

FALSE KARASS - a one-shot written for & distributed at MidAmeriCon, the ultimate Worldcon, edited and produced by Linda E. Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, Pa. 19076, and dedicated to the MAC committee. Extra copies, if available, are 25¢.

by Linda Bushyager

THE DAY WALTER CRONKITE

INTERVIEWED

MIKE GLICKSOHN

or what would have happened if the Mystery Disease that struck American Legionnaires attending a convention in Philadelphia and became known as the Philadelphia or Legion Disease had struck fans attending a science fiction convention instead. Imagine, for example, that it had happened at Midamericon....

Associated Press:

SCI-FI FANS SICKENED

Kansas City, Sept. 5 -- 10 of the 3000 persons attending a science fiction convention in Kansas City over the Labor Day weekend have come down with a mysterious flu-like ailment. Two of the members have died, and five others are on the critical list with what doctors describe as "pneumonia-like symptoms."

All those affected were members of the MidAmeriCon convention, the 34th annual sci-fi World Convention held at the Muehlebach Hotel. Early diagnostic tests have indicated that the sci-fi "fans" and writers were not suffering from food poisoning.

Local sci-fi author and member of the convention committee, Tom Reamy, said that early reports that one of the members, a Mr. Robert Wilson Tucker of Illinois, had died were at first thought to be a hoax. Mr. Tucker was a noted author of sci-fi books and stories about space and time travel. But, according to Mr. Reamy, when the convention chairman, Mr. Kenneth Keller of Kansas City, keeled over and died during the middle of the banquet speeches, the fans realized that something was amiss.

Mr. Reamy said that many of the fans suspected "rubber chicken" as the cause of the disease. But local authorities quickly pointed out that the chicken was plastic and could not have been harmful. They also ruled out contamination of the city water, even though complaints of "bull horns and tails" in the water had lately been increasing.

A spokesman for the Muehlebach Hotel calmed fears by revealing that "only those dirty hippie sci-fi freaks were affected," and that none of the hotel's other patrons or the recent Republican National Convention members had become ill.

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SCI-FI SICKNESS KILLS 10

AP. Kansas City, Sept. 6 -- Scientists still have not found the cause or cure of the mysterious "sci-fi sickness" which has so far killed 10 members of a science fiction convention and sickened 30 others. They have eliminated flus, viruses, the common cold, bacteria, food poisoning, ticks, fleas, grass, cigarettes, and athlete's foot as the cause. They are still checking into the possibility of poisoning by an allergic reaction to fanzine paper dust, old pulps, correction fluid, propellor beanies, and tribbles.

AP, Sept. 6 (continued)

Center for Disease Control (CDC) scientist Clyde D. Egler has speculated that the recent Viking Mission to Mars may be the disease's cause. He has labeled the mysterious Kansas City outbreak the "Martian Flu" and claims that he and his colleague, Dr. Richard Shaffer have traced Mars as the cause since only science fiction fans have been affected. He revealed that messages carved in Martian rocks seen in recent Viking photographs prove that the disease was transmitted to the sci-fi fans by "little green men" in retaliation for the Viking mission. According to Egler, the Viking spaceship landed on top of the last Martian village and destroyed all but two of the last surviving Martians in the last existing town of a once mighty race brought down by a 3 million year old drought. The two survivors rocketed to Earth to wreak vengeance on the sci-fi fans whose continual worship of and publication of sci-fi had inspired the U.S. to develop the spaceflight that ultimately destroyed the last of the Martian civilization.

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MARTIAN MYSTERY MALADY KILLS 20

AP, Sept. 7 -- The so-called "Martian Malady" or "Sci-Fi Syndrome" has now killed 20 fans who attended the recent World Science Fiction Convention in Kansas City. Over 200 others have been hospitalized by the mysterious "flu-like symptoms."

Noted sci-fi author Ray Bradbury was the most recent victim. Since Mr. Bradbury's most famous work was entitled "The Martian Chronicles", speculation has increased that the disease is some sort of "Martian Flu."

Police closely questioned a Mr. Robert Bloch and members of the "Count Dracula Society" today after it was revealed that a number of the victims had complained of feeling "drained of blood" before onset of the illness. These persons were released however after it was learned that many of the convention attendees had attended a convention-sponsored "bloodmobile" in order to see the convention Guest of Honor, author of sex-epic "Stranger in a Strange Land." Mr. Heinlein was unavailable for comment, having locked himself in an isolated, clean-air room at a nearby hospital to "get away from any germs."

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LOCUS, Sept. 7:

Pro News: The recent unfortunate happenings at the Worldcon have had at least one good result. Isaac Asimov has announced today that he would write his 135th book about the mysterious malady that sickened many fans at the convention. The title of his new work is "Dr. Asimov explains the Martian Sci-Fi Sickness."

