



# \* TRAVELS WITHOUT DESTINATION \*

[Warning, contains foreign language!!]

this is the iRozi intsoni (Roz tale). it is called isithunzi intsoni, or if you prefer the Amagama esiXhosa (English from Xhosa), it is called the shadow tale. it is written by Rich "the delicate genius" Pretorius. he doesn't vouch for the correct spelling/grammar usage of his Xhosa words. he does begin with a poem though:

khalisa umculo opholileyo  
musa ukulala kwakhona  
sula inyembezi  
ubusika bufikile

7

village, of a strange man living near the village, of women carrying water, she thought of today's and yesterdays.

iRozi didn't know what to do. It was the first time she had the feather of her ubulunga. It signified her connection with the home of her birth and she could not be taken by anyone. Now Hlakanyane would have it, but iRozi feared that if she were to get it back she would be trapped and could never go home. It was as if the wind was working for Hlakanyane. The wind picked up again and it was singing, it repeated the word ugqirha to her.

iRozi didn't know what to do. If she went into the gully and got her feather then she would have done the right thing according to the custom of her people. She couldn't be certain if she would ever come out. Her grandmother had told her the Hlakanyane intsoni, "isiqalo ukuisiphelo, Hlakanyane xolisa, thelekisa, ukuhleka, ukuveza." But if she escaped and returned home... The wind picked up again and it was singing, it repeated the word ugqirha to her.

iRozi would be leaving her home, her village, her mother to get to the feather. She made the decision to face Hlakanyane. When iRozi had left her home thinking about how Hlakanyane would trick her into holding a rock, iRozi did not hear the wind sing to her. It had told her about ugqirha. Hlakanyane was not there waiting for her. ugqirha was waiting.

Roz was aware again that she was dying, she knew what she had dreamt and understood. She wondered if she had been crying because she was happy.

isithunzi	shadow
intsoni	tale
isiqalo	beginning
ukuisiphelo	to the end
xolisa	to bring about
thelekisa	peace
ukuhleka	to cause a fight without fighting
ukuveza	to laugh
ugqirha	to show/reveal doctor

khalisa umculo opholileyo  
musa ukulala kwakhona  
sula inyembezi  
ubusika bufikile

play the quiet music  
Do not sleep again  
wipe your tears  
The winter is here



THIS IS THE GLOSSARY

20/11/14

There were always several ideas about death. Some people believed at the moment of death you became aware of everything in the universe. Some people believed that at the moment of death your whole life appeared in an instant but you remembered it as if it had just happened. When Roz died she saw something different.

There was something in Roz that knew she was dying, it knew about her life and her thoughts and her conceits, it was something that had dreamt an incredible and beautiful memory of Roz in other lifetimes.

This was like a short quick breath, a flash of insight. It was like, it imagined, a honeycombed ball made of silver mirrors reflecting different kinds of light and different kinds of images locked within each six sided panel. In each there was something Roz had never seen. There were different lives... one where she had a husband and child, one where she and her mother had been the best of friends, and there was one where Roz died a Xhosa child who for that short time lived on an Afrikan veldt with a clear blue new fresh sky, a village with huts and people living their lives respecting rituals and listening to the stories that grandmothers told... This was a long time before she was born Roslyn Inyathi Forrester.

It was a time iRozi saw herself staring into the sky in an ancient Afrika, long before her grandmother told her tales of Hlakanyane, the boy trickster. It was a time when the ancient grandmothers told their tales of the Xhosa, when they had left their father Tshawe. Tshawe was the first man and was thought of as an archetype on Earth. All the sons had come from him; Wangu, Ngwevu, Xhosa, Mfengu, Mpondo.

iRozi was a child of seven staring into the sky in that ancient Afrika. She watched a sky were clouds raced across a land that she felt was home. She never lived there once when she was Roslyn Forrester, but now she realised she was born there. All things looked familiar to her: veldt, sky, huts, people.

iRozi had been staring into the sky watching the clouds or birds flying, she watch the sky turn different shades of blue, it was all good. iRozi always thought about her life although she didn't at that age quite realize was that meant. She recalled memories of other children in the

One day when iRozi was staring into the sky the blue had soured and turned into a dark grey. The grey had moved from the north like? ... eating into the blue. Far in the distance in the north, the land was also turning grey, being eaten away by this sickness. She thought for a moment that her sickness had returned. She closed her eyes. Opened them again. The blue had returned to the sky.

iRozi closed her eyes feeling the sun warm her skin, she held onto the feather of her ubulunga. She imagined the feather against the blue, that perhaps one day her grandchild will tell their grandchild of how iRozi held the grey back with an image of a feather against a blue sky.

The something told Roz things were changing.

