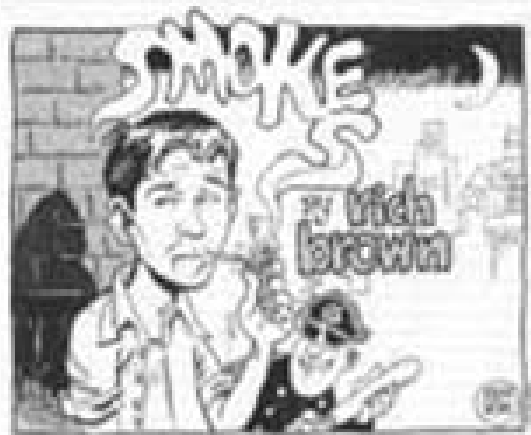


# confuSon

"The son of confusion"

# CELEBRATION



of

# rich brown

Volume 1

Number 5

# confuSon

"The Son of *confusion*"

Done March, 2007, for you completists out there.

---

## C o n t e n t s

---

- The BALLANCE Sheet...by ye ed, Shelby Vick..Page 1  
(Well, it's FIRST, anyway!)
- The Thin Veneer.....Arnie Katz  
*is replaced, this time, by Good-Bye, Dr.Gafia*
- In the Midst of ConfuSon.....ye ed
- Nightlife.....rich brown
- Sound OFF!.....NO Letters!
- Back Talk.....yed, of cuss

Many thanx to Arnie Katz, for letting me reprint Good-Bye, Dr. Gafis from his zine, Vegas Fandom Weekly.

confuSon (Shelby Vick, [shelvy20012000@yahoo.com](mailto:shelvy20012000@yahoo.com) or P O Box 9824, Panama City Beach, Fl 32417) is, frankly, an attempt (however fruitless) to regain youth! At least, to hark back to Days of Yore, by bringing out a fanzine that is a shameless rip-off of one I did over 50 years ago. Including lifting bits'n'pieces!



## BALANCE SHEET



We've spent lotsa time mourning the loss of rich brown – who will be greatly missed. In this, there are mournful things. . .but I tried to get in some happy memories, too. After all, the cover states that this is a Celebration of rich brown's life, and there were so many things to celebrate!

This is in celebration of rich brown's life. It was a great life, with its ups and downs, but with much affect on fandom, most of it good and praiseworthy.

While rich's wit could be sharp, those pricked by it usually were deserving of it. Most both laughed and marveled at his great accomplishment. Altho we will miss him, his spirit will never die.

It's at times like these when I wish my mastery of words was greater. Oh, I've written – and sold – a lot; paperback action stuff, short stories, articles for newspapers and insurance magazines and, of course, tons of stuff for fanzines. Yeah. But I've never really mastered the expressions of emotion, words that stir the readers' hearts.

I remember rich's first book – at least, the first one that I know of. He was writing it when I met him as a Tyndall AFB teen, and he re-wrote it and re-wrote it. When he was stationed in Germany, he told me he had just finished another re-write. Now, we had that in common; at the time we met, I had one I had re-written many times. The difference is, I sold mine.

NOT that it was better; I was just lucky enuf to stumble across a market. I didn't care (well, not *too* much, after I kept reminding myself that I was Being Published) that Novel Books titled it *Three Thrill Hungry Bodies*, which had nothing to do with the contents. In rich's case, I don't think what he wrote ever got to where it met his exacting standards and, so, was never submitted.

Wish I had a copy of it. . . .

But, back to Celebrating. Oh, I don't expect fireworks and skyrockets; I just want to remind everyone (most of whom don't need reminding!) how great a contribution rich

brown made to fandom, an indelible mark of humor and wisdom.

Personally, I remember when rich, accompanied by Norm Metcalf, first walked in to Vick Mimeograph in, I think, 1959. (I'm lousy on dates, but rich – as I recall – was seventeen at the time. That would make it '59 or '60.) ANYwee, rich admired all our mimeo equipment: My original ABDick, my new Gestetner, my dozens o letteringuides and multiple styli, plus my assortment of paper and inks.

As for me, it was great meeting a Real Live Fan!

As time went by, we would sometimes have rich and Norm – and, sometimes, other assorted airmen – over to our house for the weekend. They had to sleep on the couch or on the floor, and there were times when we could only feed them dried limas cooked with tomatoes plus cornbread, but they all swore it beat the messhall any day.

Norm and rich had each picked up motorscooters for transportation. Against rich's advice, my wife Suzy took Norm's invitation to 'go for a spin'. When they returned, she was smiling. .but, later, she told me 'Never again!' Norm had no fear; in fact, we never found that he had ANY emotions – just logic. Mr Spock existed before Star Trek!

rich had an exploring mind and a sharp wit which held nothing sacred – except, in a fashion, fandom. He coul be kind and gentle and thoughtful but, if you were having trouble getting his point, he could be quite persistent to the point of agitation. He could shovel words on you until you gave up.

