We want to participate in a conversation, preferably a cordial one, but we take what we get. For those of us who do, there are varying amounts of ego, from those who enjoy the discourse of ideas and opinions, even conflicting ones, and those who are determined to shout others down and insult those they disagree with. We tolerate all kinds here. Just read Robert Bloch's essay, and fannish life will be easier for all. And, we're going to Las Vegas, too.



Wonderful essay of a life in SF from Charles Nuetzel. I can even see from here those were heady days, and similarly, I yearn for a publishing group that I can excel in. My resumes are out there. If I could get involved they way Charles' father was, I'd be very pleased indeed. In Canada, there are only two specialty SF publishing houses, both are in Alberta, and they recently merged. It looks like the management of the national Aurora Awards will be heading out west, too, so the heart of SF in Canada is out there, too. Won't be the first time it's happened, either, because fandom is frankly failing in the east. Not enough literacy,

and too much actor worship, IMHO.

Yes, I knew Judith Merrill, and she ranted at me, and I ranted back. That's how I got some respect out of her. Because Judith spent her remaining days in Toronto, and because I never had the best relation with her, I'm probably one of the few locals who wouldn't have

much good to say about her. She's an SF icon around here.

Many thanks to Terry Kemp for his hard slogwork into research these marvelous books, and great cover scans, too.

All those pages, and this is all the loc I can generate. Much of what's inside is outside of my generation, but boy, it's great to read about it, and great to look at, and that's the whole point. There may never be a definitive history of science fiction as a whole, but *eI* assembled is pretty close, and thanks to you, Earl, for all of it. I look forward to the next installment, and perhaps I'll have more to say next time. (Another entry for the WAHF columns, I suppose...)

--Lloyd Penney.

Sunday September 9, 2007:

Since you are such a fan of Yma's [see "Secrets of the Indas," and "Voice of the Inner World" *eI6*, [January 2003](#)] I just wanted to be sure to let you know that my book "Yma Sumac - The Art Behind the Legend" should be released sometime late fall or early winter by YBK publishers here in New York. I am in the midst of final proofings now and, without knowing anything about how this kind of thing works I suspect it might be out around December or January. I am very pleased since I was able to locate some unreleased photographs which I think will add a lot to the book. I will make sure I let you know when it is ready. Thanks so much for your exposure on the ezine. I really appreciate that.

--Nick Limansky

Sunday September 16, 2007:

Oh, Lordy, Earl, you always produce just a wonderful, wonderful issue every other month. It makes me both envious and appreciative of you. And, as always, *eI* provokes some commentary.

F'rinstance, the lengthy Charles Nuetzel excerpt was both fascinating and touching. Charles was blessed to have a father who was a gifted artist who understood that inner passion which drives people to excel in something. It was also kind of funny in a sweet, fatherly way that his dad used to say, "Great! You can sing *and* write!" in a way supporting both Charles' and his own dreams of success. This article also reminded me of how my dad supported my dream of being a songwriter. He was not a creative person, but he understood this "inner passion" thing well; in fact, dad always told me that I could do whatever I wanted if I ever really put my mind and heart into it. That bit of advice still lurks within me. Even though I have long given up on a career in music, this teaching career deal I now have going was another passion: my back-up plan, you could say. Dad respected that, even though he may have sadly wagged his head at some of my decisions along the way. Still, a guy could not have had a better father. It certainly seems as though Charles Nuetzel feels the same way about his dad. Again, this was a wonderful selection to

lead off your latest issue with. Great material.

I also must thank you for reprinting that Bob Bloch article from *Ciln* #5. This is one of the best summations of how a fan acts like a fan within certain spheres within the group. I really love the way Bloch stated that Fandom is a Way of Life but ignores talking about the Facts of Life. How true. When a neofan of any age runs into that, he or she could either adapt, learn and join the group, or - more likely - run away screaming into the night. But I tell ya, this quote says it all:

Fandom is a place where I've met some nice people and had a lot of fun. To me, that's all it should be. For any little bit I've ever contributed, I've always received at least threefold in return of pleasure and entertainment.



That is so very, very true. The older I get and stay involved with this bunch of crazy loonies in fandom, the more I enjoy it. One only gets out of life what one puts into it, and fandom is no different.

This piece also reminds me of the only time I met Bob Bloch: ByobCon V in Kansas City, July of 1975. The little bit that I talked with him left a life-long impression on me; he was a genuinely nice man with that same damned eye-twinkly look of constant amusement that I saw in Bob Tucker's eyes. Those two were quite the pair that weekend, and ByobCon V still remains as one of my favorite conventions of all time.

The articles by Bob Toomey and Greg Benford were great, too. What was really neat was the way you have these arranged. First, here's Toomey writing about Sid Coleman. Then we have Benford writing about Toomey. Too bad there's nothing by Coleman writing about Benford; that would have the ultimate plan. Even so, a very nice positioning of articles, and both quite enjoyable. I have nothing else to add here about them, but I just had to tell you that I liked the way you set them up.

Of course, the Anthem/Shasta books article was fantastic, and those cover scans simply made me drool all over the computer keyboard. (Do you know how difficult it is to wipe spittle out from in-between the keys? Damned hard, I tell you, Earl. *Damned* hard.) The way the cover-scans gave the whole picture was truly awesome. How I loved the work of Hannes Bok. What a talent! Many thanks again for fascinating book natter. This is just great stuff for the bibliophiles in all of us.

Thanks for the zine, Earl. I may have to un-newbie you at the next Corflu. Take care.

--John Purcell

Some critics take issue with me because I make my points and discuss my ideas with jokes, rather than with oceanic tragedy.
9/18/02, McSweeney's

-- Kurt Vonnegut,

Can You Turn It Down Please?

or: Memoirs of an itinerant guitarist

By Graham Charnock

During my early formative years as a musician there was no bigger influence than the Bellyflops, a group Mike Moorcock put together for the 1965 sf Worldcon. I even played with the core members of the band at an impromptu session set up by Charles Platt at his place in Portobello Road, with Mike, Pervy Pete Taylor (saxophone), Charles (dulcimer), and Mike Harrison. I think Lang was there too, probably playing a swanee whistle. Should anyone doubt this I have a tape with Mike giving a spirited rendition of 'Be Bop a Lula' and an improvised number by Charles dedicated to his cat called, 'Stop Biting All the Wires!' Hey maybe I was a member of the Bellyflops, after all, but they didn't tell me at the time.