Her eyes were shut tight and iRozi she did not see the wind come towards her. She didn't feel a chill only warmth, she didn't feel a wind only sun light. But she felt the feather disappear, something had taken it out of her hand. It was there she saw, flying in the wind, past the last huts and beyond the village.

She chased it while the wind laughed at her, it told her that she would be punished by her mother because she had gone from the village. She ran past some sleeping children, but she saw that they were really laughing. The feather flew as if it tried to escape from the village, away from her home. It finally settled into a gully.

She had seen the gully once when she went to the ochre pit the day before her sister Leabie's wedding a year ago. Her grandmother had gone with them. When they went past the gully, her grandmother had warned her to never go in there because that was where Hlakanyane, the boy trickster, had lived.

She warned her because too many children and animals had thought that they could not be tricked. Her grandmother reminded her about the story of Hlakanyane and the leopardess, and how Hlakanyane had tricked the leopardess into holding the rock while he escaped.

Now iRozi was much older than she was a year ago. The feather of her ubulunga beast had been carried here, and she knew that she could be smarter than Hlakanyane. The wind picked up again this time it was singing, it repeated the word ugqirha to her.

Contains SPOILERS for "So Vile A Sin".



# Paul Hinder otherwise known as Paul Leonard.

He's popping up in May in Decalog 4, writing a story called "Rescue Mission". Him and Jim Mortimore are editing Decalog 5, which is about the Ten Wonders of the Universe. They hope to instil some wonder back into SF. It'll be out September/October.

Why do you use the pseudonym Paul Leonard when writing NA/MA?

At the time, it was because I wanted to keep the name PJL Hinder for what I considered to be my more serious work, i.e. small press short stories. However the logic of book publishing is such that I'll probably be Paul Leonard for the rest of my career. I don't really mind; who wants to be a hinderance anyway?

Could you tell us how you began writing for Virgin?

Jim Mortimore was in my writer's group. He was writing *Lucifer Rising* with Andy Lane at the time. He was very persuasive. He told me it would make me rich and famous (he was half right).

Why did you pick the first Doctor and original TARDIS complement?

Because Jim's story in the first Decalog, "The Book of Shadows", featured these characters. The MA had just started. I wanted to get in quick, before anyone else, in order to have a better chance. This was my first book, and I wasn't sure of my ability to get the characters from watching episodes alone. So I used Jim's ready-made characterisations as a launching pad for my own.

Two of your books have been third Doctor MA, capturing the hard science coating and moral heart of that era. Jo Grant returns in your eighth Doctor book. Could you explain why you are drawn to these particular characters and style?

Actually *Speed of Flight* was going to be another 1st Doctor book, but there was a clash with Gareth's book [*The Plotters*] & I was the one who didn't mind changing it, especially since I didn't have much time to write the book.

I think the main reason I find the 3rd Doctor and Jo easy to write for is that (oh, sacrilege!) that was the only TV *Who* I ever watched live. I was about 14 at the time, and it made a subconscious impression that I can still draw on.

Having said all that, the idea of science-based stories with a moral heart is very close to my heart. We're stuck with science — we can't hope to survive without it — and if we hope to survive with it, we are going to have to be scrupulously moral. So it's important.

I'm starting work on some original fiction soon, in a world where magic works, but which is otherwise very similar to our own. The main difference is that, due to the ruthless exercise of magic, Josef Stalin is still alive, and therefore the cold war — and the horror story that was Stalinist Russia — are still going on, into the nineties world of computers and the internet. So really it's just an excuse to write a 70s style hi-tech spy story with a bit of magic thrown in... I don't think I'll ever really catch up with the present!

Can we expect *Genocide* to be in a similar vein?

Yes. Very much so. The science of the book — prehistory, anthropology, etc — interests me greatly. The 'present' of the book is the 90s, but Jo Grant is still there — I think the book may have a bit of a 70s feel to it.

How do you see the MA?

It isn't just visuals that get cramped by a low budget and half-hour children's format episodes. Characterisation inevitably suffers too — even a six-episode series is only equivalent in terms of plot to about 10000 words of text (I know the Target novels were longer, but that was called "necessary padding"). Full length original novels therefore can fit about as much characterisation in *each* as an entire season of televised *Who* — and with much more consistency, since only one person is doing the work!

Why did you write a NA (*Toy Soldiers*)?

I can't come up with a high-falutin' answer for this one. It was going to be an MA (3rd Doc) but this was before *Dancing the Code*. Somehow it got turned into an NA. I think I wanted to try my hand with the format. Actually I didn't get along with it — I found the continuity a bit of a bind.

Could you tell us a little about *Genocide*?

It's about the extermination of the human race by a group of aliens who have a very good reason for doing so, with the help of a human who also has a good reason. It features the 8th Doctor and the new companion Sam Jones, plus Jo Grant aged about 45, divorced, with an eleven-year old son. Most of it happens about 2.5 million years ago.

