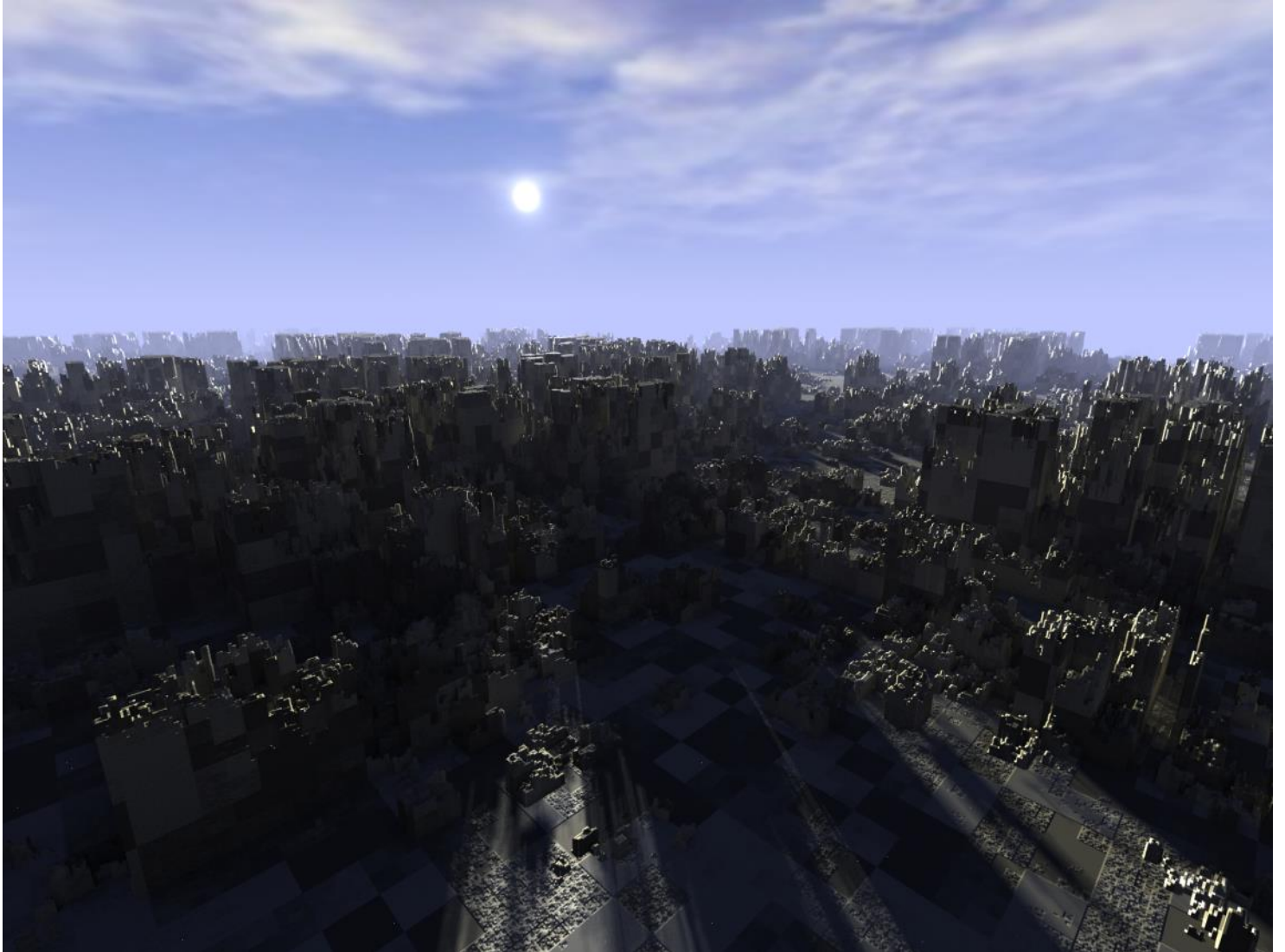


# Tightbeam 363



City Shadows  
By Tiffanie Gray

# Tightbeam 363

December 2024

What is Tightbeam? We are the N3F literary fanzine, not the novel and anthology fanzine, but the fanzine that tries to cover all tastes in fandom, such as anime, comics, cosplay, films, novels, biographies, poetry, music, short stories, food, ...

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Anime Reviews are courtesy Jessi Silver and her site [www.s1e1.com](http://www.s1e1.com). Ms. Silver writes of her site "S1E1 is primarily an outlet for views and reviews on Japanese animated media, and occasionally video games and other entertainment." Cedar Sanderson's reviews and other interesting articles appear on her site [www.cedarwrites.wordpress.com/](http://www.cedarwrites.wordpress.com/) and its culinary extension. Jason P. Hunt's reviews appear on [SciFi4Me.Com](http://SciFi4Me.Com) Jim McCoy is now found at [Jimbossffreviews.substack.com](http://Jimbossffreviews.substack.com)

Tightbeam is published approximately monthly by the National Fantasy Fan Federation and distributed electronically to the membership.

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To join or renew, use the membership form at <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> to provide your name and whichever address you use to receive zines.

