

THE BEANIE

The Zine With THE 3 BNF'S

No. 18, RSN 1980 - PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY PRACTICALLY

© 1979

3p

DAVE THE MENACE AND GNASHER



.... MORE ON INSIDE!

Isola Police Department 87th Precinct

Under sections 850 and 851 of the Penal Law, wanted for questioning in connection with various liquor-store holdups, these suspects are known ringleaders of an organized crime syndicate calling itself the Broadmoor-Saughton Fraternal Alliance [BSFA].



*LANGFORD, David
alias L.Sordo*



*KRUTCH, Irving
alias
Alan Dorey*



*CARELLA, Teddy
alias
Eve Harvey*



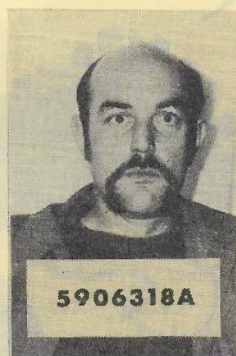
*DiANGELO,
Salvatore
alias Kevin Smith*



*NICHOLAS, Joe
alias Danny Gimp*



*EDWARDS, Malcolm
alias 'Manmountain
Mal'*



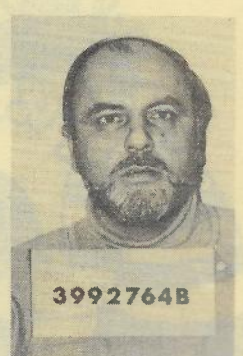
*DICKINSON, Mike
alias Meyer Meyer*



*HARVEY, John
alias
'Headbanger'*



*OUNSLEY, Simon
alias 'The
Eldorado Kid',
Lannie Budd*



*BROWN, Sandy
alias Fats Donner*

Any citizen with information regarding the present whereabouts of any of the above is requested to phone the 87th Squad, Det. 1st/Gr. Hawes, on Frederick 7 - 8024.

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That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even TWLL-DDU 18 may come out. It is August, 1980. Still struggling to evade responsibility is Dave Langford at his cyclopean megalopolis, 22 Northumberland Avenue, READING, Berks. RG2 7PW, UK. Blasphemous acolytes this issue include Taral (front cover—however, I use a Roneo really), Sandy Brown (inside cover design, captions and photography) and the eldritch progenitor of the D. West Guide to Fanzine Production within: this six-part vade mecum was produced for Seacon's fanroom and has lain in decent obscurity ever since. Electrostencils by John Harvey. NOTE: the huge 32pp Barker-Langford TWLL-DDU 17 aka TAFF-DDU (March 1980) is and was a TAFF fund-raiser available only for 75p (USA: \$2 to Joyce Scrivner, 2528 15th Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55404). This is a hint. TD-18 goes to the usual rabble, with a few available to neophytes sending 50p (for TAFF). TD-19 will quite probably, but on the other hand could conceivably, unless... Join the dots in the above paragraph to make a fascinating fold-out kitchen aid and massage device which can be handed in at your local supermarket or abbatoir to bring you 25% discount on euthanasia lotion (or would exchange for inflatable replica of the Queen Mother). Support TAFF! Support GUFF! Support Aussiecon '83!

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THE INEXORABILITY OF THE SPECIOUS

A fannish reputation resembles leprosy: acquiring it may involve some small difficulty, but your real problem is getting rid of it. Also as with leprosy, parts of you tend to drop off. This is not a coarse jest aimed at Dave Cobbledick, or Roz Kaveney, but a brilliantly witty and economical way of saying that your average fan-reputation is stripped down to a label with a couple of words on it—the rest of the owner's doubtless complex and fascinating personality being as piffle before the wind. Greg Pickersgill, hairy dreadnaught. Roy Kettle, jester rat. Jim Barker, captive artist. Kevin Smith, parody of an accountant. D. West, eldritch prophet. Chris Atkinson, enigmatic herbalist. Joe Nicholas, nihilist chiffonier. Alan Dorey, foulmouthed empire-builder. Malcolm Edwards, owlish empire-builder. David Pringle, see Malcolm Edwards. Rob Holdstock, priapic hack. Ian Williams, paranoid dwarf (or, 'Dwarf'—Paranoid). Brian Parker, dancing boil. Keith Walker, fanxien r_eviw_r. Simone Walsh, motherly temp. Ian Maule, hmm....

By memorizing these and other such condensed biographies, the merest neofan can cause roars of laughter as he or she wittily alludes to K. Walker's misspelling of the indefinite article or A. Dorey's plans to merge the BSFA with IBM. There are, of course, difficulties. Some people (I do not mention Graham James) seem to have blankish labels; others have unusually sparse descriptions (Simon Ounsley: 'Bollards'); and John Collick and

Steev Higgins are still securely roped together with a label reading 'Vast inrush of new talent since 1978'... though our Steev has made some attempt to branch out and share with Terry Jeeves a label saying something like 'Erg!'. Personally I suspect that even if I got an ear transplant and wrote nothing but Star Trek poetry for eighteen months, I'd still be branded as a deaf gossip columnist.

"Look out, it's Langford!" they whisper to new fans as I enter the room party with my usual suave impersonation of a gyroscope. "You watch what you say when he's around! He writes it all down and prints it!" An awed silence falls on the new fans, despite the plain fact that said gossip columnist's hearing aid is awash with beer whilst his brain (now shrivelled to something between a raisin and a prune) is wholly occupied in plotting the complex space/time geodesic which will intersect the probable location of the drinks. Neophytes may fall silent, but those more fannish at once burst into what they hope is newsworthy activity, surrounding the hapless gossip columnist and shrieking out the most intimate and perverse details of each others' indiscretions. Shower-rails bend like Gellerized spoons, glass tabletops shatter at the touch of a buttock. D. West—lurching and twirling in what Charles Fort would have called a precession of the damned—removes his clothes to seduce Steev Higgins, three times, in different ways. Joe Nicholas is detached from Helen Eling and nailed to the wall; passages from Star Trek or Perry Rhodan

novels are tattooed upon his chest and thighs. Jim Barker chisels impromptu cartoons into the furniture, being careful to sign each one for copyright reasons. Reluctantly, I am forced to take notes....

