

new worlds

Fiction: Thomas M. Disch, 1-A; Joel Zoss, The Valve Transcript; also Zorin, Butterworth, Bailey. **Science:** Dr. John Clark, The Mechanical Hypnotist. **Art:** Panos Koutrouboussis. 5/-/75¢



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new worlds

Number 181

Contents

- 2 **Lead-In**
- 4 **Hilary Bailey:** Dr. Gelabius
- 7 **Thomas M. Disch:** 1-A
- 13 **Norman Spinrad:** Bug Jack Barron
- 23 **Dr. John Clark:** The Mechanical Hypnotist
- 28 **James Sallis & David Lunde:** Weather Man
- 31 **Leo Zorin:** The Man Who Was Dostoevsky
- 33 **John T. Sladek:** New Forms
- 38 **Michael Butterworth:** Concentrate 2
- 42 **Joel Zoss:** The Valve Transcript
- 60 **Books and Comment:** The 77th Earl
- 65 **Classified Advertisements**

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Illustrations: Panos Koutrouboussis, Charles Platt

MICHAEL MOORCOCK, editor. CHARLES PLATT, production, design.
JAMES SALLIS, associate editor, fiction. DOUGLAS HILL associate.
Dr. CHRISTOPHER EVANS, science. CHRISTOPHER FINCH, arts. EDUARDO
PAOLOZZI, aeronautics advisor. DIANE LAMBERT, advertising (01-636 8283).

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WORLDS in the hands of those it will interest and we will be pleased to hear from any readers still finding copies hard to obtain. Since last November we have also had new publishers who stepped in with the necessary backing when we had almost lost hope of continuing publication.

Our staff has increased since we first began, with **Douglas Hill** as associate editor, **Diane Lambert** handling advertising and promotion and **James Sallis**, who recently arrived from America, as our fiction editor.

Sallis is 23, the author of a number of short stories, poems and articles, whose first published story appeared in *NEW WORLDS* 174 and who will be appearing fairly frequently in the *Orbit* series edited in the U.S.A. by Damon Knight. Sallis has also contributed to *CHEETAH*. His novel *Moth* will be published by Doubleday in the U.S. and Rupert Hart-Davis in the U.K. and an anthology of sf stories protesting war will be edited by him and published by Rupert Hart-Davis next spring.

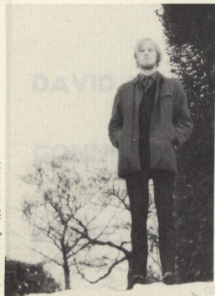
Michael Butterworth's *Concentrate* 2, which appears in this issue, is a sequel to his *Concentrate* 1 in our July, 1967, issue. The first half of the story is a condensation of the author's unpublished novelette *Stick*. It has an anarchistic hero who works constantly to create beauty through destruction; successive slices of space-time show how the destructive process is taking effect. Butterworth has described the story's philosophy as "Destroy the universe. Up with *Stick*. Down with urbanism. Down with God. Down with everything."

Butterworth has a story in **Judith Merril's** "British SF" anthology (to be published in the U.S. by Doubleday this year), and his story *Post-atomic Girl* has been accepted by *AMBIT*. After being almost totally unpublished for several years, he is finding wider recognition. *NEW WORLDS* published his first story, *The Steel Corkscrew*, in No. 167 and hopes to publish *Concentrate* 3 and many other stories in future issues.

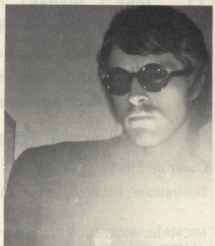
Thomas M. Disch at 28 has already made a reputation for himself as one of the finest living sf writers and more recently his poetry has

begun to attract favourable attention. He is currently working on a non-sf novel to be called *Glandier*. Disch was born in Minnesota, moved to New York to go to college at seventeen, earning his way by working as a theatre cloakroom attendant. He dropped out of college in his junior year after learning that he had sold his first story to *Cele Lalli's* *FANTASTIC*. He lived in New York for eight years, working for some time in advertising until he sold his first novel (*The Genocides*) and decided to travel in Europe. He has been in Europe, based principally in London, since 1966, and has been closely associated with *NEW WORLDS*. We have published short stories, essays, poems and novels by him, most notably *Camp Concentration* which we serialised in four parts last year and which will soon appear from Doubleday in the U.S. and Rupert Hart-Davis in Britain. His other books include *102 H-Bombs & Others* (Compact, U.K., Berkley, U.S.), *Echo Round His Bones* (Hart-Davis, U.K., Berkley, U.S.) and *Under Compulsion* (Hart-Davis).

His story in this issue is based largely on his brief experience in the U.S. Army, from which he opted out with painful memories.



Butterworth: "Destroy the universe"



Koutroubousis: first appearance

All but two of this issue's illustrations are by **Panos Koutroubousis**. Born in 1937 in Parnassus, he has worked in films and sf translation (Zelazny's *This Immortal*); exhibited in Copenhagen, 1965; has lived in Athens, Rome, Paris, and is now settled in London. *NEW WORLDS* is the first English magazine to feature his work.

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From our back list we would especially recommend the Harrison/Aldiss anthology, *THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION NO. 1* — a new series of annual collections which should provide some stiff competition for Judith Merril's *BEST SF*.

In the future list there is Samuel R. Delany's great trilogy *THE FALL OF THE TOWERS* which can only be compared to Asimov's *FOUNDATION* series. Reviewing Delany's *BABEL-17*

(a Nebula Award Winner, also acquired by Sphere) in *Tribune* Martin Hillman wrote: "(his) rampaging talent mesmerises the reader with the thunderous, luminous world he has created". Delany is sure to become one of the Big Names in the new generation of SF writers.

If you have any difficulty in obtaining any of our titles or want to make any recommendations of your own, please contact us direct at:

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Dr. Gelabius

DR. GELABIUS STOOD at midnight in the laboratory among his foetuses, all heaving and rolling gently and monotonously in the glass jars around him.

Beyond the white frames of the laboratory windows it was quiet and solidly dark. Even the trees of the campus were hidden by the thickness of the night.

Short, fat and shining-bald Dr. Gelabius stood, considering, as his foetuses rolled in their jars, three deep on the walls of the small laboratory. Apparatus, gleaming bright under the harsh central light, was laid out neatly on the white work benches. On the central bench lay Dr. Gelabius's notebook. Hands behind small foreheaded back, round brown eyes blank and intent, Gelabius moved, began to tour shelves on which embryos were arranged in order of age: from skinny huge-headed three-month foetuses to the large six- or seven-pounders, complete with toenails and tiny moving mouths in small, finished faces.

Tour over, Dr. Gelabius sat down on his stool

opposite the nearly-mature foetuses and, removing a ball point pen, one of three, from his pocket, began to write. Around the walls mute mouths opened and shut, tiny hands slowly clenched and unclenched, monkey bodies rolled in their placid, individual amniotic seas.

Notes done, Dr. Gelabius crossed the silent room with his slow, heaving fat-man's walk and began to pace past the forty biggest foetuses, nearly mature in their labelled bottles.

He worked calmly on the contents of the jars, studying the thermometer and pseudo-placenta set in each, touching one embryo gently with a spatula and studying its movements, gazing, huge-faced, through the jar at the tiny features inside. With thirty years' practise behind him, Gelabius could judge the potential of an embryo as well as an experienced mother can sum up her newborn.

Work on each bottle completed, Dr. Gelabius marked the labels, some with the date, some with a tiny inked



TIANOS '64

by Hilary Bailey

cross.

Dr. Gelabius headed one of five research teams—two in Germany, one in Britain and two in the United States—all working on specialised breedings. Fertile cells from selected women were brought together with sperm from selected men, and the results encased in jars, surrounded by pseudo-amniotic fluid and fed by an artificial placenta. Brought forth at maturity, the ex-embryos were placed with approved parents, chosen for their emotional stability and social normality. At a few years old they began to attend special schools part-time, and finally became boarders at institutions designed to reinforce their healthy psyches and extend their already superior mental, moral and physical powers.

For Dr. Gelabius had spent his thirty years improving the race; making combinations of beauty, strength and intelligence and sanity, putting to shame the haphazard genetic results of ordinary matings. The

end products, by their merits, moved ever upwards and onwards, spreading light in darkness, shaping and forming, continually increasing the sum of human knowledge and pleasure.

By law their natural parents had to be informed of their existence from the beginning—lawyers in all civilised countries had made a last-ditch stand, a desperate and out-dated assertion in favour of those who produced those tiny dots of tissue which fed Dr. Gelabius's jars.

Nevertheless, in the laboratory Dr. Gelabius was king.

He finished his examination and marking of the jars and stepped back: under the glaring light, a short, insignificant figure in the middle of his shining bottles and instruments.

With the sad but dutiful smile of a parent who must punish he moved forward again towards his slowly-turning foetuses. His pale, steady short-fingered hands reached for the first jar marked with a cross.

He ripped the artificial placenta from its feeder. The foetus gave a sudden jerk. He took the jar, plastic placenta trailing across the floor, contents tossing and moving a little in its water, to the gleaming stainless steel sink. He unstopped the jar, tipped it up and, one hand splayed across the top of the jar and the embryo's soft head, neatly poured the fluid down the sink. Inside the jar limbs moved feebly, mouth opened and shut soundlessly, fingers closed and loosened in slow spasms. Gravely Dr. Gelabius carried the bottle to the door of the laboratory and placed it outside. The foetus heaved a little and, as Dr. Gelabius closed the door, stopped moving.

Sadly, borne by necessity, Dr. Gelabius removed nine more bottles from the shelves until there were ten shining jars standing in a line in the corridor, each with an unmoving homunculus collapsed on its glass floor.

Dr. Gelabius moved back to his bench, opened his record book and began to write.

Suddenly the door crashed back against the wall. In the entrance to the laboratory stood a woman in a torn red coat. Her grey hair hung in wild tangles around her head, her eyes burned in a lined, pinched face. In one thin hand she held a revolver.

"You killed my baby," she screamed, and as Dr. Gelabius stood up she fired four shots into him.

She turned and ran, her feet banging along the corridor and gradually fading away.

Dr. Gelabius fell down, hand clutched against his white-coated belly which was pierced by two bullets. He lay, knees drawn up, arms around his body. He rolled a little, made a soundless mouthing, turned on to his back, and died.

All around him in the silent laboratory his embryos continued their determined, senseless rolling; naked monkeys heaving like ships at anchor in their bland, amniotic swell.

But Gelabius, mother and father to them all, did not move.



FLA

"NOW THAT," Mr. Green said with great definiteness, "that was a *real* war." Mr. Green, who had been a sergeant way back in the Second World War, set the lawn rake just inside the door to his garage.

"Well, this one is probably *real* enough, for that matter," Bruce Berwyn argued, without great conviction.

Mr. Green made a skeptical sound through his nose, or perhaps it was just the strain of lifting the bushel basket of dry leaves.

"Here, let me help you with that," Bruce offered. Bruce was twenty years old and worked, with his father, as a piano mover. Two years earlier he had played full-back for his high school team, where he had shown such aptitude that, had he been willing to go to college, he would have had his choice of four scholarships, one of them in the east.

"You just look after yourself, young fellow, and that'll keep you plenty busy. I guess I've still got the strength to lift a basket of leaves." He upended them into a rusty, open-ended oil drum.

"Well, you've got to admit it's necessary, Mr. Green. We've got to live up to our commitments. You've got to admit that."

Mr. Green sprinkled kerosene over the leaves. "I'll admit it keeps young people off the streets," he said with a dry chuckle.

"But the Communists—" Bruce explained patiently, ignoring the old man's gibe.

"Those goddamn reds!" Mr. Green said, applying a match. "They should have bombed China years ago. We missed our big chance in '45. We could have wiped them out of existence." A geyser of bright orange flame shot up from the top of the can, and Mr. Green bit his lower lip with satisfaction. Then, returning to his earlier theme, he said: "Now *that* was a real war. Goddamned yellowbelly Japs—I could tell you stories about those babies that would make your *teeth* fall out. We should have bombed them while we had the chance."

"But they're our *allies*, Mr. Green," Bruce protested.

Mr. Green made a sound of utmost contempt. "No Jap is my ally!"

It was hopeless trying to make Mr. Green concede a point. Bruce would not even have made the attempt if he had had anything better to do. But since he was entering the Armed Services next day, he was at loose ends. He had said all his goodbyes; he had cleared up all his business; nothing remained for him to do now except report at the courthouse next morning.

"Now *that*," Mr. Green said, looking proudly upon the mounting blaze, "that's a *real* fire."

THOUGH BRUCE BERWYN was a sincere, if not devout, Methodist, he had never felt himself called to the religious life. He had any number of firm opinions, which he set considerable store upon, but they were none of them characterised by unorthodoxy. He was

neither very short nor very tall, very fat nor very thin; he had 20-20 vision and an IQ of 106. He did not wet his bed, nor did he have frequent and terrifying nightmares. He had, once, used narcotics (marijuana, nothing more than that), but he had not seen fit to mention this on the Selective Service questionnaire. There had never been any doubt in his mind, nor in the minds of those who knew him, that he would be classified 1-A, and so he had been.

The prospect of military service had been there, in Bruce's future, ever since he had been aware of having any future at all. Thus he did not look upon it as an interruption in the natural course of his life, for it was a part of that natural course—almost, for the moment, its definition. After the Army he would find a good job and marry, have kids, buy a home, retire, and then just settle back and enjoy things. That was the way it was done; that was the way he would do it.

And besides—he owed it to his country. Citizens, as Bruce well knew, had responsibilities as well as rights, duties as well as privileges.

Service in the Army is a duty and a privilege. Each individual in this nation has the duty to contribute as much as he can to the well-being of the nation and its people. Military service is one form of such a contribution. From the oldest times, it has been considered a privilege to be permitted to bear arms in the defense of one's nation or people. This privilege is afforded only to those who are individuals of good standing and of good reputation.

from The Soldier's Guide, Department of the Army Field Manual FM 21-13

No one could gainsay that Bruce was an individual of good standing and reputation. Ergo, the Army.

BRUCE, WHO HAD never flown before, was pleasantly surprised to find that he was to be taken to Fort Candler in an airplane. The officer who had sworn the draftees in at the courthouse did not accompany them on the plane, so that Bruce's first taste of Army life could not have been more agreeable. The trip took only an hour and ten minutes, but in that time Bruce made good friends with four other inductees. They exchanged light-hearted anecdotes about the idiocies and hardships of Army life, but mainly about the idiocies. One fellow had had a brother in the Regular Army, a career man, who had been in a platoon that had been anxious to win the pennant that was awarded each week after inspection to the tidiest platoon. This platoon would scrub and polish and clean their rifles till very late on Friday night, but since all the other platoons did this too, their efforts went unrecognised. They had to do something uniquely neat, and this was the strategem they eventually devised: each man emptied out a tube of toothpaste and filled it with quick-drying cement; when the cement was firm, he scraped the paint off, painted the

tube with copper paint and polished it until it shone as brightly as the brass on his jacket's lapels. The platoon won the pennant the first week this was done, but by the next week all the other platoons in the regiment had learned the same trick.

This anecdote was reassuring to Bruce and the other draftees, for, among its many lessons, it showed that the Army was essentially a sort of game. One only had to learn the rules, which were, it is true, rather arbitrary, and all would be well. One only had to keep in step. If a person could maintain an attitude of cool detachment, the Army might even prove to be a source of amusement.

Even so, in dismounting from the plane one of the inductees who had been liveliest in the exchange of anecdotes was attacked by what seemed to be an hysterical fit, after which he fell unconscious. This had the effect of casting a pall over the whole reception ceremony.

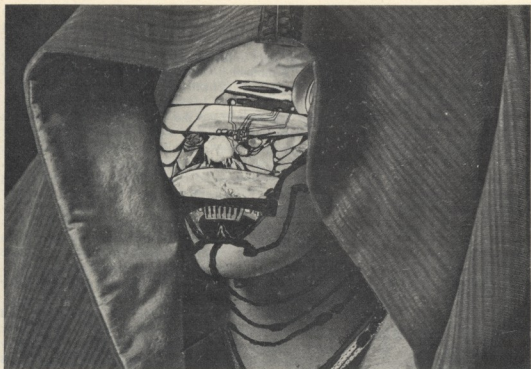
The draftees were driven the rest of the way to Fort Candler in a bus, under the supervision of a fat, taciturn Master Sergeant. It was sunset. The Master Sergeant delivered his commands in an ordinary conversational tone and did not require them to stand at attention. They were all slightly disappointed, having expected to be bullied a bit at the first.

They were shown to a temporary barracks and told to assemble for mess in fifteen minutes. But when they had assembled, no one came by to take them to the messhall and since none of the new inductees knew where it was they had nothing to do but return, grumbling, to the cold barracks. They waited, sitting on the olive-drab bunks, for a long long while for someone to realise that an error had been made, but no one ever came around and they had to go to bed hungry. Perhaps, one boy suggested, it was not an error at all.

Being courageous does not mean that you won't be afraid at the same time. The true mark of courage is to overcome fear. Fear in battle is natural and most soldiers have been afraid, but they went ahead, even with shaking hands and pounding hearts. Actually, a little fear is helpful. Medical experts tell us that fear and anger sharpen the reflexes and lend strength, preparing you for extra efforts.

from FM 21-13

THE NEXT MORNING Bruce found that he was, after all, in the Army now. He was awakened by a blast of incandescence and loud obscenity that tangled together, in those first straggling moments, into a single noxious knot; before he had quite unravelled it he was standing outside in the mist pre-dawn, where the sergeant told them how they looked like a lot of puking babies. It made the sergeant sick to see them. He didn't understand why they didn't send him *men* any more. Well,



the Army would *make* them into men, if it was possible, and how many of them thought it *was* possible?

There was general agreement that they all thought it was possible.

But the sergeant was deaf, and demanded to know again how many of them?

They *all* did!

The sergeant still couldn't hear them.

THEY ALL DID!

"You're goddamn right! And you'd better start shaping up as soldiers soon, or. . . ." The sergeant left this threat hanging in the air. Or, it was implied, something terrible would become of them.

Then they were ordered to form into ranks, which sounded easy until they tried it. Each draftee had his own idea of how to come to attention and where to stand in relation to the others. The sergeant became ever more angry in correcting their ideas. Bruce, who as chance would have it, was standing in the first rank, became worried that the sergeant would single him out as the particular object of his satire. He sucked in his stomach and chin, puffed out his chest and stared dead ahead. The sergeant passed him by without seeming to notice him. Inwardly Bruce smiled, but he was careful to let no trace of it glimmer upon his outward man.

He was a soldier now, a G.I.

As a soldier, you are always a fighting man. In combat you are prepared to give your life in defense of your country. This is the basis for the fighting man's code of conduct.

from FM 21-13

WHEN THE SERGEANT had concluded this first inspection there was a scarcely audible sigh that passed down the four ranks of the platoon. In answer the sergeant's glance flickered along the rows of faces, like an insect's flight, and seemed to alight on Bruce. But it was towards a soldier behind Bruce, in the second rank, that the sergeant made his way.

"Suck in that gut!" the sergeant screamed at his chosen victim.

"I'm trying, sir." Bruce recognised the scapegoat's voice, reedy with adolescence, as that of O'Brien, a chubby college dropout who appeared to be years too young for armed service.

"Don't talk to me, fartface, unless I tell you to!"

"No sir."

"And suck that gut in!"

There was a long silence, followed by the sound of the sergeant's fist sinking into the boy's soft gut. After the third such blow, Bruce risked a backwards glance just as O'Brien, with a muffled cry, collapsed to the ground.

"The rest of you men had better shape up," the sergeant warned, as he left them still standing at attention.

"Help me up," O'Brien whined. None of them dared move. "Someone, please, help me. I think I've broken something."

Bruce could not help but despise such a fellow.

That day, after a breakfast for which appetite had been the sauce, the new soldiers assembled in a big auditorium where they took tests. Bruce felt that he had done pretty well on the tests, though there was one

arithmetic problem he hadn't been entirely sure of. Afterwards he asked two other inductees what they'd answered for that question, and each of them had given a different answer than his and than each other's.

That was all that happened on the first day, except that after evening mess it was discovered that three of the inductees were AWOL from the barracks already. It seemed quite unlikely that they had got outside Ford Candler, since a high wall of reinforced concrete surmounted with high-tension wires surrounded it and all exits were effectively guarded.

The next morning the sergeant told them that they were all a bunch of fairies. They were soft—soft as the turds of a sick rabbit. But the Army was going to make them hard as nails. Wasn't it?

Yes it was.

The sergeant thought a sparrow had farted.

Yes, it was!

Perhaps the sergeant should take up a collection to buy himself a hearing aid.

YES IT WAS!

Again the sergeant called them to attention and again he sought out O'Brien, who was standing today in the fourth rank. The sergeant quickly found a pretext to renew his attack. O'Brien fell to his knees after the second blow, but this time the sergeant ordered two other inductees to help him to his feet. Whimpering, O'Brien tried to crawl away. The sergeant caught hold of the collar of his cotton sportshirt and ripped it down the back dragging the boy to his feet. They stood then, as in a tableau, motionless, except for the trembling of O'Brien's thick legs. The sergeant drew back his fist. Anticipatory tears started to O'Brien's eyes, and he began pleading to be let off. "I'm hurt," he sobbed. "I'm hurt inside." Bruce and the rest of the inductees felt disgraced by his performance.

The sergeant hit him only once more, though solidly, then went off chuckling and shaking his head in mock-dismay. O'Brien was still lying unconscious, face in the dirt, when the company marched off for the morning's processing.

They moved through the medical examination building as though on a conveyor belt, being swabbed and jabbed and thumped and stuck and probed in single file. Bruce managed not to wince when a Med Corps corporal stuck the needle in his thumb to obtain a blood sample. He had type O blood.

In the afternoon the inductees waiting in line before a yellow building (all the buildings of Fort Candler were yellow, with green, shingled roofs), where, upon being admitted, they were, one by one, photographed and given their Armed Forces Identification Cards. Also, metal dogtags were made up for them, which they must always wear around their necks. The dogtags had a curious notch in one end, and one of the clerks explained that this was so that the tag would stay put in a corpse's mouth, the upper teeth being wedged into the notch. Bruce had never worn anything on a chain about

his neck before, and he was conscious the rest of the day of the cold metal brushing clandestinely against his chest.

That night in the barracks Bruce overheard somebody say: "I thought it would be worse. You know?" And somebody else: "It will be."

ON THE THIRD day they were issued their uniforms and equipment, first a duffle bag, then, though not necessarily in that order, fatigue pants, fatigue shirts, fatigue caps, boots, drawers, t-shirts, stockings, poncho, blankets, canteen and cup, canteen cover, entrenching tool, mess kit, helmet liner, field pack, gas mask, leather mitten with wool liners, and so on and so forth. They returned to the temporary barracks with their duffles bulging. They changed out of civilian clothes and into fatigues. Soon, except for gross differences in stature and colouring, each man was the mirror image of every other man. Only one element was wanting now for their metamorphosis to be complete.

On the previous day, after the identification cards had been drawn up, each man had been given a seven-dollar advance on his pay in order for him to purchase the few necessities that were not to be issued—toilet articles mostly—and for a haircut. The line outside the yellow barber shop was the longest and slowest-moving of any that Bruce had had to stand in, and this despite the obvious dispatch with which this operation was performed. Each draftee leaving the building would be rubbing his stubby scalp ruefully or else he would have his fatigue cap pulled down to his ears.

Though there were three barbers working, the shop seemed curiously silent. The barbers were bored with their work, which consisted merely in using a clippers up the side of each head, then stripping off the top with another, slightly longer length of clippers. The linoleum was thick with the masses of fallen hair, like grain upon the threshing floor. Bruce was surprised at how hot the electric shears were. Because they were used almost continually, they never had a chance to cool.

Since Bruce had usually worn his hair in a crewcut during the summertime, the barbering did not strike him as an extraordinary indignity. Other draftees, however, seemed to feel their loss more deeply and would protest what they must have known was inevitable, or begged to have it left "just a little longer in front". One of the barbers would always humorously agree to leave it a little longer, though of course never doing so, but the other, a surly man in his sixties, became so annoyed with one of his customers (whose hair had come down quite over his ears) that he ran the shears over the crown of his head with such force that the shears, striking one of the natural prominences of his skull, made a cut two inches wide. A paste of blood and shorn-off hair spread down the boy's face, but upon cleansing the wound proved, luckily, to be more symbolic than actual.

Bruce left the barber shop rubbing his head ruefully. Somehow a goblet of the other draftee's blood had got

on to his hands.

Returning to the barracks, he found his fellow soldiers in a great uproar. While they had been gone from the barracks, someone had entered the building and hanged himself from a stair railing. Some claimed it had been the Master Sergeant who had driven in from the airport with them their first night at Fort Candler; others, more reasonably, insisted it had been one of their own number, perhaps one of the three who had gone AWOL, or O'Brien (who, it later developed, was in sickbay with internal injuries). Some, and Bruce among them, having arrived after the body had been taken away, doubted that such an incident had taken place. They were shown where one end of the rope that had been used was still knotted to the wooden railing.

Bruce went into the can to look at his new self in the mirror. Several other draftees were there for the same purpose, though they pretended to brush their teeth or shave. His face might have been any of the faces in the mirror.

During most of your Army career, you will find yourself part of a team, and you will be expected to play your part in it. This is not all give and no take, for while you are giving strength to your outfit, it will be giving strength right back to you. The more you put in, the more you get out. This is one of the most important facts of Army life, and one of the hardest to put into words. More and more you will see that your outfit is not just a bunch of men, and that it is a sort of person in its own right. This is most true of regiments, battalions and divisions

from FM 21-13

THE NEXT MORNING Bruce was assigned to a Basic Training company, "A" Company it was called, of which he would be a member for the next eight weeks. A sergeant from this company marched Bruce and the other newly-oriented soldiers from the Reception Centre to "A" Company's barracks on the other side of the camp. It was fully half an hour's march. Their new barracks were identical in all particulars to their old barracks, and they were able to feel at home immediately.

At 1400 hours "A" Company was assembled in front of the high, reinforced concrete wall that enclosed Fort Candler (for they were now at the very periphery), and their captain, a certain Captain Best, addressed this speech to them:

"Hello there, men, and welcome to 'A' Company. I can see without looking twice that you've already been welcomed into the Army. Ha, ha. For most of you the Army will be a new experience. Whether you're going to enjoy it depends on you. It's a new way of life, and for some of you it will probably be difficult to adjust to at first. Remember that I'm always here to come to with your problems. There are also Protestant, Catholic and Jewish chaplains at your service. The PX is open

until ten in the evening.

"Now, some of you may be asking yourselves—what makes a good soldier? Well, I don't pretend to be any philosopher, ha, ha, but just off-hand I'd say that a good soldier is loyal, courageous, self-controlled and dead.

"What do I mean by loyal?

"By loyal I mean that a good soldier loves his country. He doesn't ask what his country can do for him, but what he can do for his country. In the last analysis, every other quality that makes up a good soldier is a consequence of this kind of *loyalty*.

"What do I mean by courageous?

"By courageous I mean that a good soldier is brave. He does his duty no matter what hazards arise. Courage keeps you going when you think you've reached the limit. You'll find, as you get to know the Army better, that there *are* no limits.

"What do I mean by self-controlled?