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## Letter of Comment

Dear George and Jon:

Thank you for Tightbeam 362. We're in the midst of getting ourselves ready to fly down to Los Angeles for Loscon 50, we fly out in one week. Lots to do to get ready, but I also have zines to respond to, so here goes with something I think will be quick.

My loc...we've been in the US twice already this year, and our trip to Loscon will make three. As a foreign national, I hope to get to the convention safely...I have to wonder what will happen if I were to come back to the US after Inauguration Day in 2025. I think many other foreign nationals have the same wonders and fears.

I have not seen George Takei's stage play *Allegiance*, but I have heard much about his family's confinement in an internment camp. Not a happy time, and many of those interred lost much, if not all of their possessions and money. I have to wonder if this is being reviewed at this time given some of the promises of the incoming Trump government.

I had never seen the word saccade before (well, spellcheck seems to like it), and had to look up the definition. It looks like the saccade is the method of reading we all share, and some saccade faster than others. I am getting back to reading...I can't afford new books, and our local library often doesn't have new books, but the stack of books I received as a member of the World Fantasy Convention just past is getting me back into it. I am currently reading *The Mona Lisa Sacrifice* by Vancouver author Peter Darbyshire.

I haven't been much into D&D over the years, but I can tell you I went to university with Ed Greenwood, Elminster himself. We attended Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (now called Toronto Metropolitan University), and we both have a BAA in Journalism. A few of the rooms Ed put into his superior dungeon, I designed.

Thank you for the bio on Michael Bishop. I was under the mistaken impression that he was British. I thought I had some of his books on my shelves...I don't, and I will have to fix that.

All done this time around, and thank you. See you with the next one!  
Yours, Lloyd Penney

## Anime

### Angomois: Record of Mongol Invasion Review by Jessi Silver

In the year 1274, the invading Mongols have their sights set on Japan. The exiled samurai Jinzaburō Kuchii is in Kamakura when he finds himself face to face with the invasion. – ANN

Episode 1 Summary: Jinzaburo Kuchii is a former general, and one of many criminals facing exile for his crimes. On a storm-tossed boat, he and his fellow prisoners are at the mercy of the seas until a gang revolt sees several dead and Kuchii and the more reasonable members now in



charge. They make their way to Tsushima, an island located between Japan and Goryeo (the modern-day Korean Peninsula) where they're greeted warmly by Princess Teruhi who invites them all to dinner. It's there that the reason for their exile (rather than alternate punishment) becomes clear; there are rumblings of Mongol ships 900 strong waiting to set off from Goryeo, and Tsushima is directly in their path. The criminals are meant to be the first line of defense to help repel the Mongol invasion. Kuchii vows not to get involved, but is drawn into the conflict when Princess Teruhi is nearly kidnapped by an advance force.

Impressions: I wouldn't necessarily say that certain anime seasons have "themes," but there are often a few trends represented. So far this season it feels like "trash girls" (Asobi Asobase, Chio's School Road, and Drop Kick on my Devil! to some extent) and "dreamy dudes" (Banana Fish, Phantom

in the Twilight, 100 Sleeping Princes... etc.) are the flavor of the moment. But there are almost always a few exceptions, series that seem drawn from other eras or which buck popular styles and trends. I think originally I would have pegged Mr. Tonegawa: Middle Management Blues as my pick for "strangest deviation from common anime norms" for the season; having now watched the first episode of Angolmois, I almost feel like it's a better candidate for that title.



Princess Teruhi takes on a manipulative persona for the sake of her island home.

I'm not sure if this is just a perception of mine, but I recall back when I started reviewing anime in the mid-2000's that it felt like there were a lot more examples of gritty and/or adult anime series (and, in fact, I think that was a definite appeal of anime for many fans for a long time). What comes to mind are specifically a lot of Madhouse series for whatever reason; stuff like Aoi Bungaku, Mouryou no Hako, Rainbow, and Shigurui (coincidentally, series that are either no longer very available or were never officially available in the US in the first place). Cuteness then became much more popular for a time; it's

not as if violent and downbeat testosterone-fueled anime disappeared, but it was an aesthetic that definitely faded into the background in favor of gentler, more visually-palatable fare. It's just the simple ebb and flow of popularity over time, of course. But that's likely one of the reasons why I was impressed by this episode more than I might have been ten years ago – it goes against the grain in many ways and I find that dissonance exciting.

I think history is such a fertile well of possible stories; it's my opinion that there's often nothing so fascinating and compelling as the truth of things that actually happened. Though there's a lot of anime that draws upon time periods like the Meiji era, a time of major social and technological transformation in Japan, or the Sengoku era, a time of many national conflicts with many factions on which to focus, the Kamakura period in which this particular series takes place doesn't seem to be a path as well-trod despite the fact that it includes some major societal and political changes as well (including the establishment of the Shogunate – considering the im-



portant place that the samurai class held in the country for centuries, it's kind of a big deal!) . In particular, the Mongol invasion(s) of Japan seem like a great source from which to draw fascinating narratives; people love an underdog story anyway, and the conflict on Tsushima island feels like a fascinating tale of outnumbered (and doomed) forces along the lines of 300. The characters here are convicted criminals with nothing to lose, and I think it will be interesting to see them reconcile the basic injustice of their situation, having been essentially dumped into it by a government looking for expendable forces, as well as their disconnect from Tsushima in order to come together and try to defend it.