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NEGATIONS

One Tun meetings are not the place for astonishing feats of gossip-columnry: to produce one's trusty notebook is to run the risk of having it seized and inscribed with orders for a round of thirty drinks. Some months ago, as I stood there letting the ambience flatten me against the wall, I became aware that one John Stewart was shouting something in my general direction: his eyes were screwed up as he gazed on me with the expression of one contemplating a small and noxious specimen of vermin.

"I don't like you working for the Ministry of Defence," he slurred earnestly. "I want you to stop working there. I'll buy you five pints of beer if you give it up...."

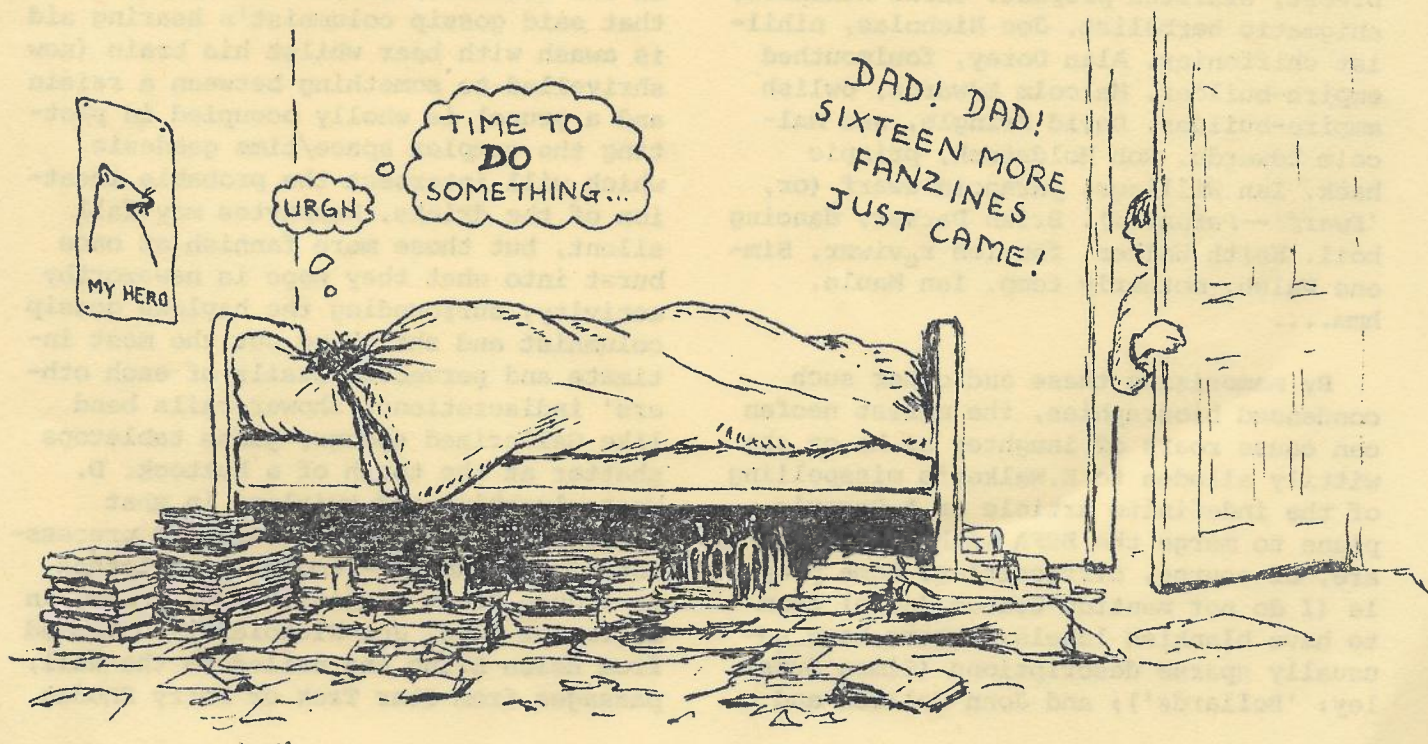
I mention this encounter (a) as a subtle but not causally connected preliminary to the official announcement that I no longer work for AWRE, and (b) as a possible explanation of Mr Stewart's

absence from One Tun meetings since I gave in my notice.

In the secrecy and obscurity of these ill-duplicated sheets, I suppose I should reveal Why I Resigned—in order to avoid incarceration in a Barker cartoon series to teach me the error of my ways. Unfortunately the motives seem even cloudier than can be accounted for by the 1½ pints of lager bought me by grateful colleagues on my departure. Lust for money can surely have had little to do with it: though admittedly an incautious mention of my salary could be relied on to make friends fall to the ground in strong hysterics, I have it on the authority of the *Daily Express* that civil servants are grossly overpaid. (Some more grossly than others: the effete and plutocratic Hazel was earning more than me despite being, nominally, a grade lower.) The *Express* also explained that civil servants do virtually no work—an ideal I'd worked hard to attain, with little success—and that they almost automatically receive knighthoods and such on retirement. I'm waiting for the New Year with great eagerness.

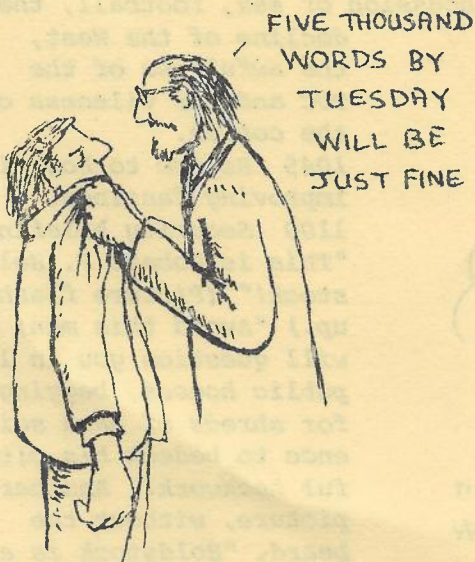
Meanwhile... I wrote to Dave Bridges on the joys of having one's nostrils fluoroscoped and fillings removed for security inspection at the end of each working day. This was a mild exaggeration

↓ (1) *The Moment of Inspiration* ↓



--but one unspeakable irritation of AWRE was the random search, whereby at the whim of MOD policemen you're called from the departing crowd at the main gate and taken indoors to have your briefcase examined and (if the officer in charge feels particularly randy) your body fingered for suspicious lumps of plutonium taped to the skin. I didn't like satisfying their perverse longings in this way, especially as (a) if you can afford to commute to AWRE by car, the police do occasionally look in the boot but never grope your luscious body; (b) no searches are conducted at lunchtime, enabling master spies to leave with impunity and carloads of goodies; (c) those with access to secret data need only make longhand copies which police will be too thick to recognize, and can thus remove whatever they wish. (The searches are really to prevent industrial workers from nicking electric drills and suchlike, but naturally this is not admitted.) Rage, spleen, bile!