"By self-controlled I mean that a good soldier knows discipline. Discipline is the foundation of every Army in the world. You've got to learn to take orders—fearlessly—without questioning them: that's self-control.

"Lastly, what do I mean by dead?

"In just a minute I'll show you what I mean by dead . . . but first let me say, off the cuff, that I think this company is going to be the best goddamn company in Fort Candler, and that's saying something because Fort Candler is the best goddamn training camp in this man's Army, which I think you will agree is tops in the world. So, let's hear a cheer for 'A' Company!"

After Captain Best's speech, and after the cheer for "A" Company, a curious and very large vehicle, which moved on treads, lumbered up the gravel parade grounds where "A" Company was standing at attention. It was built on the general lines of a tank, but it was far too large and unwieldy to have gone into battle. It was quite the equal in length to one of the barracks. Moreover, it was not armour-plated, unless the bright orange plastic shell that encased it concealed armour-plate beneath. A flag floated from the central mast, and at regular intervals around the shell there were apertures from which the nozzles of small-calibre guns projected.

The captain raised his right arm, then brought it down sharply.

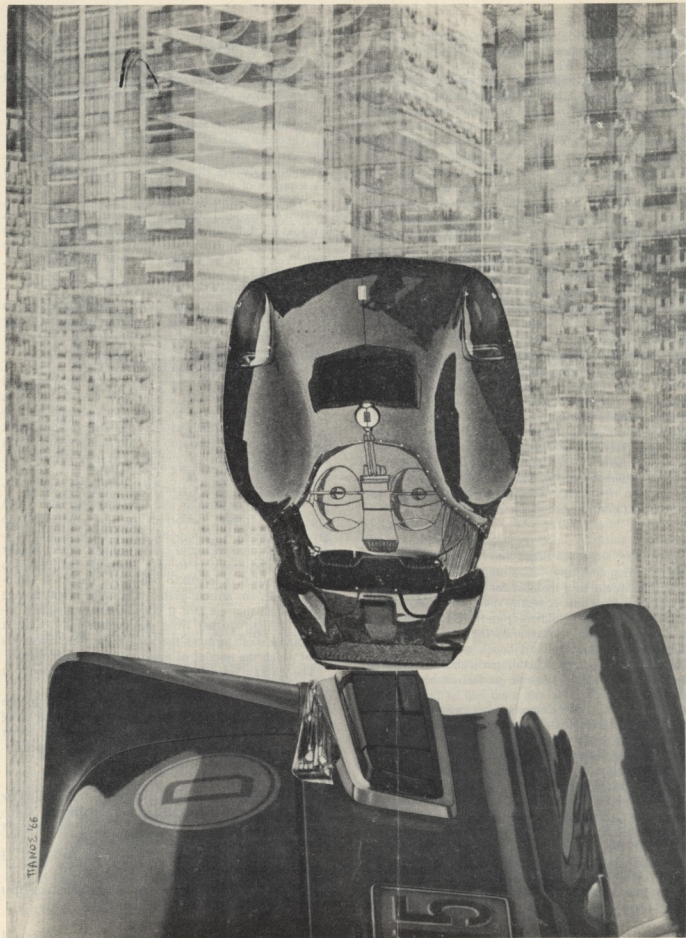
The guns within the orange shell commenced to fire upon the men of "A" Company. They continued firing until all the men had been lying on the ground, either prostrate or supine, for some time. Then they ceased.

Bruce had got his in the gut.

Each soldier must handle weapons even though he may never have handled them before entering the Army. Whether you are an old hand or a novice—handle them with care. These weapons are made to kill.

from FM 21-13

"Now *that*," Captain Best said with satisfaction, "that is what I mean by dead."



BUG JACK BARRON

PART 4 BY NORMAN SPINRAD

JACK BARRON—founder member of the radical Social Justice Coalition which is now about as strong as the withering, super-reactionary Republican Party. But Barron has sold out the SJC, now panders controversy on a powerful TV show, "Bug Jack Barron", where individual's grievances are given a coast-to-coast airing. The show appears fearless, knocking the establishment hard, but really never goes far enough to rock the boat. Barron knows it, is careful. He's estranged from his hippy wife SARA WESTERFELD who hates to hear his name mentioned, loves and remembers the idealist he once was.

BENEDICT HOWARDS—man of even greater power than Barron. He owns the Foundation for Human Immortality: leave the Foundation \$50,000, and you're good for—who knows—maybe forever. On death you're frozen and stored till the secret of immortality has been discovered. That moment may be fast approaching. Howards is given a treatment. Maybe he has forever.

On the day of Howards' greatest triumph, Barron comes up against the Foundation. A negro claims (wrongly, as Barron knows) that the Foundation practices colour prejudice. On the show Barron tries to contact Howards. But Howards won't be disturbed and, angry, Barron hits harder than he normally would have, bringing in people he knows hate Howards—like his old friend and co-founder of the SJC LUKAS GREENE, now the Negro Governor of Mississippi.

Barron tries to put things right and contacts Senator TEDDY HENNERING, co-sponsor of the Freezer Utility Bill, which would grant Howards' Foundation a Freezing monopoly. But Hennering appears strangely agitated and inexplicably throws away his chance. Barron is worried, realises he's made an unwanted enemy in Howards—an enemy he can't afford to have.

Little more than a year to go till the Democratic Convention. President Bobby had his run; will Teddy the Pretender get the nomination? Howards has his own plans. Great big plans he won't let Barron scotch.

Howards comes to Barron's office the day after the show. He threatens, cajoles—and finally offers a free Freeze contract if

Barron will promote the Freeze Bill on his show. Barron knows Howards is running scared, and pushes. Finally Howards tells him: Hennering has just died in an air crash! Howards has lost his front man. Now Teddy the pretender has the Presidency in his pocket, but Howards thinks Barron can swing it back to his side.

Barron takes a week to think it over. With his producer he plans to give Howards a taste of fire on the next show, so he'll back off. Deathbed scene, the family begging for a Freeze. Then put Howards on and let him answer that.

But Howards is working at his own plans. Barron is "the last piece in a pattern of power". How can he force the piece into place?

He learns of Barron's estrangement from Sara Westerfield and has Sara brought to him. Knowing she needs only half an excuse to go running back to Barron, he confronts her with the images of her own death, then offers a free Freeze contract if she'll get Barron into bed with her. A simple deal: the minute Barron signs, she gets a contract of her own.

But Sara realizes now what will happen. It will be her and Jack together again—forever. She'll give Barron to Howards, but it will be *her* Barron—turned-on, angry, love-filled, an apocalyptic angel to destroy Howards and all he stands for. She looks up at Howards and wonders: how much does he know? What kind of man would try to turn love into a weapon of paranoid power?

And now a day of surprises for Barron. In the warm afterglow of a night with secretary Carrie the vidphone chimes: smooth face of Gregory Morris, Governor of California and de facto head of the semi-vestigial Republican Party. And he asks Barron: "How would you like to be President of the United States?"

Morris can get a Republican nomination and the show—Barron's image—will do the rest. Barron laughs at him. Morris finally falls to threats. Barron puts him down, cuts off. He calls Lukas Greene and relates what has just happened. Greene listens; thinks the SJC can use the Republican Party in the same way Morris wants to use Barron. Barron blips the conversation-tape to Greene and cuts off.

The vidphone chimes again and it's Sara. Barron rushes across

the city to see her and they are reunited, full of guilt at having copped out on one another, and full of the old love. Safe in that love, Barron thinks: *Morris is right, I could do it. And Sara: Jack, Jack, someone like you should never die.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

"DEATHBED AT GO," the promptboard flashed, and Jack Barron, clocking Vince's smart-ass Sicilian-type-grin, was sure Gelardi had to have Mafiosa blood in him somewhere, even though he claimed to be strictly *Napolitan*. The promptboard flashed "45 seconds" and Barron shuddered as the last seconds of the opening commercial reeled by—schtick was a bunch of diplomats relaxing around the old conference table with good old Acapulco Golds. Ain't as funny as it looks, he thought. Vips run the world like they're stoned half the time anyway—and the other half, things are worse. Wonder what Bennie Howards would be like high? Well, maybe tonight all hundred million Brackett Count chilluns gonna see—they say adrenalin's like a psychedelic, and before I'm through tonight, Bennie's gonna go on an adrenalin bummer he won't believe.

Watching the commercial fade into his own face on the monitor, Barron felt a weird psychedelic flash go through him, the reality of the last week compressed into an instantaneous image flashed on the promptboard of his mind: sitting in the studio chair, electronic feedback circuitry connecting him with sub-systems of power—Foundation power SJC-Democrat-Republican power hundred million Brackett Count power—he was like the master transistor in a massive satellite network confluence circuit of power, gigantic input of others' power feeding into his head through vidphone circuits, none of it his, but all feeding through him, his to control by micro-cosmic adjustments; for one hour, 8-9 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, that power was *de facto* his.

He felt his subjective head-time speeding up, like an alien drug in his bloodstream, at the focus of forces far beyond him yet at his command, as letters crawled across the promptboard, an electric-dot message that seemed to take ten million years: "On the Air."

"And what's bugging you out there tonight?" Jack Barron said, playing to the kinesthoph darkness shapes double-reflected (backdrop off desktop) in his eye-hollows ominous with foreknowledge of the shape of the show to come. "What bugs you, bugs Jack Barron," he said, digging his own image on the monitor, eyes picking up flashes as never before. "And we'll soon see what happens when you bug Jack Barron. The number is Area Code 212, 969-6969, and we'll take our first call right . . . now."

Now, he thought, making the vidphone connection, nitty-gritty time, Bennie-baby, better be good and ready, here it comes *now*. And the screen split down the middle; the left half a pallid grey on grey image of a dough-faced middle-aged woman with deep lines of defeat-tension etched around her hollow-bagged eyes

like dry kernels of mortal disaster, a hag-grey ghost begging his living colour image for alms from the gods.

"This is *Bug Jack Barron* and you're on the air, plugged into me, plugged into *one hundred million Americans*" (drawing out the words for special audience of one, one hundred million, count 'em, Bennie, 100,000,000) "and this is your chance to let 'em all know what's bugging you, and get some action, 'cause action's the name of the game when you bug Jack Barron. So let's hear it all, the right here right now live no time-delay nitty-gritty; what's bugging you?"

"My . . . my name is Dolores Pulaski," the woman said, "and I've been trying to talk to you for three weeks, Mr. Barron, but I know it's not your fault" (Vince gave her three-quarters screen, put Barron in upper right-hand corner catbirdseat, living colour crusader dwarfed by yawning grey need. Just the right touch, Barron thought.) "I'm calling for my father, Harold Lopat. He . . . he . . . he can't speak for himself." Her lips quivered on the edge of a sob.

Jesus Christ, Barron thought, hope Vince didn't feed me a cryer, gotta underplay this schtick or I'll push Howards too far. "Take it easy, Mrs. Pulaski," he soothed, "you're talking to friends. We're all on your side."

"I'm sorry," the woman said, "it's just so hard to. . . ." Her eyes frightened and furtive, her jaw hardened to numbness and the tension came across beautifully as she forced herself calm. "I'm calling from the Kennedy Hospital for Chronic Diseases in Chicago. My father's room, he's been here ten weeks, dy . . . dy. . . . He's got cancer, cancer of the stomach, and it's spread to the lym . . . *lymphatics*, and the doctors all say . . . we've had four specialists. . . . He's dying! He's dying! They say they can't do anything. My father, Mr. Barron. My father . . . he's going to *die*!"

She began sobbing; then her face went off-camera, and a huge pale hand obscured the vidphone image as she picked her vidphone up, turned its camera on the room. Trembling, disoriented, out of focus pieces of hospital room stumbled across the monitor screen: walls, wilted flowers, transfusion stands, bed, blankets, the thousand deathbed's wrinkled ether-smell shriveled face of a ruined old man, and her voice—"Look! Look! Look at him!"

Jeez, Barron thought, making frantic footsignals even as Vince changed the monitor-mix to three-quarters Jack Barron the lower left-hand quadrant still a jumble of sliding images, old man's face, fingers, vased flowers, trays of needles, bedpan—hideous grey montage of death by inches now muted at least, surrounded by full-colour embracing image of concerned Big Brother Jack Barron, and Dolores Pulaski's screaming sobs were a far-away tinny unreality as Vince bled her audio and Barron's voice re-established control:

"Take it easy, Mrs. Pulaski." Barron stopped just short of harshness. "We all want to help you, but you'll have to stay calm. Now put the vidphone down in front

of you, and just try to remember you'll have all the time you need to say what you want to, and if you can't find the words, that's why I'm here to help you. Try to relax—a hundred million Americans are on your side and *want* to understand."

The woman's face reappeared in the lower left quadrant, eyes dull, jaw slack, a spent, paleflesh robot image, and Barron knew he was back in control. After a little hair-tearing, she's got nothing left in her, you can make her say anything, she won't make more waves. And he footsignalled Vince to give her three-quarters screen—her schtick to the next commercial as long as she stayed tame.

"I'm sorry I had to be so short with you, Mrs. Pulaski," Barron said softly. "Believe me, we all understand how you must feel."

"I'm sorry too, Mr. Barron," she said in a loud stage whisper. (Vince, Barron thought, on the ball as usual, turning up her volume.) "It's just that I feel so . . . you know, helpless, and now when I can finally do something about it . . . it all just came out, everything I've been holding in. . . I don't know what to do, what to say, but I've got to make everyone understand. . ."

Here it comes! Barron thought. Sitting on the edge of your sweaty little seat, Bennie? Not yet, eh? Keep cool, Bennie-baby, 'cause now you get yours!

"OF COURSE WE ALL sympathise, Mrs. Pulaski, but I'm not quite sure what anyone can do. If the doctors say. . ." Give, baby! Shit, don't make me fish for it!

"The doctors say . . . they say there's no hope for my father. Surgery, radiation, drugs . . . nothing can save him. My father's dying, Mr. Barron. They give him only weeks. Within a month. . . Within a month, he'll be dead."

"I still don't see—"

"Dead," she whispered. "In a few weeks, my father will be dead forever. Oh, he's a *good* man, Mr. Barron! He's got children and grandchildren who love him, and he's worked hard for us all his life, and he loves us. . . He's as good a man as anyone who ever lived. Why, why, why should he be dead and gone forever while other men, *bad* men, Mr. Barron, men who've gotten rich on good men's sweat, they *can* live forever just by buying their way into a Freezer with the money they've stolen and cheated people like us to get? It's not fair, it's . . . *evil*. A man like my father, an honest, kind man, works all his life for his family and when he dies he's buried and gone like he had never existed, while a man like Benedict Howards holds . . . holds immortal lives in his filthy hands like he was God. . ."

Dolores Pulaski blanched at the weight of the word that hung from her lips. "I didn't mean. . ." she stammered. "I mean, forgive me, to mention a man like that in the same sentence with God. . ."

Jeez, spare me the Hail Marys! Barron thought. "Of course you didn't," he said, picturing Howards sweating somewhere in the bowels of his Colorado

Freezer with no place to hide. He footsignalled Vince to give him a two minute count to the next commercial as he paused, casually kind, before continuing. "But tell me, Mrs. Pulaski, what are you asking *me* to do?" he said, all earnest choir-boy innocence.

"Get my father a place in a Freezer!" Dolores Pulaski shot back. (Beautiful, thought Barron. Couldn't be better if we were working from a script; you're show biz all the way, Dolores Pulaski!)

"I'm afraid I don't swing much weight at the Foundation for Human Immortality," Barron said archly as Vince now split the screen evenly between them, "as I'm sure you'll remember if you saw the last show." And the promptboard flashed "90 seconds". Don't fail me now, Mrs. Pulaski, come out with the right line and I make you a star.

"I know that, Mr. Barron. It's that Benedict Howards . . . one man in the whole world who can save my father, and he sells immortality like the devil buys souls. God forgive me for saying it, but I mean it, like Satan! Who else but Satan and Benedict Howards are evil enough to put a price on a man's immortal life? Talk to him, Mr. Barron, show the world what he's like. Make him explain to poor people dying everywhere without a hope of living again how he can set a price on human life. And if he can't explain . . . I mean in front of millions of people . . . well, then he'll have to do something about my father, won't he? He can't afford to look like a monster in public, I mean an important man like that. . .?" And the promptboard flashed "60 seconds".

"You've got a point, Mrs. Pulaski," Barron said, cutting her off quickly before too much more peasant shrewdness could come through. Such a thing as *too* show biz, Dolores Pulaski—can't stand a straightman steps on *my* lines.

Vince expanded his image to three-quarters screen, cut Dolores Pulaski to a pre-fadeout inset, cut her audio too, and a good thing, the chick's getting a wee bit naked, Barron thought as the promptboard flashed "30 seconds".

"Yeah, Mrs. Pulaski sure has a point, doesn't she?" Barron said, staring straight into the camera as his living colour image filled the monitor screen in extreme close-up, darkness shadows, bruised sullen hollows, framing his eyes. "If there's a reason to set a dollar value on a man's chance at immortality, there's sure as hell a reason to hear what it is, with all America watching, with a bill pending in Congress to make this monopoly on Freezing into Federal law. And we'll get the answer from Mr. Benedict Howards right after this word from our sponsor—or a hundred million Americans will know the reason why."

WHAT A LEAD IN! Barron thought as they rolled the commercial. Dolores Pulaski, you're beautiful, baby! As long as you don't flip out again while I'm playing chicken with Bennie. . .

He punched the intercom button on his number one

vidphone. "Hey, Vince," he said, "keep your finger on that audio dial. It's me and Bennie all the way from here on in; I want Mrs. Pulaski seen and not heard. Keep her audio down unless I ask her a direct question, and if you gotta cut her off, then fade it, make it look like a bad vidphone connection, not the old axe. Got Bennie on the line yet?"

Gelardi grinned from behind the control booth glass. "Beep on the line for the last three minutes, and by now he's foaming at the mouth. Wants to talk to you right now, before you go back on the air. Still got 45 seconds. . . ?"

"Tell him to get stuffed," Barron said. "He'll have more time than he can handle to talk to me when he's on the air. And, baby, when I get my hooks into him, he won't be in any position to hang up."

Poor Bennie, Barron thought. Two strikes already—he's playing the master's game on the master's turf, and he's gibbering mad to boot. And as the promptboard flashed "30 seconds", Barron suddenly realised that for the rest of the show he held Benedict Howards, the most powerful man in the United States, right there in his hot little hand, to play with like a cat plays with a wounded mouse. Can kill his Freezer bill just for openers if I get that feeling, do him in all the way any time I want to close my fist, just gotta twitch and he's had it, is all. Cat and mouse. And Luke and Morris out there now wondering just what the hell game I'm playing. . . maybe theirs? It's what they're both hot for, ain't it—Jack Barron down on the Foundation with high-heeled hobnails and off to the races. . . ? So hung on "Hail to the Chief" the poor bastards could never dream there could be a *bigger* game in town. . .

"On the Air," the promptboard said.

Barron made the number two vidphone connection and Dolores Pulaski appeared in a small lower right inset, with Howards seemingly glowering down from the upper left quadrant at her across the colour image of larger-than-either-adversary Jack Barron. Groovy! Barron thought as he said: "This is *Bug Jack Barron*, and the man on the screen with myself and Mrs. Pulaski is Mr. Benedict Howards himself, President, Chairman of the Board and founder of the Foundation for Human Immortality. Mr. Howards, Mrs. Pulaski has—"

"I've been watching the show, *Mr. Barron*," Howards interrupted, and Barron could see him fighting for control, eyes hot in the cool, earnest mask of his face. (But he still can't keep from dripping acid, Barron thought gleefully.) "It's one of my favourites and I rarely miss it—it's sure long on excitement; you know how to create heat. Too bad you're so short in the light department."

Tsk, tsk! Watch it, Bennie, your fly's open and your id's hanging out, Barron thought as he smiled nastily into the camera. "That's my job, after all, Mr. Howards," he said blandly. "I'm just here to turn the spotlight on things that need seeing, like . . . turning over a lot of wet rocks to see what crawls out. I'm not

here to tell anyone anything; I just ask questions America thinks need answering. Enlightenment's gotta come from the other end of the vidphone, *your end*, Mr. Howards. So since you've been watching the show, let's not bore a hundred million Americans with repetition, let's get right down to the nitty-gritty. There's a man dying in a hospital in Chicago—fact. There's one of your Freezers in Cicero, isn't there—that's a hard fact too. Mrs. Pulaski and her family want a place for Mr. Lopat in that Freezer. If he isn't Frozen, he dies and never lives again. If he is Frozen, he's got the same chance at immortality as anyone else in a Freezer. You hold Harold Lopat's life in your hands, Mr. Howards, you say whether he lives or he dies. So you see, it all boils down to one simple question, Mr. Howards, and a hundred million Americans know you and only you have the answer: does Harold Lopat live or die?"

Howards' mouth snapped open and time stopped for a beat; he seemed to think twice and closed it. Got you right on the knife-edge, Bennie—the Nero schtick: thumbs up, the cat lives, thumbs down, he dies. Thumbs down, you're a murderer in front of a hundred million people. Thumbs up, and you've opened the floodgates and the dam's busted for every deadbeat dying everywhere, people, Mr. Howards, people, is all, free Freeze for everyone on Emperor Howards. . . . Whatever you say next, Bennie, it's gotta be *wrong*.

"Neither you nor Mrs. Pulaski understand the situation," Howards finally said. "I don't have the power to say who's Frozen and who isn't; nobody does. It's sheer economics, just like who can afford a new Cadillac and who has to drive an '81 Ford. \$50,000 or more must be assigned to the Foundation for every man Frozen. I assure you if Mr. Lopat or his family have the requisite assets, he *will* be Frozen, if that's what they want."

"Mrs. Pulaski . . . ?" Barron said, footsignalling Gelardi to cut in her audio.

"\$50,000!" Dolores Pulaski shouted. "A man like you doesn't know how much money that is, more than my husband makes in eight years, and he's got a wife and a family to support. Even with Medicare, the specialists, the extra doctors, aren't covered, and our savings, my father's and my husband's and my brother's, are all gone. Why don't you just make it a million dollars or a billion; what's the difference when ordinary people can't afford it, what kind of filthy. . . ." Her voice trailed off in crackles, fading simulated hisses as Gelardi cut her off.

"Seems to be a bug in Mrs. Pulaski's connection," Barron said as Vince rearranged the images, giving Howards' naked discomfort half the screen alongside him, Dolores Pulaski reduced to a tiny inset-creature looking on. "But I think she's made her point. \$50,000 is a hell of a lot of bread to hold on to, taxes and cost of living being what they are. You know, I knock down a pretty nice piece of change for this show, I probably make more money than 90 per cent of the people in

the country, and even *I* can't squirrel that kind of bread away. So when you set the price of a Freezer at fifty big ones, you're really saying that 90 per cent of all living Americans gonna be food for the worms when they die, while a few million fat cats get the chance to live forever. Hardly seems right that money can buy life. Maybe the people who're yelling for Public Freezers—"

"Commies!" shouted Howards. "Can't you see that? They're all Communists or dupes of the Reds. Look at the Soviet Union, look at Red China—they got any Freezer programmes *at all*? Of course not, because a Freezer programme can only be supported by a healthy free enterprise system. Socialised Freezing means no Freezing at all. The Commies would love—"

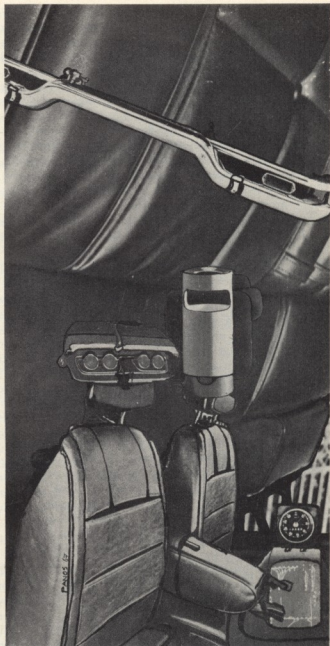
"But aren't you the best friend the Communists have in America?" Barron cut in, signalling for a commercial in three minutes.

"You calling *me* a Communist?" Howards said, forcing his face into a soundless parody of a laugh. "That's good, Barron, the whole country knows the kind of people *you've* been involved with."

"Let's skip the name-calling, shall we? I didn't call you a Communist . . . just, shall we say, an unwitting dupe of the Reds? I mean, the fact that less than 10 per cent of the population—shall we say, the exploiters of the working class, as they put it—has a chance to live forever while everyone else has to die and like it . . . is there a *better* argument against a pure capitalistic system that the Reds can dream up? Isn't your Foundation the best piece of propaganda the Reds have?"

"I'm sure your audience isn't swallowing that crap," Howards said (knowing it damn well is, Barron thought smugly). "Nevertheless, I'll try to explain it so that even you can understand it, Mr. Barron. Maintaining Freezers costs lots of money, and so does research on restoring and extending life. It costs billions each year, so much money that, for instance, the Soviet government simply can't afford it—and neither can the government of the United States. But an effort like ours must be financed somehow, and the only way is for the people who are Frozen to pay their own way. If the government tried to Freeze everyone who died, it'd go bankrupt, it'd cost tens of billions a year. The Foundation, by seeing to it that those Frozen pay for it, and pay for research, at least keeps the dream of human immortality alive. It may not be perfect, but it's the only thing that can work. Surely a man of your . . . *vast intelligence* should be able to see *that*."

FIVE POINTS FOR YOU, Bennie, Barron conceded. Thing is that the fucker's essentially *right*. Letting the few that are Frozen now feed the worms won't get anyone else into a Freezer, and if you got a thousand people dying for every slot open, well, baby, that's where life's always been at—the winners win and the losers lose. But you're too right for your own good, Bennie—muscle talks, and muscle's what you'll get from good



old Jack Barron.

"Of course I understand the hard economic realities," Barron said as the promptboard flashed "2 minutes". "I mean, sitting here fat and healthy and thirty-eight years old. Dollars and sense and all that crap, on paper your Foundation looks real good. Yeah, *I* understand, Mr. Howards . . . but I wonder if I'd feel so damn philosophical if I were dying. Would you, Mr. Howards? How'd you like to die like Harold Lopat, broke, and the life leaking out of you drop by drop while some cat in a two hundred and fifty dollar suit explains real logical-like how it's economically imprac-

tical to give you the chance to live again someday?"

To Barron's surprise, Howards seemed genuinely stricken: a mist of what seemed like sheer madness drifted behind his eyes, his jaw trembling. Howards muttered something unintelligible, then froze entirely. The basilisk himself turned to stone? Bennie Howards with an attack of conscience? Barron wondered. More likely something he ate. Well, it's an ill wind, he thought as the promptboard flashed "90 seconds".

"What's the matter, Mr. Howards," Barron said, "can't identify with the situation? Okay, Mrs. Pulaski, let's give Mr. Howards some help. Please turn the camera of your vidphone on your father and hold it there."

Vince's right on the ball, Barron thought as he blew up Dolores Pulaski's small inset to fill virtually the entire monitor screen as the image danced fragments of walls, vase, ceiling, then became a huge close-up black and white newspaper photo image of the wasted old man's face, a long rubber tube trailing from one nostril and taped to his forehead; the grey deathbed photo tilted at a crazy home videotape angle made the closed blind eyes of Harold Lopat seem to stare down at the image of Benedict Howards in the lower left quadrant like an avenging ghost of death looking down at a scuttling insect after kicking over a wet rock, as the promptboard flashed "60 seconds".