The abiding musical guru in our household when I was growing up was our lodger, called Robert. He was a swarthy Mediterranean type who held down a job as a Chauffeur. In his heyday he was chauffeur to the Maharani of Baroda and would frequently park his limousine outside our end of terrace house in Alperton, which gave our neighbours an entirely erroneous nature of our social standing, I'm sure.

Robert played the harmonica, and I don't mean the mouth organ, he had a Hohner 64 Chromatica model which he wielded with the panache of Larry Adler, and which he later bequeathed to me but which I can't play for toffee.

He moved out, but would come back to visit regularly and when he did my brother and I competed for his musical attention. My brother had a Vox solid body modelled on a Stratocaster, but considerably more clunky because it was built in the UK. He also had an old nylon acoustic which I pinched and taught myself to play on. One day, in the back room at 1 Eden Close, we both auditioned for Robert.



The Bellyflops in 1965 (left to right): Michael Moorcock, Charles Platt (below), Roger Morris, Pete Taylor (with lantern), Bob Sellars, and Langdon Jones.

John played a single string style Shadows instrumental piece on his Vox, whilst I had just learnt a very rudimentary style of claw-picking. Robert proclaimed I would always be a better musician than my brother because I took a more holistic view of music, which I think meant that I could use more than one finger at once. This, I think, accounted for why my brother hated me for the rest of his life, although we have recently reached some kind of rapprochement.

Based on Robert's encouragement I went on to buy a Harmony Sovereign guitar, made in Sweden. It was an acoustic model but unusually had a cambered fretboard, the like of which were only normally found on electric models. My mate Peter at school bought one too, and we had dreams of forming a duo, and even recorded a few rudimentary tracks, but I fear the attraction of girls soon superseded the attraction of the guitar in Peter's life, so I was forced to strum on my own for several years. After a while I thought I had better get serious about music and bought a Gretsch acoustic at Macari's in Charing Court Road. I think it cost about £200. Today you could add x 10 to that.



This was a pretend band put together by Chris Priest for a film class he was involved in. I am thankfully obscured behind Dicky Howett but that is my left hand and my Harmony Sovereign. Other guitarist was a flatmate.

I went shambolically through several jobs in my youth and ultimately ended up in the Willesden County Court, where I met and later shagged and married a lovely lady in hot pants (I forget her name for the moment). I also met but didn't shag, a bloke called Herbert North, who was a tall, gangly geek type with horn-rimmed glasses. It didn't take long to figure out the horn rimmed connection – he was the world's number one Hank Marvin Fan. Furthermore he had every guitar that Hank had ever played, from a Baldwin

Burns Bison to Fender Strats, and could obviously play them, because he performed in a jobbing dance band playing around West London.

Pat and I went to a few gigs and they were an entertaining band, although without any presumptions or aspirations about their talent whatsoever

Then the rhythm guitarist, Dave Winkworth, left the band, and Bert, because he knew I had a guitar and could play it, asked me to join the band. I wasn't likely to say no, so the first thing I did was equip myself properly and buy a Telecaster and a Vox AC 30 amp. Thus equipped I jumped head first into a regime of rehearsal, working up to our first gig together.

Bert's father worked at the Fuller's Brewery in Chiswick, and the family had a sort of grubby bonded flat attached to the factory. We would practice in the kitchen, which smelt of gas and greens. His mother and father were at the end of their viability both as workers (his father spent most of his time with a gouty leg propped up on the table) and useful members of society, but were affable if terminally diseased folk. Bert was a well-paid employee at the County Court, and I think most of his income went into supporting them in the squalor they had come to love. Bert also had an 'N' model railway layout in the living room they all shared and probably slept in. Yes, he was that kind of Bert.

The drummer at this time was John Gillespie, who worked for a car dealership, and the Bass player was Bob Edwards, who, you guessed it, was also employed in the brewery, in the accounts department.

After a few desultory rehearsals I had learnt enough numbers to gig out with them. The repertoire relied heavily on Shadows numbers, and standard dance numbers, in 4/4, 3/4 and Latin American formats, samba, cha cha, etc. None of it was very taxing and most of it went down well with the social-club type audience we were playing to who just wanted a soundtrack to dance to. Of course we would throw in novelty numbers. And because the others were retiring violets it largely fell to me to engage the punters in patter and announcements, as well as spot-prize numbers, where we would stop the action and give prizes to the first person up to the mike who had plastic teeth (a comb), a moustache, or an endorsement on his driving license, etc, etc. If nothing else it gave me an ability to unselfconsciously hold a microphone and natter inconsequentially to an audience.

Occasionally I would get pissed off with this role and go all surrealist and existential, gabbling and asking meaningless questions and making meaningless announcements all to the bafflement of the band as well as the audience. The audience probably thought I was drunk, but the band realized I wasn't and were thus far more worried.

Bert was the main vocalist who sang in a not unattractive Cliff Richard style (obviously) and Bob did effective harmonies on some numbers. I was allowed a few vocals, notably 'Johnny B. Goode' and the whistling solo in 'Singing the Blues.' Once Bert had a throat infection and couldn't sing, so Bob handled most of the vocals, but I remember I essayed a try on a Four Seasons number. Afterward a woman waddled up out of the audience and

said: 'You're a lovely bloke, but you can't sing for crap.' I couldn't argue with her.

Pat and I were living in Acton at this time, not too far removed from the West London circuit we were playing and I went on doing it far longer than I should have. Originally Bert would drive me and my gear to gigs (I remember horrendous drives in fog down on motorways to Guildford) but eventually I got my own transport and became independent in this respect. Meant I couldn't drink at gigs but this never bothered me. The music was drug enough, bland as it was.

At this remove of time the gigs all blur together although my appoint diaries at the time show we were playing at least once or twice a week for about five years. Venues ranged from pubs and halls and scout huts (yes) hired for private parties, to Social and 'Working Mens' clubs, and ex-servicemen's clubs. As I say few specific gigs stick in the mind except for one where the organizer had failed to advertise and sell any tickets, and only two people turned up, namely the organizer and his wife. We doggedly went into our act, treating it as a rehearsal, but when it became obvious no one else was going to turn up, the organizer paid us off and let us go. But most of the time we had good and enthusiastic audiences, the only on-going drawback being the frequency with which we were CYTED (Can You Turn It Down) for being too loud. Some clubs even had sound-level monitors in the form of a traffic light type indicator which would flash at you if the decibels were raised above the sound of a pin dropping, and even automatically cut off the power if you persisted in such wilfully anti-social behaviour. Needless to say heavy metal axe solos were not our forte under these conditions.