A lesser annoyance was the radiation monitoring: wearing film badges is no trouble, but there's also the obligation to fill numerous urine bottles for our ever-eager 'Health Physics' department to boil down and examine for signs of nuclear warheads. With the small standard bottle, the problem is to schedule a suitable intermission at the requisite point of one's efforts, in order to make



↑ (2) Editorial Skills ↑

massive course course corrections and programme a target area other than the now-full container. However, some tests require about a gallon of, as it were, raw material. It's a desperate race against time, frantically pumping in more tea and coffee, risking a dropsical bladder in the mad need to top up one's bottle before Health Physics's white-coated minions remove it for their strange rites. A keen element of competition exists, the polythene bottles being quite sufficiently translucent to show the level of achievement, while the victim's name is of course pasted on each. Oh what jolly fun! The dread receptacles stand accusingly in the toilet, on a sunny window-sill where on occasion they can fester for a full week-end, and I leave you to imagine the soft fragrance which billows forth as you unscrew the lid to make further contributions on a warm Monday morning. It may be years before I lose this habit of holding my breath in the loo (the trouble with the habit being that colossal pressure builds up until one staggers desperately outside to go 'Gaaaaaaaah!' in the startled faces of passers-by).

I had my revenge on this system before shaking the radioactive dust of AWRE from my shoes. A former occupant of my office was still receiving urgent urinary requests from Health Physics, a year after I'd displaced him; his bottles came and went unchristened and without comment. In my final months at AWRE I conscientiously filled them with various interesting solutions: cold tea looked rather convincing (provided you strained out the leaves), and dilute coffee perhaps a little sickly; my ultimate, pathological effort consumed the contents of several old felt-pens and should by rights have had the ambulance screaming round to my office before lunchtime. Nothing happened. I left before I could try the experiment of adding uranium salts to the synthetic pee.

Other doubtless excellent reasons for abandoning this job can be stated in less time than it takes Joe Nicholas to bolt on a subordinate clause: having to get up at 7.10am on weekday mornings to catch a rotten lousy smelly bus which is always late and keeps me waiting in the rain (you will please ignore the fact that I've crawled from bed early on a Monday morning to type this); having to

submit books like *War In 2080* to arcane censorship (in one chapter I ventured to suggest that neutron bombs kill more people than old-fashioned nukes, for a given amount of property damage; this page came back with 'gutter journalism!' scrawled in the margin, and was edited down to the more politically correct assertion that neutron bombs do less damage for the same number of corpses...); being expected by D. West to write revealingly about my job—this proves West to be in the pay of the Kremlin; and, of course, the prospect of collecting five pints of beer from John Stewart when he next shows his face in the Tun.

I'm not wholly convinced by these reasons, mind you. There were good things about AWRE work: not having to deal with the revolting public (being surrounded by a 5-mile security fence means never having to say you're sorry), not being able to take work home for, heh-heh, security reasons, and getting free computer time. Now I'm making do with a mere calculator—which I had to lend to my boss so he could present it to me in a touching farewell ceremony, the 'We're Getting Rid Of Langford Fund' not having raised enough for more than an abacus bead or two. Alas, the calculator lacks large-computer facilities: there are no long queues to use it, and it doesn't stop working just before the vital solution emerges.

Very possibly the real reason for

my departure is that furtively I wanted to be professional, filthy and incredibly rich from foreign sales. Only one to go! And besides, it gives you lots of time to produce fanzines.

PROFILES IN STRING

When I cleared out my AWRE desk, strange things came to light—one of the strangest being an apple I'd brought to work in, I should say, early 1979. I'd tell you all about what this apple looked like on exhumation, only I need the idea for a horror story I'm writing... There were also some unsavoury limericks about Bogdan C. Maglich of Rutgers University, who'd invented a new and science-fictional fusion power system a few years back, a system which I'd had to write up for AWRE consumption and, presumably, a system which didn't work—I mean, you haven't seen many headlines lately about the Bogdan C. Maglich Migma Fusion Power Thingy, have you? I swear I'm not making this up. And there was a draft Daily Timetable of uncertain date...

0830 Office. Fall into desk chair and moan.

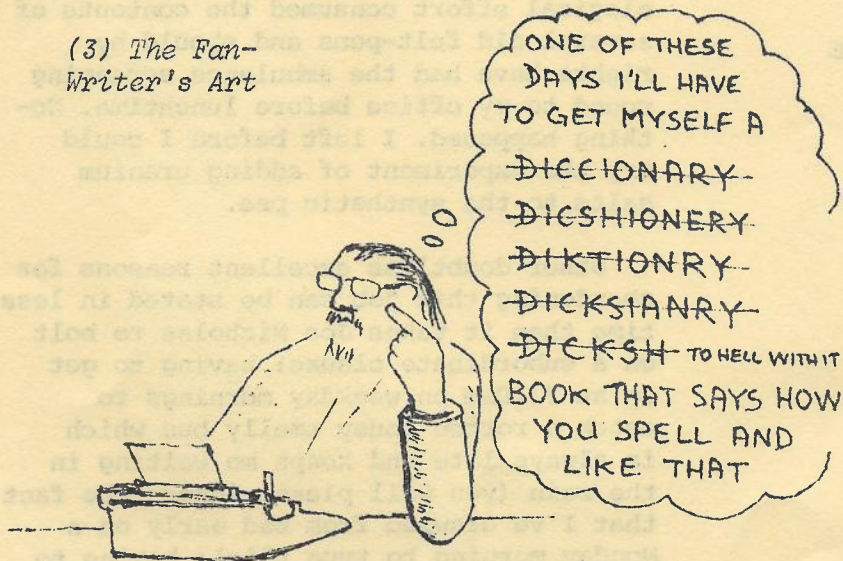
0945 Feel a little better. Unlock safe, filing cabinet, desk drawers, storage cupboard, paperclip box. Arrange TOP SECRET documents and paperclips tastefully on desk. Just time to put them away in safe, filing cabinet etc. before 1000 Coffee. Listen respectfully as senior scientific staff conduct high-level discussion of sex, football, the

decline of the West, the awfulness of the TUC and the vileness of the coffee.