Simply on its own merits, this opening episode is better than I would have expected, going in knowing as little about it as I did. Aside from its interesting setting, I also appreciate the fact that this opening episode is kind of its own package – it introduces the story and characters, sets up a conflict, provides some flash and excitement, and gives its protagonist the opportunity for a personal journey. Though I'm all about slow-burn anime stories, as well as anime that doesn't rely much on plot at all, it's fun sometimes to sit back and enjoy a show with straightforward surface appeal and just appreciate through viewing it many of the aspects that make anime what it is (cool action and heroics being just some of them).



Kuchii chooses to fight.

The visual quality of the episode is an interesting mixed bag. The animation itself is overall very good, with the expected emphasis on scenes of battle. I was especially impressed by Kuchii's fight scene with our thus-far-unnamed antagonist on the beach. Each clash of swords and movement of bodies was fluidly-animated and exciting to watch. Though it's a little gimmicky, I liked the shine applied to the metal weapons in the moonlight, as well as the enemy's glowing red eyes. On the other side of things, there's a textural visual filter applied to

the entire episode which I thought was an odd decision. It's definitely not a deal-breaker and I do think the intent was to give the series an older look, as if it was drawn on handmade paper. I'm actually reminded of Mononoke, which used a similar technique to good effect. In a series like this, though, which otherwise uses a pretty typical design, it's distracting and makes the nighttime scenes more difficult to parse.

I'm also generally questioning why the antagonist that Kuchii faces in this episode is a blond-haired blue-eyed individual. I'm most certainly coming to this from a Western point-of-view in that I've seen a lot of American movies insert white people into situation where they don't belong and I'm not a fan of it. I can't say that I'm knowledgeable enough about this period in history to say for certain whether or not white people were even around, or even if this character is intended to represent a white European person. I'm sure whatever their origin is, the logic of their appearance should be discerned more easily later on. I'm still wary, though, and question the choice to begin with. I realize this is a nitpick, but I want to mention that most of the episode seems based in reality so it's surprising and (unintentionally?) comical when blonde jumps all the way from the beach into his ship which is bobbing on the water several meters away. It's not a good look.

I was really surprised by how much I enjoyed this, especially considering that I completely lacked awareness of it prior to the beginning of the season (though that's nothing new). I think the gender make-up and some of the visual choices might get a little tiresome after a while (sorry guys, but it takes a lot for me to get excited about a cast that's comprised almost entirely of scruffy dudes, especially since I've been made to watch so gosh-darned many of them over the years), but I'm always interested in learning a little bit more about Japanese history. While I'm sure this series takes some creative licenses with it I'm betting I'll still absorb a little something.

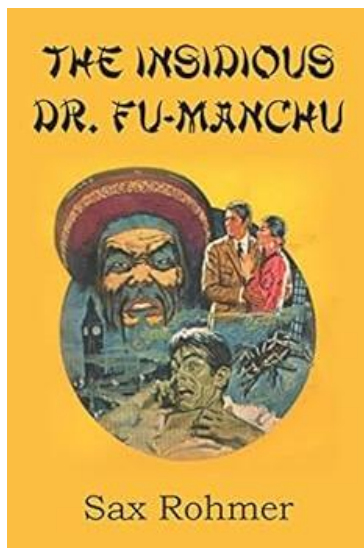
Pros: Good animation. Draws from an uncommon historical source. The first episode really dives right into the setup/conflict.

Cons: The filter/overlay is unnecessary and distracting. The cast is very masculine, with all the pros and cons that entails. I'm questioning why the main baddie character we see is blue-eyed and blonde.

Grade: B

## Books

### The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu by Sax Rohmer Review by Heath Row



Geez, Sax Rohmer can write! Though I consciously made the decision at least once not to read this bright yellow-covered paperback in public, I devoured it in several sittings. It's a relatively linear, though occasionally wandering or unnecessarily expansive narrative—not unlike Rohmer's *Brood of the Witch-Queen*—but Rohmer still does well to pull readers through the chapters.

The basic gist of the novel is that Fu Manchu is a criminal mastermind, the representative of a “third party” distinct from the old China of the Mandarin class of the Manchu dynasty or the young China, a new generation sullied by western reforms. As such, he's a figurehead of the racist concept of the yellow peril. Reading the book is not a guilty pleasure, per se, because I don't sympathize with the author's portrayal of Asians, specifically the Chinese, but one can still enjoy reading the book as an of-its-time, though unfortunate,

adventure story.

Also of interest is the character of Karamaneh, a supposedly Arab woman who fulfills the role of near-Asian temptress and mysterious beauty. Formerly a slave girl, her brother has been imprisoned by Fu Manchu, kept in a deathlike state using a mysterious serum that, when paired with its antidote, can move someone back and forth from somnolence.