Graham Charnock and the Burlingtons. Photo courtesy Jim Linwood Collection

For the rest of the group the money was an important supplement to their incomes, but it was never important to me, not that I earned a lot, and certainly not as much as Bert who was working his way up through the echelons of the Civil Service at this time, but I had dreams we could improve our performance and actually produce something musically more original and worthwhile, but it took me long decades to realize I was sailing against the wind in this respect.

When I fell in with Moorcock and did *New Worlds Fair*, I was still playing with the Burlingtons and invited Bert to the Pye recording studios to overdub some guitar solos on my songs, because I did believe he had a good sub-Marvin melodic style which would suit my songs. It was an embarrassing experience. Most of our time was spent sitting around the studio smoking dope rather than recording, and Bert obviously disapproved, and

rapidly grew tired of waving away offered spliffs. When he was called upon to perform he didn't pull any sparks out of the bag as I thought he might have. I think he was intimidated by the whole affair. And in the end his contributions were cut from the final mix by Steve Gilmore, without any consultation with me.

At about the same time Mike started hanging out with neighbours Hawkwind who lived in the Rachmanite tenements of Notting Hill at that time. At first we formed a sort of fan posse following them about to local gigs. One time, because I wore a black vinyl jacket and was uncharacteristically skinny, Mike mischievously introduced me to them as Nick Kent, an influential and charismatic NME journalist as the time. This was when we were travelling with them to one of their own gigs in Kings Cross...on the tube train. Unfortunately I failed to capitalize on the experience by scoring dope or groupies or anything at all really. Later Mike would parlay his acquaintance up to the point where he was performing with them on an ad hoc basis as ranter, whilst Robert Calvert was otherwise indisposed. And that was what eventually led, through Doug Smith, their manager, to the *New Worlds Fair* album.

Meanwhile back in the real world I was about to join a real band that actually played live, although not very well.

The Burlingtons with Bert did a couple of conventions, but after a while Bert, whose parents had now died, found true love and sex and got married and decided to hang up his guitars and his Hank Marvin spectacles.

The rest of us formed a group called Eric and the Maggots, after enlisting a very talented guitarist/singer called Brian Reeves, who was more of an Eric Clapton than a Hank Marvin. We did a convention under that name as well, I believe. By this time Bob Edwards' brother Mike had replaced John Gillespie who had terminally retired after having had his drum kit stolen when he parked his car outside a QPR match. Eric was a much tighter and more inspirational band and more eclectic in its material, but it only lasted a year, before Brian went off to try and earn some real money in the real world. One notable gig was when we played an ex-serviceman's club (picture of the Queen on the wall, and all) and Brian invited a Pakistani friend of his to come along as a guest. The coolness which greeted us as we walked through the door was palpable. Talk about black man at the Hammersmith Palais.



This is a street party for the Queen's silver anniversary.

After the Maggots broke up, Bob and Mike Edwards reformed and joined forces with a rival local group called Quadrant, and last year Bob Edwards phoned me with an invitation for their 30th Anniversary gig (stretching it across a group or two) in Guildford. I was enthusiastic on the phone, especially when I learnt Bert would be invited to play along, but less than enthusiastic when I realized I myself wasn't being invited to play along. Furthermore Bob warned me not to mention his brother Mike, the Maggots' drummer, who had died in the interim, apparently of a heart attack, although I suspected, knowing him, a large amount of alcohol had also been involved. So I didn't go. Thomas Wolfe was right, You Can Never Go Home.

Twang Twang.



Did you ever admire an empty-headed writer for his or her mastery of the language?
No.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*, essay on 'style'

Nelson Bond: "Payment in Fee Simple"*

By Curt Phillips

He hated being called a science fiction writer. "If I need such a label," he would say, "the only accurate one would be that I am a fantasy writer." And by fantasy he meant the genteel comedies of style and manners such as those written by Donne Byrne (*Msser. Marco Polo* was his favorite) or James Branch Cabell, a fellow Virginian whose work provided a lifetime of study and enjoyment. He wrote for the stage, the screen, and the airwaves; for books and magazines both pulp and slick. He was a writer that other writers spoke of in tones of admiration, envy, and respect. And until he was invited to be a guest of honor at a certain Pulpcon years ago, he was convinced that he'd been all but forgotten by his readers. Let me tell you a little something about a fine writer and a friend of mine; Nelson Bond.

I met Nelson at the first science fiction convention I ever attended; Rovacon, a 1976 convention held in Nelson's hometown of Roanoke, VA and hosted by the local SF club which -- with his permission -- had been named the Nelson Bond Society. I soon joined that club and began a 30-year friendship with one of the most fascinating writers and bookmen I've ever known. Nelson enjoyed meeting and talking with people who shared his love of books and the well written word, and he and wife Betty often hosted small groups of visiting fans and friends in their home. Nelson was very agreeable to answering questions about his own work in the pulp magazines, and his scriptwriting work for radio and early television, but I think he most enjoyed discussing the books and writers that he'd known and enjoyed himself. He had a trove of stories about the business of writing and the people involved in the field during his heyday. He once told me of attending the very first 1939 World SF convention in New York and being approached by an excited young man who wanted writing advice. "Mr. Bond," the young man said. "I've just sold my first story! What should I do next?"

Bond looked the fellow in the eye and said, "I'll bet you've got a desk full of rejected stories at home, haven't you?"

"I sure do!" replied the youngster, "and I've already picked out six to rewrite and...."

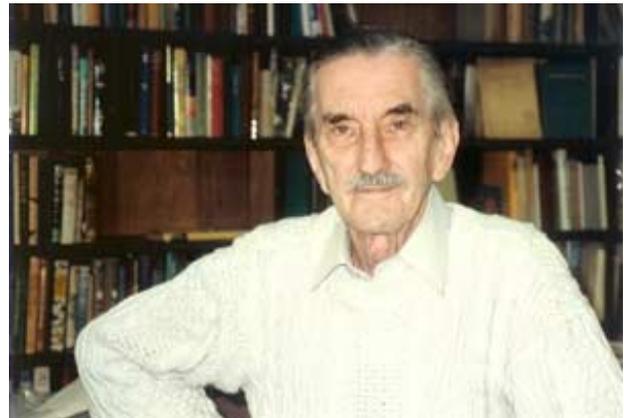
"Stop right there," said Bond. "Here's the best advice I can give you right now. Go home, take out all those old manuscripts and burn them. Then sit down at your desk, put a fresh piece of paper in your typewriter, and start fresh. All those old stories belong to the past when you were just trying to be a writer. Now you **are** a writer. Don't go back." The young man thanked him and took his advice. His name was Isaac Asimov and decades later he acknowledged Bond's advice in his autobiography.