There was also an intensity to rich, and buried anger best illustrated by the results of Suzanne's first pregnancy She had premature twins and they didn't last twenty-four hours. When he called and got the news, rich cursed and violently slammed his fist into the wall , bruising his knuckles.

My wife and I were deep into Little Theatre, and rich caught the bug immediately. He was in quite a few of ou plays (doing great, of course) including "Visit To A Small Planet", which was fitting.

There was also an intensity to rich, and buried anger best illustrated by the results of Suzanne's first pregnancy She had premature twins and they didn't last twenty-four hours. When he called and got the news, rich cursed and violently slammed his fist into the wall , bruising his knuckles.

His time in our area was enjoyed greatly but, as is the way with the military, rich eventually was transferred. We swapped many letters afterwards (not email; this was before that.) Eventually he was discharged and settled in New York.

In the 1990s, I met him at a Tropicon. As some may not know, he was skinny as a teen. When I met him at Tropicon as an adult, he had grown hefty. I didn't even recognize him until he spoke to me. The face, while rounder, was still rich brown – especially when he grinned! None of it affected his mind. In ways, he remained a sharp-witted teen all his life. He was a true friend, as well as one of the trufen.

# Good-Bye, Dr. Gafia

---

## ARNIE KATZ

rich brown was an unshakably loyal friend, an exemplary human being and one of the best damn fans of his era. He touched many lives, invariably for the good, including mine.

rich wasn't the first fan I met and, even at the time, not the biggest BNF who had deigned to acknowledge my existence. Yet from the moment I met him, he exercised a powerful, positive influence on me as a human, a writer and a fan.

Without taking away from the many others who have taught me and helped me and nurtured me on a human level, rich did a lot of the "hands on" work that helped transform me from a mouthy and insecure teenager into the semi-suave, reasonably well-integrated and moderately successful adult I became.

Even before I met him, or even knew who he was, rich brown played a pivotal role in my life as a fan. After Lenny Bailes and I published *Cursed #1* in March 1963 in a successful effort to find Fandom, I spent the next year trying to learn about the hobby. I joined the N3F, went to ESFA and Lunarians, attended first Lunacon '73 and then Discon I (the 1963 worldcon) and generally searched for... something.

Emboldened by contact with Frank Willemczyk in N'APA (the N3F apa), I wrote to Ted White to ask for an invitation to visit the Fanoclasts. That was pretty ballsy for a Long Island high schooler and Ted, probably rightly, was about to consign my post card to the trash can when rich brown and Mike McInerney, visiting Ted at the time, convinced him to give the brash kid a chance.

When I actually went to Ted's Brooklyn apartment for one of the Fanoclasts' Friday-night gathering, rich was the friendliest and most approachable fan I met. I'd like to think he sized me up as good raw material, but whatever it was, we be-

came friends almost immediately.

rich shepherded me through that meeting, pled my case for admission with the other Fanoclasts and quickly took over my fannish education. He told me anecdotes based on his personal experiences and his knowledge of fanhistory, explained things I didn't understand, and shared insights that were well beyond my powers of perception at that time.

rich and Mike were co-hosting FISTFA on alternate Fridays to Fanoclasts meetings. With their encouragement, I began going to the open, informal club. Meetings ran late, but rich encouraged me to stay even later. I'd read his fanzines as he fed me stories and factoids about the fans associated with that particular zine. Between fanzines, we talked about Fandom and about Real Life.

In a way, rich was like an older brother. I kind of idolized Ted White when I was a teenager and, as I matured, came to think of him as a beloved fannish Uncle, but rich was more like the guy who took me places and showed me things.

Though rich is best-known in Fandom for his fanhistorical essays and blazing polemics, he also had a terrific sense of humor. I know this, because he always thought I was funny.

He was a master of the deadpan put-on. He had an awesome talent for gradually leading me down the path from reality to ridiculous paranoia and fantasy so adroitly that I would often make the journey before I even realized I'd put the first foot on that yellow brick road.

His best was the gradual revelation that there is a Fandom beyond ours. Little by little, sometimes by subtle indirection, rich disclosed this greatest secret of the microcosm. When great fans leave our ken, either by gafia or death, they are, in reality, graduating to a "higher Fandom." This net-

work of ober-fans guides our fannish destinies and shapes our hobby.

He drove me crazy with that one. His sincerity and conviction, trained on my sensitive neofannish psyche for 12 hours or so in a row, could overcome skepticism and circumvent good sense.