1045 Retire to bog with improving fanzines.

1100 Security briefing. "This is Robert P. Holdstock!" (Picture flashes up.) "Avoid this man; he will question you in low public houses, begging for shreds of hard science to bedeck his pitiful hackwork." Another picture, without the beard. "Holdstock is a master of disguise..." Another picture. "This is Brian Hampton and I must warn you that the

(3) *The Fan-Writer's Art*



rest of this talk is classified *Tediously Secret...*" Snores fill the room.

1200 Lunch. Seniors discuss sex, the decline of football, the vileness of the TUC and the awfulness of the food.

1400 Inspect nuclear warheads, tapping each with a small hammer. Ting. Ting. Ting. "Lots of lovely megatons there," says the aged Hereditary Custodian of the Queen's Nasties. Ting. Ting. Plunk. I sneer: "Send that one to Dermot Dobson, it's no use to us." The Custodian grovels. We leave the plywood storage hut and he secures the door with stout cords to foil the IRA.

1500 Tea. Seniors expound on the decline of sex, the awfulness of football...

1600 Phonecalls. "Hello? Charlie's due round with a hundredweight of plutonium—where's he got to?" "Funny, I saw him throw it into the back of his car two hours ago... Let me check... Hello? It's all right, he's just nipped out to do some shopping en route. Be back soon."

"OK, but what about the reactor wastes he left in Woolworths last week?" "This is the Kremlin. Can I help you?" "Sorry, wrong number... bloody phones..."

1615 Think about going home, until

1730 Go home.

CONCERNING SPRING

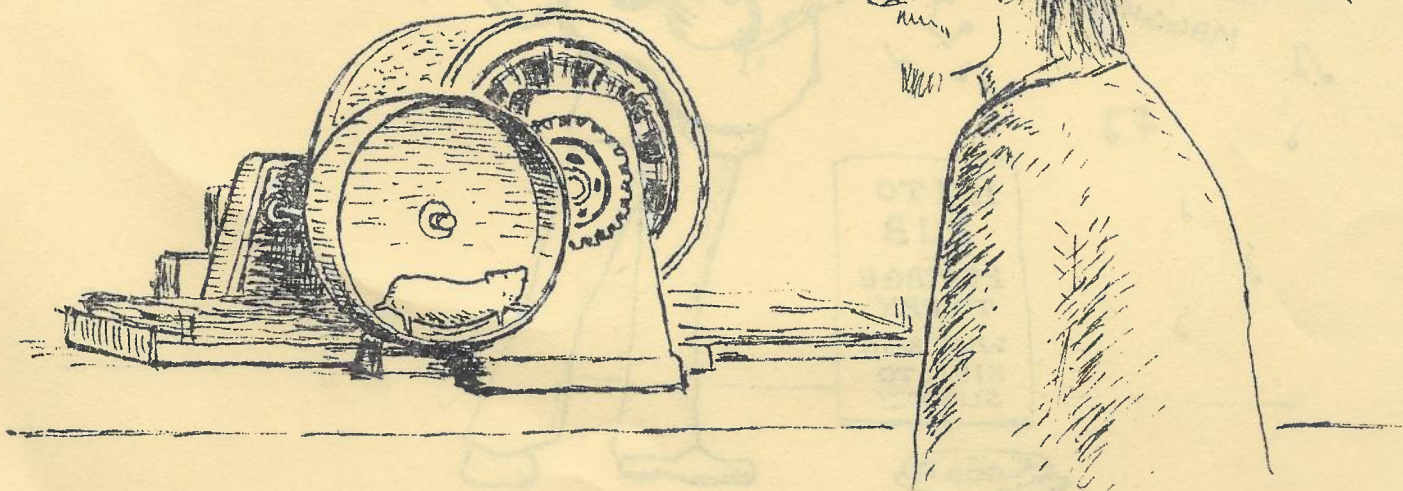
In Corvo's Hadrian VII this seedy English

priest nips into the Sistine Chapel for a quick one and discovers that—for reasons never too clearly defined—everyone's shouting "Surprise, surprise, you're the new Pope!" This cheers him up more than somewhat... but such feeble worldly distinction, such transient glory is a pale and faded thing—like unto Keith Walker's duplicating—compared with a seedy British fan's experience of waking up one spring morning to learn that for reasons never too clearly defined, he's been made TAFFman. Bloody hell. Me, a TAFF delegate? Though disinclined to the abjectly uncritical ancestor-worship favoured by some, I do feel a certain awe, or alarm, or something, at being added to a list comprising Walt Willis (pre-TAFF, but essentially the impetus for it all in 1952), Vinç Clarke (54), Ken Bulmer (55), Lee Hoffman (56), Bob Madle (57), Ron Bennett (58), Don Ford (59), Eric Bentcliffe (60), Ron Ellik (61), Ethel Lindsay (62), Wally Weber (63), Athur Thomson (64), Terry Carr (65), Tom Schluck (66), Steve Stiles (68), Eddie Jones (69), Elliot Shorter (70), Mario Bosnyak (71), Len Moffatt (73), Peter Weston (74), Roy Tackett (76), Peter Roberts (77) and Terry Hughes (79). Study of this hierarchy produces cries of "Gosh!", "Who?" and "What!" according to one's prejudices; those better informed than I will mutter dark asides on

(4) *The Arcane Secrets of the Duplicator*

HURRY IT UP,
WILL YOU?

NEVER WAS
SUCH AN
IDLE
HAMSTER



who did or didn't do the proper thing by producing millions of copies of their trip report to be a drug on the market and insulate the homes of future administrators.

