

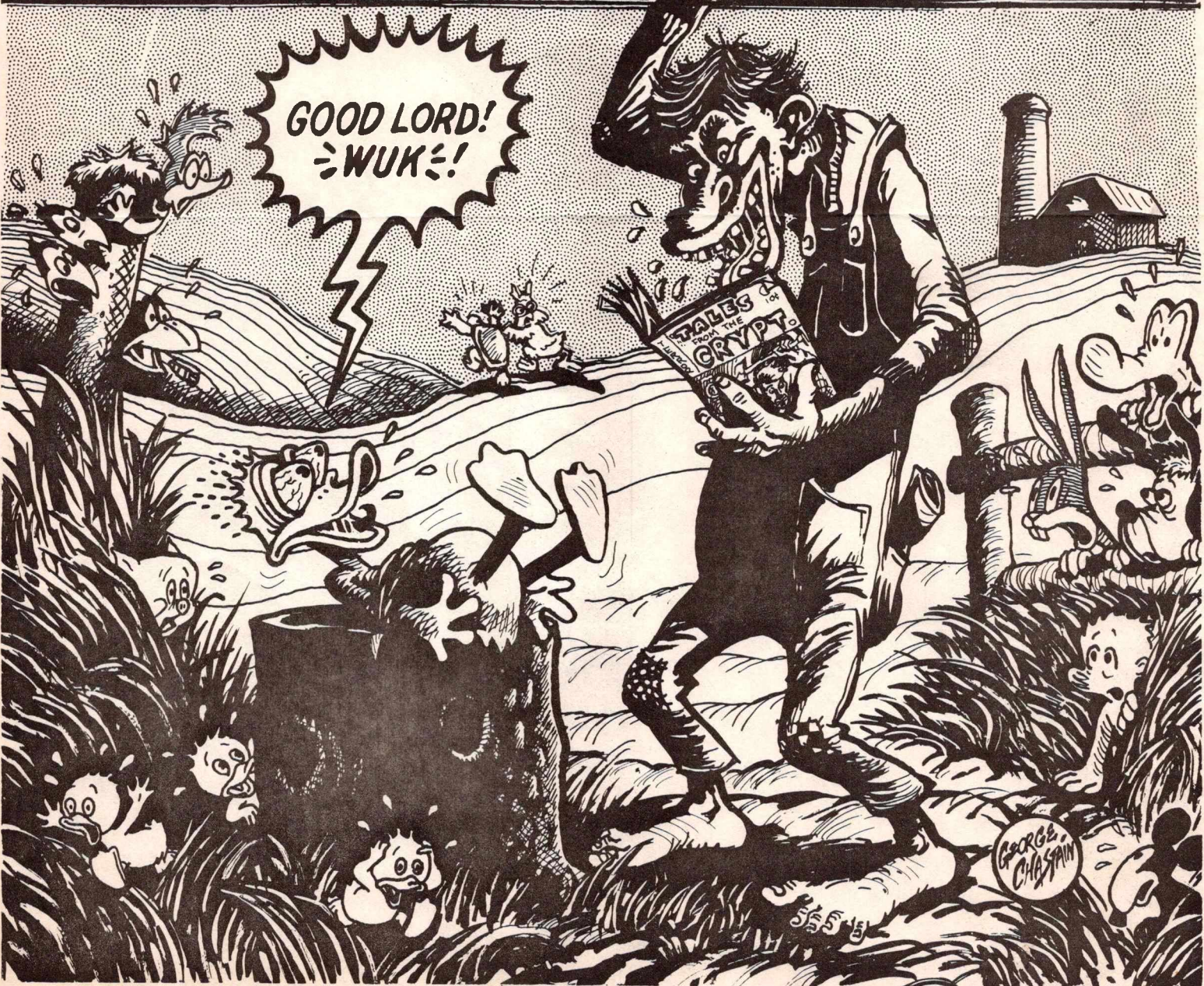
MINI-CON



NEWS CALCULATED TO GIVE YOU



# VERMIN GO





VERTIGO #28 is the 26th issue of the Official Organ of the Carolina Fan Federation. This issue is to promote the January 25, 1976 Durham mini-con. Editor, typesetter: Edwin L. Murray, 2540 Chapel Hill Rd, Durham, N.C. 27707. Publisher: Scott Whiteside, P O Drawer 25830, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. Cover artist: George Chastain, 207 Henrietta St., Greenville, S.C. 29601. Price - current issue: 35¢ back issues: 35¢ recent issues, older inquire 28