And Jack Barron, in a once in a blue moon off-camera spectral voice gambit, etched Howards' face into a mask of terror and fury with precise scalpel-words: "Look, Howards, you're looking at death. That's not \$50,000 on your balance sheet, that's a human being and he's dying. Go ahead, look at that face, look at the pain, look at the disease eating it up behind the mask. Only it's not a mask, Howards, it's a human being, a human life in the process of being snuffed out forever. We all come down to that in the end, don't we, Mr. Howards? You and me and Harold Lopat, all of us sooner or later fighting for just another breath, another moment of life before the big nothing closes in. And there but for \$50,000 goes you or I. What's so holy about fifty grand that it buys a man's life? How much is fifty thousand dollars in pieces of silver, Mr. Howards? A thousand? Two thousand? Once a man's life was sold for twenty pieces of silver, Mr. Howards, just *twenty*, and he was Jesus Christ. How many lives you got in your Freezer worth more than His? You think any man's life is worth more money than the life of Jesus Christ?"

And Gelardi filled the screen with the face of Benedict Howards, ghost-white in an extreme close-up that showed every razor nick, every pimple, network of coarse, open pores, the eyes of a maddened, trapped carnivore as Jack Barron's voice said: "And maybe we'll have some answers from Benedict Howards after this word from our sponsor."

Jesus H. himself on a bicycle, Barron thought gleefully as they rolled the commercial. Days like this, I scare myself!

"OOH, DOES HE WANT to talk to you," Vince Gelardi's voice said over the intercom circuit the moment the commercial was rolling. "Sounds like he's down with hydrophobia." And Barron saw Gelardi grin, give him the high sign, start the count with "90 seconds" on the promptboard, as Benedict Howards' face appeared on the tiny number two vidphone screen and his voice came on in the middle of a tirade:

"... to the fucking fishes. No one plays games like that with Benedict Howards. You lay off me, you crazy bastard, or I'll have you off the air and in jail for libel before —"

"Fuck off, Howards," Barron said. "And before you shoot your big mouth off again, just remember that this call goes through the control booth; it's not a private line." (He shot Howards a cool-it, we're still fencing, don't spill the beans look.) "You know where all this is at, and you've got about sixty seconds before we go on the air again to give me a reason to lay off, and I don't mean a lot of dumb threats. I don't like threats. Tell you just what's gonna happen next segment — I'm gonna tear you to pieces, is all, but I'm gonna leave just enough left so you can throw in the towel during the next commercial and save what's left of your ass. Unless you wanna be smart, meet my terms *now*, and we both know what those terms are."

"Don't threaten me, you goddamned clown!" Howards roared. "You lay off, or I'll just hang up, and when I get through with you, you won't be able to get a job cleaning cesspools in —"

"Go ahead, hang up," Barron said as the promptboard flashed 30 seconds. "I've got five calls just like the first one, only seedier, lined up to fill the rest of the show. I don't need you on the air to do you in. One way or the other, you're gonna learn it doesn't pay to screw around with me, 'cause unless you come around the next commercial, your Freezer bill has had it, and your whole fucking Foundation will stink so bad you'll think Judas Iscariot was your press agent. How's that grab you, big shot?"

"You filthy fuck —" And Gelardi cut Howards off just in time as the promptboard flashed "On the Air".

Jack Barron grinned at his own image filling the monitor — flesh-eyes digging phosphordot-eyes in an adrenalin-feedback reaction — and he felt a strange, lighthearted exhilaration, a psychic erection. More than anticipation of the coming catbirdseat five aces in the hole poker game for the big chips with Howards — blood humming behind his ears, Barron felt the primal sap rising, the hot berserker joy ghost of Berkeley, the Baby Bolshevik jocular thrill of the hunt, amplified by electronic satellite network hundred million Brackett Count living colour image-power shooting sparks out of his phosphordot eyes, and for the first time, felt himself giving the show over to the gyroscope of his endocrine system, and didn't know what would happen next. And didn't care.

Gelardi gave Howards a lower left quadrant inquisition dock inset, Dolores Pulaski having finished her

schtick, as Barron said: "Okay, we're back on the air, Mr. Howards, and we're gonna talk about your favourite subject for a change. Let's talk about money. How many . . . er, clients you figure you got in your Freezers?"

"There are over a million people already in Foundation Freezers," Howards said (and Barron could sense him fighting for purchase, trying to anticipate the line of the jocular-thrust he *knew* was coming). "So you see, Freezing is not really just for the few at all. A million human beings with hope for eternal life someday is quite a large—"

"You ain't just whistling Dixie," Barron said. "A million's a nice round number. Let's continue with our little arithmetic lesson, shall we? How much would you say it costs to maintain one body in a cryogenic Freezer for one year?"

"It's impossible to come up with an average figure just like that," Howards said. "You've got to figure in the cost of preparation for Freezing, the cost of the Freezing itself, amortization on the Freezer facilities, the cost of replacing evaporated coolant, power to run the pumps, salaries, taxes, insurance . . ."

"Yeah, we know you run a real complicated show," Barron said. "But let's take a generous average figure no one can say is stingy . . ." Lay the trap right, he thought. True figure can't be more than three thou per stiff per year and he's gotta know it, so give him more than enough rope . . . "Let's say \$5,000 will cover it, five thou per client per year. Sound reasonable? Or am I way too high? I don't have much of a head for business, as my accountant keeps telling me every year around April 15."

"I suppose that's about right," Howards said grudgingly, and Barron could see the fear showing through his eyes. Scared shitless, eh Bennie? 'Cause you don't see where all this is going, 'cause you know there's something happening and you don't know what it is, do you Mr. Jones?

"And in order to be Frozen, you've gotta sign over a minimum of \$50,000 in liquid assets to the Foundation in order to cover costs, right?"

"We've gone through all that," Howards muttered, obviously unsure as to what was going to happen next.

"All righty . . ." Barron drawled, footsignalling to Vince to kill Howards' audio. He stared straight into the camera, tilted his head forward, picking up darkness shadows reflected off the desk-arm of the chair from the kinstroph background in the hollows of his dead-end-kid-innocent eyes, gave a little bemused, inside-joke grin. "Okay out there, we've got the figures, now let's all do a little arithmetic. Check me out there, will you, I've got a lousy head for figures—at least the *numerical* kind. Lessee . . . multiply how many bodies in the Freezers by \$50,000 per body . . . That comes to . . . ah . . . ten zeros and . . . why, that's fifty billion dollars, isn't that right folks? Foundation's got at least fifty billion bucks in assets; now *there's* cigarette

money! About half the defence budget of the United States, is all. Okay students, now one more problem in multiplication: \$5,000 for each body for a year times a million bodies in the Freezers. Nice round numbers and it comes to . . . *five billion dollars*. Now let's see, if I had fifty billion bucks to play around with, I ought to be able to make, oh say 10 per cent a year on it, couldn't you out there? And wouldn't you like to try? That comes to . . . why it's about five billion dollars, isn't it? What a coincidence! Same as Foundation expenses — one tenth, count it folks, 10 per cent of the Foundation's total assets. Boy, numbers are fun!"

Visualizing the path to the punchline, Barron footsignalled Gelardi to give him a two-minute count to the next commercial and to cut in Howards' audio.

"What the hell is this?" Howards snapped. "Who do you think you are, the Internal Revenue Service?"

"Patience, Mr. Howards, patience," Barron drawled with purposefully irritating slowness. "Jack Barron, great swami, knows all, sees all, tells all. Now let's try some simple subtraction. Subtract five billion in expenses from five billion a year in interest on your assets; now that leaves a big fat zero, doesn't it? That's exactly how much maintaining those million bodies in the Freezers cuts into that fifty billion bucks in assets you got squirreled away — zero! Not at all! How neat! And that's how you hold on to your non-profit, tax-exempt status, isn't it? Expenses balance income and that \$50,000 each client chucks in, why that's not nasty old income at all, is it, technically it's not even yours, and that keeps the Income Tax boys' hot little hands out of your till. Boy, I'd like to borrow your accountant!"

"What're you gibbering about?" Howards said, with a totally unconvincing show of incomprehension.

"I'm gibbering about the small matter of fifty billion dollars," Barron said as the promptboard flashed "60 seconds". "Fifty billion dollars free and clear that you've got to play around with *above* Freezer expenses, a fifty billion dollar slush fund! Who do you think you're putting on, Howards? That's enough bread to provide a free Freeze for every man, woman and child who dies every year in the United States, and Canada too, for that matter, *isn't it*? Fifty billion bucks sitting there while Harold Lopat and millions like him die and are gone forever while you poormouth us! What *does* happen to that fifty billion, Howards? You must have mighty big holes in your pockets, or else—"

"Research," Howards croaked frantically. "Without research—" And Gelardi, anticipating even as Barron footsignalled and the promptboard flashed "30 seconds", cut his audio off.

"Research," Barron mimicked, his image now filling the entire monitor screen, a mask of righteous indignation scowling into Brackett Audience Count estimated hundred million pairs of eyes.

"Yeah sure, *research*, but research into *what*? Research into how to buy votes in Congress to get this

cozy little set-up written into law? Research into how to own Governors and Senators and . . . who knows, maybe your very own Presidential candidate? I don't like to speak ill of the dead—the conveniently *permanant* dead—but you were awful tight with a certain late Senator who was putting on a rather well-financed campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination, now weren't you? That come under *research* too? Fifty billion bucks worth of *research* with people like Harold Lopat dying all around you every day. Research! Yeah, let's talk about research! And we'll have plenty of time to discuss fifty billion dollars worth of scientific—or is it *political*—research after this word from our relatively impoverished sponsor."

AS THEY ROLLED the final commercial, Barron felt a weird manic exhilaration, knowing he had set up a focus of forces that could squash the fifty-billion-dollar Foundation for Human Immortality like a bug in the next few minutes if Bennie was dumb enough not to holler uncle. Fifty billion bucks. Never added it up before, Barron thought. What the fuck *is* he really doing with all that bread, shit he could buy the Congress, the President and the Supreme Court out of petty cash, it came down to it! Talk about big league action! Bennie Howards is bigger than the whole fucking country!

Yeah, but right here, right now, no time-delay live, he's nothing but a punk I can dribble like a basketball. And what's that make me. . . ? Luke and Morris maybe not as crazy as they sound. . . .

He made the connection on the number two vid-phone and Howards, his eyes now reptile-cold gimlets, stared up at him from the oh-so-tiny vidphone screen like a bug trapped in amber.

"All right, Barron," Howards said in a dead-flat, money-talk voice, "you've made your point. We've been playing your game and we both know I'm no match for you at it. You hurt me, and you hurt me bad. Maybe you can do more damage to me than I thought possible, but I warn you, you play ball and get me out of this mess, or I'll *really* finish you and quick. And don't con me, you know damn well I can do it. You keep this up, and you'll find out just how much muscle fifty billion dollars is—I'll use every penny of it if I have to to pound you to a pulp. You'll lose more than your show; I can have your tax returns for the last ten years investigated, sue you for libel and buy the judge, and that's just off the top of my head. Play ball, remember what you've got to lose—and *what you've got to gain*."

And it brought Barron down like a bucket of ice-water smack in the face. Sure I can finish the hatchet-job, he thought, but goodbye *Bug Jack Barron* and goodbye free Freeze and Christ knows what else the bastard can do to me—kamikaze's the name of that game. An old Dylan lyric ran through his head:

I wish I could give Brother Bill his big thrill

I would tie him in chains at the top of the hill

Then send out for some pillars and Cecil B. De Mille. . . .

Yeah, I can do him in and he can do me in if we both want to do that Samson schtick. Bluff's the name of the real game.

And the promptboard told him he had 60 seconds to play his hand.

"Look, Howards," he said, "we can do each other in, or play ball and cool it. *Your* choice, Bennie-baby. You know what I want, the straight poop plus that *other thing*. I don't change my mind, matter of principle. So maybe I'm bluffing, so call me on it, I dare you. But before you do, ask yourself what you've got to gain by calling me that's worth the risk of losing what you've got to lose. I'm a dangerous lunatic, Howards, I'm not afraid of you. You *that* sure you're not afraid of me?"

Howards was silent for a long moment, bit his lip, then said: "All right, you win. It's all negotiable, you get me out of this and we'll talk turkey on your terms. Good enough?"

The promptboard flashed "30 seconds" for instant decision on the course of the rest of the show and all that was riding on it. As close to "uncle" as you'll hear from Bennie, Barron knew. He'll say anything now to get off the hook, thinks he can maybe wetch later, those fifty billion bucks Foundation aces, but he doesn't know all the aces I got—Luke and Morris' fun and games up my sleeve—enough to bluff him out for good, comes nitty-gritty time, no matter what he's holding. So okay, Bennie, you get off the hook or anyway, I don't give the *descabello*, leave your bod bleeding but alive.

"All right, Howards, things don't get any worse to-night, but don't expect to make any big points in the next ten minutes either; all I'm gonna do is make things kinda fuzzy in all those heads out there."

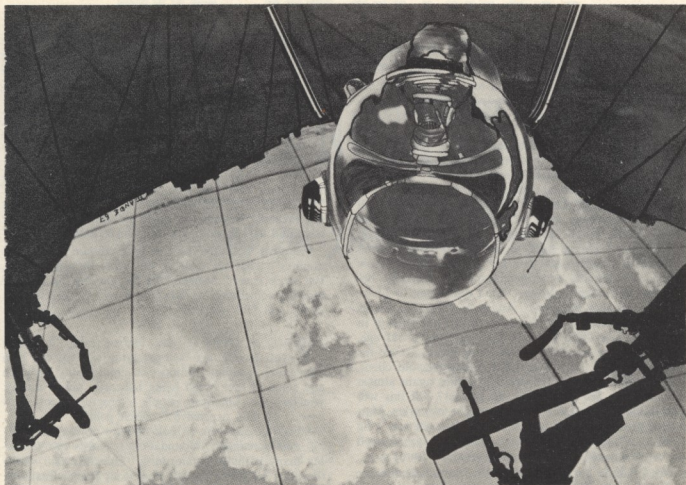
"But you've got me backed into a corner!" Howards whined. "How you gonna get me out of this with a whole skin?"

"That's my line of evil, Bennie," Barron said. He flashed Howards an ironic man-in-control smirk. "What's the matter, Bennie, don't you trust me?"

And the promptboard flashed "On the Air," and Gelardi gave Howards the same lower left quadrant inquisition seat as before.

"NOW WHAT WERE WE talking about?" Barron said. (Gotta back off real gradual-like, and not too far.) "Ah yes, *research*! Fifty billion dollars worth of research. Since by some fancy sleight of hand the Foundation is tax-exempt, I think the American people have a right to know just what kind of . . . *research* that money is being spent on. Now we can always check this with the tax boys, Mr. Howards, so let's have the straight poop—just what is your annual research budget?"

"Somewhere between three and four billion dollars," Howards said, and Barron footsignalled Gelardi to



give him half-screen, ease him out of the hotseat.

"That's a far cry from fifty billion dollars, isn't it?" Barron said, but with the cutting edge eased out of his voice (come on, schmuck, he telepathed, pick up on it, don't expect *me* to make your points for you). "What's the story on that fifty billion?"

Howards seemed to relax a bit, catch on that the lead was being passed over to him. "You've been tossing that figure around pretty freely," he said, "but you obviously don't understand what it represents. If you'd studied a Freeze contract, you'd know that the \$50,000 per client is *not* a fee turned over free and clear to the Foundation. Upon clinical death, the total assets of the client go into a *trust-fund* administered by the Foundation for as long as the client is biologically and legally dead. But upon revival, all assets originally placed in the trust fund revert to the client. Only the interest and capital appreciation during the time the client in the Freezer actually become the property of the Foundation. So you see, that fifty billion dollars is simply not ours to spend. It certainly is an enormous amount of money, but that fact is that we must maintain *all of it* as a reserve against the day when we can revive our clients and return it to them. The fund works essentially the way a bank works—a bank can't go

around spending its deposits, and we can't spend that fifty billion dollars. It's not really ours."

Can't make *me* look bad, Barron thought. Can't make it too easy; gotta back off slow. "But a chunk of capital that big grows awful fast unless you're some kind of idiot or you're blowing it on the horses," he said. "And you've just admitted that all increases in the original capital *do* belong to the Foundation, so you've gotta have tens of billions in assets that *are* yours free and clear. What about that?"

Howards pounced quickly. (Now he sees daylight, Barron thought.) "Quite true. But our expenses are enormous. Something like five billion a year for maintenance, and that eats up all the interest on the original capital. So the four billion for research must come from profits on the investment on our *own* capital. After all, if we started spending *capital* on research, we'd quickly go bankrupt."

Suddenly, almost unwillingly, Barron realised that Howards had handed him a weapon that could make the rest of the show look like a love-pat. Shit, he thought, Bennie's got a vested interest in keeping all those quick-Frozen stiff dead. The day he can thaw 'em out and revive 'em, he loses that fifty-billion-dollar trust fund. Hit him with *that*, baby, and you'll stomp

him into the ground! Why—Cool it! Cool it, he reminded himself. You're supposed to be pulling the lox out of the hole, not digging it deeper!

"So it all comes down to this . . . research," Barron said, leading reluctantly away from the jugular. "Four billion bucks is still one hell of a research budget, more than enough to hide . . . all kinds of interesting things. Suppose you explain what kind of research you're spending all that bread on?"

Howards shot him a dirty look. (Jeez, what you expect, Bennie? Barron thought. I still gotta look like kick 'em in the ass Jack Barron, don't I?) "First off, you've got to understand that all those people in our Freezers are *dead*. Dead as anyone in a cemetery. All cryogenic Freezing does is preserve the bodies from decay—those bodies are simply corpses. The problem of bringing a corpse back to life is enormous. I'm no scientist and neither are you, but you can imagine how much research and experimentation must be done before we can actually bring a dead man back to life—and it's all very expensive. And even then. . . . Cures must be developed for whatever killed the clients in the first place—and most of the time, that's old age. And that's the toughest nut of all to crack, a cure for ageing. I mean, so you revive a ninety-year-old client, but if you haven't licked ageing, he dies again almost immediately. See what we're up against? All this will cost billions a year for decades, maybe centuries. Man in my position's gotta take the long view, the real long view. . . ." And for a moment, Howards' eyes seemed to be staring off into some unimaginable future.

And Barron got a flash. Could be the whole Freezer schtick's a shuck? he wondered. Way to raise money for something else? Pie in the sky in the great bye and bye? The whole Freezer programme's useless unless they lick ageing. (And how much is that free Freeze really worth? Maybe I'm selling myself awful cheap . . .) And the way Bennie babbled in my office about living forever, *that* was no shuck, he was really zonked on it! Yeah, it all adds up—he doesn't want to lick the revival problem, 'cause that'd cost him that fifty billion. But he's sure hot to live forever. Five'll get you ten Foundation scientists are just pissing around with revival research, big bread's gotta be behind immortality research. And if *that* gets out, how many more suckers gonna spring for that fifty thou? Bennie-baby, we gonna have a long, long talk. And let's see if we can hit a little nerve, he thought as the promptboard flashed "3 minutes", what they call an exploratory operation.

"Someday all men will live forever through the Foundation for Human Immortality," Barron said.

"What?" Howards grunted, his eyes snapping back to sharp focus like a man called back from a trance.

"Just quoting a Foundation slogan," Barron said. "Isn't that where it's really at? I mean, all that bread spent on Freezing is money down a rathole unless it leads to immortality, right? Some old crot signs over fifty thou so you can revive him a hundred years later so he can die again of old age in a year or two, that

doesn't make much sense to me. The Freezer programme is a way to preserve a few people who die now so they can have immortality in the future whenever you lick *that* one—I mean young cats like me, the country in general, main stake we've got in letting the Foundation do business is like that slogan of yours about people some day *all* living forever through the Foundation for Human Immortality, right? So either you're going hot and heavy on immortality research, or the whole thing's just a con. You follow me, Mr. Howards?"

"Wh . . . wh . . . why of course we are!" Howards stammered, and his eyes went reptile uptight cold. "It's called the Foundation for Human Immortality, not the Freezing Foundation, after all. Immortality is our goal, and we're spending billions on it, and in fact. . . ."

Howards hesitated as the promptboard flashed "2 minutes". That hit a nerve all right, Barron thought. But *what* nerve? Seemed like he was on the edge of blowing something he didn't want to . . . 120 seconds to try and find out what.

"WELL, IT SEEMS TO ME," Barron said, "that with you having tax-exempt status and by our own admission spending billions on immortality research and some of that bread being indirectly public money, you owe the American people a progress report. Just how is all this expensive research going?"

Howards shot him a look of pure poison. Lay off! his eyes screamed. "Foundation scientists are following many paths to immortality," Howards said slowly (he must be watching the clock too, Barron realised). "Some, of course, are more promising than others. . . . Nevertheless, we feel that all possibilities should be explored. . . ."

Barron tapped his left foot three times, and got three-quarters screen, with Howards in the inquisition slot again, as the promptboard flashed "90 seconds". "How about some specifics?" he said. "Tell us what the most promising line of research seems to be and how far along you are."

"I don't think it would be right to raise any false hopes this early," Howards said blandly, but Barron's teeth sensed something . . . tense? fearful? threatening? behind it. "Discussing specifics would be a mistake at this time. . . ." But false hopes are your stock in trade, Barron thought. Why don't you want to give a nice sales spiel, Bennie. . . ? Unless. . . .

"You mean to tell me you've spent all those billions and you're right back where you started from?" Barron snapped in a tone of cynical disbelief. "That can only mean one of two things: the so-called scientists you've got working for you are all quacks or idiots or. . . . Or the money you've got budgeted for immortality research is going for something else . . . like pushing your Freezer bill through Congress, like backing political campaigns. . . ."

"That's a lie!" Howards shrieked, and he seemed

continued on page 44

THE MECHANICAL HYPNOTIST

by Dr. John Clark

The Eighteenth Century Botanist

I HAVE ALWAYS wanted to be an eighteenth century botanist. More precisely, this ambition dates from about my eleventh year. A schoolmaster of the Edwardian vintage used to read us Gilbert White's *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* during the last period on winter evenings. All I can remember of that book now is a dead Elk rotting in some ducal greenhouse, and the beautiful name for swallows in Latin. How I envied the naturalist of those palmy days—he could achieve immortality with such apparent ease. He had merely, it seemed, to stroll beside the nearest hedgerow and, Noah-like, to bestow a handful of names on the assembled *flora* and *fauna*.

As I pursued my scientific studies throughout my schooldays, I looked back wistfully to that golden age. Bicycling down the leafy lanes of Leicestershire I was depressed by the knowledge that everything had been catalogued years ago, by Parsons from the Age of Reason and Gentlemen of Private Means from the Age of Steam. My dream never left me completely, however, and I longed to chance upon some forgotten valley where even yet there languished some living thing without a name. I even imagined myself penning a modest note to the Zoological Gardens or to Kew. . . .

Well, my ancient desire is at last being fulfilled, though not quite as planned. For my botanising has turned out to be, not among the leaves and bowers of the countryside, but rather in the comparatively virgin territory of language. After all, words hang down very much like leaves from the trees which droop like weeping willows across Chomsky's elegant pages.

ONCE AGAIN, to be more precise, my natural history has dealt with, not language in general, but more specifically, the language of hypnosis. But it would be true to say that psychology and her younger sister psycholinguistics are like meadows full of the nameless blossoms of behaviour, verbal and otherwise.

For in their earnest endeavour to follow the nineteenth century physicist into his laboratory, the psychologists have largely neglected the eighteenth century garden which surrounds it. However, more recently psychologists have begun to *botanise*, to collect and systematically name the humble yet enthralling data which lies around them, in every conversation and chance encounter, in every glance and baby's cry. One cause of this new interest has been the impetus given to psycholinguistics by the tough-minded members of the Chomsky school. Words are *behaviour*—the raw material of psychology—and they came in such neat little packages. The temptation to catch them in flight and play beautiful games with them is irresistible.

Another influence has been the gradual gaining ground of the idea of the *non-participant observer* as described in 1951 by Professor Colin Cherry. The non-participant observer does not take part in the system he is observing, but in order to earn this glorious detachment he has to put an accomplice or henchman into conversational relationship with the *subject* of his observation.

The Participant Observer

THIS OBSERVER, the *participant observer*, is given a programme of behaviour to follow in his dealings with the subject. The programme may be complex. It

Figure 1

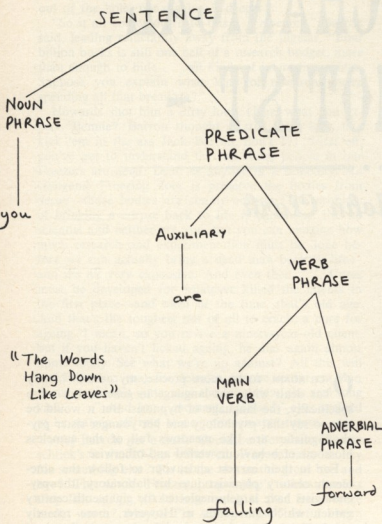
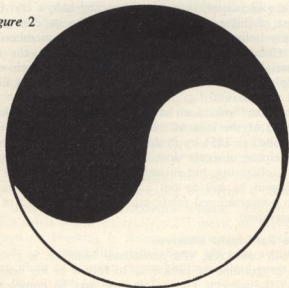


Figure 2

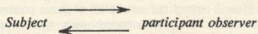


may also be adaptive, depending in its branching, upon the subject's behaviour. The participant observer is a busy man and has little or no time left to observe, with detachment, the system in which he engages. The more automatic the participant observer, the better, and indeed it may be an advantage to make him into an automaton; in other words, to build him as an adaptive machine.

Relieved of the demanding task of conversing with the subject, which he leaves to his servant the participant observer, the non-participant observer is now quite free to observe the system (*subject* or *participant observer*) from behind a one-way screen. Note that he does not observe the subject alone but a system containing the subject and another element (the participant observer, whose behaviour and structure, or both, he knows, having programmed them himself).

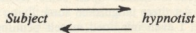
We cannot observe normal behaviour in living systems, such as people, unless they are engaged in their own characteristic activities. During this behaviour they observe, remember and adapt to their environment. At once we are faced with the dilemma of the biologist in general and the psychologist in particular. *He cannot just "observe" people, because they are busy observing him back.* The subject, according to my colleague Martin Lucas, is playing his *own* game and, according to his whim, degree of boredom or mischief, he interferes with the system so that he can get the observer to react in turn and thus reveal *his* game.

All we can do is accept this fact and, having accepted it, push the system to a limit. Let us interact with the subject as much as we can and persuade him to play *our* game. We can watch him at play with the opponent that we have ourselves programmed and/or built, the participant observer. Now the behaviour of the *double* system:



becomes the true "subject" of our observation, our non-participant observation. This double system is complex in that it contains internal feedback and possess the *Yin* and *Yang* qualities of the real world, in which every figure has a ground and every object an environment.