How did you come to be writing for the BBC Books line?

They approached me. They approached every *DW* author in fact, and quite a few others who were known to have an interest in *Who*. To be honest, I didn't really have any new ideas for them at first; *Genocide* started life as an idea for a possible short story collection of Jon Blum's about old companions (hence the 45 year old Jo!), but both Jon and Jim thought it had novel potential... looks like they were right.

What did you think of the television movie?

About what I'd have expected, really. A bit Americanised, a bit bland, OTT SFX — and a bit brilliant, in places (those clocks...!). I'd have liked to have seen more. Shame about the ratings, but there you are...

You're writing one of the first eighth Doctor stories and unlike other NA/MA the character of the eighth Doctor is largely unwritten. How do you see the character? How are you intending to write and expand the character? Do you see that you, Lance,

Terry, etc, will be shaping the direction this Doctor will take? Do you see that as a daunting task?

Whoa, one at a time! His character: mysterious. I still intend to follow the Virgin precept of "don't try to get inside the Doctor's head". Obviously I'll use McGann's mannerisms, his spontaneity, his optimism and love of life which come across so clearly. I think there's a general agreement that he should be less manipulative, less ambivalent, more child-like than the 7th Doctor had become in the Virgin NAs.

Yes, we will all be shaping the way the 8th Doc develops. Jon, Kate, Mark Morris and I are in regular email communication about this — but ironically, we talk a lot more about the new companion, Sam Jones, than the Doctor himself! I think the truth is (as Terrance Dicks says) the Doctor is the Doctor is the Doctor. Only his superficial characteristics change. A new companion, however is a different matter...

I certainly don't see it as daunting. My only worry is that we'll somehow make him inconsistent. But it's hard to go wrong, really, with all that TV background. And Auntie Beeb will no doubt keep an eye open for any *real* bloomers!

Have you read many of the existing books?

Not many (shame to say). Andrew Cartmel does some nice stuff — his style is brilliant. So is Ben Aaronovitch, most of the time. Jim Mortimore of course, I'd recommend his books any day, but his crime fiction (*Cracker*) is better, and so is his *Babylon 5* book (*Clark's Law*). Paul Cornell's prose is excellent, and *Human Nature* is probably the best *DW* book I've read.

Could you tell us about your writing process?

The writing process is largely subconscious. I try to "write" — be actually "on duty" — for six hours a day, seven days a week, less allowances for my part time job. That's the discipline. Inside that time, however, I'm like any office worker: I take tea breaks, I have little rests, I chat on the phone, I do interviews, sign contracts — and sometimes, quite suddenly, write like blue blazes because the inspiration is with me, God is on my side and the words are flowing again. Sometimes they don't flow for *days*, and that's dreadful.

I try never to stare at a blank screen. It's a waste of time. Making notes is sometimes an alternative to staring at a blank screen, but I don't find it particularly useful. Prose has its own flow and moment, and you have to write it as it arrives. And edit it, fit it in, make it work, later.

What sort of music do you listen to?

Music — any. Boring stuff. Bruckner, Oasis, Dusty Springfield (anyone remember her?), Vivaldi. I didn't even know what an "indie" band was till someone took pity and explained it to me!

interview by David Golding

# JON BLUM

interview by Richard Prekodravac

This man is a leviathan of a fan and a force to be reckoned with on the internet. He has previously spent many years producing "Time Rift" the ultimate fan DW video. Now he's writing with and engaged to Kate Orman.

What differences have you found between writing a novel and writing a script (*Time Rift*)?

It's completely different — though I'm sure part of the difference is that with *Time Rift* I didn't have a deadline screaming down upon me! Aside from when I was writing scenes that needed to be shot the next day, that is...

I've always found writing prose, or rather *good* prose, more difficult than scriptwriting. The sentences just don't flow the same way for me. Also, I'm still trying to figure out how to structure a novel, as opposed to a script — like Sam Raimi said in an interview, I'm constantly terrified of boring my audience, that I'm not doing enough to make it interesting.

Also, just as we were really getting a handle on the heart of the book, the BBC told us we couldn't use Grace, who was central to our story. We still don't know why — apparently the order was handed down to Nuala from high up! So we had to replace her with a new character, and that completely shifted the balance of the book — there were long stretches of the book which centered on her, and if the character in those scenes isn't a regular, then it's just not as interesting to spend so much time without a regular character in sight. So we had to restructure the book to have the Doctor and the companion take up more of the slack. It still doesn't feel like I've gotten the balance quite right yet, but we're getting there... Oh, and I think the book is definitely called *Vampire Science* now — we were hoping for something more evocative, but nothing else seems to fit the book as well. We did get some great suggestions from the net for a title, though — Kate's favorite was *IV4*, while mine was *Stakedown*...