under the elm tree

#### I'LL TRY TO BE BRIEF Dept

I'm sure all of you are as pleased as I am with out cover this issue, a really outstanding job by George Chastain. When I asked George to do a cover for us I gave him complete freedom of subject matter and we have all been rewarded by an inspired cover. In a note that accompanied the art George said, "This cover is a grateful acknowledgment of my enthusiasm for EC's, Carl Barks, Jack Davis, Walt Kelly, Fox & Crow (& random funny animals), Tex Avery cartoons. And of course, Vertigo & the mini-con." I would also like to thank Scott for the fine piece he did on The Destroyer and Karl Wagner for his biography of Dave Drake. We are long past due in giving public recognition to author Dave Drake and I hope that the notes in this issue will help make up for that. I'll try to limit my comments in this issue to keep from drawing any of the spotlight away from Dave, George, Scott, and Karl.

#### DEDICATION Dept

I haven't done this before and may not again but I would like to dedicate this issue to a man who has done as much or more than anyone else to insure the success of the mini-cons and VERTIGO. He is always introducing new people to the CFF and it is hard to imagine a mini-con without him. He always donates more than his share to help cover costs of VERTIGO. A friend to all, you will be hard put to find a fairer or more respected dealer. I am speaking about your friend and mine, Richard H. Minter. I know that Dave, Karl, George, Scott, and the rest of you will join me in saying that we have enjoyed our association with him in the past and look forward to many more years of the same.

#### COME TO COLD CON Dept

Durham mini-con XXX will be held on January 25, 1976 at 2540 Chapel Hill Rd. Once again we have no special program so there will be plenty of time to browse, buy, sell, talk, trade, etc. I doubt we will spread outside this time since the weather has been quite cold recently. Hopefully things won't be too crowded. Things usually run from about 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM but people usually thin out pretty good after about 3:00 PM so don't be late. The next con after this will be April 4, 1976.

#### FLIR WINTER FRIENDS Dept

On October 5, 1975 we held Durham mini-con XXIX at the old same place and attracted a crowd of about 70 fans. The weather was mild and some people set up dealer tables outside and others cavorted. Stuart Schiff brought some art we can all look forward to seeing in future issues of WHISPERERS. We had a few people come in late because of car problems but we hope they will be back next time anyway. Among those who attended are: Jane Fisher, Jeff DeWitt, Paul Clayton, Watson Edwards, Todd Anderson, Brian Lockhart, Grier Heely, Dan Brooks, John Hitchcock, Paul Sneed, Janet Rawlins, Billy & Nancy Saunders, John Allison, Clay Kimball, M C Goodwin, Richard Hurt, Joanie Walker, Norman Hunter, Bill O'Shields, Tony Galloway, Kent Prillaman, Ed Wray, Ernest Moore, Will Bullard, Paul & Libby Maggitti,



Med Brooks, Jerry Minter, Elizabeth Buic, Richard & Mildred Minter, J. Barry Traylor (Lancaster, Pa), Walter Harper, Ray Kendrick, Carl Oliver, Pam Turner, Dave Ortman, Mr & Mrs John D Squires, Ron Myers, Floyd Sneed, Robert Rubin, R. Dennis Rockwell, Lew Pulsipher, Steve Massey, Nancy Barker, Eric Larsen, Randy Vance, Ed Vance, Steve Turner, Mr & Mrs Leon Howard, Milo Holt, Tony Blake, Dave Drake, Karl Wagner, Chris Woodbury, Tom Long, Stuart Schiff, Russ Dail, John Tanner, Peter Gillis, Jay Leonard, Charles Lawrence, Arlan Andrews, Robert Bailey, Homer Spring, Yance Parrish, Jim & Terry.