When my attention was directed to hypnosis, some time ago by Mr. (now Dr.) Gordon Pask, I noticed that hypnotists always acted as participant observers:

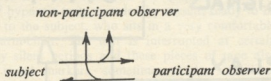


As a result of this the descriptions available, both of the behaviour of the subject and of the hypnotist, are very sketchy. The hypnotists were just too busy to make adequate descriptions of the system in which they were themselves so actively engaged. Moreover, being mostly medical men, their main concern has been the strange behaviour of their subjects, their patients, particularly

during therapy. That their own behaviour was of great interest has largely escaped them and their descriptions of it are marked by a tone of impatience as if it were a trivial detail standing between them and the really interesting data.

The Non-Participant Observer

MY OWN CONTRIBUTION to the study of hypnosis can be described quite simply by saying that I became a non-participant observer, thus:



Several helpful colleagues allowed me to sit quietly in a corner with my tape-recorder while, at session after session, they hypnotised their subjects, who were usually psychiatric patients. With the aid of a Medical Research Council (M.R.C.) Clinical Research Fellowship I spent three years gathering this new data and analysing it. From my analysis various facts emerged. Subjects, I noted with interest, do not talk, or at any rate they do not *have* to talk. So the feedback from the subject to the hypnotist is, or can be, completely non-verbal. It is, in fact, conveyed by the non-verbal muscular movements of the subject as he closes his eyes, adjusts his posture, swallows, straightens an arm, stiffens it, takes deep breaths, grimaces and so on. All this behaviour is watched acutely by the hypnotist, who meanwhile keeps up a flow of that intriguing rhetoric which we all recognise at once as being "hypnotic". For example, here is a short piece of typical hypnotic text:

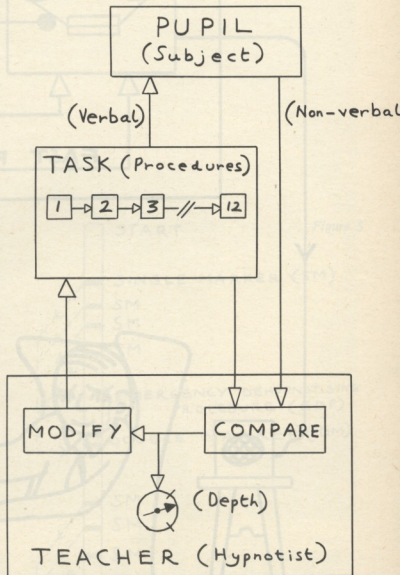
"Your arm is beginning to rise, it is beginning to rise up, off the arm of the chair. As you pay attention to your arm you will find that it starts to float up into the air. It is floating. Floating up into the air, just like a feather. Up it goes, up, up, up into the air, floating up into the air. . . ." and so on, ad infinitum.

The Hypnotist as a Teacher

I BEGAN THEN to formulate the system in a different way. I began to see the hypnotist as a teacher and the subject as his pupil.

If we consider any teaching system we can portray it in a simple form in figure 3.

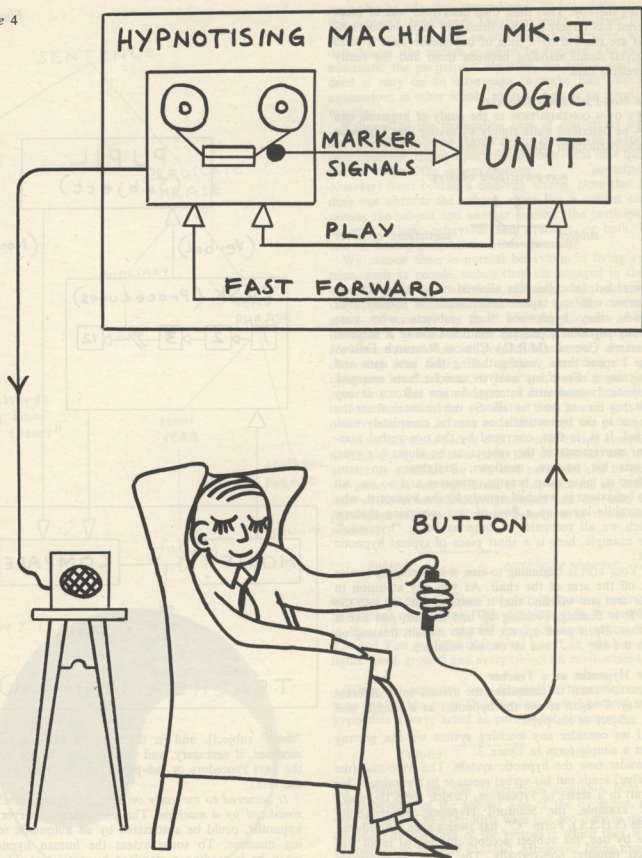
Consider now the hypnotic system. The hypnotist (the teacher) sends out his verbal message to the subject (his pupil) in a series of Procedures (which form the task). For example, the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale (S.H.S.S.), Form "C", has twelve such Procedures. One by one, the subject accepts this verbal input and reacts (mostly) non-verbally. The hypnotist compares this non-verbal behaviour with the expected or desired behaviour (that is to say, the behaviour of a "good" or



"deep" subject), and in the light of his comparison modifies, if necessary, and then presents to the subject the next Procedure or sub-procedure (the next piece of the task).

It occurred to me early on that this system could be simulated by a machine. The participant observer, the hypnotist, could be automated by an automatic teaching machine. To some extent the human hypnotist, when he is reading a standard hypnotic text, like the S.H.S.S., is *already* an automaton. (A strong disinclination to spend my time in this zombie-like state has been

Figure 4



an important motive in this research.)

Starting with "lash-ups" at Bristol University in 1964, I have now moved on to a very simple yet effective machine, Mk. I, which has been designed in collaboration with our Senior Experimental Officer, Mr. Anthony Dixon.

Hypnotising Machine, Mk. I

THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE of this machine is shown left.

Let us see how it works. On the magnetic tape are pieces of hypnotic text, recorded by myself, ready to be sent out to the subject, who sits in a very comfortable winged arm-chair. The text is interrupted at certain places by silent periods and these pieces of tape also contain metal markers, sometimes single, sometimes double. At the single marker it is possible for the tape to "skip" silently forward at a fast speed. The skip ends when a double marker is reached and then the next piece of the text is played.

The "skip" occurs only if the subject has pressed his button, as instructed, just before the single marker is reached. Should he never press his button the session is brought to a close by one of the emergency dehypnotising procedures.

A "good" or "deep" subject skips early, whereas a "poor" subjects skips late, and so by counting how many markers have passed before the skip, one can estimate the susceptibility of the subject. The instructions given to the subject can either refer to his behaviour at that time or can ask him to report on his behaviour just performed. Thus he may be told: "Your eyes are closing, they are closing. . . (etcetera, etcetera) . . . IF YOUR EYES ARE CLOSED NOW, PRESS THE BUTTON!" Or he may be asked, after an arm-stiffening procedure, "JUST NOW, IF YOUR ARM DID NOT BEND AT ALL, PRESS THE BUTTON! (Pause) IF YOUR ARM DID BEND, BUT ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY, PRESS THE BUTTON!" and so on.

Pilot Experiments

THIS MACHINE HAS been demonstrated at the National Physical Laboratory and is now being provided with an improved programme on tape. The process of writing the programme is typical of preparing programmed-learning text in general; with each trial-run improvements are thought of and then incorporated.

Uses of the Machine

I HOPE THAT the machine will prove to be a useful tool for the experimental psychologist. It should provide him with a standard and tireless hypnotic procedure. I also hope that the machine may eventually have medical uses.

At any rate, by setting up such machines I am free at last to sit back and really *botanise* amid these fascinating groves and pavilions first mapped out for us by Mesmer in the eighteenth century—which is where I came in.

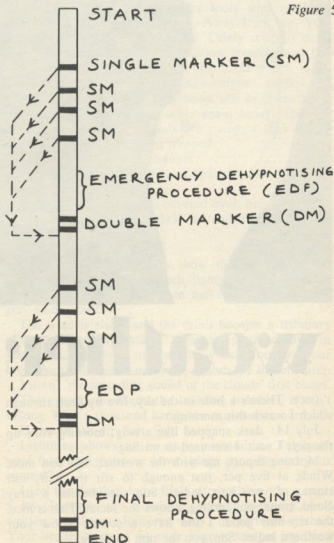


Figure 5



weather man

by james sallis
and david lunde

(SKY. There's a hole in the sky, five by four, through which I watch this morning.)

July 14: dark snapped like a twig; morning runs up the sky; I wait. I am used to waiting.

Morning report, me with the weather, fair and mild. Winds at five per, just enough to stir the hair, soft storms of your hair, ladies. Sun slips behind a stray cloud, comes out smiling, knows the secret. This is nice, the rhythms good. I too have a secret: know your weathers, ladies. Sun, you the sun, uncaring.

(Bare window. But air itself stiff, starched, yellow curtains. Sky: pendulous, impending. Sun. Sun light. But: spread in layers like butter on sky table face. Layer. Lair.)

I report breakfast in an outdoor restaurant. Egg like orange sun in winter sky; brown snow falls from the toast; drinking midnight. Everyone has his sunny side up but there's rain behind the sky.

You.

You are. Sitting away from me across twelve slate

blocks size of my window. Away from me, are.

Sipping coffee, pink cat tongue, basking. Sun fingers hair, sun on bare arms. I report you, lady: random piece of storm endangered here. . . . You do not listen, are not my lady? No lady for the weatherman. But you will know; will share this pain, the rain and change of weather. Will. Are. My sunshine.

And are so fair, lady, walking. Cloud-drift your movements, soft, thighs kiss like wind in oats, akin some colour of wheat come fall. Golden lady. Along the boardwalk, we, moving to the beach and sea. Rain will fall on us alone, spoil their crops with too much sun, parched and cracked on the stem. You there, me here; separate in our seasons, sharing weather.

And the sea is calm today . . . moves gentle on the shore, touching with fingers of foam. Sun makes it a medal, metal, hard shine of gold, gold like you, gleam of bronze . . . beautiful. Be careful of the sea, lady. Moves soft and strong, changes like weather and woman; doesn't worship you, is a lady too and with those jealousies. I warn you. Even now, brushing this bank, she shifts great boulders upon the bottom, alters a coastline to suit her fancy, fancies herself irritable, in-souciant sea. I warn you. See the white birds, their shadow on the water: dark lanes, lady, dark lanes behind the laws of change.

But again you don't listen. And why should you? No one listens to the weatherman. Always wrong, right? Always changing his mind, outside and back to report this first drop of surprising rain. Fooled, a fool. Lives too close to it, to weather. Bones become ice, turn water; heart is fire and storm; mind an iceberg buried in itself. No one listens. Not even you, you. I am sorry you don't listen.

The beach. We step onto the beach, into the beach, footfirst, and feel for warmth. It comes around us now and we're cut loose, adrift, isolate on this isle of gold sand spilling to the sea. On each side it curves back around a court of huts and cabins to form a half-mile crescent. Cut loose. Sand a tawny glow, each grain refracting sun, sharing light. A warm colour, lady, yet duller than the gloss of your skin, the sheen and dew of perspiration drawn by sun. The sea so quiet, so still, waiting.

Look at them, lady: the acolytes prostrate. Citizens, denizens, useless! Look at them. Sun a terror god, male, wants only their moisture. Will leave them crisped like jellyfish on the beach, like salamanders. They'll slip in the grease of sea. But I understand, it's you I worship. Me, the weather, subservient to you. You.

You pause and smile at me, moon comes out after blue dew rain. Taking my homage? You smile. Smile. And turn and drift across the sand, foam licking your feet. Take off your blouse, allow the sun to touch you unafraid . . . Cybele, Isis, Proserpine? I forget the old ways, lady. Forgive me, you've been away so long. Forgive me. I forget.

The sun is jealous, lady. They've forgotten the sacri-

fice, tithe, forgot to watch the weather. Fools! And the sun is jealous, a terror god. Lady, there are dark lanes behind the laws of change.

Look at the sky.

Watch: it grows tense, hard as a lens.

Watch: it takes your every movement, throws them a hundredfold into itself.

The wind is rising, fretful.

Clouds move in to gather like fists.

See the froth whipped from the waves and the sea turns green like old bronze. . . .

Bathers come to the sand, sink into lethargy. The sun feeds and grows. Swells. You begin to notice, look about nervously, cross back up the beach. Sea beats at the beach, slams sand down to a cat's-foot layer. Lair. Birds fly, flee, screaming. The need for coolness enters you.

WE PASS QUICKLY down empty streets. People here have not forgotten, are sheltered in dark rooms, waiting. We enter a lunchroom grey like clouds, brown like shells.

Discretion, lady, discretion for fools who wouldn't understand: we sit tables apart. Away from me. You order salad, working your magic. Celery crisp as dew, tomato bits beaded with condensation, green lettuce, the bowl itself wet: wet. I order a Hurricane punch, wait. Your magic is sympathetic, mine catalytic: unchanged, yet changing dread order. We boast our own weather.

You glance across and smile again today, again. I look out the window. Winds are rising, a skin across the sky. It is too late. I am trapped.

The sky now, lady of changes:

Ponderous clouds are driving against it like vast steel hammerheads:

The sun is nailed down, covered over, burst:

The winds with their cheeks distended are sawing at the fabric of clouds. . . .

And rips occur.

Look at your rains now, how they steam on the streets. See how they quench light, slur the edge of buildings. Watch as your rain makes sketches on this grey-made slate. . . .

The wind is rising and the rain's become a tributary of the sea, rolling, heavy. Wind whips cat-cradles in your hair, forming its own magic, wilful. You turn your face, open yourself to moisture, absorb the life of water.

Listen: the pounding sound of the clouds' first blows.

The ground shudders, the building trembles, doesn't belong. With a thousand hands the rain dams our roof.

Ozone in the air. Salt. Salt. Salt.

Lightning shows us in stark pantomime. Tableau: your face apprehensive; have things gone beyond your control?

I feel the weather, lady. It's a surge within me, a rage, a joy. It walks the clouds on legs of lightning. And written up there: Join me, lady, in perfect weather. Your beauty to quiet my rage, rage to temper joy. You

with love and me, authority. Let them pray for your intervention.

You do not answer. But I will wait a while, watching over you, holding you in the warm weather of my eyes. I am used to waiting, lady.

THE STORM is passing, fury gone, wild urge spent. I quiet the wind and thunder, hush the spitting flood, roll it all backstage till needed again. Only your rain remains, floating down softly now, almost a whisper. Your rain. Away from me. Going.

You walk in the spray. Your skin is fresh with the rain, alive. Eyes too like water, calm water to reflect my face, my love. The air is washed brass-bright. You walk in the soft spray.

And have you still no word for the weatherman, no sign? A bad forecast, lady; these tropics, mad. Will not stay clement forever, this weather: I see sun burning thought away, enraging the sea; spurts of combustion on the sand. Dark lanes behind the laws of chance.

See how gently sun steals rain? Touches, and dampness is gone. Moisture rises, returns. Simpler, you deal with me. I warn you, lady. Weather will have its way, must have its way. I warn you. I am sorry you don't listen.

A rainbow slides across the sky. It leads us down the beach, to the very edge of water, cutting edge. The sand is deserted now. We are marooned, alone, knowing (only us, knowing) weather will have its way whatever.

You step carefully among jetsam thrown up by the sea. And will you find some lost treasure of the Spanish Empire, cast out for irritating the sea's soft palate . . . some relic of kings or ships . . . golden bones bound with coral? Foot follows foot, arc over slow arc, among these souvenirs. Feel sand, in your toes clinging.

And there! The sun on the sand is a circle, a sign. Our treasure, lady (we are marooned, alone).

You remove your blouse, your skirt. Lie on damp sand, abandon yourself to devotions. Weather pauses, process stops, all awaits some new sign. You move softly on the sand.

I watch you, lady, from a distance. The sun grows stronger, its pull increases. Again I see moisture drawn from the sand, sand recedes. The heat is a weight on my shoulders. This sea, this bronchial clock. Sweat runs into my eyes. Into the shells of my ears.

I watch you, lady, from a distance. You move softly on the sand. The sun controls your movements, trapped you in its golden lure.

From a distance. And feel a sullen sudden breath of wind off the sea, a fetid air. Mark the sea now like molten bronze. O beware the change of weather!

Lady, it is too late. The sky darkens. . . .

Darkens. The lanes. Everything is mad, lady, like the sun. And is the sun. I stagger to you in darkness, stand over you, watching. The heat slams on my shoulders.

Too late.

Lady: weather topples cities, moves a river, can erase a thousand years in a moment's surging.

Lady: sun is in us, of us, in the cells of our bodies, so useless to struggle, struggle with the storms inside you, it pours from us. The sun is too old, cold, for your control. You are possessed, out of your depth.

It is too late. The sun burns my brain, the storm beats down upon us. Burns. Too late, the dark lanes.

I cannot help it, lady. The catalyst of my rage is out of control, away beyond my magic, changing.

Too late.

Listen: thunder shatters the crests of waves. . . .

Listen: wind speaks in ancient black tongues. . . .

Storm warnings are up in every port. The sea claws at the beach. The sky is black. The torrent gathers.

Please.

I mean to help you, lady, help you weather this storm. Will shield you, show you its power, cathartic.

Please.

So useless to struggle, so useless.

Please.

Feel the force of the wind, how it stings warm skin—stings, then recedes as flesh adjusts. Useless to struggle. Learn to share its rage. The storm fury, it's in us, with us, in our blood.

So useless to struggle, understand. . . .

You feel the storm's strength, lady, its rhythms, drums done in the dark. Your rains: how strong, how hot they are!

Please.

Feel the drum of waves on sand, the pounding of sound in our ears.

Hear the scream of winds, the rasp and rattle of the storm's fury. . . .

As lightning splits us apart I cry out with thunder black fish surge up out of the sea. . . .

Lady. Ah, lady.

THE STORM, our storm, is passing. The barometer rising. The pressure has eased and the winds croon softly now.

But this is a momentary thing, eye of the storm. All time is suspended. The sun looks down into this funnel. See: all about us, the wild grey storm yet damns and roars.

But you do not look. Please look, lady. There. Please. You are quiet, too quiet.

The storm too strong.

O lady, I warned you against pride, resistance, so useless, the dark lanes, lady. I warned you, tried to warn you. Some things can't survive the storm. . . .

Poor lady.

Soon it will be morning.

The sky will be lurid red.

Sailors, take warning.

THE MAN WHO WAS DOSTOEVSKY

Leo Zorin

WORD SYSTEM NUMBER ONE begins. He lives in an attic near the park. In summer the evenings ripen into brown. He lives in the park near an attic. He goes on the boating-pool. He rolls himself an introverted cigarette. The traffic wardens twitter in the trees. Less often the tides of railways mangle up into hubbub. He returns to his room, squared by the intrusions of the rain. The collector comes, with echoes of brass band and shoveha'penny. He eats by himself in the pub. They are dismantling the post office on the corner. He walks through the deserted housing estate, sees a Henry Moore, but it is a mistake. A gaslight illumines a Spanish portico. The cats watch him with golden eyes as he stalks by. World psychosis number one. The skyscrapers are toppling wildly. Motorists writhe impaled on jagged fragments of the Post Office Tower. The river overflows its banks, traverses his eyes, runs down the pipes inside his mind. His room stays thwarted.

In the park the tramp is smelling women's armpits, with a soft tang of certainty. A cloud derides the tramp, leaving him broken dead crumpled by the path. Ferocious lovers stroll hand over hand along the urban walkways. The geese are being fattened by the snow.

In his room, he sits down to read. The words rise up to slaughter him, he turns his bloodied mouth away. The blind have their telescopes turned on him. The palaces are being shredded to confetti by the birds.

But he breathes. The attic is small, diamond-razored by the evening's rising towers. The mausoleums are nearly finished. Already they have been perfumed with attar of roses, lined with silk, filled with jewels and incunabula, the incantations murmured, the uncton spilled, the voices of the dead transfused: the angels masturbate more gently than the dead.

Word system number one continues. The silvery tendrils are spreading now, killing the rats in the sewers, devouring all the air and gaps between minds.

He cries softly in the attic. The carcasses of ducks are floating upside down on the lake. The kindly zoo-bound elephants are trumpeting apocalypse. A shaft of light comes through the lace curtains, he removes his shabby trousers, examines his penis. He cries once more. The whores of the world erupt into raucous laughter.

He wakes up at five in the morning, turns on his head briefly. He peers cautiously out of the window. Out in the streets the dogs are having a religious experience. He opens his notebook, sucks his pencil thoughtfully. The kettle comes to the boil. It is stained and lack-lustre. He brews strong coffee.

He had a love affair once. She was small and blonde, she was svelte, she was the tall, willowy brunette of his dreams. They met in the public library. They discussed Proust. She wore a red dress. She wore a red dress. He carried her books. He dropped them. I'm sorry, he said. It doesn't matter, she answered. She laughed, showing dimples. He fell, in love with her. He groped to his feet. She helped him; are you all right? It was raining. They had a coffee. There was a lot of traffic. They caught a bus. They went for a walk in the park. The beggars smiled at them, dancing in Pompeian frescoes. They retired to his attic. He showed her his notebook. It's beautiful, she gasped.

He takes a sip of coffee. He adds an annotation to his notebook. It is beginning to get light. He draws his coat about him. He invents an aphorism. The sky becomes ruined with morning. Peddlers troop off to the ghettoes.

He held her against him, felt the gentle pressure of her breasts. What is it, she whispered. Nothing he meant. They made love abstractedly. After that he waited quite often by the station. He used to buy her flowers. She preferred red roses. They dreamt of each other. She had a sister, tall and blonde like herself.

They have begun to destroy the bakery. It is part of their system. They are sending in troops full of workmen. According to reliable sources, there have been many cases of dysentery in the area recently. Many doctors have been gassed in the hospital. A teenage girl's skeleton is chained to the stucco wall. Milk is in short supply. Citizens are advised to stay in their homes and only travel on essential business. There will be no exceptions. By order.

Something rumbles overhead. He shivers. Someone is flushing the toilet.

Her sister was a strange girl, dark and morbid. She

spied on them, watched through the keyholes when they were in bed. Once she put salt in their coffee. She would not tell why.

The descent into the interior begins. They have gressed the escalators. At a distance resounds insane cackling. The poor are bandaged and bloodied, unequal to the weary trudge. Whips crack, a voice of command is heard, now and then rifle shots. An old man is being blinded with a red-hot poker. The ground writhes ominously. The descent is well under way. The outriders are sending back reports. There are no lights in the lifts, which are, in any case, too crowded, fetid, rather like cattle trucks. Now and then someone dies, too weak to cry. They are playing soft music, trying to keep the crowd docile. A nubile young girl is riding in a sedan chair built for two. An officer with a moustache is stroking her breasts, talking to her in a reasonable tone, whistling through his teeth from time to time. They are sinking piles into the clay.

He used to meet her very often. He was so entranced by her beauty, he could not stay away from her. They would talk for hours to go to the pictures or simply make love on the rug in his attic. Once he had a long talk with her sister, coaxed her gently, tried to be friends with her. But she undressed, dared him to take control of her, laughed at him.

He combs his beard, thick and matted now. The mirror cracks. He puts on his hat.

Eventually he was compelled to go to bed with her sister. After that things were never quite the same. She did not chide him, perhaps she did not know. Soon the rains started. Shortly after that the censorship began.

The descent into the interior proceeds apace. They are speaking over loud-hailers now, urging the stragglers along. Many of the entry passages have been dynamited. They are taking no risks.

Her sister died quite unexpectedly. Some cancer had devoured the girl, so that she became, in the space of hours, blackened and warped. He remembered that he had been with his love at that time, so that she knew nothing of her sister's strange end until later. But by that time they were already releasing the giant carnivores. She was gravely affected by this tragedy, became tongue-tied and suspicious, no longer gentle and friendly, a death-mask of her sister, in fact.

WORD SYSTEM NUMBER ONE divides. They are travelling along two main arteries now. When the presses closed she lived with him for a time. She seemed to regain something of her lost bloom. Obviously severe rationing had to be enforced. When the professor came to see them for the first time he was a little worried. But it was a happy time for them.

The professor lived quite near. It seemed appropriate that they should work together. One or two media remained open to them. For a while all three laboured very hard and in harmony. It became convenient for the professor to move in with them, though he was careless to turn his head discreetly while they made love.

The telephone wires have long been ripped up, of course. He has no way of finding out how matters are progressing, save by venturing out. This is arduous, but he feels it is necessary. He strokes his beard wistfully, creeps down to the door.

The professor was taken away before long, which was not really surprising. It was never found out whether he had made a confession.

Word system number one throbs wildly. Even the molecules themselves may well be dismantled shortly. Many of the original survivors lie in disjointed attitudes, partly eaten in some cases. The supply of whisky in the attic has nearly run out.

It had been an agonising decision for her. She had intended to stay with him to the end. He was spending a lot of time on his notes, hoping to get the record complete while the opportunity remained. They no longer yearned for each other, but were bound by friendship and concern for each other. By that time they had to boil all the water before it was safe to drink. Rumour had it that the glaciers were on the move again.

He found her body while it was still warm. He did not pause to cry. He picked her up and put her over his shoulder, grabbed a spade and went out. No one took any notice. By that time all the survivors were either too preoccupied with their own salvation or too scared to ask questions. He did not say a prayer or mark her grave.

His beard had grown very thick since then. But his ingenuity had not failed him. The notes are nearly complete. The sky is gorgeously red. The last of the entrances has caved in.

They are now far below the surface. In any case the last of the mausoleums have received their occupants, have been closed, presenting a bland face. It is doubtful whether this costly and rash method will meet with any success. But below, the activity remains furious. Now everything depends on the initiative of individual leaders. The captain is notable among them. He strides about, urging, ordering, setting to with his own hands.

The wind is howling furiously. He sees that the cathedral is miraculously almost intact. He runs towards it, stumbles, catching his foot in a stray end of wire, becomes buried in a drift. He struggles fiercely, but cannot escape.

Almost simultaneously the old house crumbles, slowly at first, but soon this long time haven is split asunder. His notebook is borne along by the wind, pages tear loose, words blur in psychosis.

The young girl is laughing hysterically. Her skirt has been torn off by the blind man. She lies on the ground, writhing in abandon. At first they hesitate, try to push by her. Then they shrug, troop across, trample her till she is bloody and unrecognisable. The captain beckons; onward, ever onward.

A fragment of his notebook reaches him. He grabs it. But he is weeping. He knows there is no hope. The glacier holds him tight, the ghastly light illuminates the words across his brow: I am Dostoevsky.

NEW FORMS

BY JOHN T. SLADEK

THE CORRESPONDING CHOICE TEST

LN-276440-V

DIRECTIONS: Mark the choice that seems to you to be best for each question.
Do it now. Read directions WITH care.

EXAMPLE: Small does (a) graven (b) craven (c) raven (d) Bill.
Now answer the rest of the questions in the same way.

1. In India, bhuta are the ghosts of violent criminals. They are represented with small thick bodies of a red colour, with pigtailed round their heads, horrible faces, the teeth of a lion in their mouths, and their bodies covered with ornaments. Who are they?
2. Capering will: (a) manage (b) silk (c) dub (d) shale.
3. Covered with ornaments: (a) baize (b) Kools (c) seizure.
4. Take no notice of: (a) LN-276440-V (b) Kools (c) notice.
5. I gave you as many apples as John gave me if John received more apples from you than he bought. If John bought three fewer apples than I could have bought if I had twice as many as you, how many apples in all?
5. Hanford.
6. Ape is to raven as giant is to: (a) small (b) giant (c) ape (d) giant.
7. Taken: (a) volute (b) fray
8. The same applies to ordinary commerce. If the supply somehow exceeds the demand, the price will drop until the surplus is gone, but if the demand exceeds the supply the price will rise, increasing the supply!
9. God be with ye. (ape)
10. Praxion: (a) swit (b) duthe (c) yalkin (d) flaze.
11. (a) is to (b) as (c) is to: (a)(b) (b)(c) (c)(b) (d)(a)
12. God created me with free choice. (a) Yes (b) No.
13. I am often troubled by:
(a) choice (b) trouble (c) God (e) Hanford (d) one of the above.