You're writing one of the first eighth Doctor stories and unlike other NA/MA the character of the eighth Doctor is largely unwritten. How do you see the character? How are you intending to write and expand the character? Do you see that as a daunting task?

More of a thrilling task. In a way it's what every fan dreams of — getting to define *their* Doctor. We've just recently set up an e-mail list, on which Kate, John, Paul Leonard, Mark Morris, a few others, and I are discussing the characterization of the eighth Doctor and the new companion, and I think we're really beginning to get a clear vision of where we're headed.

We're really lucky in that the film gives us such clear broad strokes of the Doctor's personality — there's a great sense of youthful energy and *aliveness* about the McGann Doctor, and it all seems to flow from there.

One of the aspects I'm most fond of with the eighth Doctor is his magician-like nature... throughout the film he does a number of little things, like disappearing into Grace's car or

palming the clock chip, which are wonderful how-did-he-do-THAT? moments. I like a Doctor who can really startle and amaze you. We want to play with the ambiguity of whether the Doctor is really all sleight-of-hand and misdirection, or whether he really can do actual real live magic. The Doctor is certainly a magical character at heart, and we want to keep that sense of wonder about him.

It's also great that this Doctor is much more comfortable with human emotions than the previous ones — it gives us a whole new range of colors to paint with, as it were. When you think about it, we've never really heard the Doctor just laugh for joy before... a full-blown rolling-on-the-floor God-it's-great-to-be-alive laugh. I can really see this Doctor doing that.

Do you and Kate share similar views to the eighth Doctor's character?

Incredibly so — that's what astonishes me so much! The main difference is that I don't drool over Paul McGann the way she does... We've basically gotten to form our perceptions of the eighth Doctor together, since we were talking about him pretty much from the moment the film aired, and we both loved it. It's a totally new feeling for me to be collaborating with a writer who I fundamentally agree with.

Is your perspective to *DW* grounded primarily in the visual form? How are you translating that into a novel form? Will we read something in *Vampire Science* that is more of a visually rich narrative?

Actually, I think *DW* can work just as well in either format — but you need a completely different approach for making a TV episode that you would for writing a good book. I think *Vamp Sci* is probably going to be the most dialogue- or prose-based thing I've written in a while.

I think I've become increasingly visually oriented over the past few years, mainly because I've been working as a director and editor. I used to be very much in love with dialogue — writing pages and pages of clever lines — but then when it came to shoot them in *Time Rift* I realized how hard it was to make that interesting to watch. On the rough-cut, I had these five-page-long dialogue scenes pretty much intact, and by the end the audience was squirming in their seats. But a scene like that you could get away with much more easily in a book.

Do you think that you may befall the error of many NA writers and perhaps be writing a seventh Doctor in an eighth Doctor novel?

We were very worried about doing this, and so we keep making a point of looking back over what we've written and clearly "McGannifying" it. Kate's made an intense study of McGann's mannerisms — not just in the *Who* movie, but a number of things she sees McGann doing in all his different roles — and we're trying to work

them in wherever they fit. Some of the eighth-Doctor-isms we've been talking about on the mailing list also clearly differentiate his approach to situations from the seventh

Doctor. Lance Parkin made it clear that this Doctor doesn't really plan — he may be one step ahead of his enemies, or be deliberately trying to confuse them, but that's the extent of his manipulateness. Quite a contrast with the seventh Doctor. Similarly, where McCoy kept everything to himself, we're having the eighth Doctor tend to think out loud, bouncing ideas and fragments of ideas off of people at high speed.

There's a clear difference in approach between the two Doctors — the seventh was often very quietly weird, while the eighth Doctor confuses you just as effectively by being dazzling and attention-getting. Two different ways of bewildering people.

Plus, one of the subplots in this book is designed to really point out the differences between the seventh and eighth Doctors — one character knows of the seventh Doctor, and expects the eighth to react the same way, and ends up having their assumptions blown out of the water.

Finally could we have a few words on the following authors and their work...

Oh dear... Is this a standard entrance exam?

For me, Kate and Paul [Cornell] are the Goddess and God of the NA. They defined so much of what was possible in the range, and built up so much of the sense of mythology. I still remember staying up till 3 AM to finish reading *Timewyrm: Revelation*, and being in absolute awe — I'd never imagined *DW* could be as rich as that! Characters and themes and imagery — all the stuff of real novels! What an eye-opener!

It's kind of depressing that I have to write for the same book-line as Paul — I know I'm just not in the same league as a writer with him or Ben Aaronovitch. Every time I feel like I've got some decent prose, I pick up *Human Nature* or *Happy Endings* or *The Also People*, and once again my words feel like little pieces of grit and gravel compared to their smooth flow of ideas and images.