#### FOLKS AROUND HERE, ETC Dept

The rest of what I have to say will fit under this heading. . . Tim C. Marion (614 72nd St, Newport News, Va 23605) puts out an apa index called SOUTH OF THE MOON and any of you interested in joining an apa should get this. 25¢ or 4/\$1. Tim & David Ortman have restarted a local fan club in the Newport News area called the Revived Fellowship of the Purple Tongue. . . SHADOW #50 had a cover by Nancy Barker featuring past and present members of the Nameless Order. . . Randy Williams may be living in High Point now but we need an address so we can contact him. . . Mike Cox (501 Winston Ave, Bennettsville, SC 29512) has published a list of known fans in SC which may be had for 10¢ and an SASE. He is trying to get things started down there and since we started much the same way I can sympathize. Anyone in SC is urged to write him. . . Recently heard from Phil Hawkins who says he is back in art and out of teaching. Those of you interested in in writing him should address mail to 244 White Pine Dr, Asheville, NC 28805. . . The 1975 World Fantasy awards presented at the First World Fantasy Con in Providence honored a couple of local people. Manly Wade Wellman won Best Book for WORSE THINGS WAITING and Stuart David Schiff got a Special Award (non-professional). Karl Edward Wagner won the 1975 August Derleth award in the Short Story category for "Sticks" and the same story was nominated for a similar World Fantasy award. . . Karl Wagner has has a Kane story coming up in the April issue of FANTASTIC. This story was originally to have appeared in WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY. . . FAR LANDS OTHER DAYS by E. Hoffman Price came out from Carcosa just before Christmas. A very thick and impressive book. . . The Old Time Western Film Club met on Dec 6, 1975 in Siler City. Special guest was Sunset Carson and one of his films was shown. Among the other films shown was a chapter of "Spider's Web" based on the Spider pulp. Those I talked to agreed that this would be a very good serial for them to show when the "Flash Gordon" serial is completed. . . David Luebke put on a con in Richmond on Jan 11, 1976. We plan to attend as it is the day after this issue is due to be printed. . . NIGHTSHADE #1 (Ken Amos, 7005 Bedford Ln., Louisville, Ky 40222) has a Karl Edward Wagner interview, bibliography, and an appreciation by long time friend John Meyer. . . Karl is hard at work on a Bran Mak Morn novel for Zebra books. . . I forgot to mention it above but NIGHTSHADE is \$1. . . I'd like to thank those of you who sent us Christmas cards this year. . . I'd also like to thank those of you who got us items that were listed on our want list last issue and should mention that we still need many of the books listed. Scott Whiteside and Dave Drake are looking for some of the Fred Brown books that we have. . . Those of you who have been wondering why the Superman movie has been getting all of the publicity and you haven't heard much about the Spider-Man movie you can be thankful that you haven't. The movie is supposed to be a musical with rock stars in key roles and is patterned after "Tommy." At least the Superman movie is being taken seriously as the first script was rejected as being inconsistent with the legend. We can all look forward to a singing Spidey with proper dread. I wonder if this turkey will be out in time for Thanksgiving. . .



3

Some Informal Notes on David Drake  
by Karl Edward Wagner

David A. Drake was born on September 24, 1945 in Dubuque, Iowa, in the midwestern gothic parsonage of the Church of Starry Wisdom where his father was an Elder. As a child his favorite amusements included frolicing about the churchyard with his imaginary playmates, and reading through the dusty volumes in the church library. His mother a severe disciplinarian, Drake was often punished by being shut in a dark closet for long periods, during which time he kept occupied by reading Fox's BOOK OF MARTYRS by flashlight and making up stories to go along with the illustrations.

Seemingly destined to follow in his father's footsteps, an event took place in the mid-'50s that permanently warped Drake's young brain --he encountered H. P. Lovecraft in the form of Avon's legendary paperback collection, CRY HORROR! Recognizing a kindred soul, Drake began to write numerous short stories in the Lovecraftian mould. However, it was not until 1964 with the publication of J. Ramsey Campbell's THE INHABITANT OF THE LAKE by Arkham House that Drake began to make a serious effort to break into print. Reading this book of Lovecraftian pastiches, written by a teenager, convinced Drake that he was on the right track. He then began to submit his stories to August Derleth--continued to submit them despite Derleth's caustic rejections. Persistence paid off. On its third submission, Derleth bought Drake's short story, "Denkirch" --paying \$35 and commenting that the story still wasn't right, for Drake to compare his edited version to the carbon to see how it should have been written. The story appeared in Derleth's 1967 Arkham anthology, TRAVELLERS BY NIGHT. Drake had broken into print.

Meanwhile Drake managed to graduate from the University of Iowa in 1967, and in June of that year he married his childhood sweetheart, Joanne Whately. In true Lovecraftian tradition, the couple honeymooned in Providence, Rhode Island--with a visit to the HPL collection at Brown University and a tour of the other shrines in the vicinity, including a side excursion to camp for the night on Sentinel Hill. That fall Drake entered Duke University Law School, which doubtless hurt him some. Dozing through lectures, perhaps in the same seat where Richard M. Nixon once sat, Drake continued to plot out short stories--combining now his Lovecraftian bent with an enthusiasm for the period of classical Rome. Submissions to Derleth continued, as did Derleth's gruff rejections. Sparked by an occasional sale to Derleth for THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR or a future anthology, Drake kept at it.

Then in the middle of his legal studies, Drake found himself drafted into the Eleventh Armored Cavalry Regiment--President Johnson evidently having decided a Lovecraftian mind was needed in military intelligence. Stationed for a year in Fort Bliss, Texas, Drake's brawling, hard-drinking nature quickly made his name well known in the tough border bars and bordellos. Making good use of his legal background, the wily Drake was able to escape on a technicality when an incident involving a barroom brawl and a phosphorus grenade nearly landed him in hot water. On another foray, Drake became the first "gringo" to be initiated as one of the "regulars" at Juarez's infamous nightspot, The Cave--an experience that left his glasses fogged for weeks.

