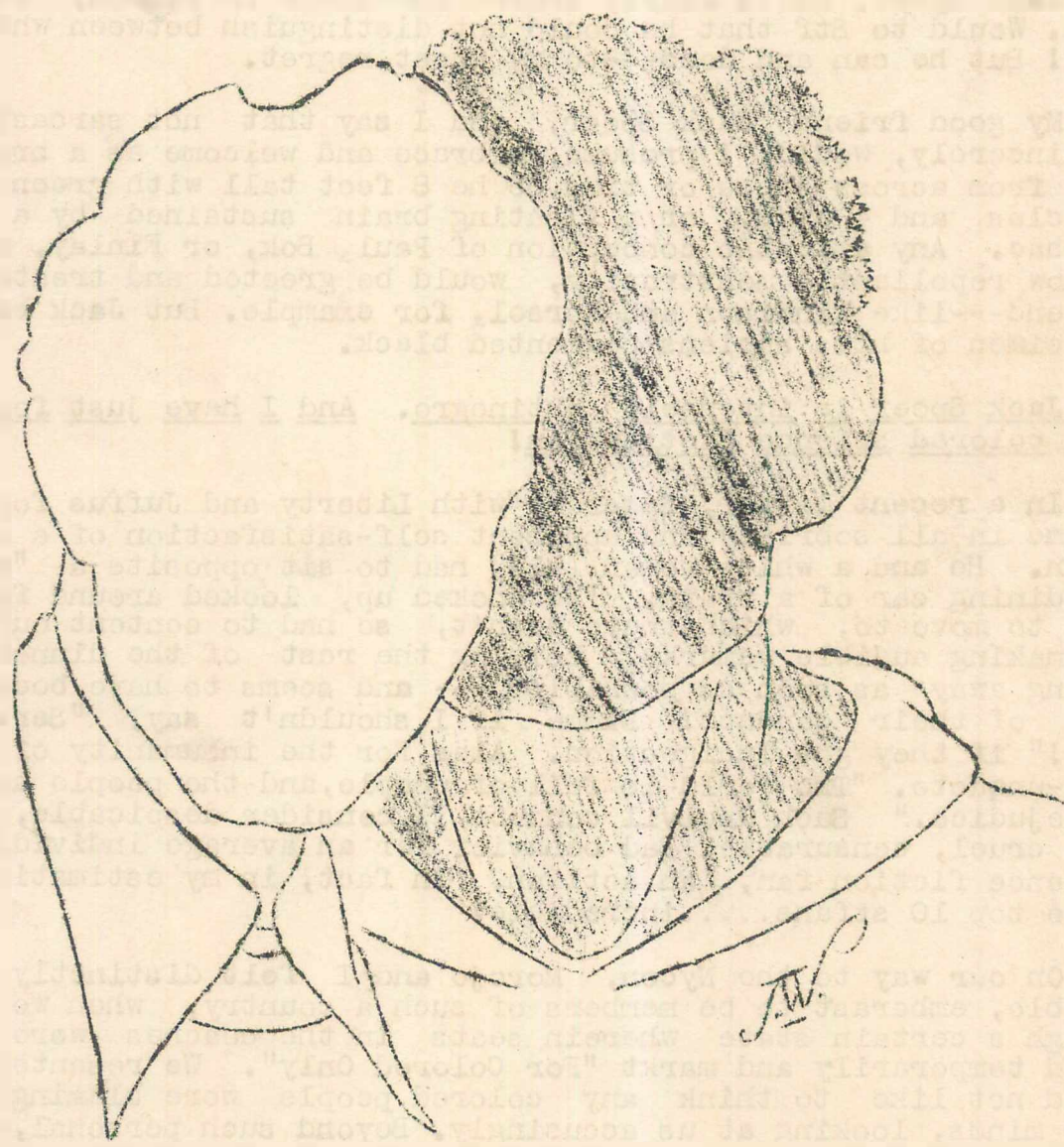


black & white



BLACK & WHITE

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WHEREIN JACK SPEER'S HAIR TURNS GRAY OVER NITE

By Forrest J Ackerman

Jack Speer, as is fairly common knowledge in fandom, is color blind. Would to Stf that he could not distinguish between white and black! But he can and does---to my great regret.