Similarly, I was a huge Kate Orman fan before we ever got to know each other. The first parts of *Hummer* and *Set Piece* left me in absolute awe of the intensity and vividness of her writing. I've found my style and hers can mesh fairly well, but I'm still amazed by the images she comes up with. On the more recent books, of course I'm too biased to comment intelligently. :-)

If not for the things [Andrew Cartmel] brought to the program — the new insights on the Doctor, the formula-busting storytelling — I think I would probably have gotten bored with the show and drifted away from *Who* fandom some time in the early '90s. But not only did he revitalize the show, he inspired so many of the other writers I

"Vampire Science" features lesbians and vampires — cool er!!

admire hugely. He's another one of those people whose prose and storytelling are positively humbling... I just wish he could find more for the Doctor to do in his books.

Everyone's got a point at which they balk at counting something as having "the DW spirit". There's not much that bothers me — I'm quite happy accepting everything from *Warhead* to *The Ghosts of N-Space* as being Whoish in different ways. But the ending of *Penswick's The Pit*, where the Doctor doesn't even have a word of condemnation or retribution for a man who's destroyed an entire solar system full of innocent people, was my stopping point. Aside from a couple of pieces of fanfic, I think it's the only bit of *Who* ever where I've put down the book and thought "No, that's wrong." In this book the Doctor is cruel and cowardly, and I think that's the root of the problem I have with it.

Other than the fact that I think his book gets something fundamental utterly wrong, I'm sure he's a great guy...

[Dave Stone is] awe-perspiring coruscating lunatickling my funnybone pretend-move author thingy. The sheer imagination in his books is startling. If I can ever create one thing as memorable as the Sloathes, I'll be a happy puppy.

When it came to doing *Time Rift*, *Remembrance* was the *Who* story which influenced me. The pace, the wit, the daring characterization of the Doctor, the intelligent use of continuity... The humbling bit was when I realized that I'd been working on the *TR* script for a year and a half, and [Ben Aaronvitch had] done *Remembrance* in how many WEEKS???

*Transit* I liked, but I can't really count it as an influence, because I've never been able to pull off writing cyberpunk. *The Also People*, on the

other hand, is one of those quintessential DW stories, full of wit and imagination and humanity. I would give my left arm and possibly several internal organs to be able to write a book like that — except that then I wouldn't be able to write a book like that, would I?

John [Peel] was a huge influence on me when I was a young fan — his reviews/critiques of stories in *Fantasy Empire* gave me a lot to think about, and I remember being quite impressed with his defense of the JNT years. It was a bit of a shock to meet him on the net, and find that pretty much all his opinions on the show since 1979 or so had done a 180 in the intervening years! I actually quite enjoy John's books for what they are — adventure romps — but from what he's said he seems to think that that's all DW can or should ever be, which would be terribly limiting if it were true.



by the way:

this is BROADSWORD issue 11 Sep-Oct 96  
(and you'd thought I'd forgotten) (well, actually more like Jan-Feb 97)

I'm the editor, blame me, David Golding, come and see the Virgin Worlds guidelines at:

<http://yoyo.cc.monash.edu.au/~aknyra>

\*Editors-in-chiefs: Richard Prekodravac  
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THIS HAS BEEN A  
SYDNEY - MELBOURNE  
CO-PRODUCTION.

"Why can't we all just  
love one another?"

## A SMALL SNIPPET WITH KATE ORMAN:

You're writing one of the first eighth Doctor stories and unlike other NAMA the character of the eighth Doctor is largely unwritten. How do you see the character? How are you intending to write and expand the character? Do you see that as a daunting task?

The Eighth Doctor is Life's Champion. Not that we'll be saying that explicitly, of course, but that's how I see this character — passionate and compassionate, enjoying and treasuring life.

Daunting is the right word — after all these years of writing for the Seventh Doctor, it's become very easy just to chum out his dialogue. I was struck with paralysis the first time I tried to write for Number Eight. :-) Writer's nerves! But the characterisation and the performance in the film are very strong, giving us a firm basis.

Kate has finished "So Uile A Sin". It weighs in at 95,000 words.  
way to go, Kate!!





# THIS IS JOHN PEEL

interview by  
Jade Otyemnota  
who doesn't exist

This man's contracts are yet to be signed. He has not tapped out one word of his proposed books. Hopefully Terry Nation's greed will sink his plans, just like last time...

What do you see as the role of the MA/NA?

I see them as primarily the chance to play...! For me, it's the opportunity to tell a DW story. I've been a fan of the show from virtually the beginning (I caught the ending of *The Firemaker*, and was hooked), so the opportunity to write stories based on the show has always been a tremendous draw for me.