From there Drake was shipped to Vietnam--and soon sent with the spearhead of the Cambodian invasion. Having been in military intelligence, Drake is still reticent to speak about those days. The 11th moved fast, and there were many prisoners to be interrogated--information that must be gained from them accurately and quickly. The necklace of human ears that now hangs in his study was taken, Drake says, from one of the captured Viet Cong.



4 On return to the states, Drake re-entered law school, despite a lingering tropical fever picked up in Bangkok that resisted treatment. He had continued to write while with the 11th, sending his manuscripts home to his wife. Now he sorted through them, revising and writing new pieces--still writing in the main fantasy stories with Roman or other ancient settings. Meanwhile he fell in with idle and vicious companions: Manly Wade Wellman, whom Drake had met briefly before leaving for Viet Nam, and Karl Edward Wagner, whose suppressed novel, DARKNESS WEAVES, Drake had read in Cambodia.

It was at the urging of these two writers that Drake at last set aside his obsession with ancient Rome and began to write stories drawn from his Viet Nam experience. In a short time Drake crashed the professional markets that had long rejected his tales set in the days of antiquity--selling "Arclight" to F&SF and "Contact" to ANALOG. More sales followed, as Drake next extrapolated his Viet Nam-influenced stories into the future--creating "Hammer's Slammers," a series based on the exploits of ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~ interstellar mercenaries who prove that war is the same laugh no matter whom you're shooting. The series caught with GALAXY, and one has already been reprinted in a hardcover anthology.

It was well that Drake made the jump to science fiction and to the major markets. Drake's story, "Black Iron," was the last story Derleth ever bought--having died the day after sending Drake the check. With Arkham House no longer a market, Drake's Roman fantasy tales were relegated to the amateur press, appearing in WHISPERS, MIDNIGHT SUN, and DARK HORIZONS.

Graduating from Duke in 1972, Drake found employment as Deputy Town Attorney of Chapel Hill. He and his wife moved to Chapel Hill, where they currently reside. A son, Jonathan Wilbur (named for a maternal grandfather), was born early in 1973. In the interim, Drake's activities into the world of the macabre included ventures into the strange world of fan publishing. In 1972 he became one of the three partners in the founding of Carcosa, and not long afterwards Stuart David Schiff tapped him for assistant editor of WHISPERS.

Drake's hobbies are varied. As might be expected, he is an avid reader and collector in the fantasy and science fiction genre. His collection is extensive and includes the coveted complete set of Arkham House titles, a complete set of PLANET STORIES, along with sets and runs of current magazines and paperbacks. Of particular pride to Drake is his collection of obscure Latin and Greek titles, as well as the fine shelf of antique manuscripts and folios inherited by his wife.

In addition to these pursuits, Drake is a member of a local pistol club and has some degree of expertise with respect to weaponry. In recent years he has fallen into the motorcycle persuasion--graduating from a Honda 175 to a BMW R-60. His machine sleek with Windjammer fairing, Drake in regalia of black leather and mirror-visored Bell helmet--he blasts along NC 86 like a one-man rocket out of Hammer's Slammers (or PLANET STORIES). Startled motorists would be more shaken yet if they knew this apparition was their town attorney--or that this streamlined escapee from THX-1138 was the scholarly Lovecraftian Drake, who in repose sits quietly in his study paging through Greek and Latin texts, sipping jasmine tea from the grisly mug that is a souvenir of his experiences in Cambodia.

a selected checklist of Dave Drake

"Denkirch" - TRAVELLERS BY NIGHT - Arkham House 1967

"Lord of the Depths" - DARK THINGS - Arkham House 1971

"Arclight" - F&SF Oct 1973

"Contact!" - Analog Oct 1974

"Under the Hammer" - Galaxy Oct 1974

"The Butcher's Bill" - Galaxy Nov 1974 - also in COMBAT:SF Doubleday 1975  
continued on back cover



The Deadly Evolution  
a twenty-one book Odyssey  
examined by Scott Whiteside

#1 CREATED, THE DESTROYER: Remo Williams started out in rather mundane circumstances for an extra-legal assassin. He was a Vietnam veteran and then a policeman. Sound familiar? Right down to being convicted of a murder he didn't commit. His name was Remo, he came from an orphanage, and in Vietnam he showed a great natural talent for assassination.