With such elements, the book is also somewhat science fictional—and therefore fair game for these pages. In addition to the potentially speculative political science mentioned above, the book also features numerous biological weapons. Examples include another serum that causes

murderous madness and various poisons—Fu Manchu is a master—including puffballs, spores, and a fungus that can envelop the body of a man, smothering him. It's obvious why Rohmer was such a popular writer in the early 20th century—the man exhibits serious craft—and I'll eagerly read subsequent books in the series.

## Films

### Horror of Dracula (Hammer Films, 1958) Review by Heath Row



I watched the 1958 Horror of Dracula with my wife and in-laws. My brother-in-law had brought it on his laptop, knowing I enjoy such movies. While I have the film on DVD and it's available for streaming, we watched it with his laptop connected to the television. That in itself was an interesting experience. The transfer was pretty decent, and for the most part, watching the movie was seamless. But a couple of times, the image stuttered, hanging up briefly in order to continue loading—much like a streaming movie idling. I'm sure he downloaded the movie from somewhere for free, and the viewing experience was no better than streaming or watching a DVD, which is my preferred method for movies at home.

While not the first Hammer horror film, Horror of Dracula—also titled just Dracula—is still considered a key production by that company. Christopher Lee does a fine job as Count Dracula, but it is Peter Cushing as Doctor Van Helsing who stands out most strongly. The Technicolor process also co-stars, with the blood so very bright red—even its spatters during the opening sequence are a highlight of the movie. Jimmy Sangster's screenplay takes some liberties with Bram Stoker's novel—positioning Jonathan Harker as a vampire hunter and slightly adjusting some of the character relationships—but the result is a fine cinematic adaptation and experience. The attempts to protect Lucy from Count Dracula are ineffectual, and Mina Harker is also endangered, but the threat is eventually averted.

The movie's use of readymade wooden stakes and the practical special effects once Dracula is exposed to sunlight are wonderful, as is the occasional weaponization of religious symbols. It's not the best adaptation of Dracula, but it's among the most liberal and colorful—a feather in Hammer's cap.

### The Mummy (Hammer Films, 1959) Review by Heath Row

This week for movie night with a friend, we watched another Hammer production, The Mummy, released in 1959. Of the two films, it's the better movie. Also starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, it's a relatively short movie at just under an hour and a half, and its relatively straightforward plotting is padded with a section of flashback exposition.





You likely know the outline of the story: archaeologists discover a hidden tomb, releasing an undead protector who falls in love with a living woman because she looks like the Egyptian princess with whom the high priest was in love before he was entombed.

Cushing is effective as the surviving archaeologist, his father driven mad—for a span of three years—by seeing the mummy emerge. And Lee is absolutely wonderful as the mummy—even better than he is as Count Dracula. The scene in which he emerges from the marsh is wonderful, as are most scenes in which he is featured.

One of the aspects that struck me was that most of the movie seemed to be filmed on a sound stage rather than outside. Indeed, it was shot at Bray Studios in Berkshire. What the crew was able to do with painted backdrops and other set design is pretty impressive, especially the scenes in the marsh or swamp.

The scene in which Cushing drives a spear through Lee's mummy—and in which the gathered hunters let loose their firearms on it in the swamp—are very fun visually. Despite such visual treats, the movie is a little slow—especially the flashback exposition—and my friend and I conversed actively through much of the movie. That was a rarity; we occasionally make remarks here and there, but to talk throughout is uncommon. Horror of Dracula might have been more interesting throughout, but the practical effects and costuming in *The Mummy* are more consistently excellent despite the slow pace.

## Magazine Review

I still had material from the Hugo Award packet left over after the voting deadline passed, which I have been reading at my convenience.

## Uncanny Review by Tom Feller

This e-zine already published four of the Hugo finalists last year, so while I was preparing to vote I skipped over their sample for the Semi-Prozine category. It featured other stories the editors, Lynn M. Thomas and Michael Damian Thomas, considered memorable. They were also nominated in the Best Editor-Short Form category.

“Waystation City” by A. T. Greenblatt is set in a city populated by people from many different places and times. At some point, they are all supposed to be returned to their original place and time, but some people, such as the twins Daphne and Claude from the 1970s, don't want to wait. However, it is dangerous to leave without instructions, so they consult Gerty, who writes about such people.

A mysterious door keeps appearing in the various homes of Kosmo, the narrator in “Bad Doors” by John Wiswell. He and his dog Rufus keep moving, but the door keeps following until he starts living in an RV. It is set during the Covid-19 pandemic. “A Piece of the Continent” by Marissa Lingen is a nice little ghost story about a young woman and a friend who set off from Boston to Alaska to spread the stolen ashes of their deceased grandfathers. One of their mothers, who has supernatural abilities, objects.

“A Soul in the World” by Charlie Jane Anders is a prequel to her Unstoppable trilogy. I liked the third book in the trilogy so much that it was my first choice for the Lodestar Award. This story is about a childless woman who is given a baby by aliens to raise as her own. It was nice to read about the woman, because she disappears from the trilogy after the first chapter of the first book.