It was only when he told me that he had been to a meeting and Certain Gafiated Fans had pushed for my admission to Super Fandom that I finally concluded he was kidding. I mean, how great could they be if they wanted a neo like me? would touch off exactly the situation I so much wanted to avoid.

In a way, I dubbed him "Dr. Gafia" in self defense. His periodic gafiations scared the crap out of me and pinning a nickname to this recurring phenomenon made it seem a little more bearable.

The urge to gafiate, by which rich meant something more drastic than dropping out of FAPA or skipping the worldcon, overtook rich periodically, generally at times of great emotional stress and life upheaval.

rich started in very modest circumstances and worked his life up in many ways through a combination of dogged determination and natural talent. He seldom talked about his South Pasadena childhood, though it evidently wasn't a very pleasant or nurturing environment. Yet rich completed high school, got additional training in the air Force and, through his experience in Fandom, made himself into a fine writer, editor and journalist.

rich never had it easy and, sometimes, the obstacles seemed insurmountable and the reverses in fortune almost unbearable. This sometimes led to one of rich's dramatic declarations of gafia. Suddenly, he would announce that he was quitting Fandom, divesting himself of his fanzine collection and other mementos of the microcosm and moving to some far-off place.

These mercurial moods would terrify me. Not only did I identify with rich's struggle, but he was both a close friend and my fannish guide. There's no question that, overall, Ted White is my fannish

mentor, the fan who has inspired me to do whatever it is that I've done in the hobby. rich brown watched over me in a more personal way. I spent more time with him than any of the other Fano-clasts after I joined the group in April, 1964 and came to think of him as an older brother.

Every Declaration of Gafiation hurled me into a tailspin. I couldn't accept the idea that rich was about to vanish from my life. My persuasive powers probably weren't what they are today, but I used everything I had to argue, cajole and convince rich that he should reconsider his (obviously) rash decision.

Besides that feeling of impending abandonment, I had an additional burden of guilt. Rich allows accompanied his Gafia announcement with a fire sale of old and rare fanzines. His attitude toward his hoard of fannish treasures would shift dramatically. He couldn't get rid of them fast enough – and his low prices insured that fans would snap them up in a matter of minutes.

One Friday evening in the mid-1960's found me sitting with rich in the living room of the apartment he and Mike McInerney shared, trying to convince him not to sell his fanzines, especially his professionally bound copy of the FAPA 100<sup>th</sup> mailing post-mailings, including *Ah, Sweet Idiotcy!* and the *Spaceways* anthology. It was a beautiful thing in its white hardcover binding and I tried to sell rich on the idea of keeping it even if he let go of a lot of lesser fanzines.

He was unmoved by my neofannish eloquence. Almost worse, he insisted that I should buy it, since he knew it was something that I very much wanted to have. I did my best to resist this temptation and held out grimly until rich played his trump card. He pointed out that fans would soon be arriving for that night's FISTFA meeting. He threatened that, if I didn't buy it, he would sell it for an even lower price to one of the fuggheads that clung to the fringes of the informal, open club.

So I bought the volume for something like \$5, a ridiculously low price even then, but only after I told rich that he could buy back the volume at the same price if he should ever change his mind.

I kept that book near the door in our Brooklyn Heights apartment for 19 years, in a similar position at Toner Hall for over a decade and now in the hallway of the Launch Pad since our move. At first, I kept it there in case rich should ever knock on the door and want his bound volume.

After I returned to Fandom in late 1989, rich assured me that he would never want to take it away at that late date. I left it in what has become a position of honor, a personal fannish tradition. It's still there now. My fondest hope is that rich will show up to claim it.

What a pity rich was kidding about the Over Fandom. It would be nice to think of him benignly nudging Core Fandom towards its next Golden Age. I guess I'll have to settle for a mental image of him at the Enchanted Convention, sitting in an endless room party next to Terry Carr with Burbee, Rotsler, Laney and Perdue on one hand and Willis, Shaw, White, Clark and Harris on the other.

— Arnie Katz



# AIMING

## for the

# M O M E N T



# CONFUSION IN THE MIDST OF

This time, entirely devoted to pictures.

Let's start with some early rich --



...and also --



rich at Disclave 1966

(Thans, by the way, to Alicia Brown for permission to use these!)



More rich photos --



...well, actually, it's an excellent drawing by that master artist, Steve Stiles.