Nelson Bond was born on November 23, 1908, grew up in Philadelphia, and attended Marshall University in West Virginia from 1932 to '34 where he met a fellow student

named Betty Folsom. They married in 1934 and later settled in Roanoke, VA. Bond began his writing career in the depths of the Great Depression writing travel commentaries in the employ of the government of Nova Scotia with the aim of encouraging Nova Scotian localities as tourist destinations. He soon moved on to writing short fiction pieces for the McClure Newspaper Syndicate and quickly learned that the most reliable market for short fiction in those days were the pulp magazines.

His first pulp story, “The Making of Sailor Jack,” appeared in the Sept. 1935 issue of *Top-Notch* and earned Bond the then tidy sum of \$50. Several more stories appeared in the next two years in various newspaper and small press outlets until Bond cracked a major slick market with “The Battle of Blue Trout Basin” in *Esquire* for May 1937. Later that same year one of his most famous stories appeared in the November 1937 *Scribner’s*; “Mr. Mergenthwirker’s Lobblies.” Due to a misunderstanding with the publisher, Bond retained full rights to the story – an unusual circumstance for the time which soon proved to be extremely lucrative for the author with subsequent sales of the story to television, to radio for a full series (which Bond largely wrote), and many reprintings in various anthologies. Bond’s stories also appeared in *Argosy*, *Astounding Stories*, *Planet Stories*, *Five Novels Monthly*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Poplar Detective*, *Ten Detective Aces*, *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Weird Tales*, *Unknown Worlds*, and many others.

About this time, Bond began branching out into writing for the sports pulps. In fact, he was probably better known as a writer of sports fiction in the '30s and early '40s than for anything else. His files indicate he sold more sports stories than SF and placed them in most of the specialized sports pulps of that time, on occasion using the names “Ralph Powers,” “Cliff Campbell,” “Don Newell,” and “Cliff Howe” when he had more than one story in a particular issue. (He also had one story appear in the Fall 1938 *All-American Football Magazine* as by “Lee Bond,” but this was just a mistake on the editor’s



Nelson Bond at home, 1990.

part. There was another sports writer in those days by that name and the editor confused the two. Bond’s only other pseudonyms in the pulps were “Hubert Mavity” in the February 1939 *Dynamic Science Stories*, and “George Danzell” in the Winter 1940 *Planet Stories*, each time again due to there being two Bond stories in those issues.) Bond wrote about baseball, football, basketball, boxing, and almost any other sport you can think of. He once related that he wrote his first ice hockey story without knowing anything about how the game was actually played. A few months later he chanced to attend his first hockey game and was delighted to see that the game proceeded very much as he'd anticipated in his story! While writing a series of space adventures for *Thrilling Wonder Stories* he became great friends with Manly Wade Wellman and the two writers began

writing a series of "inside jokes" to each other in their stories never anticipating that readers would eventually decide that the two were working in a "shared universe" of SF because of those jokes. Nelson developed a strong relationship with Donald Kennicott, the longtime editor of *Blue Book*, and soon made that magazine his market of choice. For one thing, *Blue Book* paid better than other fiction magazines, and for another, Kennicott occasionally sent Bond a letter which read "I like your latest story very much indeed, but the editor of our sister magazine *Redbook* likes it too and he can pay you more than I can, so I've taken the liberty of giving that story to him. When can you send me another Nelson Bond story?" *Blue Book* eventually declared Bond to be their most popular and most requested writer.

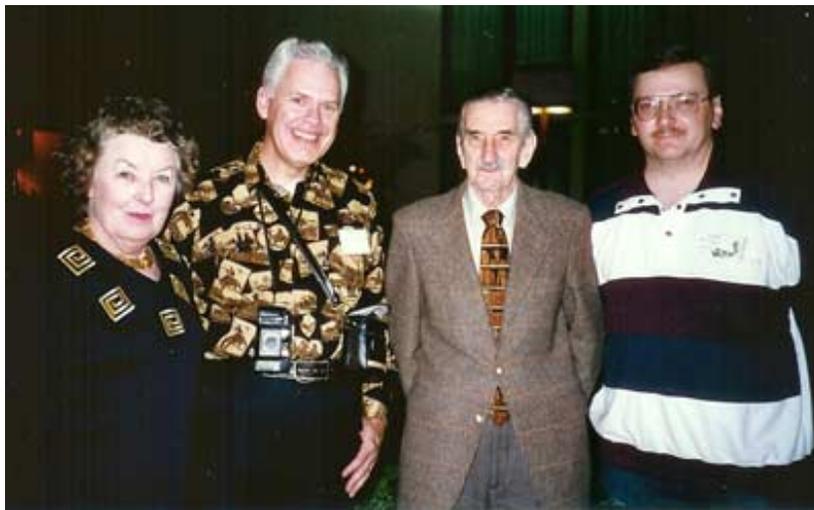
Bond became involved in writing scripts for radio and wrote for some of the better shows of the day including *Suspense*, *Mollé Mystery Theater*, *Dr. Christian*, *Grand Marque*, *Escape*, *X Minus One*, and several others. One script that he adapted from his own *Blue Book* story called "The Ring of Iscariot" was broadcast on the popular dramatic series *Dr. Christian* and won a special \$1,000 prize as the best show of the season. (A script written by Nelson's wife Betty won the third place award that same year.) He wrote an entire series about a "plucky girl reporter" called *Hot Copy* for ABC, and was soon called out to Hollywood to write for some of the earliest TV series. He produced several excellent scripts for early anthology shows, usually turning out scripts with a fantasy element. One of the benefits of attending those long ago Roanoke SF conventions was the chance to see several of Bond's early teleplays as he'd saved some of them on 16mm film. Bond also wrote the first TV show ever to be broadcast on a network. True, the network was the old DuMont network and at the time (1947) it only had three stations, but the script secured Bond's place in early television history.