Eugenia Triantafyllou has two stories in the sample. The title character of “Six Versions of My Brother Found Under a Bridge” is a deceased boy whose sister keeps finding new versions of him. It was a Nebula Award finalist. The women in a family described in “Flower, Daughter, Soil, Seed” have been different kinds of flowers.

“Supermax” by Daniel H. Wilson refers to a sentient prison run by an AI. Two beings create worlds together in “Collaboration” by Ken Liu & Caroline M. Yoachim. The premise of “Can You Hear Me Now?” by Catherynne M. Valente is that a real person is created from TV commercials.

The title character in “Miz Boudreaux’s Last Ride” by Christopher Caldwell is deceased, but she calls out from the grave to recruit Davion and Tommy to help Jack, her magician goddaughter. Among other things, they visit a ghost town and have to fend off swarms of starlings.

“The Rain Remembers What the Sky Forgets” by Fran Wilde is set in the early 20th Century when the feathers of exotic birds were used in women’s hats. The late Dr. Martin Ventri was a collector of rare birds, but his widow wants to kill those birds so that the feathers can be used in her hats. Dr. Ventri’s ward, Celia Smith, is a hat maker who has to make a decision regarding the feathers.

The title characters in “Tantie Merle and the Farmhand 4200” by R.S.A. Garcia are an 85 year old widow living in Trinidad with her goat and a Roomba-sized AI robot whom she names Lincoln after her late husband. The robot was a gift from the woman’s daughter to help her with her garden and other chores. Their biggest challenge is that the goat keeps trying to eat the robot. This was my favorite story in the sample and liked it as much, if not more so, as the ones that became Hugo finalists.

“Cold Relations” by Mary Robinette Kowal concern estranged two siblings. Claudette illegally makes a living as a “Ghostbuster” who also consumes the life forces of the ghosts. Her older brother Rupert is a government wizard who takes energy from living murderers.

“Scalzi on Film: Speed Racer’s Long Road” by John Scalzi is a retrospective review of the 2008 film Speed Racer. “Building Better Worlds” by Javier Grillo-Marxuach, as the title indicates, is about the art of world building in fiction, film, and television, including Star Trek, The Lord of the Rings, and Star Wars.

It is a hot subject these days, so there were two essays on the effect of AI on the arts. “Something in the Way: AI-Generated Images and the Real Killer” by John Picacio, an illustrator, and “Not a Zero Sum Game: AI vs. Art” by Hana Lee, a writer.

I have read *The Canterbury Tales*, but was not aware that Geoffrey Chaucer may once have been accused of rape. “What a Fourteenth Century Legal Case can Teach us About Storytelling” by Annalee Newitz updates us on the controversy.

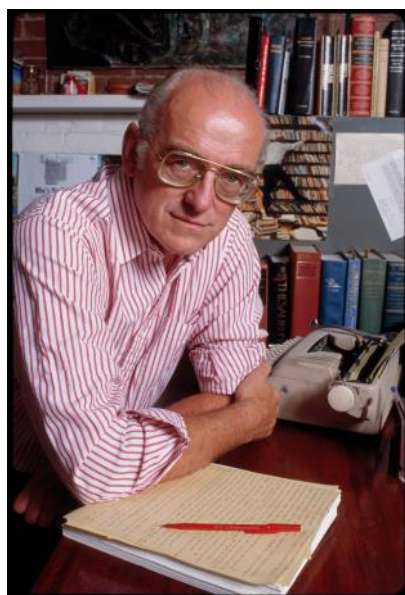
## SerCon

### Don Westlake Bio-Bibliography

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

N3F Historian



Donald Edwin Westlake (1933 - 2008) was an American writer with over a hundred novels and non-fiction books to his credit. He specialized in crime fiction, especially comic crime capers, and was known for the number of “in jokes” he put in his stories.

#### Genre Fiction

Westlake also wrote science fiction (SF) and fantasy (F). His SF/F writing included over 30 short stories written between 1954 and 1984 -- some of which were collected in *The Curious Facts Preceding My Execution and Other Fictions* (1968) and in *Tomorrow's Crimes* (1989) -- and the novels *Anarchaos* (1967/ as by Curt Clark), *Humans* (1992), and *Smoke* (1995).

#### Pseudonyms

Westlake wrote under several pseudonyms -- including Richard Stark, Tucker Coe, Samuel Holt, Edwin West, John B. Allan, Judson Jack Carmichael, Curt Clark, Timothy J. Culver, J. Morgan Cunningham, Sheldon Lord, and Alan Marshall. Most of his SF, however, was written under his own name.