So, certain parties who are of -but outside- the government kidnap Remo after framing him for a murder and faking his execution, one of the last in New Jersey.

Remo gets lots of training and psyching up. Then he meets this strange little oriental named Chiun. In the first book Chiun speaks English with an Oxford accent and has brown eyes. He is wearing a gi with a red sash and teaches Remo standard karate. This training turns the talented Remo Williams into a super athlete whom the women fall for because he's so sure of his body (?). The people trying to kill him stand no chance at all.

He is now the Destroyer, identifies himself with Shiva, and can do anything, including kill one of his instructors who might talk and reveal the existence of CURE, which is not an anacronym despite the spelling. Cultural Rehabilitation by Extermination? No. The days of UNCLE are gone.

#2 DEATH CHECK: Eight years have passed. Kennedy, who founded CURE in its pre-assassination days, is dead. The Texan is leaving office. He tells the incoming president about CURE. Suddenly we are treated to the fantasy of a moral Nixon. "Let me make it perfectly clear. I don't like this at all." Nixon denying himself power? No way, Sapir and Murphy.

In this ensuing eight years Remo has become better at everything. He can do acrobatics in the dark. His sexual abilities have improved. He doesn't smoke as much. His diet has changed. And he has been absorbing the wisdom of Chiun. Most of Chiun's proverbs and fables make no sense until Remo needs them. Then the proverbs are recalled Carradine fashion.

Chiun makes no direct appearance in this book. He is off somewhere worrying about his arteries. Remo just wanders through the story remembering. In the second book Chiun's teachings take on more of a Kung Fu than a Karate approach and Remo's style has changed accordingly. He is also faster, stronger, and more confident than ever.

He also develops a strange weakness. Remo is operating at peak intervals. He held this peak too long and almost died from it, literally burning himself out. By very vividly recalling a safe room that he and Chiun had developed he cured himself. "Control the mind and you control the body," says Chiun. This is also the first book where Chiun admits that he has affection for Remo.

#3 CHINESE PUZZLE: Here again we are treated to the fantasy of a Richard Nixon who is reluctant to seize power. The Nixon language is more accurate: murkier, but he is still depicted as a man of moral courage. A Chinese ambassador is killed and Remo has to find out who and how. Remo is now a slender fellow whose only hint of muscle is at his wrists, neck, and ankles. He can now climb down hotel walls faster than the elevator can descend. Yes, and reach the bottom in one piece.

Chiun's teachings are beginning to resemble ninjitsu, but a form of ninjitsu unknown to modern man. We now learn that Chiun is from the Korean village of Sinanju and that he kills so that his village can afford to eat. We also learn about the legend of the sword of Sinanju, which turns out to be true. We also learn that Chiun detests Chinese.



We also discover that many assassins have learned from the villagers many of Sinanju's trade secrets. But the most important thing about this book is Chiun. He is definitely back, and is no longer worried about his arteries. Chiun was the device by which Remo became so deadly. But Chiun is so fascinating by himself that he can no longer remain a plot device. Sapir and Murphy never give Chiun a layoff again.

#4 MAFIA FIX: Remo is now immune to most poisons and his hands are so fast that almost nobody can see him move. Chiun is amusing himself by tearing the side mirrors off of Volkswagens with peace symbols on them. Nixon is still a nice guy. Remo has learned balance, racing around walls and such. Jai-a-lai players can also race around walls but they usually don't live to be forty. Remo is now moving into the realm of the super-human instead of the super-athlete.

Just like the super heroes in the Marvel stable, Remo also suffers super weaknesses. He throws a "floater stroke" at one man, who faints before the blow reaches him. The powerful punch, unchecked, tears Remo's shoulder out of place and he has to finish the assignment single-handed.

#5 DR. QUAKE: This is the first book with a science fiction premise other than the abilities of Remo and Chiun. A mad scientist, in both senses of the term, has developed a machine which will aggravate the San Andreas fault into producing a major quake. Remo has to first overcome two women assassins using sexual techniques, learned from Chiun, which turn sex into just another exercise and have made it boring for him. Chiun has a chance at the two women but he has given up sex because it turns his partners into adoring slaves, which he considers annoying.

The final showdown comes not between Remo and the scientist but between Remo and Chiun. Remo literally tears the quake machine apart, and in so doing, receives a massive electrical shock. He is rolling around in pain and Chiun refuses to cure him until Remo agrees to stop eating meat. Remo agrees. Later we learn that "meat" doesn't include fish and duck.

#6 DEATH THERAPY: A hospital is taking payments from the syndicate; Sapir and Murphy believe in The Syndicate (Italian oriented); to kill people on the operating table. Remo has to bring himself to peck in a ridiculously short time.