As far as their role, I think it's their purpose to (a) keep DW alive until a new series is made and (b) to entertain the readers. For me, the second is primary. It's also the chance to do things that the TV show can't do, either for reasons of budget (I can have a lot better special effects, for example!), or other reasons. *Legacy Of The Daleks* can bring back the Roger Delgado Master, for example, which is obviously impossible in terms of television.

What audience do you write for when you write a NA/MA? Is it a different audience to those of your other books? I understand you've written for the *Star Trek* and *Quantum Leap* ranges ... any others?

Lots! (Mostly young adult and juvenile series, though.) Obviously, when you write a DW novel, it's aimed specifically at DW fans. As a result, you can put in in-jokes, continuity and so forth to tie the book more firmly into DW mythos. When you write for *Star Trek*, obviously, you're writing for an audience than wants to read about that show, so you tailor the book to them.

Other than that, I simply write for a general audience. I guess I assume they're in their late teens/early twenties, and write for that target group. When I write the tie-ins for Nickelodeon shows, for example, I aim them at a younger audience. That only means that I use simpler structure and vocabulary. My plotting level doesn't change.

Could you give us an insight into your writing process?

I always work up a draft outline for a story first. This can vary from four to ten pages, depending on the complexity of the plot, and whether it's my first novel for an editor. In that case, you have to assure them you know what you're doing, so it tends to be longer. Once the outline is approved, I start work on the novel. Naturally, portions of the outline change as I write. I find sometimes that something I thought would work doesn't. For example, my outline to *Timewyrm: Genesys* had Ishtar as a robotic spider. As I started to write the book, I realized that with "wyrm" in the title, a snake form was more logical.

I start writing about 8.30 in the morning, and write from 5 to 15 pages a day. However, when I'm getting close to the end of a novel, that tends to rise to 20 or even 30 pages a day as it's more exciting, and I don't want to stop. None of the time is spent staring at a blank screen, because I'm working from my notes and know what I'm

roughly going to be writing. I usually finish about 1pm. The rest of the day is spent relaxing physically (my hands get tired from typing), but thinking of the plot and dialogue for the next day's work.

When I evolve my initial plot, I tend to do it about four or five key "scenes" that I picture in my mind, and then link together with the threads of the plot. It's hard for me to describe, because I'm not entirely certain how I do it myself. I tend to start by thinking about the general subject I'd like to do, and then start complicating it. For example, *Evolution* arose because I wanted to write a Fourth Doctor/Sarah Jane story (my own favorite combination of cast for the show). I then thought about Sherlock Holmes because I have a friend who's a big Sherlockian, and I thought it would be fun to write a story to amuse him. However, using Sherlock was a little too obvious, so I thought it would be fun to use his creator, Conan Doyle, instead. That led to the image of Tom Baker in the deerstalker, and the fact he'd been in *Hound Of The Baskervilles*. These all started to come together in a plot.

Do you listen to music?

Mostly classical, and a lot of Irish folk music. I use them in the evenings to relax after writing.

What do you think of your own books?

Well, obviously I like them! I wouldn't have written them otherwise. I think they work from the point of view of evoking the feel of their particular eras of the show. Other than that, it's hard for me to judge. I reread them occasionally, and still enjoy them as stories. If someone else had written them, I'd like them just as much.

You're writing one of the first eighth Doctor stories and unlike other NA/MA the character of the eighth Doctor is largely unwritten. How do you see the character? Do you see writing for him as a daunting task?

I see him as a kind of combination of Troughton and Tom Baker — capable, but worried. I'm not sure how the other writers see him, of course. Working out his character is something I'll obviously have to do with our editor, to maintain a continuity. Also, Jon Blum is organizing a "newsgroup" of writers, sharing information, which will undoubtedly be very helpful.

Daunting? Not really. I'm a writer, and it's my job to create. It's fun, really.

*War of the Daleks* isn't a new idea: it was posited as a Virgin NA a couple of years ago...

The idea for the book was originally to tie up the JNT era Dalek stories. I had originally planned it, in fact, as a four-part TV proposal. Then the show was placed in hiatus hell, so I altered it to a novel outline. What I wanted to do was to finish the Davros/Dalek war thread that had been

running a little too long, and then enable future stories to simply find their own ground, without being forced into following the rather involved plot that was running.

Another reason for the story was to bring back Skaro. I feel that its destruction in *Remembrance* was a bad move, as did Terry Nation. When I sought his permission for *War*, he asked me to try and rectify the destruction, which I think I've done very sneakily.

You've caused a lot of controversy on the internet with this un-destruction...

When I first went onto rec.arts.dr.who, I did say I was going to "do a number" on *Remembrance*! This was meant as a humorous comment mainly. I have a pretty dreadful sense of humor, I suppose! I was trying to intrigue people with the idea that the ending of *Remembrance* isn't the whole story, and that the Daleks have something rather nasty up their metallic sleeves for the Doctor. In retrospect, I could have phrased things better, of course.