#### SF Short Stories

“And Then He Went Away” in *Future Science Fiction* #43 (June 1959)

“Call Him Nemesis” in *If* (September 1961)

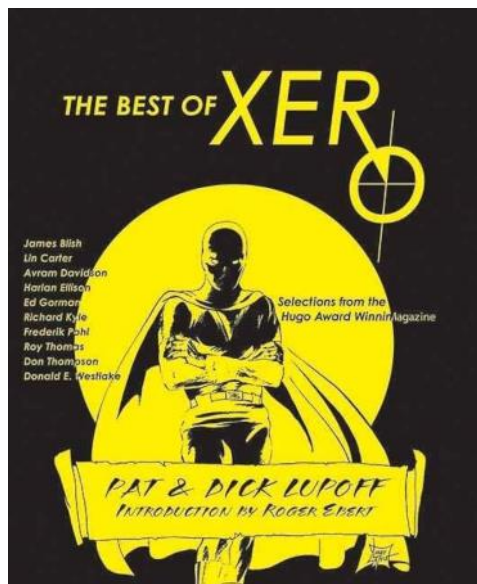
“Cat Killers” in *Shock* (September 1960)

“The Earthman's Burden” in *Galaxy* (October 1962)

“Fluorocarbons Are Here to Stay” in *Science Fiction* (March 1958)

“Hydra” in *F&SF* (March 1984)

“Nackles” in *F&SF* (January 1964) [as by Curt Clark]



“Look Before You Leap” in ASF (May 1962)  
 “Man of Action” in ASF (December 1960)  
 “Meteor Strike!” in Amazing (November 1961)  
 “Or Give Me Death” in Universe #8 (November 1954)  
 “The Risk Profession” in Amazing (March 1961)  
 “The Spy in the Elevator” in Galaxy (October 1961)  
 “They Also Serve” in ASF (September 1961)  
 “Travelers Far and Wee” in Science Fiction (May 1960)  
 “The Question” in F&SF (March 1963) [with Lawrence M. Janifer]  
 “The Winner” in Nova 1 (1970), edited by Harry Harrison

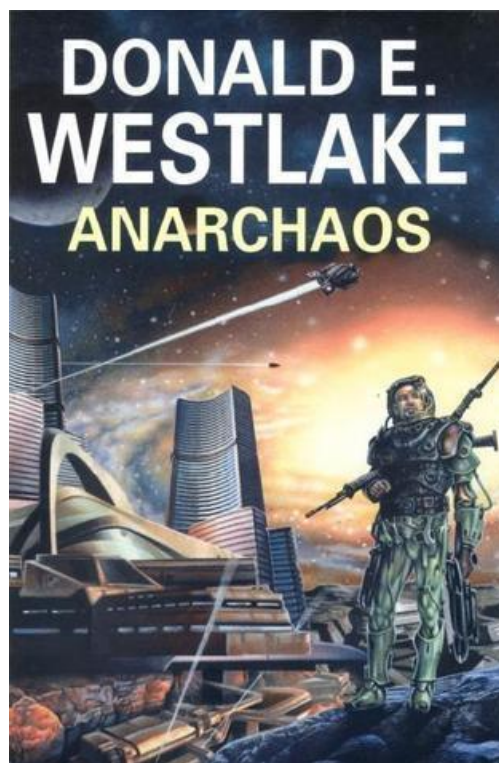
#### Reprinted SF Stories

“The Earthman's Burden” was reprinted in Elsewhere and Elsewhen (1968), edited by Groff Conklin.

“The Question” was in 100 Great Science Fiction Short Stories (1978), edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg, and Joseph D. Olander.

“The Winner” was in Mysterious Visions (1979), edited by Charles G. Waugh, Martin Greenberg, & Joseph D. Olander.

#### SF Books



Anarchaos (NY; Ace, 1967/as by Curt Clark)

Anarchy and chaos rule on the planet Anarchaos when Rolf Malone arrives from Earth after serving time for murder. While he lacks most human emotions, Rolf did love his brother Gar, who was killed on Anarchaos, and he is bent on vengeance. At first, even with his considerable armament, Rolf is no match for the hellish planet. Still, he survives and plans revenge. “Prison may have seemed like Hell but, in reality, was like Heaven compared to Anarchaos.”

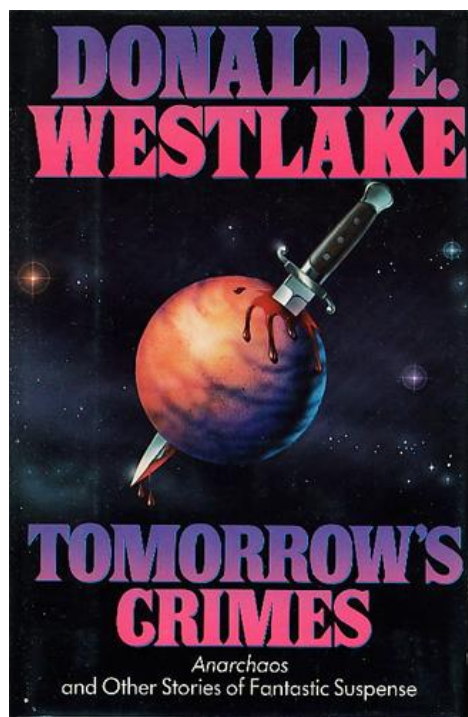
The Curious Facts Preceding My Execution and Other Fictions (NY: Ballantine Books, 1973)

A collection of Westlake’s mysteries and his SF story “Murder in Outer Space.”