While on drawings, look at this 'Smoke' strip --



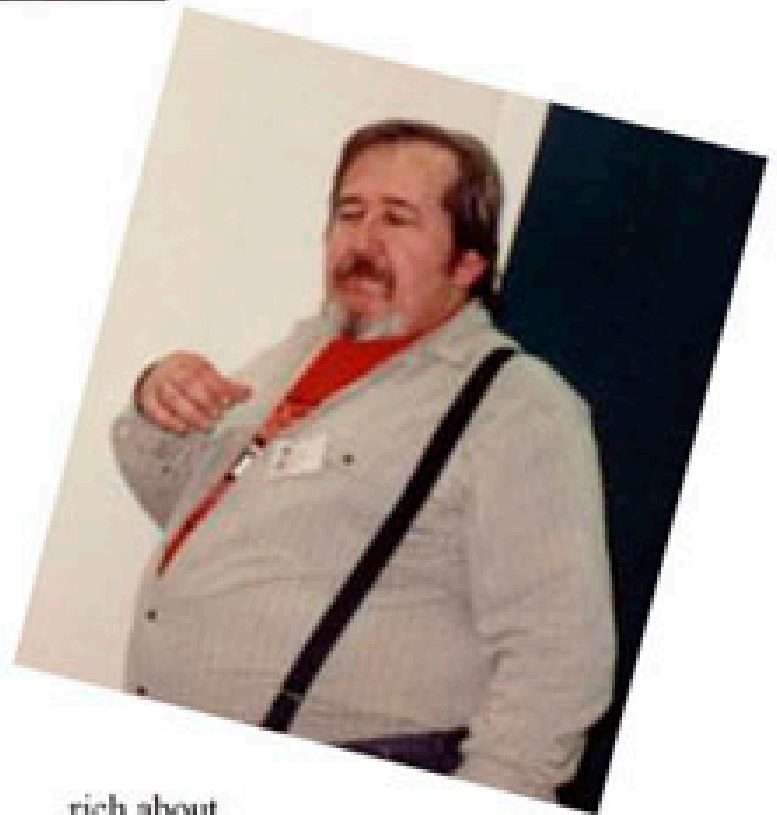
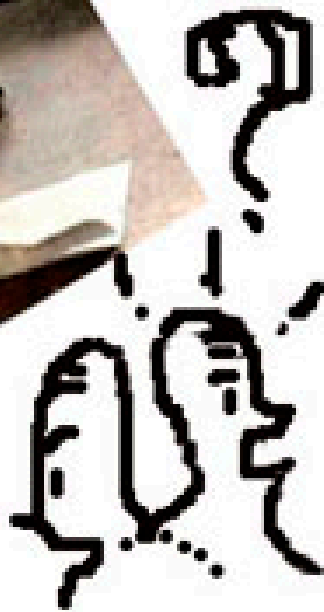
rich and me at Tropicon 1988 --



My response to rich's. . .growth--



rich as I last saw him. . .



rich about  
thirty years later.

...And a couple more --



rich at Alivia's wedding

To wind things up --



... a fairly recent photo.

Here's the last story rich and I worked on together.

# NIGHT LIFE

By Richard W. Brown

My *Webster's New Collegiate* offers two definitions for the word "lycanthropy." To wit: 1: a delusion that one has become a wolf; 2: the assumption of the form and characteristics of a wolf held to be possible by witchcraft or magic.

And the following is offered for "lycanthrope": 1: a person displaying lycanthropy; 2: WEREWOLF.

It's my sense of the absurd rather any belief in witchcraft or magic that has me wondering from time to time if I've perhaps ticked off some witch or warlock.

It may sound ever bit as absurd, or perhaps just pretentious, but I have two answers to the question, *What am I?*, to match the two definitions of those two words: 1: a madman; 2: a werewolf. Two answers based on two definitions of two related words to give me two possible solutions to the duality that is my existence. And I can't help but wonder which definition, which answer, holds the truth of me?

-oOo-

Even before my secretary Melinda buzzed me, interrupting my daily 4:10 doodling session, my instincts told me something was up.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr. Russell," her voice sounded over my intercom, "but . . . Mr. Buxton called. Wants to see you upstairs. In his office. Hung up before I could ask what for."

"Right. Thank you, Miss Conway."

She gave me a worried frown as I passed her desk en route to the elevator.

I understand her uncertainty about the stability of my position here at Benson, Burton, Buxton & Miller, part of it, I'm sure, stems from some unconscious realization she's made about the fact that I've never made a pass at her. The stable junior execs, whose very auras seem to say they'll be Running Things in a few years, have *all* made passes at her -- that's the kind of men young up-and-coming BBB&M executives *are*.

Lovely, petite Melinda of the pert breasts and well-rounded ass, dove-eyed and raven-tressed -- how could I tell her I'll never go there because I'm already committed? I suppose she might regard that as romantic integrity, but what would she think if I added that my True Love eats raw meat and lives in a cave? Would she appreciate the irony if I explained I'm not more of a "wolf" to her because I literally *am* a wolf?

Actually saying these things could, I know, set wheels in motion that would result in my being committed in quite another way. So I say nothing. I do appreciate the loyalty and care that underlies the look she sends my way -- but I say nothing.