Bond was successful as a TV and radio scriptwriter but grew to dislike the Hollywood way of doing business and returned home to Virginia to concentrate on writing the kind of stories he liked best. He began turning a lifelong love of fine books into a hobby of book scouting and bookselling and eventually set up business as an antiquarian bookseller. He developed an international reputation as a specialist in fantasy fiction and regional books and his catalogs with their detailed and loving book descriptions are themselves sought after collectibles in the old book trade. He continued to write well into the '50s but after Donald Kennicott resigned as editor of *Blue Book*, Bond began to lose interest in dealing with the business concerns of a changing writing market and by 1958 his active writing career was over. He opened a public relations firm in Roanoke with considerable success and involved himself in regional theater on the stage and local radio while maintaining his interest in selling rare books. He was a renowned philatelist and wrote *The Postal Stationery of Canada* (1953), a book that remains to this day the definitive work on the subject.

In the early '70s a group of Roanoke area SF fans approached Bond to ask that he allow them to call their club the Nelson Bond Society. He agreed and served as a gracious mentor to those young fans for the rest of his life. A few NBS alumni went on to become published poets and writers, and at least one, Bud Webster, fulfilled the ambitions of the entire club and became a professional SF writer himself to Nelson's considerable

satisfaction.

In 1974 one of those club members wrote a letter to Harlan Ellison suggesting that it would be a fine thing if Harlan could persuade Bond to write a story for the *Last Dangerous Visions* anthology. Harlan thought so too and the story was written; eventually seeing publication in the Roger Zelazny anthology *Wheel of Fortune*. Bond was always diligent in crediting Ellison for stirring him to write again, but resisted suggestions that he return to full-time writing, saying that the business and the tastes of the readers had changed too much for him to become involved in professional writing again. He did produce one further story in 1999 at the request of the editor of *Asimov's Science Fiction*, and later told me that he thought it fitting to write his last story for the magazine that bore Asimov's name due to his long-ago encounter with that "promising young writer."



Betty Bond, Paul Dellinger, Nelson Bond, and Curt Phillips
at Pulpcon, 1996.

After years of being urged to do so (by Rusty Hevelin, myself, and others), Bond finally agreed to make a rare convention appearance at the 1996 Pulpcon "B" in Asheville, NC as a guest of honor along with fellow reclusive pulp writer Talmadge Powell. When I spoke with Nelson on the phone a few weeks prior to the convention he expressed serious concern about what he was to say and do at that convention.

"After all, Curt," he protested. "I haven't published anything in a magazine for 40 years. Besides you and Rusty Hevelin, is anyone there even going to know my name?" I assured him that he had nothing to worry about, but I knew that he was only taking my assurances on faith. I, on the other hand, knew very well that pulp fandom certainly did remember the name of Nelson Bond and were only awaiting the chance to tell him so in person. And as soon as he and Betty arrived at the convention hotel in Asheville they were surrounded by fans and well wishers and at every appearance Nelson received standing ovations and numerous requests for autographs. I stood back and enjoyed watching Nelson meeting his

fans throughout that weekend and I was delighted to see the glow on his face as he finally put away all thoughts of having been forgotten by his readers.



Pulp Era Amateur Press Society members at Pulpcon 1996
with GOH's Talmadge Powell and Nelson Bond.

Nelson Bond came home that weekend in Asheville; and he finally knew that he'd earned a permanent place in our hearts. During a lively and entertaining guest-of-honor speech he thanked his fans for remembering and appreciating his stories after so many years. As he spoke that afternoon I turned to Betty who was sitting next to me and remarked that Nelson was making a terrific hit with the audience. Without missing a beat, Betty just smiled proudly and replied, "he always does."

Nelson Bond was named Author Emeritus by the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1998, and received the First Fandom award in 1992. In 2003, Bond donated his papers to the Marshall University library in Morgantown, WV, which – as a tribute – plans to build a replica of his home office where he wrote many of his stories. Bond died on November 4, 2006 "of complications from heart problems" and is survived by wife Betty, sons Kit and Lynn, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Nelson Bond isn't a well known writer in the world of science fiction and fantasy today, at least not to the casual reader but he has an impressive body of work, the best of which will, I think, stand the test of time rather well. There will always be readers who seek out the rare stories of style and substance, and they will find the best of Nelson Bond's stories waiting for them.

A very selective suggested reading list - first printings only:

“Mr. Mergenthwirker’s Lobblies,” *Scribner’s Magazine*,
November 1937

“The Voice from the Curious Cube,” *Top-Notch*, March,
1937

“Magic City,” *Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1941

“Take My Drum to England,” *Unknown*, August 1941

“The Bookshop,” *Blue Book*, October 1941

“The Ghost of Lancelot Biggs,” *Weird Tales*, January 1942

“The Ring of Iscariot,” *Blue Book*, June 1943

“Conqueror’s Isle,” *Blue Book*, June 1946

“The Song,” *Blue Book*, April 1949

“Vital Factor,” *Esquire*, August 1951

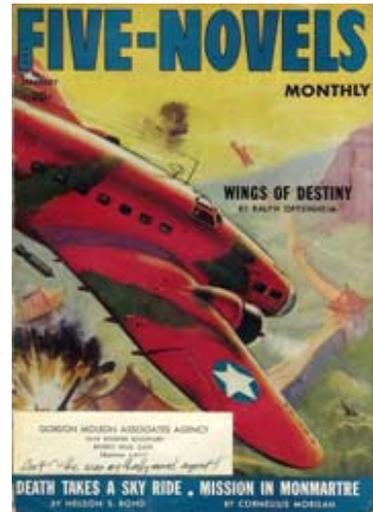
Nightmares & Daydreams – Arkham House, 1968

The Far Side of Nowhere – Arkham House, 2002

Other Worlds Than Ours – Arkham House, 2005

Probability Zero -- Arkham House, (forthcoming)

*This article appeared in substantially the same form in *The Pulpster* 16, a publication of Pulpcon edited by Tony Davis.



The First Amendment reads more like a dream than a law, and no other nation, so far as I know, has been crazy enough to include such a dream among its fundamental legal documents.

--Kurt Vonnegut

Psychic Block*

Artwork recycled Harry Bell

By Marion Zimmer Bradley

In the silence of a starred night, a little world rolled onward and onward, in a silent orbit from nowhere to nowhere....