Tomorrow's Crimes. (NY: Mysterious Press, 1989)

The selections in this volume, nine short stories and the book-length Anarchaos, all originally appeared in SF prozines. Both the novel and a much shorter tale, “Hydra,” carry an implied warning about future life in a polluted world.





Humans (NY: Mysterious Press, 1992)

The basic plot of *Humans* is that God is tired of his creation, and could wipe it out himself -- but decides to let humans use the free will he has given them to do it themselves. God sends an angel to earth to manipulate a few key humans who should bring about the earth's demise. On the other hand, Satan has found humans quite entertaining through the years and doesn't want his entertainment to end -- so he sends forth his own minions to save the planet.

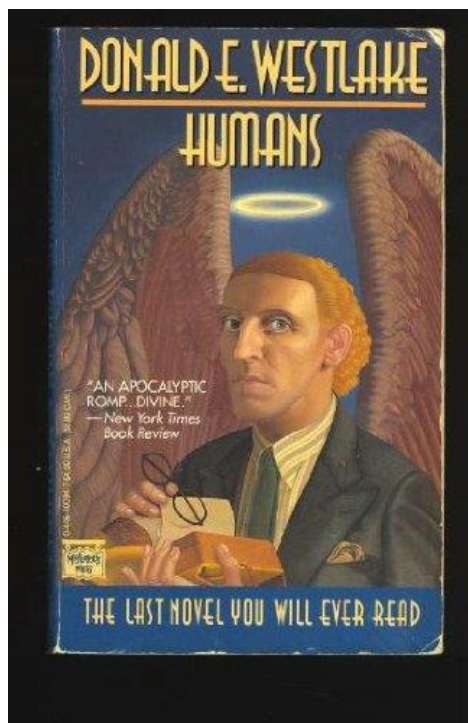
Smoke (NY: Mysterious Press, 1995)

The main character in *Smoke*, Freddie Noon, is a career villain. He breaks into the research lab of an American tobacco company to steal some equipment. Unfortunately, he's caught by scientists who can't be bothered waiting for a governmental okay to use human volunteers -- so they see Freddie as a handy test subject. They convince him to take an injection -- showing him something they say is the

antidote -- because it's better than going to jail, isn't it? Only Freddie escapes, steals the antidote, and takes it. The problem is that it's not an antidote, and Freddie is now invisible. Being invisible comes with a lot of problems, but also has its unique opportunities.

### Awards/Honors/Recognitions

Westlake was a three-time Edgar Award winner, and one of only two writers to win Edgars in three different categories (1968, Best Novel, *God Save the Mark*/ 1990, Best Short Story, "Too Many Crooks"/1991, Best Motion Picture Screenplay, *The Grifters*).



Several of his novels were made into successful motion pictures, including *The Hot Rock* (1973), starring Robert Redford, George Segal, and Zero Mostel.

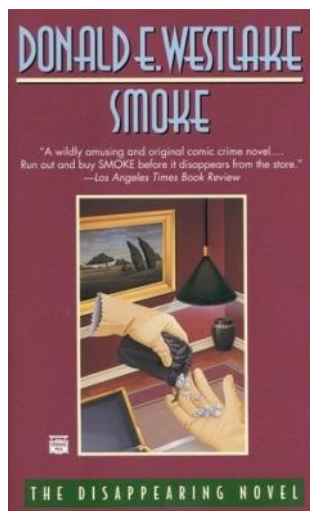
Westlake was named a Mystery Writers of America Grand Master for life achievement in 1993.

### Some Conclusions

He was also an occasional contributor to SF fanzines, including *Xero*. He was represented in *The Best of Xero* (Tachyon, July, 2004), edited by Pat and Dick Lupoff.

Westlake's mystery fiction is highly thought of, especially his John Dortmunder series. In describing his modern crime stories, Martin H. Greenberg stated: "Perhaps no other writer has so successfully and skillfully worked in as many different sub-genres, and so prolifically."





On the other hand, his SF has not received much critical notice. In an interview in the 1990s, Westlake was asked why he no longer wrote science fiction. He replied: "I've been out of science fiction 8 years. It was too hidebound, conservative, and Campbell-ridden. Probably still is." He had published stories in ASF in the early 1960s.

He once admitted that the main subject of his stories was bewilderment.

### Death

He died suddenly on December 31, 2008, while on vacation in Mexico; he was 75. His widow, Abigail, reported that he died of a heart attack.

In addition to Abigail, he was survived by four sons: Sean Westlake, Steven Westlake, Paul Westlake and Tod Westlake; two stepdaughters, Adrienne Adams and Katherine Adams; a stepson, Patrick Adams; a sister, Virginia; and four grandchildren.

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Note: In addition to the above, several Internet sites were consulted, including Wikipedia, Fancyclopedia 3, and ISFDB.

## Food of Famous Writers

### Cooking by Cedar Sanderson

Hence... recipes!

#### Tabbouleh

Yes, I've blogged it before. But this version is the full-wheat definitely not keto-friendly version. Ooh, that's another reason for doing my 'recipe box' this way, I can do all the cross links and indexing.