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KARASS, Sept. 8:

People News: The list of those killed by the mystery flu at MidAmeriCon continues to increase. Those who have died include: Bob Tucker, Ken Keller, Moshe Feder, Victoria Vayne, Gary Farber, Jeff May, Linda Bushyager, Bruce Pelz, Curt Stubbs, Jodie Offutt, Andy Offutt, Jerry Kaufman, Bill Bowers, Ro Nagey, Meade Frierson, Stanley from Beneath the Earth, Ray Bradbury, Grant Canfield, Loren McGregor, and Nelson Moore. The large number of fanzine fans affected has caused some to theorize that convention fans may have plotted against fanzine fans and poisoned their conflu.

West coast fans are said to suspect an "east coast conspiracy," East coast fans blamed West Coast fans, and New York fans blamed New York fans. Some people have suspected that Chase Park Plaza hotel representatives from nearby St. Louis may have played some part. Other rumors blamed SF Expo's secret observers, and a commie plot to kill off Republicans which somehow got our convention mixed up with theirs. Fandom's contingent of doctors and fans studying to be doctors were said to be studying Twonk's Disease (those in the group include Alan Nourse, Lin Lutz-Nagey, Rich Bartucci, Elst Weinstein, Bob Passovoy, and others).

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C.B.S. NIGHTLY NEWS, Sept. 8

Walter Cronkite: The Sci-Fi Sickness or Martian Flu is still baffling scientists as the death toll continues to mount. It now stands at 25 with over 250 people hospitalized. Special correspondent Roger Mudd has returned to the scene of the convention in Kansas City to retrace the steps of one of the luckier "sci-fi fans" who has recovered from the illness.

(Scene switches to front of the Muehlebach)

Roger Mudd: Well, Mr. Glicksohn, I understand you attended the entire convention. Did you notice anything unusual? Anything that might have caused you to be poisoned, anything you ate or drank that seemed strange?

Mike Glicksohn: Goshwow no. I didn't really have too much to eat or drink, my finances wouldn't take it. The half-case of scotch I drank seemed just fine.

Roger M.: Would you mind retracing your steps.

Mike: Not at all. Let's see, Friday I arrived at the convention. Or was it Thursday? No, Friday. That night I went to a party in room 403, or was that on Saturday? Or was it room 304? Anyway, after that I went to a party in room 507, and one in 616 and 614 and 612 -- well there were several on the 6th floor in other rooms too, and 514, then back to 507, 801, 314, 304 or was it 403? Plus the meet-the-authors party, of course, and the art show. Then we went out to dinner at a chinese restraurant, or was that on Saturday night? And we ate at Baskin and Robbins....(Mike looks shocked)...You don't think Baskin and Robbins could have been poisoned? Then the party in 701, back to 612, 801, 912....

Roger M. (interrupting): Well Mr. Glicksohn, was there anything unusual about the ice cubes in all those parties?

Mike: Ice cubes? Did you get ice cubes? I bet the Republicans got ice cubes.

Roger M: When did you first feel ill?

Mike: When I lost my convention badge & had to pay another \$50 to get in.

Roger M: No, I mean when did you become ill from the Sci-fi Syndrome?

Mike: Please, Mr. Mudd, call it science fiction! Well, I didn't feel much of anything during the convention, all that scotch you know, but when I got home and saw all the fanzines I still had to loc and all the new ones stacked in my mailbox, I felt as though I had some sort of flu.

Walter Cronkite (looking at Mike and Roger in his monitor): I'd like to ask Mr.

Mr. Glicksohn a question.

Roger M: Go ahead, Walter.

Walter C.: Mr. Glicksohn, I've been wondering, well, ah, what is that hat you are wearing?

Mike G.: It's an Australian hat, I'm sure I could find one for you if you like it.

Walter C.: Err, no thank you. But I understand you are a Canadian, why are you wearing an Australian hat?

Mike G.: Because I like it.

Walter C.: But it's so large and, well...is there something underneath it?

(Mike Glicksohn doffs the hat and bows with a flourish, revealing a propellor beanie on his head.)

Walter C. (astonished): Thank you Roger. (Camera zooms in on Walter's face.) Well folks, that's the way it is.

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(Item on page 54 of Washington Post)

AP. Dec. 13, Kansas City. Scientists have given up hope of ever finding the cause to the mystery disease which killed over 3000 sci-fi fans in Kansas City over the Labor Day weekend. The only survivor, a Mr. Robert Heinlein, today commented from the isolation ward of a prominent Kansas City hospital: "TANSTAAFL."

(Written by Linda Bushyager)

(The following was written by Bob Tucker. It originally appeared in FAPA and was reprinted in Granfalloon #4.)

THE OLIVER KING SMITH AGENCY

CON GAMES OUR SPECIALTY

Proudly Announces
the latest addition to its list of special services for fans:
Convention Manipulation and Subversion!

NEW!

NEW!

NEW!

Do you want the next convention to be in YOUR city? Of course you do! Everybody does! But why try to swing it alone against dishonest adversaries? Why fight hardened villains who promise beer and circuses? Why walk into bidding sessions ill-prepared, tired, worn down from all-night parties? Let the Oliver King Smith Agency do the job!