My good friend Jack Speer, and I say that not sarcastically but sincerely, would, I presume, embrace and welcome as a brother a "man" from across space or time, be he 8 feet tall with green scales, tentacles and 4 eyes, or a floating brain sustained by a helium skin-sac. Any amicable conception of Paul, Bok, or Finlay, no matter how repellant a monstrosity, would be greeted and treated like a friend---like Kinnison and Worsel, for example. But Jack balks at a specimen of homo sapiens pigmented black.

Jack Speer is intensely antinegro. And I have just found the first colored science fiction fan!

In a recent letter, Speer ("with Liberty and Juffus for all") told me in all sobriety and apparent self-satisfaction of a heinous action. He and a white woman (sic) had to sit opposite a "boogie" in a dining car of a train. "We choked up, looked around for some place to move to, which there wasn't, so had to content ourselves with making audible remarks, bolting the rest of the dinner, and getting away as soon as possible" --- and seems to have been quite proud of their conduct! Damme if I shouldn't say, "Served 'em right!" if they got indigestion. Alas for the inhumanity of man to man---unquote. "The world is full of people, and the people are full of prejudice." Such uncivil conduct I consider despicable, heartless, cruel, censurable. Bad behavior for an average individual; for a science fiction fan, an actifan, in fact, in my estimation, one of the top 10 stfans....incredible!

On our way to the Nycen, Morojo and I felt distinctly uncomfortable, embarast to be members of such a country, when we passed through a certain state wherein seats in the coaches were partitioned temporarily and markt "For Colored Only". We resented this, we did not like to think any colored people were blaming us in their minds, looking at us accusingly. Beyond such personal, selfish considerations, we considered the situation fundamentally unjust.

Now I personally do not relish the company of negroes. I admit

I've a measure of squeamishness about associating with same. But this mental maladjustment I conscientiously attempt to overcome. All it is, I think, is that, subconsciously, I feel because a man is black he's dirty. Balderdash, of course. But one has to contend with one's thalamus!

While a Negro would not be sexually attractive to me, and I should not expect to have any intercourse with an Oriental or perhaps several other races radically different from the white, certainly I need not snub them in matters of normal activity: eating together, conversing, commerce, sport, etc. This is not to imply sexual relationships are not normal---please let us not go off on a sophisticated tangent.

If Jack is not aghast long before now, here is the part where I confidently expect his red hair to fade at least to pink: I HAVE EATEN BUTTERED POPCORN FROM THE SAME BAG WITH THIS COLORED FAN! NB: I felt no ill after-effects.

I hope to Stf that my colored fan friend never reads these words. I should want him to know, tho, that this Jack Speer, of Washington, DC, is not representative of fandom, at least, I trust and believe not, and in fact may not be entirely responsible for his own conduct. Is the bent branch to blame if a wild wind or a ruthless hand twisted the sapling? I think there are extenuating circumstances; that Jack has been hypnotized by environment.

In the near future I intend to inform the LASFS of my discovery of this Negro fan, and ask if the club would have any objection to my inviting him to meetings. I do not expect opposition. Should opposition arise, I'd be aroused --- dammit to hell, I can promise you I'd be so boiling mad I'd be ready to make an issue of it then and there: either we admit this fan or I go! But that would be melodramatic and unproductive of the desired result. Conceivably, if I do not flatter myself, there would be capitulation. But certainly it would be begrudged. I shouldn't want that. But I prefer to prophecy that when the time comes the members will rather think it a little odd of me to question that they might raise any objection, as tho I should know better. In that case I shall be very proud indeed of the fangelenos. But I must know for certain.

Wm R Twiford should have sent Jack Speer an autograft copy of his (obnoxious) book, "Sown in the Darkness---A.D. 2000". This is a novel Tremaine publisht in the days of the Comet. It is one of the most dastardly damnations ever perpetrated, in my opinion. Equaled, probably, only by that British abomination, "Concrete", of the sickening future religious revival.

"The Negro," twaddles Twiford, "should have been left in Africa to go the way of the untamed tiger, the gorilla and the lion, into final extinction. If he had been left to do this, his soul would have come back to this earth and be dwelling here today in a white body!" Metaphysical moronity!

"If such ultimate outcome was not the plan of the all-wise Creator, then why has He endowed the white race with superior in-

tellect?" It is to retch.

"If God thought black to be beauty, why did He not paint the lily that way?" Surely you, my readers, see the superficial, the ridiculous reasoning of this nauseating nonsense. Such mad-talk to me is revolting, horrendous and infamous. It really makes me quite incoherent with revulsion and rage, the evil idiocy of it!