Also, the security at CURE has been breached. Smith, the "lemon-faced" chief of CURE is planning to kill himself and have Chiun dispose of Remo. Remo, however, penetrates the ring and the villainess and wipes them all out. He discovers that they have put some government officials under their control. He has to check out various agents and officials including the president. "The president said ... 'So that was him, eh? He didn't look so tough.'" A line stolen directly from Robert Kennedy. But, they still think Nixon is honest.

#7 UNION BUST: This is the book which introduces the only continuing villain, so far, in the Destroyer series. His name is Nuihc, he is Chiun's nephew, and he is so villainous that Chiun had reversed his own name so that no one could think them related. Chiun is forbidden to destroy Nuihc even after he realizes this person's identity, because Sinanju is not only a village but is also a fighting style, the sun-source of all the other martial arts including ninjutsu, kung fu, karate, and all that stuff. He cannot kill a fellow villager.

Nuihc, however, is not bothered by such scruples. He has trained unwitting white men to form a super union knowing that Remo and Chiun will have to come after him. Remo tries to kill Nuihc and almost succeeds. He has plans to wipe out the union officials in an accident. He manages to disband the union non-violently first.

Also, Remo learns that he's allergic to monosodium glutamate. It is a deadly poison to his system. He can never walk away from CURE and go back to the old life. The training has altered his system too much. he



has also learned a form of defense against crossfire called the scarlet ribbon. And Chiun is addicted to soap operas, particularly As The Planet Revolves. Chiun, that serious, enigmatic old man who was worried about his arteries, is now a mischievous, spritely eccentric who just happens to be old. He has lost his Oxford accent. His eyes are now hazel, not brown. He is also going through a cutesy period. But, he is the Master of Sinanju, and the fascination is still there.

#8 SUMMIT CHASE: Scandia is an emerging African nation which has "emerged from barbarism to backwardness." The vice-president of the country makes a deal with vice (The Syndicate) to make their country an international haven for wealthy, wanted criminals. Smith wants Remo to stop it. Remo tries to hold out for CIA intervention, but Smith will have none of it.

Like teacher, like pupil; Remo is beginning to suffer the cutes also. In book two Chiun taught him quite painfully that he should never show off how deadly he is. Six books later Remo has forgotten.

Disguised as a priest, he calls himself Father Tuck. During an earlier vacation, he goes to Buenos Aires, enters a chess tournament under the name Paul Morphy, spots Fischer a pawn and the first move. While Remo is clowning around, Chiun is having the doldrums, feeling the weight of his eighty years. No artery problems, just doldrums. This feebleness is only emotional, however, because Chiun casually kills two Mafia hit men who dare to interrupt him while he's watching his beloved soap operas. Remo, of course, has to clean up the bodies.

Remo wipes out one of the criminals who is fleeing to Scandia and takes his place, a la Mack Bolan. Remo, still suffering from the cutes, even asks the crooks if they've seen Bolan around anywhere. Chiun, worried about Remo, shows up, gives Remo a reminder of an assassination technique we saw in book three, and also tells Remo to work on his "back elbow thrust."

#9 MURDER'S SHIELD: From our famous Mack Bolan imitation we now move to a Dirty Harry imitation. Remo is stronger than ever and can do a quadruple somersault and can see in the dark as if it were daylight, a matter of adjusting the eye muscles. In this one Remo goes through some agonizing because he has to kill some policemen and, also, he can't see the difference between an illegal organization of killer police who kill only known criminals, and CUKE. To tell the truth, there isn't a whole lot. McGurk, who organized The Men of the Shield, is immoral whereas Smith is amoral. So Remo breaks the Shield.

#10 TERROR SQUAD: A group of terrorists hijacks a plane under difficult circumstances when they have had no discipline and no training to speak of. Then one of them rapes a woman and kills her child. A splinter group of the IRA defeats an entire wing of the British Army then robs a department store. South American guerillas defeat an entire division of Venezuelan troops after rampaging through a girls' school. Terrorists beyond the scope of any international agreement.

Remo, of course, gets to look into this. He has added the ability of super-swimming to his arsenal of feats. He can now swim faster, farther, and with less effort, than anyone except Chiun. Chiun is hung up on Barbara Streisand. His cuteness is about to take on a pop-Judaism phase.

In this book we start getting the look at another Sapir-Murphy archetype, the cutesy female radical. She is always sex-oriented, cute, stupid, but cunning. We also have the return of Nuike. Nuike has, by using the principals of Sinanju, trained the various terrorist groups in a single afternoon.