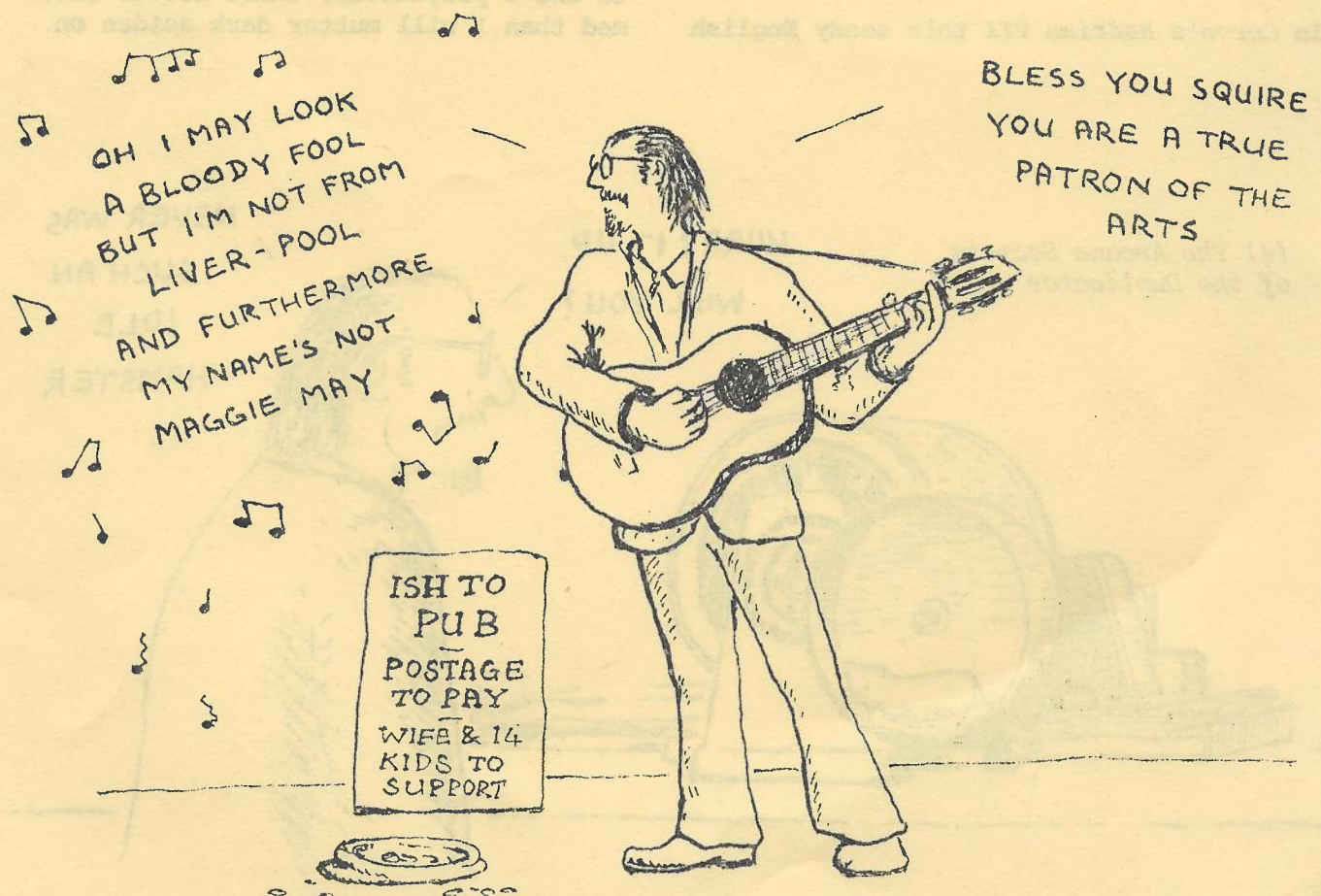
(My initial plan was for this TD to be my trip report. As I wrote to someone, "I'm just going to leave blank spaces for the names of fans I meet. I haven't the charisma to get away with P*t*r W*s-t*n's dadaistic conception whereby these subtly resonating blank spaces in fact form the entire report.")

Meanwhile we can consider the glorious march of history. Just as Darwin's principle of evolution by natural selection has finally culminated in the dominant forms of the Wookieophile and Perry Rhodan fan, just as sf itself has steadily been improving via Mary Shelley, H.G. Wells and George Orwell to the supreme and ultimate pinnacle of Donald F. Glut, so the glorious heritage of TAFF has passed from such as Willis, Bulmer and Carr to fall like an intercontinental ballistic

pork pie on, well, me. Thanks again, everybody.

The Barker/Langford TAFF struggle, which set the gutters of Albacon running with orange juice and the River Tiber foaming with stale gin, raged for a full year. From the very beginning there were complaints of undue friendliness between the combatants. With utmost impartiality Jim drew cartoons plugging each of us; with a sickening attempt at balance I drafted TAFF platforms which made us seem totally indistinguishable, as indeed we probably are, did we but know it. The joint fanzine *Taff-Ddu* was 50% Langford, 50% Barker and the rest quite good. Finally, at Albacon, FGoH Barker and interloper Langford broke out all over the fan room, contending like measles and smallpox to provide a roughly equal number of programme spots. It was here that Eve Harvey cursed us roundly (the adverb not being meant as a reflection on her physique) for vile pacifism, and required that we smite one another with chauvinist cardboard vegetables—leek and thistle—

↓ (5) Economics of Fanzine Distribution ↓



until the audience screamed for mercy.

Since then the guilty ones have conferred on such subjects as how best to whitewash their revolting moral characters for US entry visa applications, which airline to patronize (answer: Laker) and which hideous personal injuries will be most profitable under the morbid insurance policy provided: death, for example, seems hardly cost-effective when mere 'loss of one or more eyes or limbs' rakes in the same reward. At some stage, we do realize, this mask of amity will have to be dropped so the primaeval savage can burst forth (those comparing Jim's overgrown face with my elegantly clean-shaven features may have their own opinions as to which of us has the thicker veneer of civilization): for the time being I'm conciliating Jim because I want him to illustrate the trip report, while he's conciliating me because for some weird reason he wishes to illustrate the trip report. Following that and the series of brilliant cartoon strips we hope to sell for wealth beyond the dreams of Donald F. Glut, be sure our savage enmity will finally break out...

After all, as we've been repeatedly told, this vile and bloodless nonaggression is alien to all the true principles of fannishness. Shame on us! Must try harder next time.