BBB&M's fourth-floor offices are strictly functional: The carpets would be drab even without the holes punched in them to accommodate electrical outlets that rise up at frequent intervals from the floor. Battleship-gray secretaries' desks are arranged in cubicle after cubicle there, each with their own computer terminal, word processor, Dictaphone, electric pencil sharpener, what-not -- desks so sturdy they could probably be dropped out the window and, assuming they didn't flatten someone down on K Street, be brought back up again for years of further use.

The fifth and sixth floors -- for senior consultants, managers and partners -- grow

plusher, with solid carpets, mahogany desks, well-tended planters to seduce and impress the clientele.

Buxton has most of the seventh and plushiest floor to himself -- where begins a world of thick, deep-colored rugs; large, original, expensive art; chairs of exquisite leather and divans so soft you could lose yourself in their gentle embraces.

As the elevator ascended, I kept telling myself I wasn't important enough to be fired by Buxton Himself. But this was the time of year when promotions and firings occurred, so it was hard to think of any *other* reason He might want to see me. It was all I could do to hold myself in check, wondering which of my screw-ups had been brought to his attention, when the elevator opened on all that lavish plushness. Or do I mean plush lavishness? Well, whatever.

Miss Rilke, Buxton's blonde and beautiful young secretary, sat in a dark glass-walled foyer, surrounded by her circular marble desk. *How does she get out at night?* I wondered -- not for the first time. She looked up as I stepped from the elevator.

*Wonder if Mr. B's getting any of that?* Her silky, sultry voice floated the short distance across the room to me: "Mr. Buxton is expecting you." *He probably is getting some of that -- maybe in exchange for letting her out at night.* I nodded, took a breath of her sweet perfume, went in.

Buxton: a short fat man, about 190 pounds on a 5'6" frame, who wore glasses, smiled like a shark and tended to speak in clipped, barely audible sentences. He'd taken over BBB&M -- retaining the use of Benson and Burton's names, as they'd done years before with Miller's -- on the basis of one accomplishment and lots of backstabbing/dirty dealing.

Do you like irony? Most of BBB&M's clients were governmental units -- but his "accomplishment" involved *losing* the Interstate Commerce Commission as a client. In a report he wrote for them, he demonstrated his motto ("Go for the Big Bucks") in a way that made him a legend in his own time by implying union and/or political "fix" in the ICC's regulating of rates so as to make railroads noncompetitive in the 100- to 200-mile range ("The trucking industry is *not* a natural monopoly.") and tore into them for "discouraging competition and the free-enterprise system, thereby forcing the overburdened U.S. taxpayer to underwrite incompetence

Mr. B -- a scrapper, a fighter, a champion? David taking on Goliath? Hardly. Although, as one might expect, the conclusion he reached in his report (at their expense, both figuratively and literally) did not sit well with them. Naturally, they took their consulting business elsewhere. But when the smoke cleared, the gamble brought BBB&M's spokesman for Truth, Justice and the American Way six far-better-paying railroad accounts. BBB&M continues to dominate the municipal consultant services industry, but the swap of a minor federal agency for several higher-paying private industry accounts brought top, like a lump of sour cream rising up in a glass of single malt scotch.

Now he looked up at me from across his impeccable desk. Indicating the bar behind him with a casual wave of his hand, he asked, "Drink?"

"No sir," I said, trying nervously not to grin like an idiot, "I'm, ah, not quite over 'lunch' yet."

Damn. Wrong reply. Buxton'd already started to get up. He sort of paused there in mid-squat, then continued to rise, went over to the bar, poured a Bourbon over ice for himself, stirred it slowly, tasted it. Satisfied with his handiwork, he turned back to say, "You work for Raymond Steinberg."

"Yes sir. I do." I nodded vigorously but made myself shut up -- one verbal faux pas was already too many. He said something I was too nervous (or he spoke too quietly for me) to understand. "What?"

"I said, I'm told you're his right hand -- our next most senior electric utility proposal writer."

"Oh. Yes sir. I am, I guess. Yes."

"Think you could handle his accounts?"

Mistake or no, I was glad I hadn't accepted that drink. I'm sure my reaction would've been fine in a comic movie but in life it's Really Bad Form for junior execs to spew drinks all over their company CEO -- take my word for it. After a pause I was able to say, without betraying excitement, "I've taken over for him before, when he's been out of the office."

"But permanently

I swallowed hard. "I guess. I mean, I probably could, sir."

"Good. So I can assume Steinberg doesn't rewrite you?"

I began to assure him that Ray had enough to do without having to rewrite my copy, but he cut me off: "Until we get someone to replace you, we'll have to redistribute *your* work among others in your department while you're handling his. And, if I haven't made myself clear, it *will* be 'your' department."