The controversy seems to me to boil down to the fact that some people feel that by saying "No, Skaro wasn't blown up" I'm somehow ruining Ben Aaronovitch's story. I think this is rather an extreme view, which seems to imply that without Skaro's destruction, Ben's story has somehow become a piece of junk. Ben's story stands on its own merits, and nothing I write in *War* will alter this. All I am doing is saying in effect: "Ah, but there's something about the Daleks' long-range plans that Ben didn't know..." That seems to me to be the essence of many a good story.

Do you have access to much of what fandom has to say about you and your books? Does it influence you?

Only if they tell me. I get fan mail, for example, and feedback from fans I know personally. The Internet, now, adds further feedback. Does it influence me? Some of it. If it's logical, polite and to the point, I pay careful attention to what's said — especially if it's negative. My aim in writing any book is always to tell the best possible story. I want to make my next book even better than the last, and if someone has a valid point about anything I may have done wrong, I incorporate it. As an example, in one book I had a female character rub her chin while thinking. A friend pointed out that this was a very male thing to do, and that a woman is more likely to play with a lock of her hair instead. So the next thinking female I had played with a lock of her hair.

You've written a couple of factual books on fictional histories of elements of the TV series, and continuity abounds in your NA/MA. How important is continuity to you?

Continuity is obviously important when you're dealing with a show like DW. I try to maintain it to the best of my ability. However, I do

sometimes make mistakes — Ace recalling *Paradise Towers* in *Genesis*, for example!

Do you discuss continuity with other authors?

I don't discuss my books with anyone other than my editor for the most part. I might mention a sequence to friends. In the case of *War*, however, I made an exception. Because what I'll be doing is so controversial to some fans (bringing back Skaro), I went on the Internet and asked for opinions and feedback. I read some of the other books in the series, and watch videos when either called for as research or simply for fun. I do enjoy *DW* for its own sake!

You've written several Dalek novelisations, and now two full novels are planned. What's it like writing for the Daleks?

I love it. The first full *DW* story I ever saw was *The Daleks*, so I've always had a special affection for the little monsters. Being able to novelise their adventures was wonderful. Being able to write original Dalek stories has potentially even more fun.

How does it feel to be creating new Dalek stories for the nineties?

As I said, I'm anticipating a lot of fun. Plus, it does give me the chance to do a few new things with the Daleks. I started that in my novelisation of *The Chase*, where I had them interfacing with

the Mechon computers. Hopefully, I'll be able to continue giving them new and nastier things to do.

Could you tell us a little about *War of the Daleks*?

It takes place shortly after *Remembrance*. A salvage ship in space is scouring the wreckages of destroyed ships after a space battle, and comes across a mysterious piece of flotsam they can't open. One of the crew signals another ship to come and get the "merchandise," and the Doctor stumbles into the scene. He's then forced to face off against — of all people — the Thals, who are after the flotsam. And then the Daleks show up, dragging the whole sorry mess back to Skaro... which worries the Doctor considerably, since he knows it shouldn't exist...

The MA line of the BBC books seems a little tentative. Is *Legacy of the Daleks* definitely going ahead?

Neither book is *definite*, since no contracts have yet been signed. BBC Books has made an offer for both stories, which Terry's agent, Roger Hancock, is handling. Assuming the contracts can be worked out, the books will proceed. It was in the contract stage that the books failed the first time, as Virgin had wanted to commission them both initially.

Could you tell us a little about *Legacy of the Daleks*?

*Legacy* is set about twenty years after *Dalek Invasion Earth*. Susan and David Campbell are having marital problems; Britain has become a feudal society again, with warring Lords attempting to expand their domains. And the Master has arrived on Earth after a Dalek weapon hidden in the wreckage of one of their cities. My outline originally had the seventh Doctor involved (updated now to the Eighth), but I then suggested making it a Third Doctor story, as *Legacy* involves the Roger Delgado Master integrally to the plot.

Have you read many of the NA/MA?

I've read the first thirty NA so far, and none of the MA. It's mostly a matter of time to read. My favorites? I adored *Exodus*, by Terrence. I read it in a single sitting, unable to put it down. I thought Andrew Hunt's *Witch Mark* was a wonderful effort, especially as a first novel. It's a shame he hasn't done more. *Lucifer Rising*, *Iceberg*, *Blood Heat*, *First Frontier* and *Blood Harvest* were all thoroughly enjoyable. I think the book that most surprised me, though, was *Legacy*, by Gary Russell. Gary had written reviews of my stories that were pretty critical, so I was all set to tear *Legacy* apart! Instead, I thoroughly enjoyed it.