Forms are clerical ways of dealing with reality (tidying it up, clearing it away, and so forth). To the perceptions of the clerk, a form is reality. His eyes need it in black and white, and any other reality goes unrecognised.

Once, birth was marked by a baby's cry and death by the silence of the heart. We clerks of the world have replaced all that; now there are certificates to take care of these matters. It is almost impossible to

be born, die, marry, pay taxes, sell or buy property, obtain a pension or apply for a job without being punished with a form.

"Forms are created to formalise, inform, and finally replace 'life' as 'we' know it." The man who said that to me has lost his identity. Somehow every single piece of paper recording this man's name has been lost or destroyed; he no longer officially exists. He has been tidied up and cleared away. I forget his name.

Indiana Name Opinion Register

Q-Q-QQ
1937

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____ (give latest date)

1. Give your own name in full: _____

2. Print your Name in Block Capitals: _____

3. Now give your NAME: _____

4. Read the INSTRUCTIONS carefully, and do not begin until the teacher TELLS you to. In the first part, you will be expected to write as many names as you can in the time available, but you need not have them all correct. In the second part you will be expected to tell what it is you have named, and do so correctly. NOW BEGIN PART ONE.

PART ONE. Name as many things as you can before the teacher says STOP. Begin with your own name, then add other names. Now Stop. Begin with other names. Then stop. Begin. BEGIN:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____
11. _____ 12. _____ 13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____ 16. _____ 17. _____ 18. _____ 19. _____ 20. _____

PART TWO. Fill in the blanks, then explain:

21. My name is _____. 22. The name of _____ is _____. 23. This is the name of _____. 24. This is my name _____.
25. _____. 26. Explain the names given above, and explain: _____

Signature: _____ (X)

Individual Bend Record

A-23-"B"

Individual number.....

Estimation.....

Authorized by.....

[illegible]

POETRY ITEMIZATION

P-40-1

Poem Written	Date	Meaning	Poem Read	Date	Meaning
1.			1.		
2.			2.		
3.			3.		
4.			4.		
5.			5.		
6.			6.		
7.			7.		
8.			8.		
9.			9.		
10.			10.		
11.			11.		
12.			12.		
13.			13.		
14.			14.		
15.			15.		
16.			16.		
17.			17.		
18.			18.		
19.			19.		
20.			20.		

CHARACTER SIMULATION FORM

Name	Address.....
Occupation.....	Zip Code.....
Firm.....	Area Code.....
Telephone Number.....	Transference.....
Transfer Rate.....	Social Security Number.....
Cordiality.....	Cephalic Index.....
Compensation.....	Bo/aldness.....
Hair.....	Nuance....

Present Worries: _____

Left Eyebrow movements?.....

Right Eyebrow movements?.....

LEFT EYE:
 Colour?... Size?...
 Vision?...
 Tic?...

RIGHT EYE:
 Colour?... Size?...
 Vision?...
 Tic?...

- Nose 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.



19. 20.

Describe in detail the entire straight line

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

of the mouth, numbering missing teeth, etc.

Single letter table I.						Multiple letter table V.											
A						ABCDE	BACDE	CABDE	DABCE	EABCD							
Multiple letter table II.						ABCED	BACED	CABED	DABEC	EABDC							
ABBA						ABDCE	BADCE	CADBE	DACBE	EACBD							
Multiple letter table III.						ABDEC	BADEC	CADEB	DACEB	EACDB							
ABC ACB BAC BCA CAB CBA						ABEDC	BAECD	CAEBD	DAEBC	EADBC							
Multiple letter table IV.						ABECD	BAEDC	CAEDB	DAECB	EADCB							
ABCD	BACD	CABD	DABC			ACBDE	BCADE	CBADE	DBACE	EBACD							
ABDC	BADC	CADB	DACB			ACBED	BCAED	CBAED	DBAEC	EBADC							
ACBD	BCAD	CBAD	DBAC			ACDBE	BCDAE	CBDAE	DBCAE	EBCAD							
ACDB	BCDA	CBDA	DBCA			ACDEB	BCDEA	CBDEA	DBCEA	EBCDA							
ADBC	BDAC	CDAB	DCAB			ACEBD	BCEAD	CBEAD	DBEAC	EBDAC							
ADCB	BDCA	CDBA	DCBA			ACEDB	BCEDA	CBEDA	DBECA	EBDCA							
Multiple letter table VI.						ADBCB	BDACE	CDABE	DCABE	ECABD							
ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ADBEC	BDAEC	CDABE	DCABE	ECADB							
BCA	BCA	BCA	BCA	BCA	BCA	ADCB	BDCAE	CDABE	DCBAE	ECBAD							
CAB	CAB	CAB	CAB	CAB	CAB	ADCEB	BDCEA	CDBEA	DCBEA	ECBDA							
DEF	DEF	DEF	DEF	DEF	DEF	ADEBC	BDEAC	CDEAB	DCEAB	ECDAB							
EFD	EFD	EFD	EFD	EFD	EFD	ADECB	BDECA	CDEBA	DCEBA	ECDBA							
FDE	FDE	FDE	FDE	FDE	FDE												
GHI	GHI	GHI	GHI	GHI	GHI	Multiple letter table VII.											
HIG	HIG	HIG	HIG	HIG	HIG	AAABBA											
IGH	IGH	IGH	IGH	IGH	IGH	Multiple letter table VIII.											
JKL	JKL	JKL	JKL	JKL	JKL	AAA	AAB	AAC	ABA	ABB	ABC	ACA	ACB	ACC			
KLJ	KLJ	KLJ	KLJ	KLJ	KLJ	BAA	BAB	BAC	BBA	BBB	BBB	BCA	BCB	BCC			
LJK	LJK	LJK	LJK	LJK	LJK	CAA	CAB	CAC	CBA	CBB	CBC	CCA	CCB	CCC			
MNO	MNO	MNO	MNO	MNO	MNO	Multiple letter table IX.											
NOM	NOM	NOM	NOM	NOM	NOM	AAAA	AAAAB	AAAC	AAAD	ABAA	ABAB	ABAC	ABAD	ACAA	ACAB	ACAC	ACAD
OMN	OMN	OMN	OMN	OMN	OMN	AABA	AABB	AABC	AABD	ABBA	ABBB	ABBC	ABBD	ACBA	ACBB	ACBC	ACBD
						AACA	AACB	AACC	AACD	ABCA	ABCB	ABCC	ABCD	ACCA	ACCB	ACCC	ACCD
						AADA	AADB	AADC	AADD	ABDA	ABDB	ABDC	ABDD	ACDA	ACDB	ACDC	AACDD
														ADAA	ADAB	ADAC	ADAB
														ADBA	ADBB	ADBC	et

etc.

CONFIDENTIAL

2

BY MICHAEL BUTTERWORTH

(EXTRACTS FROM "STICK")

1. An empire of natural beauty

Stick was the builder of the stairs on Cain. One point: Stick had devised them so they would collapse after the natives had climbed halfway to the top.

While work went on destroying the planet's urbanised features, I actually talked to Stick for some time. He is tiny and sharp. He is a blood corpuscle out of an elephant's bloodstream. He had his hands in his pockets, shrilling out orders to the niggers every few seconds. His voice is so tiny someone had felt it necessary to build an amplifier into his mouth. You can hear him chewing and making foul noises with his miniature teeth:

"Sex of any sort disgusts me/as soon as I get these shits under my thumb" (holding up a placard saying HUMAN RACE) "I'll stop sex altogether."

He disappeared without bothering to come back.

I could feel a small metallic rat busying on my skin, prickling in my hair, sniffing with whiskers down my ears, all places at once with the speed of a bullet. The loudspeaker system of his head drowned his tiny nervous system with pain every time he tried to speak. He picked up a placard and wrote, "I WILL—WITH THE AID OF NIGGERS—BUILD AN EMPIRE OF NATURAL BEAUTY."

His secretary, Twig, a tall thin chap with glasses—which burnt his eyes out whenever he opened them—said: "He hates cities and gods; he'll take over the universe and turn it into a paradise of flowers and birds."

2. Meanwhile, in a distant corner of the Galaxy

"... somebody, is robbing me of my PIGGY bank!

(The trees of this planet are unlike any trees in the universe.)

"SOMEbody has stolen my finger ring for attracting birds. If I don't get it back soon I'll have to go on Brylcreem for a bit."

(The attraction of the bulb flower is irresistible. Lights flash on and off in your head when you pass it.)

But as I sit at my desk—Control—reports come from all OVER the universe, and come flooding in in tidal waves:

"I've had my hair cut off."

"The Brylcreem menace has struck—what shall I do?"

I've tried spit but it's no so good."

"Awkward! Awkward!"

"Get this thing out of my kitchen!"

Later in the night I had a vision of teeth.

Dec. 8th. Slept well.

3. Interview in Control Office

Stick got up in arms—became all hairy. The last bus had got home. He'd missed it.

He jumped up square into my office, face contorted in mimic of a faulty hairdryer.

The tapes recorded everything:

"The Stigma Riots have little to do with what I'm doing. They help to scare these little shits (holding up a placard of the HUMAN RACE) into believing what I believe I believe."

"Then your aim is not to convert your subjects to a proven policy, rather to a policy which you believe should be proven? When will you become a preacher of fact?"

"I will never become a preacher—least of all of a fact. What good are facts? Orders are the thing! It's all in the mind nowadays."

4. The schizophrenic theory of mind

"Any interest is interest in a component. Total interest (a simultaneous summingup of the entirety of universal affairs) would by definition be a total physical as well as mental, mergeance with universal affairs and therefore would not as some people seem to think be an interest of any sort. What an impossible feat to take an interest in a complete range of possible individual interests unless the experimenter first swaps his identity with that of the universe and, through the medium of that reverse, takes interest in himself, secondly dropping dead through nervous exhaustion!"

5. Concerning the intelligence

INTERVIEWER: What is your favourite science?

STICK: Botany.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

STICK: Botany is the science of our vegetative existence and not as some intelligent people think, a study of plantlife, the habits.

INTERVIEWER: So botany is really a social science?

STICK: Not at all. Botany is the science of human vegetation. The only friend I've got in the world looks exactly like a twig.

6. Tour round the Stick laboratories

An atmosphere of soil was everywhere. Deep lifts had

taken me to the back-benches of the most obscure government in the universe. The laboratories actually stank of soil chemical fumes and Stick. Large worms were strewn about on immense dissecting tables and were floodlit with powerful million-kilowatt light bulbs. Twig, myself and the Stick Boost reporter, accompanied by visitors in upturned raincoats, dark glasses and long hair, turned out of the dissecting room and entered a long dimlylit corridor. To the righthand head of this was a door which opened out into the development laboratories.

"Research is going on," came information from an overloud loudspeaker.

Stick was nowhere to be seen. I kept hearing him rocketing overhead at immense speeds chased by books with open arms, minutely crashing the sound barrier in explosions that shook the whole mansion.

"You are in the Development Laboratories. . . ."

I had heard previously of Stick's plans to build a super race of emotionless, nerveless plantmen.

My eardrums burst. We could see two doctors and their staff clearly. Plants were everywhere. I had a mad vision of chemists asking "Why?" Why did urbanism turn into a madhouse for donkeys?

The laboratories were in a shocking state resembling chemical pigsties. Entrails, stale blood, chemicals, broken glass littered the floor. We stood on a dry island of chemical and biological refuse surrounded by a sea of poison that emitted weird flashes and sullenly fumed.

Stick was somewhere about.

We met a crowd of cardboard doctors and staff who waved their arms at us but did not speak.

7. The pretakcoff nightmares Twig had

Metallic bats flutter against his pointed head. Large shapes advance from the edges of a rocky horizon. On the horizon a grotesque ship made out of fishbones stands luminous.

The room is filled with elephants. They dance and fill the ship's compartments with magical droppings.

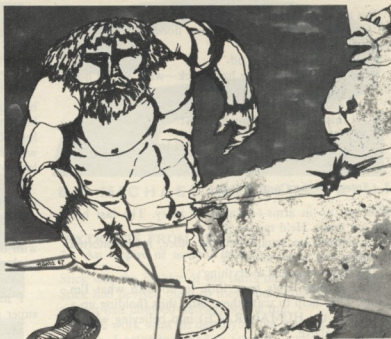
8. Speech in cold space

"For convenience I have divided the universe into four sectors or systems. As you know, the universe consists of solid masses which generally aggravate the ether. The universe is infinite YET IT IS bounded!"

"Like everything else the universe has its cancers. I have already mentioned aggravation of the ether by a solid, which aggravates Time by aggravating itself via the webs of the ether; itself is responsible for Time—matter measures time."

Stick paused after sipping coffee, then emotion suddenly welledup.

"May the . . . I mean I would like to say that I AM NOBODY'S PISSOIR!"



9. The sounds of space

Space plants: these things don't pretend to cry. They do cry. I've heard them wailing as they've floated past, tears on to earth, spacemen with fins flicking about in the ether living among splendid foliage of space and crusted with red. But they are harsh plants, spiky, not to be touched, suggestive of a bad dream. I have called them dreamplants.

CONTROL: I am losing control. This morning I can't remember whether I had a chat with Stick last night or not. He seems to be everywhere at once. Stick is closing in.

Aug. 3rd. Slept badly.

A peculiar flower on Lostar (famous for its orchids) has spread planetwide, choking the orchids. It has metal ovaries.

10. Finale

"Oh please oh PLEASE come back, Stick," wrote a lady in high hat and dress. "I love you *too* much for you to go.

"I love you."

And indeed, people on earth were loving Stick everywhere. In fact the one person Stick couldn't stand loved him too much most:

"God loves you most. Come back, son," a father said, holding up a placard saying MEET THY DOOM—THE END IS AT FINGER.

And in short, spangled earth had lost its god for the time being, and if its people cried it was because they weren't used to being without a god.

People rioted. They grew hair down to their knees and raped one another. The thing was, earth never *had* had it so good or so bad at the same time.

THE PUB THAT EXPLODED

Mercer smiled to himself as he walked over to his wife's grave. His only object was to laugh himself under with her. For a while he strode in circles round the graves kicking at the headstones mad searching for something.

Mercer took in the bar at a glance. It was long and stretched to feed trash to a large catmouth in the distance. Several characters littered the floor. An old sailor sucked his dog's prick.

In a corner sat a middleaged businessman drinking water from a fountain. After exercising his muscles on a trapeze the businessman turned away to look out of a window, then carried on with his drink.

On top of a chair an old woman stood drinking gin and peeling the skin off large round limes.

Offering him butter from a butterdish a sexy girl tried to put her brown arms into his slim pockets. He stepped over her roughly and ground her face into the fresh paint.

A leather youth snakedout from under a chair.

The barman found a tap and squirted beer over the ceiling. A woman screamed with pleasure.

The floor turned red.

The cat never lowered its head. Its white milkline grew on the bar top horizon, white trash at a hundred miles an hour. Liquid, repulsive.

His drink in one hand, a drink in another, Mercer tried to walk to the nearest table. The youth started. Glass splinters shone out of his eyes. One by one the squares to Mercer grew less. Attached to a bony hand a flicked blade screwedup into the air. Mercer sat up screaming. Eyes turned to him. Drinks were dropped.

She wore no pants.

The old sailor spun out of his clothes.

The floor cracked down the centre.

The sexy girl splitopen her face. Red hair streamed up from the crack into the beer air.

The white milkline spread white blotches infront of his eyes. Waves buffeted out of the ceiling stroking his hair. Whiteness engulfed him. A sick terror feeling glued his legs together at the tops.

One after another.

The cat let out a scream of success, chased its tail madly for a few seconds and arched its back.

The barman—

The youth—

The sex girl—

The old woman—

The old sailor—

His dog—

The walls danced. The sky fell in. Grey cloud bolted down in fantastic knots from the sky. Wet greenery thrust tendrils through the wooden blooden floor.

His feet crashed on to the heavy porch. Mercer trembled. He snatched at the carrotman's wristwatch and ran off with it, ticking. At a safe distance he turned round to face the pub. He wound the watch till its springs broke. He filled it with dead leaves and hurled it backwards towards the pub.

Flash.

The pub exploded.

Mercer crawled out of the broken wreckage of the church feeling for his hands. His face smarted. Fire-burning air poured out of the deadstone trees stooped like roadlamps over the graves. Under a sodium conifer tree he sat down to cry, breaking his toes on the hard ground.

He sat upon her grave. He cried again and slept out in the stars dreaming of summer.

SUMMER we have summer in our veins, the leaves of the conifer tree died saying: SUMMER we have summer in our veins.

The conifer tree began to tingle.

Sing sing, called voices to him from across the water.

"I have just blown up a pub. I have killed some people. Oh I got to rely on God."

On the other side of him raged war.

"I don't care," Mercer said after a while. "I don't care." Where are the other voices?

"Where are the other voices?"

The conifer tree rustled a secret, then was silent. The cloudworld vanished. Severed wrists fell down from the sky and hung in front of his blue eyes on the ends of puppet strings. Streaked across with barbed wire.

The ruined church coughed in the loud night and was silent.

In Mercer's other world the pub blewup in spurts people on to planets and strange characters into back gardens.

The trees dripped hot splats of solder on to the graves matching the tinsel of his hair.

His wife's dead hand closed over his own and drew

him down into the cold water. He whimpered.

From somewhere, the voices started up.

"... mad have ... now we know ... never oit yui."

"Will you wake up?"

"Will you wake up?"

A thunderbolt. Mercer felt hot fire coursing down his cheeks. Limbs of shadow crisscrossed his eyes and shifted some pink cloud, veined red into the interior of his skull. The comet burst, scattering painful red.

"Have you gone mad?" A bluegreen face peered into his own.

"Who is it? Who is it?"

Holly leaves rustled somewhere. Particles of soil shifted before his gaze.

The bluegreen face peered down.

Mercer coughed. His gaze followed a long thin arm into the clouds, losing sight of anything.

Two characters were sitting on a bench. They came over.

"Will you tell me what happened?" Mercer stood up. Cloud obscured the horizon.

"She's over there."

Mercer stared into the cloud.

"We saw you grab her tits off!"

Mercer tried to walk slowly towards his wife.

He sidestepped a shower of burning fallout.

"You tried to tread on her face!" an excitable male said.

She had her back to him. Tracerlike objects began to come up in the air from behind him, slowly and then more rapidly as they turned into boxes of matches piling in piles at her feet.

"Listen to me," he called her. "Whatever I said I meant nothing."

Believe me, the conifers whispered.

His feet crunched on the dry twig ground. But already the matches were flowering into tall grasses with heads of cold flame that swayed before her face.

Mercer turned to face the two men. His vision returned to normal. They traipsed off into the trees.

On the wind he could still hear their laughter, coming from the pub across the road.

Mr. Bloody Bluegreen face, Mr. Bloody Excitable Man.

It came to Mercer he had seen the two men before, sometime in the short interval.

He shuddered in the cold wind.

Gravediggers!

The moon came out.

He heard their last laughter.

The ground was churnedup. A few empty bottles littered the ground by the foot of her grave and sandwich papers and cigarette ends filled up the gaps in his head.

A cigarlength away the white softness of the pub exploded again, mushrooming into something unpleasant.

His aching brain.

THE VALVE TRANSCRIPT

BY JOEL ZOSS

I WAS ON the day shift. There were about twenty-five of us, and I was the smallest. They always used me when the pipes were small. I could go places the bigger man couldn't go. One guy, I think he was from Plainfield, he was too big for much work below the surface. They didn't know what to do with him because he was a trained pipe man. But to be a valuable linesman you've got to be small. You can be any size you want on the surface, but for the pipes you've got to be small. A lot of your professions can use a good small man."

"I believe some of that machinery is quite complicated."

"It's like everything else. I was always interested in cars when I was a kid. One year I made a little car out of a lawnmower engine. We could only drive it up and

down our street because it didn't have a licence. All your motor vehicles have to have a licence."

"How long have you held this job?"

"I've worked for Cammera's eight years. At first I used to rotate shifts sometimes, getting up and going to work at midnight, four o'clock. At the time I was on the day shift. I liked working in the pipes. At the end of the day you come out things are different."

"Is it true you sometimes spent more time underground than you had to to?"

"That depends how you look at it. One guy used to tell me about vitamin D deficiency, or maybe vitamin A, from not being in the sun. From a strict health standpoint you might be correct. It's not bad for your eyes. They've got much better lighting than you think down there. I have my headlamp. They used to use flares. It's much cooler in the summer. It wasn't that that got my goat. I was thinking of something else. He's the foreman and wants to make sure his responsibility comes through. I knew he was the foreman. The bad valve was six hundred yards from the closest hatch. Go down one and come out the other."

"You didn't intend anything tricky?"

"I didn't intend anything tricky. Ask anybody if I'm known for jokes. More difficult jobs come along all the time. They kept telling me how much money it meant. It takes a lot of money for a vacation too. I used to go canoeing. They had beaver, moose, loons, everything. The Indians up there all use outboards."

"Then you insist you acted alone?"

"I went through the one hatch to get to the machinery. Then I was supposed to climb out the other further down instead of coming back the same one. That would have meant climbing back uphill, and they were slippery. The whole thing wouldn't take more than ten minutes. So they would shut everything down for fifteen minutes and start right up again. It amounts to replacing one part, as easy as putting your batteries in a flashlight. Anybody could do it if he wasn't too big. If they didn't start right up again they would lose too much money it would be better to start up even if the valve wasn't fixed. How would they know I was out? They would have a man where I was supposed to come out, and he would tell them."

"Were you familiar with this part of the line?"

"If they started up and I was inside that would kill me. They couldn't kill somebody. I worked there eight

years. Think of the publicity. I don't blame people looking out for their money. I've spent more time down there than most of the men."

"Who was supposed to wait for you? Do you recognise him?"

"I have a very bad memory for faces. I would look at my wife and she would be a different person, sometimes even my mother and my father would look different. My dog looks the same only. All animals, I guess. Sometimes I thought things didn't stay the same at all. They change all the time. Why not? We use radio cars at construction so Allen would have called right in—'O.K., let her go.' Once they tried microphones in our helmets, but we never kept them. Everybody's wired up. Did you read about how atoms always change in the newspapers? With those, when you came to a place you did not know, for instance, you weren't sure which turn to take you just speak up and on the surface they had a map. Sure enough, the man would tell, 'Take your right.' I always knew the lines so well but some guys called all the time. If you have a feel for the pipes, which some of the men have, then you just don't have any trouble. I think the foreman recognised my ability. Who was up top?"

"You knew precisely how much money was involved?"

"Some men just naturally care for the job. For most it's check in and then just drive off in their cars as fast as they can. For a while night shift when I got off at 12:00 o'clock I would hang out at the bar and grill but I got to getting up too late I liked to feel awake. So the foreman says: 'We are shutting down for fifteen minutes. It costs Cammera fifty thousand every minute the flow is off, so do not stay down any longer than is absolutely necessary.' I have known this foreman for six years. He knows I do a good job. It was a bright day too. When you come out it takes a while to get used to the light. I put on dark glasses for the first few minutes and then take them off when my eyes are used to that, otherwise your eyes are hurt, sensitive. Then it's much hotter too. Up north it would get up to ninety in the day and below forty at night."

"You didn't have any trouble with the valve?"

"Did you think they would start it back even if I wasn't out? When it comes to repairs I never take very long. On the way down I figured that's seven hundred fifty thousand dollars. It wasn't very slippery at all, when you have to be careful. Some people want you to be what you aren't. I got to the valve right away because of my size, the seats on those models are worn. They have to be soft because your harder metals don't seal as well, which means they wear out. All the coffee cups have 'Delays are Costly' on them. For a while

they had them with safety messages. I didn't like the way the little men were drawn. Then we got the new service where the truck comes around to you and the back opens up. There are a lot of opportunities in the services. I fixed the valve just like that, and by then I was thinking it was time for coffee. I like to sit down for fifteen minutes, not stand around a truck. Paper cups always taste bad."

"Then you proceeded to the other hatch."

"In a few minutes sitting down I can relax. I earn my living. The days come and go, the day shift you spend underground in the damp. Some guys make more money than me, but I do good work. What's the fuss? I couldn't understand everybody so serious — you'd think we were invading Japan. Would they start it up anyway even if I didn't come out? Time is money. I never saw a minute but you can see money. What's money? Made at the bank. I was doing my job."

"Why didn't you leave from the hatch you were supposed to?"

"When the gas is off a man can get through the pipes without any trouble at all, otherwise it would kill you. We have very few casualties. In fact, the foreman says we came close to getting a safety award. But I never pay much attention to that. I didn't like it in the army either. You know what they do when some kids get caught in a cave. They get on the Ed Sullivan show. You don't see tv cameras when I come out of the ground. For instance, what if some kids were trapped in a cave and the foreman yelled, 'O.K., you better come out. In fifteen minutes we're going to turn on the gas.' Would you believe him? I know there are a lot of crazy things in this world. When you start getting all excited and worrying about money that's crazy. My wife worries if the milkman got the bill right. I don't even drink milk."

"Didn't you realise how much money was involved?"

"Actually milk is good for you even when you're grown. When you work below the surface you need all the vitamins you can get. When the valve was fixed I started for the hatch, but then it occurs to me another wasn't much further down, where the access road comes in. I used to go to the diner when we worked more down that end. The one waitress doesn't tease you like the others. She has such a friendly smile. It is a pleasure to have her bring you a cup of coffee on sunny days. Now the others always try to act sexy. They make too many promises, but I bet she gets more tips. Who wants to get all sexy when you're drinking a cup of coffee? They knew I was doing my job. I was never slow before. I got a little chill and went out the other hatch to the diner instead."

Bug Jack Barron continued from page 22 suddenly back in that strange trance state. "You don't know what you're talking about! (The promptboard flashed "30 seconds".) Progress is being made. More progress than anyone drea—" Howards shuddered as if he had suddenly found himself blowing his cool, caught himself short.

Barron footsignalled Gelardi to give him the full screen windup. Something's going on here, he thought. Something bigger than . . . bigger than. . . ? Anyway, too big to thrash out on the air. Good timing, as usual.

"Well, that's about it folks," he said. "We're out of time. Been quite an hour, eh? And if this whole thing's still bugging you, why next Wednesday night, you just pick up that vidphone and dial Area Code 2121, 969-6969, and we'll be off to the races again with another hour of *Bug Jack Barron*."

And they were rolling the wrap-up commercial, and he was off the air.

"He wants to—"

"No!" Jack Barron said even as Gelardi's voice spoke over the intercom circuit. "I don't talk to Howards now for no reasons, under no conditions."

Gelardi made hair-pulling motion behind the glass wall of the control booth. "I've never heard any of your victims this pissed," he said. "You gotta get this fruitcake off the line before he melts every circuit in the joint. Such language!"