THIS BEES SPEECH

Thousands of fans wrote in about the TD16 letter column (which like TD15's was titled 'That Justly Famous WAHF Column'), wittily referring to it as 'That Justly Famous WAHF Column' in hope of being credited as another author of the column title in TD17—which had no WAHF column, famous or infamous. Enough of that. Unfinished business from TD16 includes the great Dave Locke/Gary Deindorfer controversy: some innocuous comments of mine about the economical pastime of nose-picking caused Mr Deindorfer to congratulate me on how sublimely I'd insulted Mr Locke. Baffled, I asked Mr Locke for his views: now read on...

DAVE LOCKE, 3650 Newton Street #15, Torrance, CA 90505, USA

"TD16 came in a couple of weeks back, but I read Peter Edick's copy when he was here in early January... When the issue finally dragged itself into my mailbox I pulled it out and read parts of it again. The parts where I wrote and you responded.

"Already well acquainted with the material by this point, your postcard arrived today and I felt idly moved to go and read the letter and letter-response for yet a third time.

"I now feel that I am extremely well-read, though in a very narrow manner of

(6) *Critical Acclaim*

"PROMISING ISSUE —
PARTICULARLY
LIKED THE CREATIVE
TYPOES ON PAGE TWO ..."



speaking. If I could get on a quiz show and pick this material as my special field of knowledge, the prize money would be in my pocket. I am, trust me, an expert in this matter...

"In closely reviewing the material for nuances, direction and psychological motivation, it is apparent that Mr Deindorfer should be held over for questioning. No charges, but detain him on suspicion of writing LoCs while stoned.

"On the other hand, our signed statements that we were neither insulting nor insulted may not be sufficient evidence to disprove Mr Deindorfer's claims. It is always possible that we could both be wrong about this, though if this is true it means that you were too ignorant to realize what you were saying and I was too stupid to realize that I was being insulted. We can then file suit against Mr Deindorfer for insulting the both of us and thinking that we were too ignorant or stupid to notice (which is even more insulting..."

** After all that I feel I probably owe
** Dave an insult, but am now unsure of where to begin. Better to skid through time to TDL7 and its idyllic world of mice and Earl Grey tea...

ABI FROST, 63 Queen's Drive, London, N4

"One thing that struck me was your collocation of mice and Earl Grey. I once shared a flat with a social worker called Wendy; she used to give me Little Talks along the lines: 'You may think it's frightfully bohemian and artistic to leave the washing-up while you go off to get stoned in some squat in Brixton, but I'm a Social Worker and I know what It Leads To!' She finally threw me out after one of my dopesodden attempts to clear up what I'd knocked off the kitchen shelf. At breakfast I was greeted with 'This is it, Abigail. This is the End. Month's notice. You have finally done it now.'

"'Wot?'

"'You have done the thing which not even a member of a caring profession can forgive. You have caused mice.'

"'Eh?'

"'THESE were on the draining board.' She held out a piece of paper on which were a number of cylindrical black things about a centimetre long.

"No, my dear, they were not Earl Grey, that artificially scented substance that so many young things first buy at Oxford and pretend they've been drinking all

their lives (except when drinking pretend absinthe); they were the fragrant leaves of the drink of drinks, the solace of the mature dues-paying intellectual: Lapsang Souchong.

"Anyway, think yourself lucky to have had only mice at BNC; in Somerville we had huge red ants that were infected with numberless plagues from their place of origin, the Radcliffe Infirmary's operating theatre. They climbed up our kettles and kamikaze'd down the spouts..."

** For a cultured lady Abi is startlingly
** unaware that while 'Earl Grey' from supermarkets everywhere tends to be tea-chest scrapings hosed down with eau-de-cologne, one Oxford shop sells the high-class variety served to cultured guests at 22 Northumberland Avenue. Far be it from me to insult a mature dues-paying intellectual by suggesting that yer average Lapsang Souchong—which my language consultant says is Chinese for 'very cheap tea'—resembles tea-chest scrapings laced with powdered kipper. (Red ants, on the other hand, are tasty and nice.) This has been an attempt to convince Ethel Lindsay and certain US fans that non-alcoholic liquids do occasionally pass my lips—eg. when I clean my teeth. I trust Avedon Carol is listening.

AVEDON CAROL, 4409 Woodfield Road, Kensington, MD 20795, USA

"I'm beginning to recover now from Disclave, at which I saw our mutual friend, Taral, who has put on weight and is now a bigger fan than ever. We exchanged hardly a word, but one form of communication with him is not really much different than another. After all, a man who wears green mini-skirts—I ask you.

"As far as I know, I'm the only person in fandom who dislikes beer, and I don't usually have anything to say about it except when some self-righteous non-smoker starts giving me shit about my sole vice. Lately there's been a lot of that going around, tho, so I just want to do my part to remind people that it is not only cigarette smoking that might annoy someone. It's not too bad unless they breathe on me, tho. But I'll imagine you'll feel right at home among the great beer-soaked of US fandom (I gather that at least half their fascination with beer is evolved from a rather passionate anglophilia). The only person we really have to worry about is Freff, who claims to have no vices at all—but you and I

both know that those are the worst kind. He has his vices all right, he just doesn't have to pay for them, and they don't smell. And of course, he doesn't know that they are vices."

** Having no vices is surely a major personality defect: most UK fans maintain some cozy little vice like drunkenness to make others feel superior and good. It behooves us all, my brethren, to be adequately sinful in order that our weaker neighbours be not tempted into envy of our too-virtuous state. Go—as it says in that misprinted Bible of 1716—go, and sin on more! Here endeth the first lesson: and, returning to the more robust subject of vermin...