I let myself smile, not just for what was happening to me but for the corresponding promotion I assumed would be Ray's, since I was going to be stepping into his shoes.

"Thank you, sir," I said.

"You'll keep this under your hat for the time being."

"Certainly," I said, and tested the water a little by adding, "Otherwise it might let the cat out of the bag about Raymond's promotion."

He paused to drain half his glass. "I can understand how you might think that," he said, "but you'd be wrong. Truth is, we're letting him go." I didn't say anything to that. What could I say? "He doesn't have the executive ability BBB&M needs, doesn't run that department, no matter how good a proposal writer he is. . . . But that brings up a 'condition' to your promotion

"Sir?"

"You know what I mean by 'executive ability,' Stan? I mean guts." I was too bemused by the fact that he was calling me by my first name to consider a reply. He went on, "I want you to fire Steinberg yourself. Don't humiliate him -- that's not the point of the exercise. Do it in private, maybe take him to lunch sometime in the next two weeks, before we announce your promotion. Being an executive in this firm isn't all tea and cookies, Stan -- I have to see if you can handle the unpleasant side."

"I understand your need to know that, sir," I said, "but . . . well, just so I

understand, what's he done? I mean, why're we firing him? What reason do I give?"

"How much of the truth do you want to tell? He's been counseled, several times, about screwing up deadlines. Sugarcoat it if you want or leave it at that. It's not the full reason. Fact is, he's been covering for whoever's been causing the delays -- making excuses because he seems to think they all have to like him to work for him. Nothing wrong with people liking you, Stan, but it can't get in the way of doing what you have to do. Particularly not when it affects output adversely.

"We play hardball at BBB&M, Stan. Hardball. When someone has more guts than I do, he'll come up here and take this away from me," he indicated his desk, the surrounding office and the foyer containing Miss Rilke with a wave of his pudgy well-manicured hand.

He asked if I thought I had what it took and I played Untried Quarterback to The Coach: "Yes. I mean, I believe so. No problem. I think -- that is, no, I'm certain I can do it, sir."

He scowled at his glass (at least, I *hoped* it was at his glass) and went on, "It's a hard life. Sometimes we have to be . . . like a wolf, you know? Meet things head on. That's why the stipulation. I have to see if you've got enough wolf in you to get things done on time, to cut the waste, to do what's needed." He looked at me and, seeing the expression on my face, smiled his shark smile.

Most people lead internal and external lives and manage to fool themselves into believing their inner self is what's real and true. But only our external personas have any relevance to the world we live in. So there I was, standing in front of the company's Boss of Bosses, with my inner self rising up in righteous indignation to call him an idiot for denigrating wolves -- wolves! -- by using some wholly human trait to describe them, while my external self calmly listened to him winding down: ". . . as a practical matter, keep in mind that word of your promotion will probably leak by next Friday with the secretary's retyping of the organizational charts. You'll want to tell him before that. The sooner you do, the sooner he can start making other plans. Think of it that way. And the sooner it's done, the sooner you can start revamping that department to get assignments accomplished in a timely manner."

He drained his glass, put it down on his desk with a *clack*; as suddenly as that, I knew our interview was at an end. I wondered, briefly, if Buxton realized that I was probably the person Ray'd been "covering" for. Maybe. Maybe not. With Buxton, it was hard to tell and I wasn't sure it would've changed anything if I'd told him. My internal persona was still lecturing him for sharing most people's misconceptions about the wolf; it was the external reality that answered "Okay," and left him there with his glass, his desk, his blonde and blue-eyed secretary and his misconceptions.

Absolutely nothing is certain in this snow-encrusted timberland -- not food, not shelter, not even the sun's obvious warmth.

The primary wolf is leading his hunting pack of two brothers, three sisters, one of his older sons toward the river's shoreline. (His mate is back at their den, guarding new pups.) Once the wolves reach the watering place, they again pick up the scent of the caribou. The herd may be as much as a mile and a half further on ahead.

Male One is larger than average -- 145 pounds, two-and-a-half feet tall at the shoulders, nearly six foot from nose to tip of tail, with the tail accounting for 16 inches of that length. This is partly *why* he's Male One: His leadership long established, only death or a long-term disabling injury could depose him; it's unlikely he'd be seriously challenged under any other circumstance. Human misconceptions to the contrary, wolves of the same pack are averse to serious fighting with each other, and while play and rank battle are common, neither usually results in real injury. If another male in the pack grows dissatisfied with his lot, it's much more probable that he will simply sneak off with one of his sisters to start a pack of their own.

Male One turns, tail up, ears forward, waiting until the rest of the pack turns with him. Eventually they all come alongside, stop, making sure their bodies are lower than his. They assemble closely for mutual heat, talk to each other with yips and tails and body language, while awaiting his decision on which way and how fast to go.