Barron felt that old talked-out satisfied fatigue come over him as he got up out of the hotseat, and thought as usual about going somewhere and picking up a chick and fucking her brains— And then, like a new burst of energy, he remembered. Them days is gone forever. Home to Sara, and Sara there. Changes, changes, and good ones for a change, this time round.

"Come on Jack, for chrissakes, cool Howards already," Gelardi whined.

Who the fuck wants him cooled? Barron thought. Something happened those last few minutes, I hit something real tender and he almost spilled some mighty important beans—and not because he kept his cool. Let him stew awhile. I want him hot and raving when we get down to nitty-gritty—and no witnesses, Vince baby.

"Give him my home phone number," Barron said. "If that doesn't cool him, tell him to fuck off. In fact, why don't you give him my number and tell him to fuck off anyway? Tell him . . . tell him Mohammed can damn well come to the mountain."

"But, man, all we need is Howards—"

"Let me do the worrying, Vince," Barron said. "Boy Wonder Jack Barron's still in the catbirdseat."

As vip Bennie Howards will soon find out.

CHAPTER NINE

JACK . . . JACK, maybe I never understood, Sara Westerfeld thought as she stood on the breakfast deck overlooking the penthouse living room, listening to the May shower rattle against the skylight facets and to the faint hum of the elevator rising to the entrance foyer. How long's it been like *this*? she thought. This

sure wasn't what he was doing with *Bug Jack Barron* when he threw me out . . . or when I left him. Maybe he's been right all along, maybe I did leave him by copping out, refusing to dig where his head was really at?

As she heard the elevator door open, his footsteps down the hall, the pressure of his being moving like a shock wave down the narrow passage impinging on unknown kinesthetic senses, Sara felt on the edge of a new-style awareness of man-woman contrast that cut far deeper than what was revealed when pants came down. Power's a man's bag, she realised. Any chick that digs power, really feels where it's at, almost always turns out to be some kind of dyke in the end. Power's somehow cock-connected; woman's hung-up on power, she's hung-up on not having a cock, understands power only if she's thinking like someone who does. Power's even got its own man-style time-sense: man can wait, scheme, plan years-ahead guile waiting games, accumulate power on the sly, then use it for good if the man's good deep inside like Jack—like a good fuck good cat can bring a frigid chick along, cooling himself, holding back when he has to, until he's finally got her ready to come. Man kind of love, man kind of delayed-timing thinking, calculated quanta of emotion and only when the time's right, not like woman needs to feel everything totally the moment it happens—good, evil, love, hate, prick inside her. Like a man digs fucking a woman; woman digs *being* fucked. Is that all that came between us, Jack? Me thinking like an always-now woman, you thinking future-time man-thoughts?

And then he was standing before her, wet curls framing his eyes glistening with afterglow-fatigue of a hundred déjà vu battles in Berkeley, L.A., now at last *New York*, the lines in his face like time-lines from past dreams to present planned reality, mosaic of love in four-dimensional space-time manflesh, she saw the boy still living behind the face of the man, saw in memory's eye the man that had grown behind the soft-flesh shining armour of the boy she had tasted in Berkeley, L.A., Meridian actionswirl streets and bedrooms, loved the boy and his dream and the man and his past and the JACK BARRON (in flaming capital letters) of past-present-future mortal lovers-against-the-night combats—oh, this is a *man*!

She kissed him quick but deep with her tongue; bubbling over, she pulled away from his mouth, still in an arm-on-shoulders mutual embrace, said: "Jack, Jack, I watched you on television, I mean *really* watched you, really saw what you were doing for the very first time. You were magnificent, you were everything I always knew you would be the first day I met you in Berkeley, but better, better than anything I could've imagined, because then I was a girl and you were a boy, and today you were a man and I . . . Well, maybe at the advanced age of thirty-five, I'm leaving adolescence and I'm ready to try loving you the way a *woman* should love a man."

"That's . . . uh . . . groovy," he said, and now she

thrilled even at the way he was preoccupied, the old Berkeley distant-focus preoccupation, thinking through her, above her, warm exciting man-thoughts enveloping her in him were the moments she had always loved him most.

"Groovy, and I dig what you're saying. I mean about us. But the show . . . look, Sara, there are things I've got to tell you. I mean, don't think I'm back in the silly old Baby Bolshevik bag. I suppose it looked that way to a lot of people, and there were moments when I . . . But I don't do things without a nitty-gritty reason, and there are things going on that—"

"I know, Jack," she said. "You don't even have to tell me; it stands out all over you. You're involved in something big, something important, the kind of thing you were always meant to do. Something real like you used to—"

"It's not what you think, not what anyone thinks . . ." he muttered, brows furrowed at some hidden contrapuntal train of thought. "I don't even know the whole story myself, but I can feel something, smell it, something so big, so . . . I'm afraid to even think about it until I—"

The vidphone chime interrupted. "Already . . . ?" Jack muttered, and he bolted down the stairs, across the carpet to the wall consoles, made the vidphone connection as he sprawled on the floor and she followed a few steps behind.

"What's shaking with you, Rastus?" he was saying as she sat down beside him, saw that the face on the vidphone screen was good old Luke Greene, remembered good days screwing around with Luke before she met Jack.

"Never mind me, Huey," Luke said. "What's shaking with you, lot of people are asking?"

Jack picked up the vidphone, pointed the camera at her. "Hello, Luke, it's been a long time," she said.

And he smiled back at her, long-gone, no-hang-ups, ancient-history-lover, pure friendship smile. "Well hello Sara," he said, "you and Jack. . . ?"

"You know it, Kingfish," Jack said, turning the vidphone camera back on himself. "We're back together, and this time it's for keeps." And the thrill of being owned by her fated man went through her as he gooses her off-camera.

"Well, congratulations, mah chillun," Luke said. "Sara, maybe you can keep this schmuck off the streets, give him some of dat ol time religion, good for old Jack Barron and good for the SJC."

Sara saw a flicker of annoyance cross Jack's face, wondered why as Jack said: "I get the ugly feeling that that plug for Baby Bolsheviks, Inc., is what the nitty-gritty of this call's about, Luke. Or are you just using the tax money of the good people of Mississippi to make long-distance vidphone calls strictly for kicks? What's going on in that twisted excuse for a mind of yours?"

"It's *your* head that seems to be going through changes," Luke said. "You're back with Sara . . . and

after tonight, it looks mighty like you're back with us. Welcome back to the human race, Jack."

"Uh . . . what race you say that was?" Jack said archly. "Rat race, you say, Lothar? Race from nowhere straight to oblivion? Race, shit—you don't even catch me near that *track*."

"Cut the crap, you shade mother you," Luke said. "You're not bullshitting with Bennie Howards now. You got the bug, Claude, knew you would. Could taste it, couldn't you, and when you got on the air with Bennie, you just couldn't help it. . . . Well, you made your point, Jack, you made it with me and with a whole lot of others, including those fat cat Republican dinosaurs."

"What in hell are you babbling about?" Jack said, and Sara sensed he meant it, was as confused about what Luke was saying as she was, wondered if he too felt the shadow of something big and important about to come on.

"I'm talking about the show you just did, what else?" Luke said. "I never saw any vip *that* cut up; Bennie must be leaving a trail of blood from here to his digs in Colorado. Shit, man, you *know* what I'm talking about, you said it all, and you said it perfect, something for everyone. Morris flipped over the economic angle; it's a tie-in to their whole damn Gold-water platform, fat cats who want a piece of the Freezer action for themselves are ready to shell out big. Oh man, like I always say, a man that's got the instinct for politics just can't shake it. You let him off a little too easy at the end maybe, but you know, I begin to think that was the right come-on too. Like Morris says, we gotta develop your position slow and easy before you come out into the open next year."

"In words of one syllable for us ignorant shades, please," Sara heard Jack say, still feigning confusion. But you are faking it now, aren't you, Jack? she thought. Putting on *Luke*. . . . Wow, what's going on? And she felt like she had when she was eleven, peeking inbetween wooden shack slats watching naked boy-flesh shapes doing exciting-dirty little boy things. Like the old Jack in bed beside her talking big world phone talk over her quiet listening flesh with Luke and how good, oh how good to be Sara *Barron* again, watching my man doing his man-things.

"How's yes for a word of one syllable?" Luke said. "I just got off the phone with Morris, and, baby, the word is yes. You pulled it off, you made up all the points with the Republican vips you lost by badmouthing Morris. After the way you stomped Howards tonight—and they loved the way you linked him with Hennering—they are like hot for your living colour bod. You know what a tight little cabal that bunch is, so when Greg Morris says he can personally guarantee you the nomination if I can deliver the SJC, you *know* that means that their vips have all spoken. And with that word in old Luke's hip pocket, don't you worry, we're home free with the SJC Council. You know what this means, Clive? You dig? We're gonna do it! We're

really gonna do it, not another Berkeley pipe dream, not a little piece of the action like I have here, but the whole schmeer, Jack, all the way, an SJC National Administration, just like you told us in that dirty old attic. It took one hell of a long time for you to remember who you were, but, Claude, it was worth the wait, 'cause when you returned to the fold, prodigal baby, you brought more than the bacon back, you brought the whole fucking hog!"

"For chrissakes, Jack, tell me," Sara said excitedly. "What's this all about?"

Jack grimaced, handed her the vidphone. "Go ahead, Machiavelli," he said with a peculiar weariness. "You do it, at least you'll be able to keep a straight face. Tell the little lady what it's all about."

"You mean you haven't told. . . ?" Luke said incredulously. "Sara, us movers and shapers gonna make this cretin you're balling the next President of the United States, is all."

Jack snatched back the vidphone before she could answer, before she could do anything but gape at him as if he were some mystical avatar suddenly revealed in his full glory by a flash of psychedelic light. Yes! Yes! she thought. Where in the world is there a bigger man than Jack, and who can stand against him if he stands naked, the whole, total Berkeley knight in soft-flesh armour JACK BARRON, in front of those hundred million people? They've got to want him; all he's gotta do is show the world Jack!

"I GOT A ONE syllable word for you too, Luke, and it's even shorter," Jack said. "The word is *no*. If nominated, I shall not run, if elected, I shall not serve and all that Sherman jazz. Okay, let's say you can get me a Republican and SJC nomination; let's say the Pretender gets himself killed like Hennering and I end up running against some obvious Howards stooge and everyone is stoned on Election Day, so I win. What then? I don't know shit from shinola about being President, and what's more I've got no eyes to learn. It's just not my bag."

"No sweat," Luke said smoothly. "You'll have plenty of political geniuses like yours truly to run things for—"

"Look, Svengali, I'm nobody's front-man, not even yours, and I never will be, and don't you forget it. Think I'm so stupid I don't know where it's at? You and Morris want an image-candidate, an Eisenhower, a Reagan, a fucking mindless celebrity mouthpiece, is all, someone you can package and sell like soap. And the answer is *no*. You so buddy-buddy with Morris, why don't you run yourself?"

"This is a *vidphone*, isn't it?" Luke said bitterly. "Take a good look at the colour of my face and say that again, *shade*."

"Sorry, Luke, I'm *really* sorry," Jack said with that instant belly-radar reflex-reaction that always seemed to tell him when he had drawn blood, intentional or otherwise, with that inner vulnerable little-boy empathy

she had always loved behind the kick 'em in the ass exterior, drawing immediately back.

"You know me, man," Jack said earnestly, "I really don't notice your colour until it smacks me in the face; I'm not giving you some bullshit come-on. Anyway, I really meant it—you're the man should be President, not me. It's your bag, not mine. You've worked all these years in that direction, even though you knew . . . *what you were up against*, and I've been off in an entirely different bag, the show biz scene. Which is yet another good reason for my saying no—who am I to waltz on to your turf and make like top dog? You try and get yourself a phone-in show, and I'll be out to stomp you dead. Let's be friends, but let's each of us stick to his own line of evil."

Sara caught a glimpse of poor wounded Luke (hung up over it even in Berkeley days, she thought. Number one type cat always number two, being black and too hip not to know it was where it would always be at) smiling it away (how brave to be black and still be a man she remembered how contained, hard-edged he had been, even in bed) and saying real cool like Luke cool:

"You know you're right, Clyde. I always knowed I was a better man than you, never thought you'd finally up and admit it" (and Sara, through body remembered senses, knew the triple-level—reality-put-on-reality—of Luke's sarcasm). "But the hard fact is that you can do it and I can't because you're a shade and I'm a nigger—it's as simple as that, and I don't hold it against *you*. But that's why I have to do it through you, why we all have to do it through you. What's the SJC but a collection of coons, Flower People, Baby Bolsheviks and just plain losers, think I kid myself? You're the only big league shade we got going, only cat that can ring in that Republican bread and support. You could be a fucking chimpanzee and we'd have to go with—'cause you're the only ape can win."

Sara felt a pang of the old remembered thing for Luke with the balls to say the truth and the brains to say it right, and though anyone paled beside Jack for her, she felt a warm, snug satisfaction at the memory of how once she had been able to give Lukas Greene some small balm for that ever-open black wound.

"Sorry, Luke," Jack said. "The answer's still no. And you can tell Morris to forget it too. There's no point in even thinking about it any more. N. O. No. No!"

"Okay, Brer Rabbit, I won't throw you into the briar patch," Luke said. "Not today. But I'm telling you right now, I'm gonna stall Morris as long as I can till I can get you to change your mind."

"You won't," Jack said flatly.

"Sara," Luke said, "you tell this prick where it's at. Maybe you can get in through that concrete skull of his. I'm tired, chillun, gonna go lynch me a brace of rednecks or something, y'know, relax. You listen to that chick of yours, Jack. She knows you better than you know yourself, knows the best part of you, part

you still seem to be strangers to. Listen to her, will you, stupid? Later."

And he broke the connection and Jack put away the vidphone and they were staring at each other—the old contest of silence game; who would yell first?

"Jack, I—"

"Do I have to hear it from you too, Sara? Does everyone have to tell me what a fucking cop-out I am? Goddamned broken record. You and Luke . . . you think Luke *really* knows what's coming off? You so sure you do?"

"But, Jack, *President*. . . ." The word was an enormity in her mouth, choking off the impossible thoughts of what it implied.

"President, horseshit! A fucking pipe-dream! You saw the show, Howards' got a fifty-billion-dollar slush fund, whether he can legally spend it or not, the muscle's still there. Bennie Howards is gonna pick the next President, and you better believe it. I let them talk me into that crap, and I have the privilege of losing—not only the Presidency, but the show . . . and maybe a whole lot more. For what, a chance to shoot my mouth off? They *pay* me to do that every week as it is."

"But, Jack" (can't he see himself as I see him?) "you could do it, you're—"

"It's groovy to know your chick thinks you're a little tin god. That and fifteen hundred bucks'll pay the rent for a month on this pad. What'll we do if I blow everything by kamikazeing into Howards, open a cathouse with you as doorprize?"

"But—"

Again, the vidphone chime interrupted. "If this is Morris, I'm gonna tell him to go—" She saw his face change abruptly to a mask of cold calculation, and a cold chill came over her as she looked at the vidphone screen over his shoulder and found herself staring at the grey lizardman deathmask, fear-mask of life and death power of the man who had brought them together again for reasons of his own, the terrible windowless white face of Benedict Howards.

"YOU IMBECILE! You double-crossing smart ass—"

Howards was screaming; Sara could feel hot leather reptile-stench emotions of fear, rage, hate, carrion teeth all but reaching up out of the screen, windowless white teeth around a forked rattlesnake tongue, spitting venom at Jack's throat. The sight of a man of such hideous power, a man who held the secret that could destroy her, destroy Jack and Sara *Barron* again and forever, in such a black mindless rage, terrified her, and she felt like a bird before a cobra indeed.

But the moment Jack spoke the spell was broken.

"Look, Bennie," he said in what Sara recognised as his put-on lazy indifferent style, calculated to infuriate and intimidate those with actual power by an illusion of cooler-than-thou calm. "I've had a rough day and I'm in no mood to listen to you gibber. This is an unlisted number for obvious reasons, and I didn't let Vince give

it to you so you could scream at me like a red-assed baboon with bleeding piles. You got something to say to me, you take a deep breath, count to ten, light up an Acapulco Gold and come on real cool-like, or I'm gonna hang right up on you and put my vidphone on 'reject', dig?"

And in the long moment of silence that followed, Sara felt the weight of it heavy upon her. *Bennie?* Jack called him *Bennie*! Double-cross? Howards said "double-cross"! She sensed the electric conflict of wills humming in the silence between Jack and Benedict Howards across the vidphone circuit; sensed that silence operating on multiple levels of power-guile combat; could read from the tiny image of Howards—reptile rage seeming to contract in on itself into a patchwork façade of iron-control—that Jack was somehow the stronger, and both of them knew it.

"All right, Barron," Howards finally said in a voice like steel, "so I'll assume that I'm talking to a rational human being, not a raving lunatic. A rational human being should know what happens when you double-cross Benedict Howards. I thought we had reached an understanding, you were going to get me off the hook, and then you turn around and—"

"Hey, what's all this double-cross scam?" Jack said (and Sara sensed *this* was no put-on—but what's going on between Jack and Howards?). "I wasn't gonna get you off anything. I just wasn't gonna ram the knife home in the last segment, way I could've. I gave you the chance to talk about research and make points, didn't I? Not my fault if you're not a pro like me. I gave you the perfect lead-in to tell the world how great your immortality research is going, and you blew your big chance to make good in show biz. Come to think of it, you acted pretty funny, almost as if you had something to hide. . . ."

"Never mind all that," Howards said coldly. "We've got some business to transact, remember? You've already cost me Christ knows how many votes in Congress with this last disaster, and it's about time—"

"Not on the phone," Jack said. "My office, two o'clock tomorrow."

"Look, Barron, you've mickeymoused me long enough, and no one plays games with Benedict How—"

Jack laughed what Sara recognised as a calculated laugh, said: "If you insist, Bennie. Of course, I better tell you I'm not alone."

And he stared at her; she could sense worlds behind those eyes, alien worlds of guile and power, Jack-Howards clandestine-combat worlds. And with a pang of fear, she wondered if Jack saw the worlds behind *her* eyes—Howards working on her, twisting her, sending her to him for reasons of his own (was that the *business* they were talking about? Sell-out to Benedict Howards? Am I just a piece of lizardman sure-thing insurance?) and her own plan within Howards' plan . . .

"What?" Howards shouted. "Are you crazy? You want to screw us both? Who—"

"Relax, Bennie," Jack said. "Just my once and future wife, Sara . . . Sara Westerfeld née Barron née Westerfeld. You don't keep secrets from your chick for very long." Jack laughed falsely. "Not as long as your chick can keep secrets from you, anyway," he said.

Sara felt a moment of pure panic. Does Jack *know*? About me and Howards? Has the lizardman told him? Or will Howards tell him now, use me against Jack? Should I tell Jack everything now, is it time? Too soon! Too soon!

But Howards laughed a cold reptile laugh she knew was for *her*, knew he was as good as reading her mind. "Far be it from me to interfere in your love-life, Barron," Howards said, and Sara could feel daggers of sarcasm nibble at her as Howards toyed with her, reminded her of his power to destroy her through Jack—and Jack through her.

"Okay, tomorrow at your office, I'll fly in tonight. And . . . and give my regards to Sara Westerfeld." And he broke the connection.

Jack turned to her, and she felt the hesitation in his eyes, matched by her own. Building within her, she felt the tension of subterfuge, a bubble demanding to be burst. Tell him! Tell him everything! But . . . but is this the time? Will he play *our* game if . . . ? Or will it be the end of everything that ever was between us forever? Forever, a huge word—and a bigger stake.

And she decided that the decision would be Jack's, not hers. If he would tell her, tell her all, tell her that Howards was offering him a place in the Freezers, she would know he was as ready as he'd ever be, and she'd tell him what Howards really was, and together they'd destroy him. . . .

"What was that all about?" she asked blandly, felt the moment, the shadow of his next words, hang like a dagger above their lives, above all that had been, all that might be . . . forever.

Jack hesitated, and she felt the decision-turmoil behind his eyes too, but when he spoke she felt the pregnant moment shoved aside, a trip to the dentist postponed, as she saw the shield go up behind his eyes, universes of danger sheering off from the mutual moment of mortal truth they both individually knew must soon come. "I don't know yet," he said. "But tomorrow I'm going to find out. And . . . trust me till then, Sara. I just can't tell you now."

Deep within her, she sighed in relief, felt the pattern of lies, cop-outs, evasions as a kind of ironic bond between them. But she knew that that bond of falsehood would not last past tomorrow—that after Jack met with Howards, there would either be truth between them . . . or nothing.

"**Y**ESSIR MR. BARRON, NOSSIR Mr. Barron, youstinksir Mr. Barron," Jack Barron muttered, toying with the pack of Acapulco Golds, a sardonic invitation amid the clutter of his desk, his day, his head. Goddamn Carrie, could understand if she quit her job or got the

network to transfer her, who could blame her, not my fault, not hers, but no, the bitch's gotta go on with the show, baby, sit out there with that yessir-nossir crap and that big eat-shit-you-bastard office-smile. Still hung-up on me, or just being a sadist. . . ? Or maybe it's fun and games time, I gotta fire her before she passes "go" or she don't collect two hundred dollars. Well, screw you, Carrie, you can stew in your own bile till your tushy's mushy before I play your game and can you.

Barron pawed out a cigarette, stuck it in his mouth, lit it, then played tease-games with the potsmoke, sucking it in to the back of his throat, dribbling it out without inhaling, wondering whether it would be smart to have the big showdown with Howards loaded. The sweet smoke promised an out from the Lukes and Saras and Carries all playing their dumb little games for dumb little stakes and expecting Jack Barron to lay his whole bod on the line to back their dumb little action.

But *something* held him back, and the fact that he could only sniff a faint aroma (like a week-dead codfish across the street) of that something *really* uptightened him. What's bigger than the Presidency of the United States? he wondered. What's bigger than fifty billion dollars? What the fuck could be that big? *Something* is, I can smell it, feel it like a junkie feels heat coming at him in a squad car fifty blocks away, man it's out there, whatever it is, else Bennie Howards is just plain flipped acting the way he is—and come to think of it, that might be interesting right there, with the cards I'm holding.

But he wondered if the cards he was holding were really as unbeatable as they looked, too damn good for the league I'm playing in, is Bennie really that bad? Am I really that good? Goddamn, Bennie knows something I don't, is what I'm playing this game in the first place for and you know that whatever that something is, it's the ace in the hole for somebody and how the fuck can I know whose ace it is until I know *what* it is?

And whatever it is, baby, it's big, big enough to make Howards blow bubbles with his tongue when he had the opening to make points on the show that I gave him, big enough to scare him shitless when he caught himself almost blowing it—and big enough to make him blow his cool in the first place, and with a reptile like Howards, *that* is like *big*!

Barron snubbed out the joint in an ashtray. No grass today, he told himself. Today Riverboat Jack's in the big game for the big pot and you better be sure your head's all here when Bennie—

"Mr. Barron, Mr. Benedict Howards is here to see you," Carrie's tinny voice said, dry-icewise, over the intercom.

"Send Howards in, Miss Donaldson. Thank you, Miss Donaldson. Go fuck yourself, Miss Donaldson," Barron said, the last without breaking rhythm but after he had snapped off the intercom.

As Howards half-stormed half-slunk through the door, slamming a prop-attaché case stuffed no doubt

with prop-documents down on the desk top and sitting down immediately without speaking like a Russian diplomat arriving at the umpteenthundredth session of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, Barron felt a flash go through him as he saw a Benedict Howards he had never seen before—a stone-seat-grim, efficient Texas speculator who had come from the Panhandle with holes in his pockets and who had fought and connived his way to the fifty-billion-dollar point where he held life versus death power over two hundred and thirty million people, would own the next President of the United States like a Deaf Smith County judge. It was the big leagues all right, and Barron knew it.

But Bennie knows it too, he thought as Howards stared at him like a stone basilisk, waiting for the man whose turf he was on to make the first move. Looking at Howards, Mr. Big League Action himself, looking at him with not anger, not quite fear in his eyes, but cold, and for the first time shrewdly-calculating appraisal, Jack Barron dug the image of power mirroring genuine near-fear of the living colour image of himself—and in Howards' cold eyes granting him the ultimate compliment of emotionless scrutiny, got a heady musk-whiff of his own power.

"All right, Howards," Barron said in a cold voice he saw caught Howards half off-balance, "no bullshit, no pyrotechnics. You're here to do business, I'm here to do business, and we both know it. Give. Make your pitch, and in words of one syllable."

Howards opened his attaché case, laid three copies of a contract on the desk. "There it is, Barron," he said. "A standard Freeze contract in triplicate signed by me, the assets clause marked 'assigned by anonymous donor' and made out to Jack Barron, effective immediately. That's what you throw away if you don't play ball, a Freeze free and clear that no one can take away from you."

"And, of course, that 'anonymous donor' would reveal himself as Benedict Howards, along with a copy of the contract to the press, if I sign it and then don't play ball," Barron said, feeling the calculus of power filling the air with the gold stench of necromancy.

Howards smiled professionally. "I've got to have some insurance," he said. "All right, Barron, just sign on the dotted lines, and we can get down to the business of repairing the damage your big mouth has done to the Freezer Utility Bill."

"That wasn't the deal we made and you know it," Barron said. "You're not hiring a flunkie, you're leasing my specific services as, shall we say, a public relations counsellor. That's free-lance work and it means I gotta know everything about the product I'm supposed to peddle. *Everything*, Howards. And for openers, I gotta know exactly why you're so hot for my body."

"After last night, you ask me that!" Howards snarled. (But Barron saw that the snarl was calculated.) "Thanks to you, the Freezer bill's in real trouble. I need that bill, which means I need votes in Congress, which means I need public pressure on *my* side, which

means I need your pipeline into a hundred million heads, which means, unfortunately, I need you. But don't misunderstand me, you say no to me, then I need your scalp nailed to the barn door, and I'll get it. You're in too deep, Barron. You either play my game, or you don't play any game at all."

"You're lying," Barron said neutrally. "Your Freezer bill was a shoo-in till I started making waves, and I didn't make waves till you started playing footsie with me. So it couldn't have been to save the Freezer bill that you were after my ass for in the first place. Had to be something else, something bigger, and I don't screw around with anything that big till I know exactly what it is."

"I've had enough of you!" Howards snapped, and now Barron was sure he had finally pierced Bennie's cool. "You spend so much time trying to convince me how dangerous you are, all right, all right, I'm convinced. You know what that gets you? It gets you pounded to a pulp, same as I'd smash a scorpion, unless you play ball. Scorpion's deadly, could kill me if I gave it a chance, but that doesn't mean the moment I see it's really become dangerous I can't squash it like a bug. 'Cause it is a bug, and so are you."

"Don't threaten me!" Barron said, half-calculatedly, half responding to adrenalin-signals. "Don't give me the idea I've got my back to the wall. 'Cause if I get to having an itchy back, I'll do a show on the Foundation that'll make the last one seem like a Foundation commercial, and the next will be worse than that, and worse and worse every week till you can get me off the air, and by then, Bennie, it'll be way, way too late."

"You're bluffing, Barron," Howards said. "You don't have the balls to blow your whole career just to get me, and you're not that stupid either, to throw yourself out in the cold, a ruined nobody with no place to go."

Jack Barron smiled. Bennie, you've walked right into it, he thought. You're out of your league after all, big shot, here comes them four aces in the hole.