Now fans are supposed to know things like relative viewpoints, and that to gorgeous hard ebon panther people living in caves hallowed from coal, a woman's pink body, descended from the ape, would be a thing of soft, bleached and blasphemous obscenity---unless the panther were a fanther.

I suppose Jack Speer agrees with the sentiments of "Sown". I doubt he considers it God's Divine Will that the Negro should be abolished, but I daresay he would consider the prospect most desirable. If I may say so without seeming patronizing or superior, I think Jack has a Blind Spot on this subject. What can we fellow fans say to him to show him the light? I presume I'm writing to a sympathetic audience: I should be a disillusioned fan indeed were this article to raise a storm of protest against me.

The Negro servifan's name is Vincent Williams. He's a LA reader. As a passifan, he's been reading omnivorously the past 3 years. Astounding is his favorite. He likes Heinlein, also "Lefty Feep" yarns. He reads Weird Tales too. And saves his mags, claiming quite a collection, including back numbers he's bought. He'd like to try his hand at writing, particularly playwriting and radio-scripting, of the stf and fsy variety, of course. He knew me by reputation---or repute. I hope to be instrumental in introducing him to fandom. I favor women and "foreigners" in fandom--STF alone the magic password, the Open Sesame---and I earnestly hope you all will accept the concept of a dark-skinned brother.

Simultaneously, what the devil are we going to do about Jack?

WHEREIN JACK SPEER PARTAKES OF PANTOTHENIC ACID

By Jack F Speer

I doubt that he is the first Negro fan. Some time back, I believe Julius Unger said that an officer of one of the early stf clubs---Scienceers or something like that---was colored. If this is correct, I would say that one more deserves the title of fan; I would call Williams a scientifictionist.

In the letter 4e refers to, I said that the ground for my attitude was objection to intermarriage, which is best prevented at present, since we have no eugenics laws, by a psychological barrier. For reasons which he may consider sufficient, 4e disregards this in writing his article.

Anyway, you can guess from that what my policy on the extra-terrestrials would be. Making the improbable assumption that creatures physically so different mite yet have the same number of chromosomes as man and be capable of interbreeding, I would still welcome them prima facie if it should be simply a matter of exchanging diplomats, scientists, and commercial representatives, and even making some scientific mating experiments. But if the e-t's were slated to come live among us, and eventually intermarry, by the hundreds of thousands, I'd want to know what kind of genes they would contribute to the stock common.

The pigment of the skin is not important, except as the most noticeable sign of the race. The other distinctive physical characteristics tend toward a presumption that Negroes are closer to the Neanderthal than Caucasians. But the real test as to equality must be of intelligence.

It is well known that blacks average definitely lower on intelligence tests than whites do. Unfortunately, there are some environmental differences mixed in with the inborn traits, which make all present-day tests less than completely reliable, but in my judgement these differences are utterly insufficient to account for all the disparity in scores, made on tests of intelligence, mark ye, not information or education. Example of the basis of my judgement: In the 201 files (alphabetical), which are now manned almost entirely by Negroes, large posters have been put up on the walls, showing simply the alphabet, for these blacks to refer to. Especially when you consider that they must have been (public-school) educated and literate to have gotten into CAF work, you can't ascribe inability like that to lack of opportunity or incentive; it's unadulterated intellectual deficiency.

It is quite possible, since natural selection preserves the characteristics with survival value and discards those that are anti-survival, that the makeup of the Negro race is better suited for survival in certain environments than that of the Caucasian; but in the civilization which the Occident builds and hopes to build, the most needed element is intelligence, and that's something we've got to work for, regardless of what the 18th Century Rationalists said about all men being created equal.

Exceptions like Booker T Washington, George Washington Carver, and the two stiffs in question, in no way disprove the general rule that Negroes show lower in inherited brainpower than average whites. But all of this is pretty far-flung reasoning. Obviously it's not going to be much of a deterrent to a great many people; it may not be even for our type if it remains simply the recognition of an intellectual abstraction. So I have built up, to some extent by artificial means, tho the natural reaction to Negroes assists, an emotional bar against contacts with them beyond a certain limit. More of this anon.