When he starts off, they are quick to follow. All move at the same steady untiring pace. And as they begin to approach the herd, Male One deploys them along the route, instructing them with pauses, nudges, nips and barks. The youngest male, who's been acting up, quickly tucks in his tail and does as the primary male wishes. This done, Male One and Male Three can circle the hill and run the caribou back in the direction of the pack.

Once the others are where they need to be, Males One and Three move off to do what they've done successfully many times before. Their confidence, as reflected in the certainty of their movements, is as absolute as it can be in this place of no certainty, as they do have reasonable expectations that they might get the food they need. But among the variable possibilities of failure is the slight yet very real chance that they will meet their own end. Caribou, like the majority of wolves' prey, are capable of turning on and killing the wolves who track them.

Wolves can run up to 40 miles per hour, maintain a chase at less than top speed for upwards of 20 minutes and leap up to 16 feet -- but the caribou can top any of these feats. Individual caribou are also larger than any single member of the pack, and at any moment can decide to turn and give battle with their horns and hooves, weapons that can kill or disable. In this place of no certainty, lone wolves have killed caribou, individual caribou have killed one or two or three wolves, so while a single wolf can kill an adult caribou and yet numerous wolves are no guarantee, experience shows it safer, easier, more



sensible and reliable for several to make the attempt. This is the logic of the pack, beyond the emotional ties which wolves form for others in their fighting family.

No denying that the odds do favor the pack wolves. Still, out here, *there is no certainty.*

-o0o-

When they started, two years ago, I called them dreams. In amused tones, I told acquaintances about them in those conversational dalliances you occasionally get into when someone at some dreary social gathering asks, "Did you ever dream you could fly?" or "Did you ever dream you'd died?" While I've never encountered another person in these exchanges who's told me they too have dreamed they were a wolf, it would be too sweeping and presumptuous to claim that I, Stanley Russell, am the only person ever to've had such dreams.

But these dreams of mine, if dreams they are, are unusual in two important respects -- neither of which have all that much to do with their subject matter. The first peculiarity, the one I believe unique, is that every night, without exception, I resume my dream at the *exact point in time* where it left off the night before. If, for example, I'm dream I'm playfully arguing with a packmate over a piece of meat when I wake in the morning, it is a certainty that the following night I will resume the dream still contending for the same juicy morsel. While it may not be unusual for people to have serial dreams, my wolf dreams have not once skipped a point in time in the two years since they began.

The other thing that made me quit thinking them as "only" dreams is their abundant detail, undreamlike clarity and seeming reality. But even there, you see, even there, when I put my pose of tolerant amusement aside, I feel I have to qualify them as "seeming reality," since I know full well how crazy they must sound.

I really don't know how to explain what's so different except, perhaps, to say it's in the nature of the reality I seem to perceive. It's not the same way I see things in my waking life. Everything is in stark black and white -- the only "color" comes not from what I see with my eyes but by what I hear with my ears and smell with my nose. I'm an adventurer in a dimension that my waking life is aware of but cannot make part of the way I function; I have the same senses but not the wolf's ability to use them.

Back when I had more-or-less regular dreams, when I recalled them, they were in color and were not particularly detailed: Close-by things might be both clear and colorful, but things in the distance not central to the dream were only hinted-at, at best. My continuing dreams of the past two years are filled with thousands of memorable details: sights, smells, sounds: tiny icicles hanging like silvered leaves off leafless tree and bush branches, my mate's aroma when she's ready to make love, the differing pitches of barks and yips

that distinguish one packmate from another and the way the wind's whistle varies sharply from what it was before as we come over the top of a ridge. It's in a category all by itself how scent and sound fill in pictures which the eyes cannot see.

These are details I cannot call "unreal" even in my waking life -- *seemingly* real, yes, to carry on what little pretense I have that I may yet be sane, but not unreal.

There's a duality in this as well. I keep questioning my sanity, acknowledging the possibility that I might be crazy, in part because that sounds like the sane thing to do. I mean, I'm pretty sure this is because it's my understanding that truly insane people don't believe they're crazy, so my acknowledging the possibility "must" be seen as proof that I'm not nuts after all. The real truth is, while I let myself *wonder* if I "might" be crazy, I don't really believe I am. So maybe that means I have flipped out, after all.

I don't know how to go about proving anything to anyone, myself least of all, but I think there are a few relatively healthy indications that maybe I haven't gone off my rocker. For one, I've not seriously considered suicide since the dreams began, and such thoughts very nearly consumed me before they came. I take that as a hopeful sign. Then too, I'm no Lawrence Talbot, changing form on the Night Of The Full Moon, beating my breast in remorse and shame at all other times to express my shock, horror and dismay at the Terrible Monstrous Thing I Have Become.