BOB DAY, 154 Sandbed Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE5 0SN

"My experience of vermin comes from my last place of work, which often imported Canadian timber. Unfortunately, one of the buyers Over There was renowned for not being able to walk past a bargain; so, on one occasion, a container-full of worst quality Canadian timber arrived on a Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock. In the course of the passage, the string (yes, real Canadian string) binding the timber to the pallets had, for some unknown reason, parted. The container was of corrugated construction, and the various sheets of rapidly de-laminating plywood had slotted neatly into the corrugations. Finally, around 7:30 at night, each individual sheet of ply having been unloaded, a sudden cry of terror went up from somewhere behind a giant timber mountain.. Rushing to this unfortunate person's aid, we found that he had been assailed by a giant, timber-coloured beetle. With teeth. Put down on a piece of timber, this beast and its confreres would race along emitting a quiet buzzing noise and laying a trail of sawdust in their wake. Presented to a solid surface, they would promptly drill a perfect, 3/16" diameter hole. Various production directors were having fond thoughts of training these creatures to follow pencil lines and doing away with circular saws and drilling machines; but the Health & Safety Executive prevailed and the factory was fumigated with best Min. of Ag. cyanide gas. How many of this Canadian horde escaped in three-piece suites, though, remains a puzzle to this day... If you ever walk past a Williams Furnishing Store (no relation, so our Sales Dept tell me) and hear a quiet

yet persistent buzzing—well, don't say I never warned you."

** If you detected an awe-struck silence during that lot, it was because I was imagining the beetles of doom loosed in a Toronto fanzine collection. Talk about the Final Solution... (If you detected a faint yet persistent buzzing you are Mike Glicksohn, and how did you like your free gift?) For more wanton violence and destruction, ask a social worker:

PAUL OLDROYD, 136 Askern Chase, Hunslet, Leeds, LS10 1UP

"Our organization has this 'Ideal' whereby the residents in our projects are supposed to take on the running of their hostels themselves. This means that the worker is supposed to interfere as little as possible with the residents. Anyway, this particular day all was quiet. All the old women were dozing by the fire; the younger ones were tarting themselves up in readiness for a night's revelry; I was about to go home. Then in walks this amazing creature straight out of a junkie's nightmare and dumps herself into an armchair. Nobody else bats an eyelid, so I do nothing. The greasy-haired, leather-clad, gargantuan female then levers herself up, leers at me, and burps. I obligingly leer back, deciding that this doesn't constitute interference. Just before this, I had been talking to a lovely old lady, who had told me how she had 18 kids and how they all refused to have anything to do with her now. 'Always the same, you,' she now shrieked, suddenly transformed from dear Auntie Mable into Hell's Granny (eat your heart out Bruce Banner). The monolith struggled out of her chair and came out with the immortal words 'You talking to me?' Well, non-interference is all very well, but a gran with a Berserker rage standing to one side of you, facing a quivering mountain of flesh on the other, doesn't exactly inspire confidence in the beatific smile. When, after a few fucks and cunts, a chair was waved dangerously close to my nonchalant face, I decided enough was enough. Bravely I stood between the two. Upon later consideration, this turned out not to have been the most successful decision of my career. The behemoth wobbled unnervingly in front of me for a few moments, emitting a stench reminiscent of my loo the morning after an Indian curry, then stomach-butted me in a manner that would have done Big Daddy proud.

Exit one Oldroyd stage left. Whereupon one young lass leaps over me, knife in hand (OK, so it was only a table knife) and collapses gibbering on the floor.

"At this moment the full-time worker walked in, surveyed the carnage calmly, and said 'Having a spot of bother, are we? Mable having a fit, is she?' then wandered off. Real classy non-interference, that is.

"At the same time a very young lady I'd just let in vacated the room, and was last seen hysterically sobbing down the phone, asking her Mum to take her back. Maybe there's something in this 'Ideal' after all. It certainly seems to keep the numbers down."

*** It is possible, it is just possible
** that some people's work provides suitable fanzine material after all (and hi there, Mr Bridges). However--*

*WALT WILLIS, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee,
N. Ireland, BT21 OPD*

"I've always instinctively sought to separate fandom and work, and for nearly 30 years succeeded in doing so. Then, going into a meeting with an Oxbridge colleague now a Permanent Secretary, he turned to me pleasantly and asked 'By the way, are you Ghod?' This was all the fault of Brian Aldiss, who had just published an autobiography with a bit about fandom in it..."

*** When I publish my autobiography I'll
** have to explain that fannish veneration should now be transferred to our Alan Dorey, who shows all the signs: typing sermons from a small mount he has constructed a la Close Encounters in his living room, passing miracles such as the transformation of wine to urine or the feeding of 5,000 BSFA members again and again with the same chunk of polemic, being snatched up to Leeds in a fiery chariot once a month... Too full of divine fire to continue this rubbish, I conclude with a tale of true heroism, a LoC against impossible odds from one of the supreme personalities of our time (he's also an editor of mine and so I have to say things like this):*

*PAUL BARNETT (EDITORIAL), 84 Wykes Road,
Exeter, Devon, EX1 2UD*

"You'll notice a certain lack of my customary finesse in the typing of this letter. This is because at the moment I am INCAPACITATED. No, not through alcohol,

through genuine INJURIES. (Tension is mounting, theme music becoming plaintive yet hauntingly sinister, drama reaching towards an orgiastic climax.) Yes, only ten days ago your hero, while performing various acts of valour, fell down the stairs as he made his titanic yet 99% asleep way to have a pee. Concussed excitingly, he nevertheless hobbled the last few yards to have his pee, leaving drops of blood on the newly laid carpet, before his soulmate phones the doctor and had him carted off to hospital. Next morning, when several of his senses had returned, he discovered that, while having omitted to fracture his skull, he had deftly bruised his knee and side, thoroughly abraded his shoulder, broken a bone in his thumb, coated much of his beard with dried blood from his nose, puffed up his eye so sensitively that he would be unable to open it for three days, and bust some vessel at the side of his head to create a swelling of startling proportions. All in all, he looked much like the Incredible Hulk some seconds after the transformation has begun--except that his wife had forgotten to send a pair of underpants with him to remain miraculously in place."