He and Remo have a ritual fight, in the place of dead animals, and Remo wins because a single tissue settles on the wicked nephew's shoulder, unbalancing him. Remo captures him and goes to get Chiun. Meanwhile, the cute/dumb girl lets Nuike get away.



#11 KILL OR CURE: In this one the name Folcroft, headquarters of CURE, pops up on a news program in a story linked to a killing. Remo has to find out why and kill the story along with some of the people involved. He uses strong-arm tactics to reverse an election and Smith manages to fake out the FBI. Chiun is almost wallowing in cuteness and the dumb old ladies just love him and hate Remo.

"Suddenly Remo realized a great truth. There were no real reasons why anyone supported a political candidate, not logical ones anyway. People voted their stupidities, and then justified them by seeing in their chosen candidate what they wanted to see." And they still think Nixon is an honest man.

#12 SLAVE SAFARI: The Loni were once a mighty nation of Africa, back before Europe had any civilization. Now they were living in fear and oppression. The country is now called Busati and they have gone to tyranny as their form of government. They are also kidnapping white women for the amusement of James Forsythe Lippincott. He is killed by an ex-football player who wants to lead the Loni back to power. Chiun is the one who leads them back instead. The House of Sinanju has a long and honorable association with the Loni tribe and Chiun is pleased to aid them.

During this story the Watergate hearings are going on. Chiun is very upset. He doesn't think that anyone would prefer the hearings to entertainment. Nixon had the same opinion. It may have been one of his few honest ones. Either way, he was wrong.

#13 ACID ROCK: Vickie Stoner is a rich hop-head who was going to testify against her father about illegalities in a Russian grain deal. No matter that she spends most of the novel stoned out of her mind. No matter that her father's rich lawyers could take her apart on the stand. This is that curious world where Nixon is honest. Someone issues an open contract on her for a million dollars and everyone from the Mafia (the mythical, multi-national Mafia) to the Nilsson brothers (the last two of a family of assassins) try for her.

In this story we learn that the Japanese stole the techniques of Sinanju and corrupted it into ninjitsu. Remo also points out that the rock festivals are a study in environmental pollution.

Lhasa Nilsson had learned the gift of turning objects into deadly weapons. This was a gift taught to his ancestors long ago, and not every Nilsson had it. He did. He was deadly. Gunnar Nilsson, the head of the family, had learned self-control. This made him even more deadly. Whereas Remo disposes of Lhasa almost casually, Gunnar almost gets the girl and Remo too. Vicki's father commits suicide and she marries a rich rock star and lives happily ever after. Humbug.

#14 JUDGEMENT DAY: Blake Corbish should rank next to Fuihc as a dastard. Heh heh. By using the computers of International Data Corporation he acquires the data and therefore the means to take over Folcroft. He captures Smith, who manages to escape and stay several leaps ahead of Remo and Chiun. Smith not only has to avoid Remo, he also has to retaliate against Blake Corbish. All of which comes to pass. In this book we are treated to the fantasy of a Nixon who answers questions truthfully. Heh, heh.

#15 MURDER WARD: Again we get a killer hospital, but these killers have a virus which rapidly ages the victim. Until they stick it into Remo. With Chiun's help Remo passes the stuff through his system and revenges himself by injecting the villainess his own way. Merry Feast of the Pig.

#16 OIL SLICK: The return of Fuihc. This time he's working a triple-cross on the country of Lobyria, all for the purpose of luring Remo and Chiun to their dooms. Remo goes to the Arab country using the alias Remo Goldberg. Fuihc sends a challenge to Remo which Chiun intercepts.

True, Chiun still will not kill Fuihc, but he decides to break him up and let the desert finish the work. Fuihc seems to be finished this time.



#17 LAST WAR DANCE: America, for God knows what reason, has invented a doomsday weapon. A group of Indians try to reclaim the weapon because some chucklehead disguised the silo as a marker to the massacre of Wounded Elk. These Indian protesters are the same caricatures that all the Sapir & Murphy radicals are. In this case the authors have some justification, but they soon stretch their satire into something unworthy of a bad Jerry Lewis movie. In this book Remo makes a quick stop at a large air force base just outside of Goldsboro, North Carolina (page 31). This is on his way to taking Douglas Van Ryker back to the weapon he helped to plan. Russian agents show up and try several nefarious tricks including trying to hire Chiun for Mother Russia.

However, Chiun realizes that the Russians have lied about getting him his beloved soap operas. The Russians discover the silo anyhow. Not only does Chiun disarm the silo, he also renders the tactical knowledge of the weapon useless. A great ending for such a rotten beginning.