Sun broke over the world. Through a million little windows broke a shimmering, diamond, neon sparkle of yellow. Alarm clocks shrilled. The straps of cradles were unfastened. Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith and Mr. Burton floated out of beds in adjacent apartments, to shut off identically chiming alarms, while their wives drifted across weightless floors to where babies slept in cushioned cradles.

A brighter sparkle in the windows. Families, crowded in breakfast nooks, smile, snap, quarrel, show affection, and irritation.

“Pour me some more coffee,” grunts Mr. Burton, and wife Jane squeezes the nutrient solution from a capsule.

“Toast’s a little burned,” he mumbles, biting into a pill. A bell screams somewhere. Children, drifting in weightless corridors, clutch at the handholds on the wall.

“Come on, come on, Peggy! We’ll be late for school!”

Two little girls strap themselves into adjacent chairs in the great schoolroom. The neon sparkle gleams through a panel they call window. Teacher, floating up and down the length of the room, indicates with a long stylus a misspelled work on a child’s slate, or retrieves a wandering pencil.

“How often have I told you to keep your pencils under the elastic strap when you aren’t writing?” she reproves. The children drowse, listen, drone their alphabet through the long sleepy morning.

Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, Mr. Burton crowd with men from the next block into a whining elevator.

“Subway’s sure crowded this morning!”

A damp moisture blown from the hydroponics gardens wafts across their faces. Mr. Smith sniffs disapprovingly. “Smells like rain. The weather isn’t what it was when I was a boy!”



Marion Zimmer Bradley

Jane Burton, Helen Foster, Nancy Smith, gather wisps of nylon together and swish through detergent solution. Helen shoves at a pair of toddlers. "Run out in the garden, get some sunshine!" They turn clumsy little somersaults in mid-air.

Outside under the little green-glass dome, a filtered golden light, rich with ultra-violet, warm with infrared, glows under the green tiling. Children root like noisy pigs in the fuzzy surface. One little boy learns a new word.

"Grass," he lisps, and Nancy Smith floats across the little dome to hug him. A small plastic fence divides the dome, Nancy leans across the fence, anchoring herself with one hand, to chat with Jane while she pegs up clothes on a curiously angled line. "Isn't this a lovely day?"

"Never saw such weather," Jane assents. A small dress floats out of reach; Jane drifts up casually to retrieve it.

The day goes buy, busy with bustle, quiet with domestic business. Down in air-conditioned offices, men run typewriters, huge calculating machines, work in hydroponics gardens, prepare food and garments from vast vats and storerooms. Gradually the filtered glow dims, darkens. Crowded elevators carry the men homeward. They chew gum, push, crowd, read small magazines which they can hold between two fingers.

Children, noisy, dirty, tired, drift slowly home, clutching at handholds. Supper is sipped from globes, prayers read, lisped by children too sleepy to hold to the floor. Magnetic shoes are discarded by tired father-feet. Mr. Smith drifts upward, lies on the ceiling to watch his favorite video. Jane and Helen and Nancy fasten gravity straps across foam-rubber cradles.

"Now Mommy's tucked you in. Go to sleep, darling."

"Wanna drink water," lisps a fractious baby, and Helen holds down the globe. Baby sucks; drops off to sleep. The Burtons, Jane and Larry, slip quietly out of the apartment, leaving the children strapped in their cradles. They drift through corridors into a great open dome. Above them rises vast, glassed-in nothingness, shot by millions of unfamiliar stars. The tiny glow of cigarettes in the dark show where wives, husbands, lovers watch the starlight.

"It's strange," Jane whispers, "the stars are always there, and yet the stars are different every night. It's almost as if the



world were moving!”

Larry murmurs, frowning a little, “Yes, strange... I seem to remember that long ago, sometime, things were different. I wonder what it would be like if we couldn’t float, if we just had to walk. If when we put the children to bed, they’d stay in bed without floating out?”

Jane shudders. “You’re getting morbid.” She looks up at the ever-changing stars and suddenly grips her husband’s arm. “Larry—I keep thinking of one word. *Earth*. What’s—Earth?”

He scowls; slips his arm around her waist. “It’s the world we live on, honey.” The scowl slips off his face, to give way to a dreamy memory. “I wonder. I don’t know—I think I knew, long ago, but there was a world—“

Silence. Jane glances up at the mutating stars; smiles in the darkness. “Come on, honey. It’s late. The stars will be there tomorrow night.”

“But they will be different stars—“

“What’s the difference?” Woman and mother, Jane has a wise smile, “They’re stars. We’re here.”

One by one, couples and singly, they float down corridors to silent rooms; tiptoe in the darkness to beds, strap the rubber straps with an automatic gesture. Eyes close. In the faint, faint light of the ever-changing stars, a thousand people breathe in their sleep. Somewhere a baby wails. A woman dreams and sobs in her sleep.

The ship sleeps.

Far up on the bridge the light is harsh and never darkened. The co-pilot of the evening watch turns to the navigator.

“God, it’s monotonous, isn’t it?”

The navigator nods. “Yeah, but suppose you were down in the passenger decks?”

The co-pilot frowns.

“Sometimes I wonder what they think about it all?”

The *Centaurus I* plunges on and on through a world of a billion changing stars.

- - -

*Reprinted from *Ciln 5* with the permission of Ed Gorman.

Q: "What targets would you consider fair game for a satirist today?" A: "Assholes."
--Kurt Vonnegut, 1/27/03, "In These Times"

Introduction to Interview: Algis Budrys

This is quite a long article in its original appearance in *Science Fiction Review*. Mark Berry conducted his interview in the spring of 1984 while driving his Dodge Colt from Detroit, Michigan to Evanston, Illinois with Algis Budrys as his passenger. It was a tape-recorded interview and the published text made from a translation of those verbal recordings.

As I said, it is quite a long article. It begins with Berry's description of Algis Budrys (as Berry knew him to be, and that's an important distinction) and moves directly into a prolonged question-and-answer session that must have taken several hours to complete.

Conspicuously absent from the interview are some extremely important periods of Budrys' life that Berry was apparently unaware of. They are:

1. Budrys' period as The King of Pornography when working side by side with Harlan Ellison and yours truly at William Hamling's Porno Factory, Blake Pharmaceuticals, in Evanston, Illinois.
2. Budrys' short tenure at Playboy Press in Chicago, Illinois.
3. Budrys' decades-long tenure at Lafayette Ronald Hubbard's complex in Los Angeles, California and the embarrassment and humiliation he endured while employed by Dianetics, Bridge Publications, and the "church and religion"—*two spontaneous loud raspberries*—of Scientology (sic).