- 1 c. coarse bulgur wheat
- 2 c water

Bring liquid to a boil , add wheat and remove from heat immediately. Allow to sit for 20-30 minutes.



2 bunches of flat-leaf parsley (you can use the curly, I prefer the flat)  
 Handful of fresh mint  
 2 lemons, juiced  
 1 tsp garlic paste  
 1 diced English Cucumber (English or Persian are best here, if you use a slicing cuke, peel and seed it)  
 4 diced roma tomatoes (if you use other tomatoes, remove the pulp and seeds to keep the salad from being too wet)  
 2-3 green onions (scallions) finely chopped

You might want to cut the stems off the parsley, I usually just give it a light trim. The next step will take care of them. Put the herbs in a food processor, along with the garlic, and pulse until it's roughly chopped, while drizzling in the lemon juice. Combine this, with the diced tomatoes, cucumber, and onions. Gently mix in the softened wheat. This can be served immediately, but I like to make it the night before to allow all the flavors to blend and build. It should be served chilled.

Alongside a spiced dish, like a tagine, this is a great counterbalance of fresh green flavors, with the wheat and the cucumber adding crisp texture to the salad.

## Apple Brown Betty

### Cooking by Cedar Sanderson

I do a lot of apple recipes. There are a couple of reasons for that: one, they are my First Reader's favorite fruit (except maybe blackberries) and two, they are relatively cheap, easy to find, and non-perishable. I can buy a bag of apples and if I can't do anything with them for a week, they are fine. We like them for eating, although I usually buy Granny Smith for baking and I don't care for them as eating apples, too tart for me. But baking with them is wonderful, they are tart, hold their shape, and have a wonderful flavor. I sometimes miss having access to an apple orchard, and the annual cider, applesauce, and apple butter making.

Seedling apples, very tart but wonderful in baking.

I've done an Apple Crisp recipe before on the blog, but we were recently discussing what the differences are between a Crisp, a Crumble, a Cobbler, and a Dump Cake (not to mention my Dad's favorite, a Grunt). I had, until we looked it up, forgotten that a Brown Betty was also an option. So what's the difference? A Dump Cake, of the above, is least likely to be made with fresh fruit, it's normally made with canned. But all of them can be made with canned or fresh fruit.



So many similarities, and yet the variations could be near infinite. Like Pancakes.

One thing they do all have in common is the ease of preparation. I made up a huge batch of streusel as I was prepping the Apple Brown Betty, and after I was done, froze the rest of it, so the next time I want streusel all I have to do is scoop some out. I don't know how long it will last in the freezer, I've never been able to test that before it was all used up.

### Streusel to Freeze

- 1 1/2 c butter (very cold. Can even be frozen)
- 1 1/2 c dark brown sugar
- 2 c flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon (add more if your family likes it)
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg (add more if you want)

In a food processor with the blade on, combine the sugar, flour, and spices. Pulse a few times, then start adding the butter, cut into 1/2" thick patties. Put in three or four, pulse a few times, and then add another few. Repeat this until all the butter is in. Don't over-blend. You want chunks of butter, and they don't need to be uniform. Place into a ziploc bag and put in the freezer. You don't need to thaw before using.

### Ingredients for streusel

Spices, flour, sugar, and butter: Streusel

butter

Butter pats, very cold. Don't stack them - they stick!

### Preparing apple crisp for baking

A very full thing of streusel and the apples.

### Streusel topping

I made the pieces of butter a little small. It still worked just fine.

## Apple Brown Betty

4-5 apples, peeled and thinly sliced

handful of brown sugar (about 1/3 cup, use less for sweet or very ripe apples)

Handful of flour (between 1/3 to 1/2 cup, depending on how juicy the apples)

A few pats of butter

1 1/2 c streusel, divided in two.

Preheat the oven to 400 deg F and put the dutch oven (mine is cast-iron, flat-bottomed, and about 10" in diameter) in to preheat as well.

Peel, core, and slice the apples. We like them peeled, but you can leave the peel on if you wanted. I tend to slice each apple quarter into thirds as I go, but if you have one of those nifty spiral peeler-corers, that works beautifully).

In a large bowl, toss the apples with the handfuls of brown sugar and flour. Dot the butter in there, too. Add more spices if you like - a teaspoonful or two of Apple Pie Spice (allspice, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg) is nice.

Take the dutch oven out and put it on a trivet or the stovetop. With a silicon spatula to spread it, sprinkle in about 3/4 c of streusel and make it even.

Put the apples in on top of that, making sure they are settled without too much in the way of air pockets.

Put the remaining streusel on top, sprinkling it evenly.

Put the whole thing back in the oven for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350 deg F and bake for another 35-40 minutes, or until the apples are soft and you can hear the liquids bubbling.

Serve while still warm, but make sure you do let it cool. Contains HOT LAVA right out of the oven!



If you serve this while still warm, the bottom crust comes out beautifully and it is crispy, almost candied. This was so good, even better than my usual crisp recipe. Preheating the dutch oven made all the difference. It's incredibly easy to do, and it might not look elegant, but it tastes divine.





Brandy Worked  
by Tiffanie Gray