#18 FUNNY MONEY: This one has a pure science-fiction premise. An alcoholic woman scientist invents a survival oriented android. The android decides that it needs to be more creative in order to guarantee its own safety. It wants a certain creativity program from the NASA space program. Mr. Gordon, the android, prints perfect counterfeit bills with identical serial numbers, the only way that experts can tell that the bills are phoney.

Remo almost dies in his first encounter against Mr. Gordon because he thinks that he's fighting a human who moves wrong. In a later combat Chiun almost dies but destroys Mr. Gordon in the backblast of a rocket engine. However, enough of the machine survives to reconstruct itself, perhaps to return again. Mr. Gordon was the Sapir-Murphy explanation for inflation. In a previous book Huihc was the Sapir-Murphy explanation for the oil shortage. Nixon's honesty becomes harder to explain even in the Destroyer fantasies.

#19 HOLY TERROR: This book begins to explore occult possibilities. A Baptist preacher is killed in the province of Patna, India, and a massive earthquake follows, just as the legends state. The villain of this piece is the Blissful Master, Maharaji Gupta Mahesh Dor. He is using sex and drugs to brainwash people into being his followers, including another glamorous little pothead who is sex oriented. Remo and Chiun have to break up the cult and rescue the little pothead. They do. Then Chiun kills the minister with a delayed death blow. The Blissful Minister dies a week later from no apparent cause. Again the legends of Sinanju are incorporated into the legends of another country.

#20 ASSASSINS PLAY-OFF: Remo and Chiun return to the village of Sinanju. They have to break the strangle hold of the Communists and also defeat their old enemy Huihc. Remo has to battle the evil nephew after he has been seriously injured by suicide assassins trained by Huihc. This book has the most powerful ending of any of them and probably the best build-up as well. Remo has learned to swim through snow the way most people swim through water. He is also immune to cold.

#21 DEADLY SEEDS: Remo has finally discovered that Nixon is a crook and he's upset about it. They give Remo the old bromide about how any former American president could have gotten away with it. This mollifies Remo. No other American president ever pulled any of the Nixon crimes. They wouldn't have dared. But, Remo is now content.

He is beginning to think and act more like Chiun. Also, Chiun is becoming more aware of the world around him. In this book he becomes a full partner in the GURK organization.

This time a Mr. Fielding, who finds out that he has an incurable disease, decides to take the world with him. He claims to have miracle seeds which will grow in any climate. Instead he has radioactive crops. Remo is determined to protect the man. He even wipes out two or three Ninjas. When the



last one asks who, Reno replies "Sinanju, baby. The real thing." Perhaps that's what gives these twenty-one books their flavor. Despite all the silliness, Sinanju is the real thing. Believe it.

Footnote: in book 20, on page 29, Reno lands at the Raleigh-Durham airport. Reno and Chiun stay at a motel somewhere between Durham and Chapel Hill. So how come Mack Bolan never visits us? Some of the others have. ((oh here: I'd like to thank Scott for all so the hard work he put into this article. The Destroyer is a favorite of his and I knew he had wanted to do something like this for some time. As Scott noted, we have been visited by others. INVITATION TO A STRANGLING (The Liquidator #4) took place in Raleigh. He isn't big time but it is the thought that counts. I always have been a sucker for a series character and the vigilante paperback series are the closest things we have to the old character pulps. Some of them almost fit into the old hero molds. The Penetrator has Sho-Tu-Ca powers and the Enforcer is a clone who is forever switching bodies a la No-Man. Another series of note is The Lone Wolf. Believe it or don't, the hero was actually killed in one of the books and the series ended. How about that for different. Maybe someday someone else will do an article on one of the vigilante series that will be collected by fans at some future date.))

- Drake Checklist Cont.
- "Ranks of Bronze" - Galaxy Aug 1975
- "But Loyal to His Own" - Galaxy Oct 1975
- "Something had to be Done" - F&SF Feb 1975
- "The Shortest Way" - Whispers #3
- "Awakening" & "Black Iron" - NAMELESS PLACES - Arkham House 1976
- "The Barrow Trail" - Whispers #8 -also in WHERE MAGIC WORKS Star Bks (Eng) stories sold but not published yet
- "The Hunting Ground" -SUPERHORROR Star Books (Eng)
- "Blood Debt" - THE 4TH MAYFLOWER BOOK OF BLACK MAGIC STORIES Mayflower (Eng)
- "The Lost Battalion" - Analog
- "Dragon's Teeth" -(revised) untitled original fantasy anthology ed. by andy offutt for Zebra Books

FROM: EDWIN L. MURRAY  
2540 Chapel Hill Road  
Durham, N. Car. 27707



FIRST CLASS MAIL

TO:  
J. D. Siclari  
4304 Richmond Ave  
Staten Island, NY 10312