Algis Budrys at Blake
Pharmaceuticals in
Evanston, Illinois in
1961.

But none of those concern us here.

What does is the frequently devoutly worshipped tangential human being and total control freak named Robert Anson Heinlein.

On the occasion of this, the Centennial of Heinlein's birth, when many people are celebrating that immaculate event, it becomes my duty to speak for The Legion of the

Disremembered, the countless number of once-devoted Heinlein acolytes who in some small manner failed to kiss the master's rusty ass one time too many and became instantly "disremembered." Totally dropped from Heinlein's knowledge and thoughts—*sure, that'll be the day*—from his records, from his files, from his celestial existence.

For those who knew him closely and personally and far too well to disremember him in turn, we all now observe one minute of silence out of respect for the petty little man hiding behind the Ozma curtain.

<tick, tock, tick tock>

and one final middle finger salute.

#

And now we pick up the pertinent text directly from *Science Fiction Review*.

—Earl Kemp

Interview: Algis Budrys*

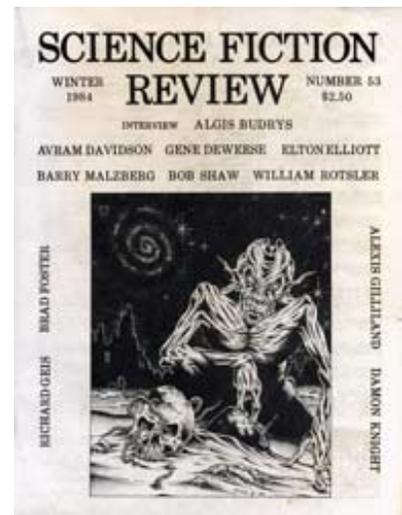
Conducted by Mark Berry

Mark Berry: As the interview wound down we found ourselves halfway between Detroit and Chicago, still three hours away. I mentioned to A.J. That I had at least one hour of blank tape left and he suggested that he tell how he got started as a book reviewer. Whether he did this for posterity or to take his attention away from my driving I'm not sure. (I used to be a paramedic and tend to drive like my little car has flashing red lights and a siren. For some reason this seems to discomfort my passengers.)

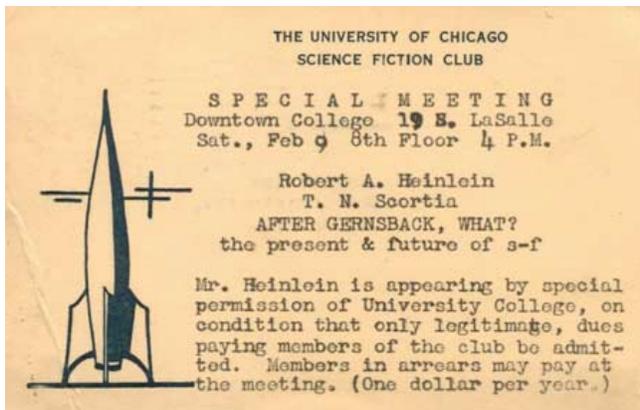
Whatever the reason, A.J. related the following. It is a piece of sf history and I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Algis Budrys: This is a story which I guess now can be told.

I had been doing some book reviewing. For instance, my first book review appeared in *Astounding* in the middle 1950s. It was a review of an anthology of Ivan Yeffremov's Russian science fiction stories. The book had been imported into this country by somebody that John Campbell knew. He gave me the book to review and I did a little thing and it was a filler at the bottom of a page somewhere. I can't retrieve it; it's not listed in the index. I can't find out what issue it was in. I still have the book. And I did that because John wanted a review of that book. I was heavily influenced by Damon Knight



and his magazine reviews and after the first Milford Science Fiction Conference in Milford, back in the middle 1950s, Damon and Lester del Rey and Jim Blish and I put together a magazine called *SF Forum* which survives today as a publication of SFWA. The Forum in those days was co-edited by Lester and Damon as a magazine of reviews. What we did was review every story in every issue of every science fiction magazine, for the improvement of the breed and the clarification of the situation. It took hardly any time at all before we had alienated everybody we knew. And we fell to bickering among ourselves; we said some amazingly stupid things in print, as a matter of fact. The *SF Forum* contains a long essay by Jim Blish on Robert Heinlein, of all people. It has to do with *The Door Into Summer* and builds up this elaborate thesis about Heinlein's methods and the reason *The Door Into Summer* is written the way it is and points out that this is the first time that Heinlein has paid attention to one of science fiction's major themes, time travel. Now, Jim had apparently forgotten a little story called "By His Bootstraps." So I don't blame Heinlein for feeling that there was something wrong with the whole concept of criticizing science fiction in this manner. I don't think Heinlein ever wrote in and did anything about that although Heinlein is a person who does not suffer slings and arrows mutely. But he's a gentleman, he's always been a gentleman, and he does it in a characteristic way.



Announcement postcard
dated February 9, 1957.

What happened, some years later, was Fred Pohl, of course being very well aware of *SF Forum*, was very well aware of the fact that I worked on it. Some years later Fred becomes the editor of *Galaxy* and his book reviewer, a fellow named Floyd C. Gale, who was Horace Gold's brother in law, and he had inherited Floyd from Horace.

And Floyd Gale, who was a very bright and conscientious guy, had been assigned the mission by Horace of reviewing as many books as possible and never saying anything that would make

anybody mad because the purpose of the review column was to generate advertising from book publishers. So Floyd has this real quickie buyer's guide. He covered 33 titles in a column and the column would be about two pages long.

So in comes the new Heinlein novel, the major Heinlein novel, the Heinlein novel everybody had been waiting for. It's called *Stranger in a Strange Land*. I do not know what process of rationality Fred went through but he got a hold of me and said, "Look, there's this new Heinlein novel. I would like you to review it. I need about 2,000 words worth of review and I'll give you 75 bucks for it and I want you to review this book." So I read the book. The first half of it was without doubt the finest modern science fiction novel ever written. I'm sitting there, the author of *Rogue Moon*, the finest, quintessential science fiction novel ever written up to that time and the guy has me beat all hollow. He has reached into the very heart of speculative fiction. He has dressed it up with the science

fiction trappings. He is proceeding full steam ahead with a masterpiece; the definitive sf novel. Halfway through it I'm foaming at the mouth; it is so beautiful, so lovely. I turn the page and it is as if someone had taken a bucket of some cold, glutinous substance and poured it over my head. The back half of *Stranger in a Strange Land* is as bad as any Jack Woodford novel ever written.