Do you crave BIG MONEY, GLORY, FUN, PRESTIGE, and the chance to make a killing in the huckster rooms? Do you want everlasting fame in Warner's next Fan History: Do you want to be known as the titular head of the BEST CON EVER? Of course you do! Let the Oliver

King Smith Agency manage your bid and manipulate the vote for you! We can deliver! We employ specialists in fair and foul means of business! Leave the hard driving to us! Name the CITY and the DATE! You select the basic package and the special options you prefer! Presto! The next convention will be YOURS for the milking.

BASIC PACKAGE #1

A guaranteed minimum of 500 Fans in attendance (most with money to spend). Up to 5 BIG NAME AUTHORS on the premises at all times (each one capable of signing a legible autograph!). At least 2 NEW YORK EDITORS on the floor at every session to answer fan questions (obfuscations a specialty!). A complete THREE DAY PROGRAM scheduled in advance -- with a printed program booklet to match! (Ink will be dry on booklet -- no smearing.) One famous speaker who will not show up! A reasonably intelligent desk clerk. An understanding house dick! Extra elevator operators! Maids to clean up rooms every day! *ALL THIS FOR ONLY \$499. A \$10 down payment starts the ball rolling!*

BASIC PACKAGE #2

The king-sized package! The super convention of the century! Up to 1000 Eager Fans in attendance every day (all with ready money). Not less than 25 BIG NAME WRITERS (plus a half dozen AUTHORS) who can read, write, and spell correctly, and who will infest room parties and engage in sparkling literary debates! Every NEW YORK EDITOR except Campbell in attendance at every session, willing to battle fans!

A complete well-rounded FOUR DAY PROGRAM put together the same week, with beautifully printed booklets to match! No errors! No omissions! Two genuine famous speakers from NASA who will register at the wrong hotel! One Air Force recruiting officer to be booed down. Printed signs reading "(blank) Says You Can't Sit Here!" Special balcony for Insurgents! A SECRET AGREEMENT with the hotel newsstand not to sell SF in the lobby, for reasons stated next below. An airtight UNDERCOVER ARRANGEMENT with the hucksters to split their profit with you! (Did you know con hucksters AVERAGE \$1000 per day?) Four BIKINI CLAD BEAUTIES for the N3F Hospitality Room (will sleep in, if desired). Your first choice of all ART WORK stolen from the Art show! Two competent and friendly desk clerks! A house dick whose job depends on pleasing you! No manager on the premises! All-night elevators! *ALL THIS FOR ONLY \$999! A modest \$20 down payment starts us moving!*

EXTRA!

OPTIONS!

OPTIONS!

EXTRA!

Dress up your basic convention package! Pep up the gawking fans! Enliven the proceedings with the following exciting extras! Turn on!

- 1 Surly Author to hurl plate of food at obstinate waiter: \$1
- 1 Brash Young Author to lead chant of hate: \$1.98
- 1 Ted White-type Chairman to harangue the multitude: \$3.75
- 1 Beautiful Girl to be auctioned off to dissolute Pro: \$100
- 1 Obnoxious Drunk to be hurled from upper window: 50¢
- 2 Belligerent Bullies to beat up hecklers: 75¢ each
- 12 Extra elevators to accomodate night-roving fans: \$250
- 12 Case-hardened operators to pilot elevators: \$24
- 12 Guards to ride shotgun on elevators: \$36
- 1 Boring Speaker to present annual Humdrum Award in
6000 well-chosen words: \$6

more, more, more on next page!

EXTRA SPECIAL BARGAINS!

WRITE FOR CONFIDENTIAL PRICES!

100 Flower Children to decorate your Masquerade Ball! See them smoke pot, grass, and banana skins during the ceremonies! Watch them Love In in corridors, stairwells, and private room parties!

Up to 500 Walk-in Fans to sell their votes to your city! Every one guaranteed to deliver the results to you! No backsliding! No wavering or lost votes for other beer-and-circus promises!

One biased M.C. (suave, witty type) to slander opposition and praise your city while maintaining pose of neutrality!

One distinguished Pro Guest of Honor (sincere type) who will second your bid and happily campaign for you.

One Fan Guest of Honor (machiavellian-type) to promise all-out support to opposition city -- even drink their booze -- but switch to yours at the last minute when opposition is lulled into false security! (This fellow can throw any convention on a moment's notice! Get him')

THE OLIVER KING SMITH AGENCY

(In the Con Game Business since 1941!)

--Bob Tucker, Sole Prop.

This has been FALSE KARASS, a special one-shot distributed at MidAmericon, edited and published by Linda E. Bushyager, and solely her responsibility. It is dedicated with love to the hard-working members of the MidAmeriCon committee, especially Ken Keller, Jim Loehr, and Bill Fesselmeyer. Special thanks to Bob Tucker for permission to reprint his article. Sept. 2, 1976.)

Linda E. Bushyager
1614 Evans Ave.
Prospect Park, Pa.
19076 USA

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