*** All these difficulties can be avoided
** if you remember to send your fascinating letters of comment on TD18 without delay! This would be the place for an orgy of name-dropping to the tune of 100+ WAHF mentions ("WAHF John Brunner, Harry Harrison, Patrick Moore, Chris Priest and Colin Wilson, so there."), except that the letters concerned have dispersed by some strange osmosis into files marked Drilkjis, Ansible, Lost and Kindling. As regards TD17 comment, Tim Marion says it all: "You are now stuck with readers who will send you long, boring passages about their experiences with mice."*

Crawling thanks to: Leigh Edmonds (Oz Agent), Keith Freeman (paper), Jim Barker, Mike Glycer, Leroy Kettle, Bob Shaw and Victoria Vayne (my TAFF nominators), to all TAFF voters indiscriminately, and to Stu Shiffman, Alexis & Dolly Gilliland, Terry Hughes, Mike Glicksohn, Jon Singer, Andy Porter, Selina Lovett, Joyce Scrivner, Denny Lein, Eric Mayer, Kathy Malone, Alan Bostick, Linda Bushyager, the Noreascon committee and others forgotten, for offers of hospitality while I'm infesting the USA. Also commendations to others who wrote... How not to write to the Langfords is shown by Colin Wilson,

as follows: "Let us know how you are getting on and how that delicious Hazel is doing these days. Have you any children yet?" Invited to consider the delightful prospect of children, delicious Hazel began: "I would rather lick out the dustbin. I would rather Hoover the carpet with my nostrils. I would—" (at this point I made an excuse and left).

TENTATIVE RESTORATION OF THE LOST BOOKS OF ELEPHANTIS

At Novacon 9 I said hello to Eileen Weston and she said "Joe Nicholas is so fascinating," and for some reason I choked and tipped vast quantities of coffee over her dress. So it was with heavy irony that as we left Novacon, Uncle Peter clapped me on the shoulder with the remark "Ah Dave, parting is such sweet sorrow."

"The woods decay, the woods decay and fall," your pissed editor agreed.

"I might have guessed you'd know the next line," said Peter...

This is not quite relevant to the pseudo-intellectual delights to come: but this issue of TD subtly parodies Kevin Smith in that it contains an obscure and bookish competition—the only clue you get being that the titles in question are not precisely books. The first correct explanation of what the competition is wins a drink or a 4-issue *Ansible* sub; best attempt at the full, sevenfold answer wins free *Ansibles* for some years, or several drinks if preferred. Those pointing out flaws in my own erudition will be rudely ignored. Wouldn't it be nice if you enclosed letters and TAFF donations with your competition entries?

THE HIGHER COMMON SENSE

The Astral League is moving with the times. You perhaps recall how the old Initiation involved entangling oneself with a pole and several dimensions outside mundane space/time until (a) you emerged triumphantly on the other side of the pole as an Astral Master; (b) you collapsed in a snap and crackle of little-used ligaments, not to mention a popping of hernias, revealing yourself as an Astral Master, 3rd Class [Failed]; or (c) you broke the pole and revealed yourself to be Rob Holdstock. All this is old hat. The dynamic new breed of Astral Youth prefers the new and harsher ordeal called 'sitting the gauntlet', whereby you sit pain-

fully erect on an imaginary chair as drunken initiates hurl darts into your quivering groin...

This breakthrough into a new regime of austerity is all the fault of John Collick (as what isn't?). At Greg Pickersgill's and Linda Karrh's Spring Bank Holiday Hangover Research Seminar, little John was all agog with this new party trick of the imaginary chair. Some folk get pink lizards or green rats; John suffers terribly from imaginary chairs.

"Watch!" he cried, and sat upon his figment—back pressed rigidly against the wall, thighs rigidly horizontal, shins rigidly vertical, the rest of him rigidly pissed. "It's terribly terribly difficult," he explained after long nanoseconds of this ordeal. "You have to—urgh—do it for *three minutes*." He did it for 2 minutes and 25 seconds before subsiding into a heap of trembling gristle. "Easy," scoffed Dave Bridges, and imitated the Collick pose for fully 2 minutes and 13 seconds before he too slithered downward in a screech of tortured muscles. "I wasn't ready that first time," announced Master Collick, striving to conjure up a somewhat more comfy imaginary chair. "Now watch..."

Among the watchers was Dai Price. Dai was perhaps resentful of the fact that John's sit-in was impeding play at the dartboard Greg had thoughtfully installed and which the players felt they were bound to hit sooner or later through sheer statistics. Nor could Daio resist the lure of the youthful Collick groin. He tossed an experimental dart, which caught in John's jeans and dangled erotically. Sweat could be heard gurgling through rifts and crevices of the Collick features as the victim gazed down at the possibility of a perforated scrotum, an Astral Leak. Daio tried anew, this time with eyes ostentatiously shut, and managed a tinkling ricochet from some hidden zipper; a third dart merely impaled one of John's enormous boots. The Ilkley prodigy had had enough: "THREE MINUTES!" he shrieked and surged to the floor.

The ensuing scenes are best not described. John retired deflated by several punctures, whilst Eve Harvey and even D. Langford were to be seen applying cheap whisky as disinfectant to small holes in their legs. Mr Price escaped with mild bruises, if that. But all these sacrifices

had surely not been in vain—for a new Astral League Initiation Test was born! We look forward with enormous interest to trying it on D. West Himself at, say, Silicon.

.....

Another Pickersgill Party highlight: Rob Hansen (author of 'Starfan' below) brought a US comic ad for a giant toy vampire bat. 'GRE-GORY! He's BIG! He's MEAN! But above all—he's FUN! Put your finger in GRE-GORY's mouth, squeeze him, and...' Our Greg did not encourage this experiment, nor did he provide any opportunity for guests to 'Look into his see-thru stomach ...and watch the RED LIQUID flow!' §§ An Empire Strikes Back review was sent in by sci-fi freak Avedon Carol; in full: 'This was fun. I particularly liked the sex scenes.' §§ Just heard I've won this year's FAAn award as fanwriter, which is nice. An explanation of this odd event may be found in the words of Roz Kaveney as she watched me coo over a Clive James book: "Yes, you would like James—he's very funny, clever and shallow, like you..." §§ Raised Consciousness Dept: my vague memory that Brecht once wrote a play called *The Good Woman of Szechwan* came up against the New Truth in Oxford last month—it's now *The Good Person...* (H'mm. *Monarch Lear? Hamlet, Heir of Denmark?*) §§ You may not have heard the one about the Trekkies who watched *Alien* after FOKT members (who'd previewed it) warned them, straight-faced, that "the worst part of all is right at the end, when the cat explodes." You can imagine their growing dread during the final credits. §§ US fanmail on *War In 2080*: "Please send me a copy airmail and if its any good I'll send you a check." *Twill d'un!* §§ TD comes for LoC/trade sometimes, 50p-for-TAFF for a sample, or whim. #19 will be harder to get.

TWILL-DDU 18

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