Jack Woodford was a culture hero of the 1930s, writing soft-core porn novels which contained no believable characters in no believable situations, mouthing lines that had been forced into them by the author who had absolutely no conception of how fiction is to be written. A self-taught, ham-handed practitioner who was able to sell stuff only because every college boy in the world thrilled to it.



Earl Kemp presenting Robert Heinlein the Hugo for *Stranger in a Strange Land*.
ChiCon III photo dated September 1962.

And here is Robert Anson Heinlein doing exactly the same fucking thing. It wasn't that he was pushing this particular religion, it wasn't that he was pushing this particular view of reincarnation. I was kind of taken by that. I don't mind that the man says something which, if he walked up to you on the street and tried to hand you a pamphlet about it and sign you up, you'd tell him to get lost. A novel is the place for that kind of thing. And, as a matter of fact, what he had to say about Michael Valentine Smith and his inevitable doom and the nature of the world strikes me as very valid social observation. It taught me a great many things about charismatic religion. I've no quarrel with that. And I admire him for having organized all that in his mind and having been able to expound it in a coherent manner.

What I do mind is the fact that he threw out the window all of his skills that he had developed in characterization and dialogue writing, all of the techniques that he had worked up, and he had started maneuvering his characters baldly and boldly and creating a polemic. He had broken his bargain, he was no longer being an entertainer. He was being a didacticist. And he was resorting to scenes like the one in which everybody says, "Poor dear Marge, she's fifty years old, she's sure that she's past it all. Let's all climb into bed at once and reassure her." Come on! This is masturbatory fiction. This is not the creation of anything like what Robert Heinlein had taught us to write like.

I said things like that in my review. Not as vehemently, but I said them. I felt I owed it to the readers. I felt I owed it to Heinlein. I felt I owed it to myself. I felt I owed it to speculative fiction. And I turned it in. And Fred liked it, he admired it as a review. I think he was pleasantly surprised at how well I had read the book and organized my thinking. I really do. I think that.

As the editor of *Galaxy*, a man who was therefore about to destroy the possibility that Robert A. Heinlein would ever sell him another story, he was in another boat entirely.



Robert Heinlein showing off his Hugo and his *Stranger in a Strange Land*. ChiCon III photo dated September 1962.

I'm not clear now on exactly what it was he did. I don't know whether he sent Heinlein a copy of the review or whether he wrote him a letter and described it to him or whether he simply wrote him a letter and said, "Bob, I think you ought to know that Algis Budrys has written an unfavorable review of *Stranger in a Strange Land* and I'm thinking of running it in the magazine." And Heinlein wrote back, and as Fred has described the letter to me, if I can recall it now, mere or less exactly...despite the fact that Heinlein and I had met at Seattle, and had spent two days admiring each other, spent a lot of time together at the Seattle Worldcon. And despite the fact that Heinlein had declared to me that I was robbed on the Hugo balloting, Heinlein proposed the theory that because I was a foreigner I hadn't really understood the English language in the book. That, if I recall, is something like what he said.

Besides proposing that because I had this foreign name and therefore might be clumsy with the English language, besides proposing that I hadn't been able to understand the prose of his book, he said to Fred, "I would not for a minute attempt to censor this man's right to say whatever he wants to say. It's

his opinion and he's entitled to it and you're entitled to publish it in your magazine. You paid him to do it, he did it, and you're entitled to publish it. However, I am a subscriber and would it be possible to omit from my subscription the issue in which that review appears?" And that was all he said.

Well, Fred didn't run the review. I don't blame him. It's tough enough keeping a science fiction magazine going. At any time. You never get any advertising to support it; you do it entirely on the basis of selling to the readers. Distribution being the way it is you can't even build up that much of a loyal following. There have been mere recent solutions to that problem. *Asimov's*, *Analog*, and *F&SF* now depend for most of their sales on their subscribers. *Galaxy* and *Astounding* at that time were not set up that way. They were depending on newsstand sales. Newsstand sales demanded the appearance on the cover of sure-fire selling names. You just were not going to make it, you were not going to get enough readers, if you did not have a name like Heinlein to stick on the cover once in a while. You were cutting your own throat for good. And Fred was entitled to feel that if he cut Heinlein off the front cover of the magazine he was cutting an awful lot of other writers out of a place where they could get their stories published. I don't blame him. He didn't ask me to rewrite the review. He didn't ask me to take it back. He didn't even look at me funny and say, "Ajay, you idiot." What he said to me was, "You did an honest job. Now I've got to cope with the results." Fred, as far as I'm concerned, came out of that situation looking golden. I gained a lot of respect for Fred. I had put him in a box and he had figured out a viable way to handle it. He just plain didn't run the review, and that may sound pusillanimous to somebody who does not understand the business. But it caused

me to raise my estimation of Fred by a couple of notches.

And I think that anybody who has edited anything under those circumstances would agree.

A couple of years later Fred just plain offered me the *Galaxy* column. I assumed that he wanted me to continue to handle it the way I had handled the Heinlein review. And although he wasn't always comfortable with what I did, he never, ever censored it, except once and even then he didn't censor it, he sent back a column for a rewrite, not because he objected to what I'd said but because he could not understand what I'd said. That was my review of *Dangerous Visions* which I rewrote, saying exactly the same things, but in a less maniacal manner.

So I think that my review of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, even though it's never been published, was what got me the *Galaxy* column.

Now, the reason the review was the way it was was on account of Damon Knight. Damon Knight had not been afraid to take on A.E. van Vogt. Damon Knight had not been afraid to poke fun at certain aspects of Isaac Asimov. Right or wrong, he had set an example. And I followed it. The example he had set was you don't do a hatchet job for the sake of doing a hatchet job but if you see something wrong you point it out. And it's to Damon's credit, as well as Fred's, in that sense.

This is a story that neither Fred nor I have been ashamed to tell people in small groups. So I figured I'd tell it to you now because I think it's time it got published out where the world can see it.

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Most fascinating game there is, keeping things from staying the way they are.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*