But that's at least in part because I know wolves are large wild dogs who hunt, pursue, attack, fight, kill and eat other animals which are, for the most part, larger and stronger than they are. When large game is scarce in the winter, of course, wolves can live on field mice alone -- but that's a mere expedient, a matter of necessity. On the American continent, only man and mountain cats are more successful predators -- and men and mountain cats are more successful only because they frequently, and with less cause, hunt smaller, less dangerous prey.

Anyway, I'm not so much concerned with *who* but *what* I am: a human being who turns on a packmate when the opportunity for advancement thrusts itself forward? Or one of the noblest and most successful predators in the Northern Hemisphere?

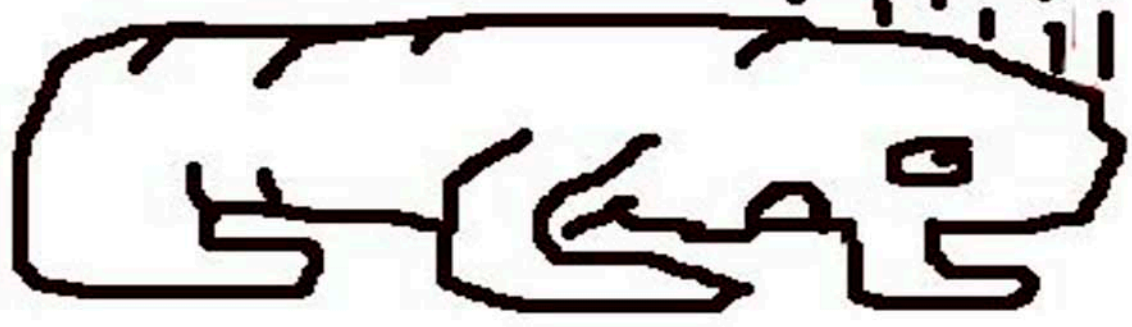
-o0o-

*Get the rest of the story by going to <http://www.planetarystories.com> and click on Issue Five, then go to Wonderlust where the full story is printed.*

**SOUND** 

**QUE!**

**DUCK!!**



**LOW FLYIN' LoC**

...Only -- not this time! People have written letters of comment, but, thish, we are skipping them.



(I'm gonna hafta redo the Contents Page; hadn't planned on this feature this time!)

Now, I like to end on an Up note. When you read what I have to say, you might question that, but – read on!

Been too long since my last *confuSon*! I've been doing a lotta work on Planetary Stories, and formatting on it is much different from this fanzine; the fanzine is for PDF, whilst – of course! – PS is html. I'd be working on getting something set up, having lotsa trouble – and then I'd say, 'No, you fool! NOT html!' and then I'd go back and redo it.

Now, I use Adobe Acrobat 6 to make a PDF. I have Adobe Reader 7 which, I understand, is supposed to do PDFs as well – but I can't get it to work! As I get it from reading instructions (that, of course, was late in the game; you know, 'reading instructions' is for when all else fails) you click on the Snapshot icon – but it isn't activated! That mebbe I had to import sumpin first, but when I tried that, I was told 'Not a supported format'. Hell, it was a jpeg, and jpegs allus worked on 6! Tried an rtf – same results!

So I went back to my Old Faithful, #6. . .and troubles again! On Ballance Sheet, it started by repeating the heading. Well, I'm usedta that, so I just scanned the whole page and made it a jpeg. No biggie. But then I tried to put it all together.

*Whaaa!*

For some reason, it had Ballance Sheet in a single column, five inches wide.

So I made the entire column a jpeg. In fact, before it was over with, each page of the fanzine was a jpeg! Sounds like a HEAVY ish of cfs! I'll do what I can to lighten the load; change dpi, go medium quality instead of maximum – and there IS a way I can lighten it whilst putting the ish together – I just hope I can remember it! . . .Or, for that matter, hope Adobe hasn't changed some of its program during an Update.

Now, FAPA is gonna get a *printed* version of this. If some of you who aren't FAPA members want one for yourself, just send me your snailmail address. Send it by email to – [shelvy20012000@yahoo.com](mailto:shelvy20012000@yahoo.com).

I should point out that the above is *not* negative. Despite frustrations experienced, I honestly enjoyed it all. And I'm having fun doing cartoons and such directly to the computer, instead of drawing and scanning them. Such as the header above.

Let me add that I, long ago, discovered the meaning of 'Happiness is a state of mind.' Some obtain happiness from alcohol or drugs; me? I get happiness from creativity. Yeah, it's obvious my creativity quotient is rather bland, but – that's okay! *I* like it, it makes me happy. . .so you've gotten the latest issue of *confuSon*, bland happiness and all.