"F^UNNY YOU SHOULD say that, Bennie," he drawled, "cause the fact is I got all kind of people telling me there's someplace else I *ought* to go."

"That I can believe," Howards said dryly.

"Good to see you've still got a sense of humour, 'cause you're gonna need it. Because if you force me to blow the show by knifing the Foundation, it won't just be crazy revenge. Y'know I got people asking me to do just that, *powerful* people like Gregory Morris and Lukas Greene begging me to play their game and do you in and to hell with *Bug Jack Barron*. And they're offering me something bigger than anything you've laid on the table so far to do it, too," Barron said, and waited for the straight line.

"You're bluffing again," Howards said, "and this time it's really obvious. What could anyone offer you that's bigger than a place in a Freezer, a chance at living forever?"

You're beautiful, Bennie, show biz all the way,

Barron thought as he made with the tailor-made punch-line:

"Would you believe the Presidency of the United States?"

"Would I believe *what*?" Howards goggled, seemed about to say something cute; then Barron sensed him backing off, putting one and one and one together in his head and getting only 2½, not knowing how to react, whether it was a gag, or pure bluff, or some weird new equation of power, sensed that Howards was waiting for him to speak—and sensed status-relationships in a state of uncertain flux.

"Well, would you believe a Presidential nomination?" Barron said, still not quite able to bring himself to use the whole silly schtick seriously. "You know how tight I've always been with the SJC, Founding Father and all that crap; well, when Luke Green saw me dig my spurs into you, he figured I could use the show to build myself up as The Hero of the People at your expense and run for President on the SJC ticket in '88. And without my giving him the go-ahead, he nosed around and now he tells me he really can deliver the Social Justice nomination." Hold the last ace for the showdown, he told himself. Let Bennie walk into it with his jaw.

"So *that's* what you mean by a Presidential nomination!" Howards said, smiling easily. "The SJC nomination and a first class plane ticket just *might* get you to Washington with a good tailwind, and you know it. I don't get it, Barron, you're not dumb enough to throw away a free Freeze over a chance to lose your show and make a public joke out of yourself. That's not even a decent bluff; you're slipping, Barron, you're slipping."

Barron smiled. This is it, he thought. Now I knock you right on your ass, Howards. "You know, Bennie," he said, "that's just about what I told Luke at the time." (He saw Howards relax some more and plunged straight through the hole in the line.) "Yeah, I told him kamikaze's not the name of my game . . . but of course, that was before Greg Morris offered me the *Republican* nomination."

Howards started, went a trifle pale. "That's a lie," he said, but without too much conviction. "You a Republican? With *your* background? Who they supposed to run on the ticket with you, Joe Stalin? You've gotta be stoned to think I'd believe that."

Barron pushed his vidphone across the desk. "You don't have to believe anything," he said. "Call Greene. Call Morris. You're a big boy, Bennie; I'm surprised no one's told you the facts of life yet. Add it up. The Republicans have elected exactly one President since Herbert Hoover, they're desperate, they've gotta win, and as Morris so flatteringly indicated, they'd run Adolph Hitler if that's what a victory would take. The only Chinaman's chance they have of winning is on a fusion ticket with the SJC, and the only man they can run who could get the SJC nomination is yours truly, Jack Barron."

"Ridiculous . . ." Howards said, but his voice was thin and unconvincing. "The Republicans and the SJC hate each other worse than either of 'em hate the Democrats. They don't agree on anything. They could never get in bed together."

"Ah, but they do agree on one thing," Barron said. "They agree on *you*. They're both against the Freezer Utility Bill and the Foundation for Human Immortality—and there's your fusion platform. They don't run me against Teddy the Pretender or whatever stooge you may still be able to ram down the Democrats' throats. I run against *you*, Howards. I use *Bug Jack Barron* to hang you around the Democratic candidate's neck like a rotten albatross stinking from coast to coast, and I run against *that*. Get the picture? Win or lose, the Foundation gets cut to pieces in the process. And win or lose, it'd mean you couldn't muscle me off the air because even though the Republicans can't deliver votes anymore, most of the fat cats in the country are still behind 'em. Pressure my sponsors and the GOP can line up ten others. Republican-type bread still controls three out of four networks and still has as much leverage with the F.C.C. as you do."

"It's . . . it's absurd," Howards said weakly. "You could never win. The Democrats can't lose, haven't lost but twice in over half a century."

"You're probably right," Barron said. "But that's not the point; I've got no eyes to be President. Point is, in a campaign like that *you* lose no matter who wins. By the time I'm finished working on you, you'll stink so bad the Democratic candidate—even if he is your stooge—will have to jump up and down on your bleeding body to win. And who really knows. . . ? Tom Dewey was a sure winner in '48. . ."

"You're turning my stomach," Howards said. "A Commie cretin like you even thinking about being President. . ."

Barron shrugged it off. "So do your patriotic duty," he said. "And save your own skin while you're at it. I don't have eyes for the White House. Buy me. I'm sitting here waiting to be bought. My cards are all on the table. Let's see what *your* hole card is. And it better be good, 'cause if you don't come clean now, you won't have another chance."

Barron felt the moment hanging high and cool in thin air between them like the Continental Divide. Like being high on Big Stuff, he thought as he studied the gears meshing, tumblers falling into place behind Howards' cold rodent eyes. He's bought it, he thought, or anyway he's not laughing it off, shit the whole schtick's *real*. Look at the cat measuring me measuring himself against me measuring fifty million bucks life and death power against nothing but a fancy pyramid of bullshit, and, baby, you got him going, got your hot little hands around his throat. How's it feel, Bennie, to finally meet a cat looks like he's your size?

What the fuck, Barron suddenly realised, it's no shuck, I *am* his size—smarter, trickier, thinking circles around him, Jack Barron's *anyone's* size. Who's a



better man, Luke, Morris, Teddy, Howards. . . ? Just bigger muscles, is all, you really be afraid of any of 'em in a fair fight? Just men like you, is all, and probably not even as well hung. Crazy to imagine myself as President, know damn well the job's too big . . . but maybe it's too big for *anyone*, and deep inside anyone who's ever looked across that Rubicon's gotta think he's getting flippy. It's all a game of bluff, money, power, President—life is all—and who wrote *that* book but good old Jack Barron? Anybody's got the openers can play to win in any game, is *that* what Sara sees?

He almost half-hoped Howards would call him, tell him to get stuffed, push him off the cliff into unknown waters, felt like a power-junkie sitting on top the Mother Lode, the Last Big High sitting in his spike, and who knows how it would come out, who really knows? Whee! he thought, brat-wise, that hole card of yours had better be good, Bennie!

"Look at me, Barron," Howards finally said. "What do you see?"

"Let's not get into. . . ." Barron began to snap back, then stopped as he saw the strange, strange manic

junkie look creeping like a plague into Howards' glistening eyes.

"Yeah, Barron," Howards said, smiling a mirthless reptile smile. "Take a good look. You see a man in his fifties in pretty good shape, right? Take another look ten years from now, twenty, a century, a million years from now, and you know what you'll see? You'll see a man in his fifties in pretty good shape is what you'll see. A decade from now a century from now a thousand years from now—forever, Barron, *forever*. I'm not just a man now, I'm something *more*. You said it yourself, four billion dollars a year is a lot of money to spend on immortality research without getting results. Well my boys finally *got* results and you're looking right at 'em. I'm immortal, Barron, *immortal*. You know what that means? I'll never get older, I'll never die. Can you feel it? Can you taste it? To wake up every morning and smell that air and know you'll be smelling it every morning for the next million years . . . maybe forever. Dumb joke the doctor made: they won't know if I'll live forever till I've lived forever. No data, see? But Benedict Howards is gonna give 'em their data, gonna live forever, *forever*. . . . You see what you're up against, Barron? An immortal—like a god! Think I'd let *anything* stand between me and that? Would you?"

"No . . ." Barron whispered, for the look on Howards' face told him in flaming letters a mile high that it was true. True!

IMMORTALITY! he thought. Even the word doesn't sound real. Forever. To really live forever. Never to die, to be young and strong and healthy for a million years. Explains where Bennie's head's at, shit for that a man would do just about anything. *Just about*. . . ? And to think this perambulating pile of shit's got it. Immortality. This motherfucker lives for the next million years, he'll still stink like the pile of shit he is, laughing for a million years while I rot in the ground we all rot and shit-eating Bennie goes on and on and on. . . .

"I'm gonna buy you, Barron," Howards said, reaching into his attaché case. "Down to the soles of your feet, right now." He pushed another Freeze contract in triplicate across the desk at Barron. "That's a very special contract," he said, "first one of its kind. Just like the other one, but with one important difference—there's a clause in there entitling you to any immortality treatment the Foundation shall develop at your own discretion. And we've *got* an immortality treatment now. Forever, Barron, forever! You give me a couple lousy years out of your life to put over my bill, elect me a President and . . . sew things up, and I give you the next million years. Even if you *could* be President, what's eight lousy years? Take it from the only man in the world who really knows, eight years ain't even worth thinking about; it's less than the blinking of an eye from where I stand. From where *you* can stand. . . ."

"Who do you think you are, Howards, the devil?" And even as he said them, the words filled him with a mortal dread he had never believed it would ever be possible for him to feel. Funny word, he thought, *devil*. Cat with a long spiked tail knows the secret, *the secret*, everybody's secret everybody's price and got the bread to meet it too, no matter what it is, and what you give him in return is a thing called a soul, *immortal* soul, ain't it, supposed to be the biggest thing a man's got to give. Immortal soul means like young and healthy and alive in paradise forever—price the devil *gets* is the fee Howards *gives*. Devil, shit, he's just a bushier; Bennie can outbid him anytime! Satan, watch out the Foundation don't foreclose the mortgage!

"I take it back, Howards," he said. "Beside you, the devil's on welfare. Just my name in ink on the dotted line? I don't have to sign it in blood? Copies for me that I can keep in a very safe place? Not subject to cancellation or exorcism?"

"A thousand copies if you want 'em, Barron, an iron-clad contract even *I* couldn't break. Yours, forever—all you gotta do is sign."

Sara! Barron suddenly thought. "Sara?" he said. "My wife . . . same deal in her name too?"

Benedict Howards smiled a sulphur smile. "Why not? I can afford to be generous, in fact I can afford just about anything. Secret of my success, Barron: I can afford to destroy any enemy, and I can afford to give any man I want to buy anything he wants . . . including, if he comes that high and he's worth it, eternal life. Come on, Barron, we both know you're gonna do it. Sign on the dotted line."

Barron fingered the contracts; his eyes fell on the pen sitting on his desk. He's right, he thought. Immortality with Sara forever, I'd be an idiot not to sign. He picked up and his eyes met the eyes of Benedict Howards.

And saw Howards staring greedily at him like some monstrous mad toad. But behind the egomaniacal madness, he saw fear—fear as naked as Howards' megalomania, an unguessable feral fear feeding his madness, giving it strength; he realised that Howards' whole crazy power-drive was fuelled on fear. And Benedict Howards was afraid of *him*.

Something's rotten in Colorado, Barron knew for certain. With this in his pocket and fifty billion dollars, Bennie can buy anyone and everyone he needs. So why's he need *me* so bad to pass some lousy bill when he can buy Congress, the President and the fucking Supreme Court? And he *does* think he needs me, look at that hunger in those eyes! He's after my bod because somehow he *really* needs it to fight whatever he's afraid of, and if he's afraid of it and I'm supposed to be some kind of sacrificial front man, where's that leave *me*?

"Before I sign," Barron said (conceding to himself that he would) "would you mind telling me why, with *this* kind of action going, you think you need *me*?"

"I need public support," Howards said, frantically earnest. "It's the one thing I can't buy directly. That's

why I need you, to sell immortality to that goddamned public of yours."

"To sell immortality? You crazy? You need a salesman for immortality like you need a salesman for money!"

"That's the point," Howards said. "You see we do have an immortality treatment, but it's . . . it's . . . *very expensive*. Maybe we can treat a thousand people a year at about a quarter a million a throw, but that's *it*, and it'll be it for years, decades, maybe always. That's what you've gotta sell, Barron—not immortality for everyone, but immortality for a few, a select few, a few *I* select."

Barron's instant reaction was disgust, at Howards, at himself even as he felt his second reaction—all questions now answered and the game was worth the candle. But his third reaction was caution—this was the biggest thing there ever was and more dangerous than the H-bomb, get involved in *that*?

"This treatment," he said, "what is it?"

"That's none of your business, and that's final. It's a Foundation secret and it stays a Foundation secret no matter what," Howards said, and Barron was sure he had hit bottom, pushed Howards as far he would ever go. "If . . . if *that* got out . . ." Howards mumbled, caught Barron catching him, clamped his mouth tight shut.

But you don't put one over on Jack Barron, Bennie! Shit, he's willing to let out that immortality's gonna be only for a few fat cats, he thought, and he thinks I can shove *that* down people's throats, but he's afraid to let anyone know what the treatment is. Must be some treatment! That's what he's scared of, and if it scares *him*. . . What the hell could it be, his immortals all end up Transylvania vampires? Hell . . . maybe that's not so funny. Immortality sure, but what the hell's he getting me into? But . . . but is there *anything* so rank it isn't worth doing if you have to do it to live forever?

"I need time, Howards," he said. "You can see that. . ."

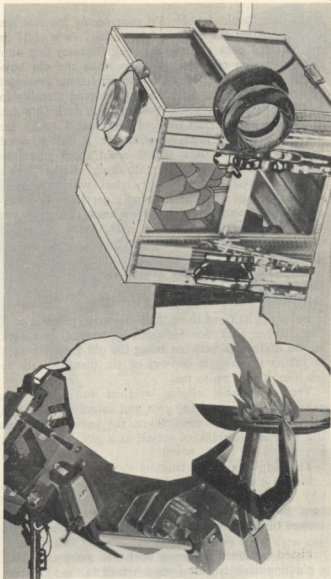
"Jack Barron turning chicken?" Howards sneered. "I'll give you time, I'll give you twenty-four hours, not a minute more. I'm tired of talking; the only words I'll listen to from you from here on in are yes or no."

And Jack Barron knew that the game was played out, the time for negotiation was over. And he had no idea of what his answer could possibly be.

CHAPTER TEN

THE VIDPHONE CHIME began to sound again. Sara Westerfeld walked barefoot over to the wall complex, reached for the phone, hesitated, then once again let it lapse into silence without answering it.

Still feels like this is strictly Jack's pad with me just hanging around, she thought, not *our* place with me having as much right to move things around or answer the phone as he does. Phone keeps ringing, but would Jack want to me to answer it or not. . . ? Who knows,



might be more of this President thing . . . or even Howards? (No, Jack's supposed to be seeing Howards himself now.)

Truth is, she admitted, I still can't start thinking like Sara Barron again. Sara *Barron'd* answer the phone if Jack wasn't here, 'cause she'd know who she was, where she stood, where Jack stood, be able to react to anything. But Sara Westerfeld was still someone from the past, someone who didn't know where she stood in Jack's present world, didn't even know the shape or limits of that world, and when she did, might or might not accept them, might or might not be able to make the quantum jump back to being Sara *Barron*.

And might or might not be able to cut it with Jack, she knew. It was easy to let the lizardman bulldoze me into going back to a Jack I thought I hated—Howards' high-paid whore was all I started out to be—had nothing to lose, either be able to bring back the Jack I once loved, or walk away with no regrets from cop-out *Bug Jack Barron* Jack.

But how could I know I'd start seeing for real the Jack I thought I'd have to fake seeing? Is it real? Is the old Jack back already, my Jack Berkeley boy now a man playing real man-game to make the old boy-dreams real, destroy Howards, Social Justice President of the United States, attic dream becoming a reality in ways we never imagined? Wouldn't *that* Jack hate me, knowing I thought so little of him that I could use him to get us Frozen, gamble like a cold-blooded windowless white lizard that I could shock him into becoming what he really was all along? And if Jack's really involved in some dirty deal with Howards, wouldn't it just help the lizardman get Jack for whatever filth he wants him for, if he knew that Howards was able to buy and use even me? Could . . . could that be what Howards was planning all along? Seeing through me seeing through him, letting me think I was putting one over and *that* setting me up as his secret weapon against Jack. . . ? *Wanting* me to tell Jack everything?

But if it's half one thing, half the other, plans in conflict, neither Jack nor Howards in control, and Jack on the knife-edge between being the old Berkeley Jack or taking the biggest cop-out of all, then I've *got* to tell him, it's all up to me. . . .

The unbearable choice weighed heavy on her, existential choice holding past and future time-lines in mortal balance, a *woman*-choice, she knew, and it was still hard not to think of herself as a *girl*, helpless in a larger-than-life man's world.

The vidphone began chiming again.

Maybe it's Jack? she suddenly realised. Maybe that's why it keeps ringing, anyone else'd figure no one's here, but Jack knows I'm here, knows I might not answer till I knew it was him ringing again and again . . .

Pissed at herself for being unable to make even such a piddling decision, she forced herself to the vidphone, made the connection.

And felt abysmal regret, cold numb terror clean through her, as the windowless white face of Benedict Howards stared out at her with knowing rodent eyes from the vidphone screen.

"It's about time you decided to answer the phone," Howards said. "I've been trying to get you for half an hour. What's the matter with you?"

"You . . . you were calling me?" Sara stammered, feeling serpent-coils winding themselves around her.

"I wouldn't be calling Barron, would I?" Howards said. "Not since I just spoke to him in the flesh. Of course I'm calling you. We're . . . *business associates*, remember?" And Howards smiled an awful, I-own-you, crocodile smile.

"Now you listen and you listen good," Howards said. "Barron is on his way home, far as I know. I've made my final offer to him and he's got about twenty-three hours to complete your end of our little bargain, or no Freeze for either of you. So you start working on him the moment he gets there, and you better make

it good."

From the greater fear of losing the Jack she had found again, Sara mustered the courage to face the lesser fear, held up her head in her mind's eye, said: "I don't care about that anymore. I've got *Jack* now, and nothing's as important to me as that anymore. You brought us together for your own dirty reasons, but you didn't understand that we love each other, always have, always will. And that's all that matters now."

"Have it your way," Howards said. "But just remember, all I have to do is tell Barron what you are, my whore, Miss Westerfeld, and where's your great love then?"

"Jack will understand. . . ."

"Will he? Will he want to? Will he believe you or me? He'll believe me because he'll want to, after what I've offered him."

"You think you're so smart," Sara said, "but you're a fool, you don't understand what love is, stronger than anything you can use to buy people. . . ."

Howards leered at her, and she realised he had anticipated *her every action* in the serpent-lair of his mind. "You think so?" Howards said. "But there's something stronger than any . . . *mortal* love—immortal love. Barron loves you, eh? Would a man who loves you be willing to let you die when he could give you the greatest gift a man can give a woman instead? Greatest gift a man can give himself?"

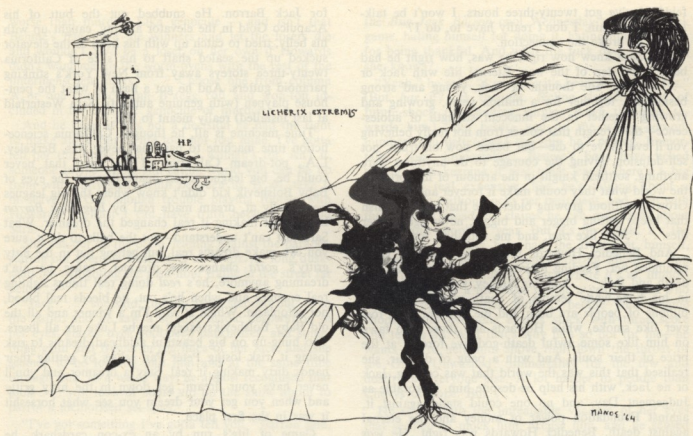
Sara felt something foul and gigantic in Howards' voice speaking of things she didn't want to know, things that might really be stronger than love, monstrous jungle truths with great gleaming fangs of bone leering from lipless reptile mouths; but she felt herself fascinated, drawn on by the primal dawn-marsh stink that seemed to hover over Howards' image on the vidphone screen.

"What . . . what could be stronger than love?" she said.

"Life," said Benedict Howards. "Without life you got nothing, no love, no taste of good food in your mouth, no nothing. Whatever anyone wants the most, he loses it all when he's dead. And that's what I'm buying Barron with, life itself."

"You call that life, a body lying stiff and cold in a Freezer? You think Jack'd give up what really mattered to him for that, thirty or forty years for now?"

"He might," said Howards. "He just might. But that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the real thing, Miss Westerfeld, *immortality*. Look at me! I'm immortal, my scientists have made the breakthrough Immortal! I'll never get older, I'll never die. Words, just words to you, what else can they be? But there are no words for what it's really like, to wake up in the morning knowing you're gonna live for centuries, forever! *That's* what I'm offering Barron, the next million years, immortality. Think he'd rather have you? Would you rather have him if the choice were yours? Immortality, Miss Westerfeld! Can you imagine what



it's like to know you're not like ordinary men, don't have to die? Can you imagine anyone turning their back on it? Can you imagine anything Barron wouldn't do to live forever? Can you imagine anything you wouldn't do? *Love*? How much is love worth when you're dead?"

"It's not true!" she cried. "You can't be able to do it, not *you* . . ." Not you, you bloodless reptile, not with your plastic frozen money, not buying it like you buy everyone and everything, not Benedict Howards with power over death forever on and on and on, webs of hate and power spinning on and on forever from your bone-white lizard-lair, it just isn't *right*.

But Howards' cold eyes stared straight through her, his lips parted in a thin smile, and she felt him dragging her thoughts, sucking up her hate, fear, sense of wrongness; letting her know he knew the loathing she felt. And letting her know he found it amusing.

"It is true, isn't it?" she said quietly. "You really can make Jack immortal. . . ." And she imagined Jack, knowing what could be his, loving her, being Jack Barron and. . . . And *what*? Can he love me enough to die with me in forty or fifty years when he can have forever? And I thought I had an impossible decision to make! But Jack . . . to choose between love and immortality. And it struck her like a sledgehammer:

Howards has to be working on me because he knows Jack *hasn't* decided. He wants *me* to make Jack choose immortality. And . . . and maybe he's right, how can I want anything less than immortality for Jack, sell him on . . . on death? Even though . . . even though I die and Jack has to go on alone forever. . . . Oh you miserable shit, Howards! Why is a bastard like you so fucking clever?

"Not only Barron," Howards said. "Anyone I choose. You, for instance. You're right about one thing: Barron loves you. First thing he asked when I made the offer was for immortality for you too. And. . . ."

The cruelty in Howards' eyes raped her as he smirked, waited for her to ask the question, sucking pleasure like a junkie from watching her squirm.

"And?"

Howards laughed. "Why not?" he said. "I can afford it. It's a nice little daisy-chain this way—I buy Barron with immortality for the both of you, and I buy you with the same thing and I buy your help in making sure he sells. Three for the price of one. You can have love and life, both forever. Think about that, you and Barron forever! And if you don't deliver, I tell Barron everything and you've blown it all—him and immortality. That's not such a hard choice, is it, Miss Wester-

feld? You've got twenty-three hours. I won't be talking to you again. I don't really have to, do I?"

And he broke the connection.

And Sara knew how right he was, how right he had been every step of the way. Eternal life with Jack or . . . *nothing*. She thought of Jack, young and strong beside her, together for a million years, growing and growing together in the innocent strength of adolescence—the strength that comes from not really believing you'll ever have to die—but based now on truth, not self-delusion, giving the courage to do anything, dare anything, softflesh knight in the armour of immortality, the world what they could make it forever and ever. . . . Growing without growing older, like that ocean sunfish that keeps getting bigger and bigger, never ages, never dies. . . . Jack like *that*, and me with him forever!

And Benedict Howards forever, a small sly voice reminded her. Feeding forever on power and fear and death and Jack. . . . Jack his flunkey, keeping him there in his bone-white temple of death while aeons and billions of people are born and die and are gone forever like smoke, while Howards and those who fawn on him like some awful death-god live forever at the price of their souls. And with a pang of despair, she realised that this was the world that was coming, Jack or no Jack, with his help or despite him, inexorable as Judgement Day, and no one could stand against it, against Foundation power of money and life eternal against death. Benedict Howards was right. He was almost a god, god of life and death. God on the side of evil and nothingness. The Black Christ and no one his size to stand against him.

No one but . . . but Jack Barron! she thought. Oh yes! yes! Jack's smarter than Howards, stronger than me. If Howards makes us immortal, what hold can he have over Jack then? If Jack's already got all that Howards has to give, and if he hates Howards the way I hate him. . . . Not even Benedict Howards could stand against Jack Barron then—the full, true Jack Barron, fighting for me and for himself and for hate and for everything we ever believed in, armoured in immortality!

She felt proud and afraid, realising what was in her hands, and hers alone. Billions of immortal lives, and hers, and Jack's. Jack was strong, clever; he would know how to keep immortality and destroy Howards too, bring immortality to the whole world. President, maybe. . . ? Luke thinks so. . . . What could Howards do then? Yes! Yes! It was all in her hands, she could make Jack immortal, make him hate, wake him up to what he was always meant to be. She could do it; she only had to be brave alone for one moment in a life that could be endless.

And I will! she vowed. And as she waited for Jack to arrive, she savoured what it was at last to think of herself as a woman. *Sara Barron*.

CATCHING HIM PREOCCUPIED, the stomach-drop of the elevator was just one more jolt in a day of jolts

for Jack Barron. He snubbed out the butt of his Acapulco Gold in the elevator ashtray, caught up with his belly, tried to catch up with his head as the elevator sucked up the sealed shaft to his slice of California twenty-three storeys away from New York's stinking paranoid gutters. And he got a flash of what the penthouse playpen (with genuine authentic Sara Westerfeld at last installed) really meant to him.

Time machine is all, he thought. California science-fiction time machine to past that never was, Berkeley, L.A., pot-dream California of the mind that never could be, big league action image through the eyes of Baby Bolshevik kid didn't know where the big leagues were really at, dream made real by *Bug Jack Barron* bread—but making it real changed the dreamer. What Sara just can't understand—got the balls to do it, sure you can make dreams real, but getting out in the nitty gritty's *gotta* change the dreamer, 'cause he ain't dreaming anymore, he's *real* doing real things fighting real enemies and when he's cut, he bleeds real blood, not ectoplasm. Which is why I'm a winner and all the old Baby Bolsheviks except maybe Luke are all losers. Too hung-up on big beautiful acidhead dreams to risk losing it, risk losing Peter Pan selves by getting their hands dirty making it real. Stay a dreamer and you'll never have your dream; get down in the nitty gritty and when you get your dream you see what horseshit it was in the first place.

Game of life's run by an ex-con cardsharp, he thought morosely as the elevator came to a stop and the door opened. Deck's marked dice is loaded and the only way you don't go home in a barrel is to play by the house rules, namely no holds barred. Especially when you're playing for immortality stakes with a cat like Howards.

He crossed the foyer, entered the dark hall, heard a Beatle album playing, picked up on the subliminal presence of Sara. And he remembered that he had to decide for her too; her immortality was in the big pot too. Feeling her presence filling the apartment with Saraness, making the joint at last a home, it was impossible to believe that the gestalt that was the total Sara could ever cease to be, become nothing more than a random pattern of inert food for the worms.