I expect that I am indeed in the minority here, since most fans are idealists leaning to the Left, and since the majority of them, like the majority of Americans, live in the North and West where the problem is not acute. In many such places the small Afro element could probably be absorbed with little noticeable deterioration --- But don't forget that there are millions of them below the Mason-Dixon line and coming North every year, and quick to marry the mulattoes and quadroons that are the first stages in any amalgamation.

Maybe there's no possibility of you yourself marrying another race. But your example helps shape the mores. There are people in the lower mental classes, and people who care nothing for what society will be like a few generations from now, who will conclude that if you can mix with them politically, economically, intellectually, et cetera, you can mix socially too. I can't think of any case where races have lived together for a long time and stayed distinct. The emotional bar mentioned slows down the process: thousands cross the color line every year, but a much smaller proportion in the South, where social disapproval is unequivocal. What reasons are there for anyone to marry outside his race? I guess in recent times the main reasons have been a mistaken idea that it will help racial understanding, desperation because no other spouse can be found, and perhaps in some cases on the level of "it gives me what I want". When we have dependable measurements of individuals' heredity, together with laws on the subject, then will be the time to consider each individual case on its own merits; until then, the rather slipshod color line method will have to do to hold miscegenation to a minimum. Incidentally, isn't it the strangest sort of inconsistency to find an author going out of his way to defend miscegenation at one place in a story of which the central ideal is racial improvement --- miscegenation which Heinlein himself admits would tend to deteriorate stock.

Ackerman is being absurd, and knows it, in putting me behind the straw man of Reverend Twiford. In sooth, a stronger case might be made by negrophiles if we were religious, the fatherhood of God over all of us often being said to imply the brotherhood of all men.

The J is right in feeling that there was pride in the account of the incident on the train, but the pride was in the straightforward, objective reporting; the incident itself was simply unpleasant.

I didn't intend to debate this issue publicly while we have a war on. The thing doesn't have to be settled immediately, though of course the sooner the better, other things being equal. Other things

aren't equal in war time, tho, and I think it's better policy not to go seeking troublesome points.

I don't get his phrase "He and a white woman (sic)". In the letter I said "Mrs. Eskridge and me". "A white woman" would be a slitley improper way to speak of my sister.

It is suggested that I have been hypnotized by my environment in this matter. A bit of autobiography is in order:

The small town in the South-West where I was brung up is predominately Anglo-Saxon. There were half a dozen or a dozen Republicans, two German households, and one Jewish family, whercof the son was the best companion I could find in school, tho I disliked his extreme extroversion. No Negroes could settle there; the policy was "Don't let the sun set on you inside town", but I didn't know there was such a policy until about the time I was twelve years old, and the only case I have heard of where it was enforced was when the banker's wife wanted to keep a colored maid. And as far as my home town environment was concerned, Negroes were non-existent.

In our summer trips to the paternal home in Florida, of course, we did see quite a lot of darbies. There were a lot of them in Oakland, and they kept perfectly to their place. We liked Fanny and Charlie. I never knew there was a Negro problem till '38.

My first unpleasant notice of them was when I was in Oklahoma City, but these were of no import. Once you get to Washington, tho, you have to decide pretty quick where you will stand. I took Psych my first semester here; the War Department has supplied other supporting data since then.

A third of the Capital's normal population is colored. That makes it ethno-geographically a southern city. But the laws are dictated by Congress, where the North-West is supreme, so the only official segregation is in the schools. On common carriers and in many department stores there is a mixture; in amusement places and eateries the managerial policy is to exclude one race. Exceptions of course are government theaters and cafeterias. Even in the latter, however, they invariably eat at different tables.

Kiplinger's book on Washington describes pretty well the general attitude. We don't like having the Negroes here. They're responsible for most of the crime and other things that give the city a low desirability-rating as compared to the white cities of Southern California and the Middle East. But there are few flare-ups, and in general we go our way and they go theirs. The only occasions for active dislike are those in which the blacks push their claims to equality, like the dining-car episode.

Oh--- incidentally, an item mentioning Pfc Ack-Ack and a colored soldier is slated for the next Fictitious But Definitely. Nothing especially objectional about it; I just want to say that it was thunk up before this debate materialized.

Another item in the letter which the "J" doesn't mention tells of a time when I ate at the same table with a Negress. The sponsor and program director of a church group had invited her to speak. None of us liked it, but thot it better not to precipitate a scene. So don't expect me to get up and walk out if Williams shows up at a convention. But don't expect me to welcome him with open arms, either.