But it *can*, he thought. Doesn't have to now, but it can, and the cat who can do it is Jack Barron. Say no to Howards, you're not only coming on with kamikazee schtick, you're murdering the only woman you ever love, and so what if it's forty years from now, so what if she never knows it, it's still murder, is all. Ugliest word there is, *murder*. No holds barred is the name of the game, but don't put yourself on, Barron, at murder even you draw the line. Only crime that's always wrong no matter what the circumstances, murder. Blowing Bennie's brains out'd just be *killing*, and that's cool, but letting Sara die when you can save her just by signing your name, that's murder.

Yeah sure, but how do you know what you're getting into if you *do* sign that contract, could be things

worse than murder. Like genocide — and isn't that Bennie's bag, save the winners and let the losers die and wouldn't Sara be a loser on her own if Howards didn't want me, to the worm-ovens with the rest of the untermenschen losers. . . ? Choose one from column A or one from column B (egg roll and won-ton included in the dinner): genocide or murder.

And he knew it was not a decision he had the right to make alone. Sara's life too, not just mine. I've gotta tell her the whole thing, what a woman's for, isn't it, someone in the whole shit-eating world you can be up front with, nitty-gritty truth between us, is all, take it or leave it. Got enough trouble playing footsie with Howards; at least I can have truth between me and Sara.

She was out on the patio, leaning against the parapet, staring out over the East River at Brooklyn, long dusk-shadows twilighting the rush-hour traffic in the street far below.

"Jack . . ." she said, turning as he stepped out on to the patio; and he saw a strange manic desperation in her eyes, glazed over pool-deep darknesses, and something grim and fragile in the lines of her face, and she seemed to be looking into him and at the same time through him. In a weird way, he almost recognised that look . . . yes, look of some vip on the show about to parrot a memorised set-spiel.

"I've got something I've gotta tell you," Barron said, crossing the terrace, leaning against the parapet close enough to taste her breath but unable to bring himself to touch her.

"And I've got something I have to tell you," she said, and he saw her jawline go white, a pulse twitch in her left temple.

"Later, baby," Barron said, knowing it was now or never. Whatever's uptighting you can wait, Sara, he thought. Either you'll forget all about it, or you'll *really* be uptight after I lay it all on you.

"It's about me and Howards," he said. "I suppose by now you know there's some hanky-panky going on there, and I owe it to you to let you in on what's shaking. And big things are shaking, bigger than you could ever imagine, bigger than all this President bullshit, bigger than. . . . Bigger than anything's ever been, bigger than anything you can even think of. Bennie Howards is hot for my bod, Sara. He needs me, he needs *Bug Jack Barron* to push through his Freezer bill, to . . . to put over something . . . well, something people just won't stomach. He's desperate, he's hotter for my bod than Luke or Morris or—"

"I know . . ." she said in a tiny voice all but drowned out by the rush-hour traffic-roar from the street below, and he sensed a huge electric potential tension charge building between them, reached out for her hand gripping the cement lip of the parapet to bleed off the electric hum in the air between them, and her skin was rubber cold and dry. As if she were a thousand miles away talking through vidphone circuit insulation, and he found with a kind of relief that he was slipping into

the *Bug Jack Barron* cool Wednesday night feedback game, hating himself for doing it, hating himself worse for being thankful. And what the fuck does she mean, she knows?

"Yeah," he said, "I suppose it's been pretty obvious." (But *has* it? he thought, feeling danger-signals of future-shock precognition surging down time-towards him.) "But before you do the whole cop-out number, you better hear the coin he's paying. Immortality, Sara, immortality! Bennie's boys have licked ageing. He's keeping it real quiet 'cause there's a big catch—it's real expensive, like he's talking about a quarter of a million bucks per treatment, and even with that kind of bread, he claims he can only treat about a thousand people a year. But it's no shuck; it's the real thing. He says he's had the treatment himself, and when you listen to him gibbering about it, you *know* he's not bullshitting. That's where it's at, immortality for maybe a thousand people a year, people who can get up a quarter million, people who Bennie chooses, and everyone else is stuck with three score and ten, is all. And that's why he's so hot for me—he wants me to help him shove *that* down the throat of the Great Unwashed: immortality for the few and death for everyone else. A lot harder to peddle than Cheys or dope. But. . . ."

He stared into the unreadable vacuum of her eyes that seemed to mock him, accuse him, and he sensed his words going straight through her like a commercial out across the city of Brooklyn and beyond, and she seemed to be waiting for something, and he waited for her to speak, scream, yell, jump up and down, do something, anything, react. But she just stood there, and even the pressure of her hand in his didn't change and Barron felt cold and afraid and didn't know why.

"\$250,000," he said. "But for us, free. That's the deal, Sara. I agree to play ball with Howards, and we both get ironclad contracts out in front. That's the decision I've gotta make by tomorrow—sign the contracts and we both have immortality, or tell Howards to fuck off and throw it all away. And not just immortality—he'll cream me, try to cost me the show, and I'll have to play games with Greg Morris & Co. just to keep our heads above water. Some choice! But it's got to be *our* choice, not just mine. . . ."

"I know, Jack," she said. "I know it all."

"Come on, will you?" Barron snapped, bugged at the deep unreadable pools behind her eyes (damn big soulful brown eyes, Christ knows what's really behind them, Christ knows if *anything's* behind 'em but Peter Pan acid bullshit—where *is* your head, Sara?). "Okay, so it's hard to get down, but don't just stand there gaping at me, and what the hell you mean you know it all?"

SHE PULLED HER hand away from his, touched his cheek, then let her hand fall to her side, and when she spoke, she looked away from him, down, down at the brawling, honking streets of rush-hour Manhattan,

and from the set of her jaw, the quaver in her voice, Barron knew she was staring down, deep down, into some private freak-out snakepit.

"You're not the only person Benedict Howards' used," she said. "That . . . that monster can buy anyone, *anyone*, Jack. He's the most thoroughly evil man in the world, and now he can go on buying people and using people and holding life and death power over people forever. . . ." He's evil, and clever, and totally amoral and he can give anyone anything they want. Everyone's got his price, and Howards can afford anyone he needs to buy, that's what he told me, and I didn't believe it, but now . . . now. . . . Oh Jack, is it wrong to want to live forever, everyone wants to live forever, and I want to live forever, does that make me so rotten, so. . . ? Jack!"

And she whirled, flung herself into his arms, not sobbing but clutching him to her with manic strength. But even as his reflexes passed soothing hands over her back, Barron went steel-cold as he struggled with her words, rejected them, felt them stinging back like dry-ice bees.

He pushed her away, holding her shoulders at arms' length, stared into her stricken face, muttered: "You . . . Howards. . . ?"

"You've got to, Jack. . . ." she said (her lips began to quiver, her eyes were wet, she was shaking in his rough hands). "Don't you see? If you sign the contracts, then we're immortal, we've got all that Howards can give and no one can take it away from us. Don't you see? You're the only man in the world can stop him, destroy him. You're the only man big enough to stand up to Benedict Howards and his loathsome Foundation. You've got to! There's no one else! But I don't want to die, I don't want you to die. . . . Sign the contracts, and then . . . then we can fight him together, and he can't do anything to hurt us. . . ."

Barron shook her, shaking himself. "What the fuck is this? Stop gibbering, damn you, Sara, and tell me what this is about." But he knew with dread certainty what it was all about. Bennie got to her, he thought. Somehow, somehow, the slimy motherfucker got to her, found the handle. . . . The—

"I love you," she sobbed. "You've gotta believe I love you. I did it because I love you. I love you, Jack, I always loved you, I'll always—"

Barron slammed her body up against the parapet. "Cut the shit," he said cruelly, feeling the cruelty cut into her cut into him, grim nitty-gritty razor of reality, and way down there below, he heard the sounds of metal and rubber and concrete abrading synthetic world of steel cutting edges way down there below him. "In words of one syllable—what's the scam with you and Benedict Howards?" And he felt himself coming on like living colour Jack Barron backing up a vip into a corner. And knew no other way to react.

He saw Sara stare blankly into his eyes with numb, wet eyes like those of a mindless parrot, as she spat it out, spat it all out like pieces of rotten meat:

"He . . . he had me dragged to his Long Island Freezer; he promised me a free Freeze contract if I got you to sign one. I told him to go to hell. But . . . but that man sees right into your guts, sees what he wants to see, and he knows how to use it, knows more about the dirty places inside you than you do yourself. He knew . . . knew deep down I still loved you, before I knew it myself . . . and . . . and when he offered me a chance to live forever and all I had to do to get it was go back to you. . . . Don't you see, I wanted you, I never stopped wanting you, just stopped *knowing* it, and when Howards gave me an *excuse* to go back to you, a good excuse. . . . He conned me into conning myself into thinking I could con you. I thought I hated you, but I thought maybe I could change you back to the Jack you were meant to be if I went back to you and got you to sign the contracts and then . . . then did just what I'm doing now, tell you everything, show you what a swine Howards is, kind of man you're involved with stops at nothing, and how a man like that can make *anyone* climb right down there in his sewer with him. . . . Oh Jack, how you must hate me now!"

Barron let her go, smiled crookedly as he saw her crying big wet tears like a cocker spaniel just shit on the rug waiting to be kicked. Hate you? he thought. Hate you for playing games with Howards, where does that leave *me*? Don't have enough hate to spare on you, too much hate for that cocksucker Howards playing with my silly chick's head, chick with no defences at all against big league Foundation action—shit, who *wouldn't* play footsie for a free Freeze chance to live forever? Wouldn't you? Didn't you? Aren't you? Where it's at, is all.

He looked past her at the dusk-lights of Brooklyn, past the East River murk, over the roaring, cursing New York traffic, steel jungle carnivore noises clashing twenty-four hours a day, and even in his little California, twenty-three storeys above it all, he knew there was no escaping the nitty-gritty gutter-reality, daisy-chain power reality that made the world go round chasing its tail up its asshole—not for Sara or Luke or Brackett Audience Count estimated hundred million people. Or Jack Barron.

Either you grow teeth, or you end up fed to the fishes.

"I'm too pissed to hate you," he said. "Maybe I even owe Bennie a favour for growing you up, way I never could. Maybe you won't yell cop-out so loud now, 'cause Bennie's right, we all got a price. Cat thinks he don't just hasn't been offered *his* price yet. Hate you, I gotta hate myself, and I just don't dig the masochist schtick. So you hated me when you came back to me, did it to have a chance to live forever, play Baby Bolshevik games with my head on the side. In a funny way, I respect that—what I would've done in your place, after all. Question is, do you really love me now?"

"I never loved you more in my whole life," she said, and he saw the funky worship-look in her eyes, and

warmth went through him from the tip of his toes, curled around his ears as he clocked the hot hungry love for *him*, not for living colour image-Jack-Barron, not Baby Bolshevik Galahad cheap-talk bullshit hero . . . *Me*, he thought. Maybe she finally digs *me*, where I'm really at—wherever the fuck *that* is!

"Likewise," he said, and he kissed her a soft and tender first kiss type kiss, mouths open tasting each-other like for the first time, but tongues apart, love-kiss without passion, and he never remembered kissing her quite like this before.

"You'll do it?" she said, arms around his waist, face inches from his, earnest little-girl conspiracy face, playing games even now, and how can I put it down when it's so like me?

"Do what?" he said, smiling a vidphone gambit, put-on smile.

"Sign the contracts. . . ."

"I'd be a schmuck not to, wouldn't I?" Jack Barron said. And that's where it is at, isn't it? he thought. Who's a big enough schmuck to choose death? You know that real good, don't you, Bennie?

"But you won't . . . you won't play that horrible reptile's game. . . ." she said (and he saw that damned old Berkeley look creep back into her eyes, Jack and Sara versus the Forces of Evil, won't she ever grow up all the way? Do you really want her to?). "All those people out there who trust you, whether you like it or not . . . you *can't* sell out all those people who believe in you, let them die just because we've got ours. I mean, once we've got immortality for ourselves, you've gotta fight Howards. You're the only man can stop him, the man a hundred million people believe in, the only man Howards is afraid of, you're . . . you're *Jack Barron* and sometimes I think you're the only one doesn't know what Jack Barron is. You can't be Howards' flunky, a stooge, a . . . You're *Jack Barron*!"

Barron hugged her to him, looked out over the teeming streets, the lights of Brooklyn stretching from coast to coast, as she buried her face in his neck, a hundred million tv antenna Wednesday night eyes all on him, and what would *they* say, those image-vampires, if they knew it all?

Play *our* game, is what they'd say, he knew. Lay your ass on the line for us, boy, you owe it to us. No different from Luke or Morris or Bennie, all thinking they own my bod—except they don't have the stake to play the game.

Yeah, just like Bennie. Everybody wants to own poor old Jack Barron, and nobody's got the word that Jack Barron owns *himself*, is all.

Jack Barron pulled the warmth of his woman to him, said: "Don't worry, Sara, I don't play Howards' game." (Or anyone else's.)

Fuck you, Bennie! he thought. Fuck you all! None of you, not Bennie, not Luke, not the Great Unwashed losers down there, not even you, Sara, is gonna own Jack Barron!

(To be continued)

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Langdon Jones reviews
"Titus Groan" by
Mervyn Peake

AFTER READING MY article on the work of Mervyn Peake in NEW WORLDS 176, an acquaintance wrote to me accusing me of inventing the whole thing, and refusing to believe that Mervyn Peake actually existed. There can now be no doubt in his mind. The publication of the "Titus" trilogy in hard-cover in the U.S.A.; the simultaneous publication of the first book of the trilogy, *Titus Groan*, in hard-cover and paperback in this country; the recent well-publicised Mervyn Peake exhibition at Westminster Public Library; and the stir of interest in publishing circles that has been caused by Maeve Peake's as-yet-unpublished book about her husband, should not only have convinced him that Peake exists, but that he is a creative artist of importance.

Of particular interest is the publication by Eyre and Spottiswoode of the second edition of *Titus Groan*. It was during the war, when

he had been drafted into the Engineers, that Peake began the first sentence of the trilogy:

"Gormenghast, that is, the main massing of the original

stone, taken by itself would have displayed a certain ponderous architectural quality were it possible to have ignored the circumference of those mean dwellings that swarmed like an epidemic around its outer walls."

With that sentence the reader is plunged into a world whose outlines never waver; whose detail never blurs; a world of ritual, compulsion, madness, tranquillity, of love and death. A world that bears a great resemblance to our own, but boasts qualities that we do not have, and lacking parts of our life that are deemed important. A world of obsessive order; an order destined to be greatly disturbed.

THE MANUSCRIPT was kept in Peake's kit-bag, and quite a large proportion of it had been completed when it was lost. Peake was not deterred; he merely began writing again, and his description of this strange world was not going to cease until after several hundred thousand words and thirteen years.





The books were written in a small, untidy hand, in brown ink in exercise books. From time to time a small sketch appears on the page. It is one of these drawings (a tiny margin-sketch, much enlarged) that forms the cover to the Eyre & Spottiswoode edition. The original book was set in a heavy, ornate, rather overpowering typeface; the present edition is set clearly in a readable type, and has the added bonus of sketches and drawings by Peake. It is perhaps a tribute to Peake's descriptive powers that his drawings of the characters—brooding Fuchsia, the enormous Countess, the angular and cheerful Prune-squallor—are not a disappointment to those who already know the book. In fact, they show aspects of the characters that we have already seen with the mind's eye, and some we have not.

Titus Groan begins from outside the confines of Gormenghast's walls—we see the massive castle and the clustered hovels of the "forgotten people", the villagers whose craftsmen produce the carvings, the bright carvings that are judged each year by the Earl. Then we see the Hall of the Bright Carvings, the room

high in the castle in which the carvings judged the best are kept, never to be moved. It is in this hall that the first book finishes, after disturbances have taken place that have rocked the castle to its foundations, but up here there is nothing to suggest it; all is as it was at first.

The characters are grotesque and very real. It is perhaps not significant, but it is interesting to note that the two people most opposed to the obsessive traditions of Gormenghast are the most "normal", the most like us. These two people are ultimately to come together in mortal combat, but that event is a long time away—it does not occur until the end of *Gormenghast*, the second of the books. However, it should be noted that the combat in this book, between the castle and the one who wants to destroy all it stands for, is by no means a combat between Good and Evil. The castle is not good. There is poverty, unhappi-



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ness, injustice and a futility of which some of the characters are unhappily aware. The contest is rather one between Law and Chaos. When one reads *Titus Groan*, one does not question the fact that it is the castle that must emerge victorious; in the first book at least, one identifies with the grotesque rather than the normal—with crippling ritual rather than freedom. It is only Titus' own rebellion, later in the trilogy, which gains one's sympathy. This book starts with Titus' birth; it finishes when he is less than two years old. The story concerns him only as a symbol; it is not until nearly the end of the book that Titus as an individual begins to manifest himself—he begins to appear as an ominous figure; a threat to the security of Gormenghast castle.

I HAVE ELSEWHERE spoken about the beauty of the writing; Peake uses the precise and evocative language of the poet, coupled with the eye of an artist. His sense of structure too is that of an artist, or perhaps an architect—*Titus Groan* is a work of sixty-nine chapters, five hundred and six pages (*Gormenghast* is even longer) but its structure is perfectly integrated—a massive architectural unity, composed of many diverse parts:

Most of these buildings had about them the rough-hewn and oppressive weight of masonry that characterised the main volume of Gormenghast, although they varied considerably in every other way, one having at its summit an enormous stone carving of a lion's head, which held between its jaws the limp corpse of a man on whose body was chiselled the words: "He was an enemy of *Groan*"; alongside this structure was a rectangular area of some length entirely filled with pillars set so closely together that it was difficult for a man to squeeze between them. Over them, at a height of about forty feet, was a perfectly flat roof of stone slabs blanketed with ivy. This structure could never have served any prac-

tical purpose, the closely packed forest of pillars with which it was entirely filled being of service only as an excellent place in which to enjoy a fantastic game of hide-and-seek.

There were many examples of an eccentric notion translated into architecture in the spine of buildings that spread eastwards over the undulating ground between the heavy walls of conifer, but for the most part they were built for some especial purpose, as a pavilion for entertainments, or as an observatory, or a museum. Some in the form of halls with galleries round three sides had been intended for concerts or dancing. One had obviously been an aviary, for though derelict, the branches that had long ago been fastened across the high central hall of the building were still hanging by rusty chains, and about the floor were strewn the broken remains of drinking cups for the birds; wire netting, red with rust, straggled across the floor among rank weeds that had taken root.

Except for the library, the eastern wing, from the Tower of Flints onwards, was now but a procession of forgotten and desolate relics, an Ichabod of masonry that filed silently along an avenue of dreary pine whose needles hid the sky.

FOR SOME YEARS the "Titus" trilogy has been, inexplicably, a forgotten and desolate relic; all those who know the books will be glad that a new and wider generation of readers will now populate its echoing halls.

The fine Eyre & Spottiswoode edition is priced at 50s. The paperback edition is in Penguin Modern Classics and is 10s. 6d.

Published by Nelson is *Captain Slaughterboard Drops Anchor*, Peake's delightful and classic work for children. It is set in nice big type, and the black and white drawings are set off with bright yellow shading. It is perhaps not as nicely produced as the original edition, but all the same it makes an ideal book for children of almost all ages.

Langdon Jones

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FROM THE OUTSIDE, IN

by James Sallis

FIVE BOOKS OF poetry and two novels, coming together at about five pounds, occupying four inches on the shelf. The poetry books are 5½ by 9, the novels 5½ by 8½. White, blue, green, red, black. The poetry (from Rapp & Carroll's *Poetry USA* and *Poetry Europe* series) is various. Both the novels—one written by a Pataphysician in 1946 and just translated, the other by a young American—are experimental.

All seven books are from Rapp & Carroll. Beyond that, it's hard to go: what have these books in common?

For one thing they are careful arrangements, or rearrangements, of the external world to private reference; they explore the spaces between information and experience. Whether by forms of words, condensed image, or peripheral sur-reality, the process here is from the outside—from the skin—in.

The grey mouse with the black whiskers made one final effort and at last got through. Behind it the ceiling sharply crashed down to the floor and long worms of grey spaghetti oozed out, slowly twisting through the cracks and broken joints. The mouse scooted as fast as it could across the darkened corridor whose trembling walls were crumbling closer and closer together, and managed to squeeze under the door. It reached the staircase and tumbled down, head over

heels. Only when it was on the pavement did it stop. It stood still for a second, decided which way to go, and started off again for the boneyard.

Quoted from Vian . . . but in tone, in mood, in concern, appropriate to most of what I have here. Most directly, it paraphrases my reaction to one of the novels.

The Self-Devoted Friend (Rapp & Carroll, 25s.) is a collection of short pieces by Marvin Cohen. These pieces are variously narrative, dialogue, essay, epigram—some are surreal, some are pastiche and parody, some are reminiscent of Baudelaire's *Petits Poemes en Prose*. Ellipsis is the predominant quality: the reader is asked to accept this material, this disparate substance strung together with associate devices, and make of it a novel.

Parts are superbly comic, and I found the book initially quite engaging, delighting in such laconic lines as:

My friend has a great deal of unused talent. He is careful to keep it unused. This increases his "potential" quota. He justifies his inactivity under the motto, "Better latent than never." Everywhere he goes, he saves energy.

Or the book's opening: "In the beginning, there was nothing. That led to my friend." But these illustrate as well what I feel to be the book's major faults. It is too embellished, and not at all casual enough (considering the whole) to afford the reader easy entrance. It is uneasy with itself; the surface is disturbed with self-indulgent cleverness; the writer intrudes upon his own carefully-constructed insouciance. Pretentiousness: that is the book's other quality.

It deserves reading; there is, at least, nothing quite like it. Cohen is trying to explore the possibilities and expand the limits of the fictional form. For this, and for the large measure of success he achieves,

attention is due him.

However. For me, there was always the feeling that the space was too small, the gate too close—and that Cohen was having to squeeze through, the forms closing down around him, dragging us along. Rather like the mouse in the passage I quoted from Vian.

BORIS VIAN's *Froth on the Daydream* (Rapp & Carroll, 25s.) was written in 1946, developed a sizable reputation, and has just been made available to English readers in a translation by Stanley Chapman. I can't account for the delay. It is a thoroughly entertaining, thoroughly funny, remarkably moving, and casually fine novel.

(Its material realisation—to use the correct expression—consists basically of a projection of reality, under favorable conditions, on to an irregularly tilting, and consequently distorting, plane of reference. This from Vian's own *Foreword*.)

Verbal humour chases situational comedy through the pages and across every single page; comic scene is often fully realised in three or four lines; surreal image or incident come on with the quality of direct, lived experience. It is a carefully structured book, moving inevitably forward: the necessities of reconstruction. And it bears a fine, moving, beautiful conclusion.

Just this: read it.

William Wantling, the author of *The Awakening* (Rapp & Carroll, 21s.), was born in the Midwest, served in Korea, became addicted to heroin when he was 23, married a fellow addict, served a term for forgery and narcotics, was divorced by his wife while in prison, was paroled, violated in four months, was returned to San Quentin, was finally released as a poor parole risk, remarried, and became a poet. And I'm afraid that just about sums it up, what needs to be said.

These poems are confessional, but not the reconstructed confes-

sional which succeeds as poetry. They are loose, wholly uncontrolled or regulated. "The form of life itself rather than an alternate form of words"—I suppose this is how one might defend the poems, and it seems this is the conviction of the poet himself. The poem entitled "Poetry" is, indeed, a manifesto to that effect.

I've got to be honest, I can
make good word music and rhyme

at the right times and fit words
together to give people pleasure

and even sometimes take their
breath away—but it always

somehow turns out kind of phoney . . .

He goes on to describe a prison-yard disagreement in which a man is killed, asking:

what could consonance or assonance
or
even rhyme do to something like that?

Quite a lot, actually. There must be discipline, control, or the work has only superficial impact. The poem must point one way and happen another. The author of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, dealing with much the same material as Wantling, could have told him that. And *someone* should have.

What these poems have is a kind of rude energy. At its best, this energy results — in such poems as "The Awakening" or "Don't Shoot" — in simple, honest statements. Wantling can record the surface of life with unusual clarity and sharpness. This, realised in his own idiom, in poems like "Goodbye Porkpie Hat" with their blues-like lyrical simplicity, produces small, moving objects—but the objects are hardly poems. Perhaps "Dirge in Spring" is the only real poem here — the only real attempt at vision — but even this is superficial.

David Rokeah is a young Israeli poet, and we have some of his best work available now in a collection of translations titled *Eyes in the Rock* (Rapp & Carroll, 21s.). These are not poems to be discussed or simply read: they must be experi-

enced. They are quiet, gentle, personal, immediate. They are miniatures, and therefore elliptical. Image and intention are allowed to generate their own idiom, the poem its own form. They are overwhelmingly beautiful and affecting. The only poets I can think to compare him to are the Spanish surrealists, and the very best work of W. S. Merwin.

Two examples . . .

Summer has the sound of walnuts
cracking. The granite splits
and in its red veins
dawn has congealed.
The dream has not died
in the blue seam.

When the sea rages
like an old preacher, my sins
multiply. Inaction
is my fear.

THE AUTHOR OF *Poems at Night* (Rapp & Carroll, 21s.). What more can one say of Galway Kinnell? He is various, accomplished, often brilliant. He offers a singular blend of observation and reflection (e.g. "Flower Herding on Mount Monadnock"). He is a major contemporary American poet, and deservedly so.

It is difficult to excerpt—to select a single poem or passage—but this at least illustrates the tone and verbal characteristics of much of his work, and the balance he strikes between reflection and sensation:

Old Arrivals

Molded in verdigris
Shortly before she died
The Lady stands by herself
Her electrical hands on fire.

They too in the Harbor
That chops the light to pieces
Looked up at her hand, burning,
Hair, flesh, blood, bone.

They floated in at night
On black water, cargoes
Which may not go back, waves
Breaking the rocks they break on.

Howard Nemerov, whose *The Winter Lighting* (Rapp & Carroll, 21s.) is at hand, is much like Kinnell, though perhaps more reflective and less intense. Also like Kinnell, it is difficult to excerpt from his work. The book is a form to itself,

the individual poem an inviolable whole . . . perhaps because these two poets, unlike many of their contemporaries, are holding to the older traditions of structure. I find in them none of the verbal excitement of the best New York poets, or the simple conviction of James Wright, or the precision of Creeley. Their qualities are of a different, but just as estimable, and perhaps a more easily approachable, order. They carry on the best traditions of American poetry.

Cid Corman is a poet who should be better known; he is one of the finest poets working in America today. His *Words for Each Other* (Rapp & Carroll, 21s.) will at least introduce his work to readers here.

Corman is one of the few poets to fully absorb the lesson of Creeley—to achieve a similar precision and to get the very texture of experience into his poems. The poems become, in fact, forms for perception, for experience. They are quiet, small. They are, like Durrell's grass, "assassins of polish". And with the delicacy, the fragility, the inevitability of colloidal suspensions . . .

The Tortoise

Always to want to
go back, to correct
an error, ease a

guilt, see how a friend
is doing. And yet
one doesn't, except

in memory, in
dreams. The land remains
desolate. Always

the feeling is of
terrible slowness
overtaking haste.

There are things to be said. No doubt.
And in one way or another
they will be said. But to whom tell

the silences? With whom share them
now? For a moment the sky is
empty and then there was a bird.

James Sallis

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