SG LOOM! PO — is good?

## UPCOMING BOOKS

### NA

FEB: *The Room With No Doors*, Kate Orman  
MAR: *Lungbarrow*, Marc Platt  
APR: *The Dying Days*, Lance Parkin  
MAY: *Oh No It Isn't!*, Paul Cornell  
JUN: *Dragons' Wrath*, Justin Richards  
JUL: *Beyond the Sun*, Matt Jones  
AUG: *Ship of Fools*, Dave Stone  
SEP: *Down*, Lawrence Miles  
DEAD FALL, Gary Russell

"So Uile A Sin" by Ben Aaronovitch and Kate Orman will be published in April. Future books will be written by Simon Bucher-Jones, Terrance Dicks and Kate Orman.

### MA

FEB: *A Device of Death*, Chris Bulis (4<sup>th</sup>, Sarah, Harry)  
MAR: *The Dark Path*, David A. McIntee (2<sup>nd</sup>, Ben, Polly, the Master)  
APR: *The Well-Mannered War*, Gareth Roberts (guess!!)

# MARTY DAY

more than just  
a nice guy

interview by Richard Prekodravac

*Devil Goblins from Neptune* started life as a proposal by Paul Cornell, Martin Day, and Keith Topping.

The three of us started pooling ideas for the plot of *DGob* soon after finishing work on our *Trek* book, *IIRC*. I think we presented Virgin with a page or so of ideas, but I don't suppose there was enough there to commission, and anyway we were all busy with different things. We had a hard time working on the second edition of our general TV book, *Classic British TV*, with tempers getting frayed and so on. It was at this stage that Paul suggested that Keith and I plug on with *DGob* on our own — maybe this suggestion was a peace offering or something, I don't know! Anyway, that's what Keith and I did (although I'm pleased to report that we're all mates again now, though our book on *The X-Files* is almost certainly our last factual book written as a threesome).

Difficult to say how different the book would have been if Paul had been involved right to the end, though obviously there would have been another 'voice' in the mix. I love Paul's seemingly-effortless prose in particular (odd for a guy who's written a fair bit of TV stuff!), and that would have worked well in this, but I suppose 'very different' is the only honest answer I can give. Not necessarily better, certainly not worse — but 'different', yes.

Just where did the idea of this story get conceived, should I make a guess and say a lot of alcohol was involved?

I don't remember a vast amount of alcohol being consumed...! I suppose we just started from the idea of doing a very 1970s *Who* story, with kung-fu fight sequences, pre-title sequences, outrageous hippies and Jason King-like dandies, etc. We wanted to do a homage to the early Target books — with illustrations, footnotes, a map. That's where the title *Dr Who and the Devil Goblins from Neptune* came from, of course.

What can we expect of the writing style, themes, etc, in comparison to *The Menagerie*. I think it has been noted somewhere that you thought *TM* was a traditionally straightforward-type story.

Yes. *Menagerie* was an adventure, first and foremost. I think there's room for all sorts of things in the *Who* universe — and, oddly, I tend to prefer the NA to the MA — but I don't think that you can escape from the conclusion that *DW* is, at heart, an exciting adventure show. I was also trying to do other — more 'intellectual' — things with *Menag.*, which may or may not have worked, but I tried not to lose the excitement and the adventure.

In that sense, *DGob* is similar. As it's a third Doctor story, it's full of tanks, battles, and daring escapes. But, again, there are certain themes we're trying to explore. Of course, the themes are quite different from *Menag.* — not surprising, as it's a two-hander, and thus a less personal work. And I'd like to think the writing style is as different from *Menag.* as possible: again, partly because it isn't just me this time, but also because it's good to try something different. (And I'm just hoping, for Keith's sake, that those who didn't like *Menag.* might still give *DGob* a look. I'm sure if it went out under a pseudonym,

nobody would realise I was the co-author. For a start, *DGob* is supposed to be funny!)

As the writing process is that of two people can we expect something a lot more complex?

Yes and no. I think the plot is bigger and more complex. The writing style is a tad more experimental at points, but actually the underlying ideas are, if anything, simpler than those of *Menag.*

What is the writing process like when two people are involved?

Interesting.

How alike are you and Keith?

Not very, and that's why it works. Let me put it this way: Keith is a big working class bachelor Geordie; I'm a 'soft, southern woman', as Keith would doubtless put it, with a degree in English, a wife, a kid and another on the way. I'm slippers and roaring fire; Keith is vodka and rock'n'roll. He supports Newcastle United, I support Manchester United. Enough said!

How do you work together? When Andy Lane and Jim Mortimore wrote *Lucifer Rising* they each wrote the consecutive chapters and then rewrote the other person's chapters, is this the approach you have taken?

Similar. We've got the plot sorted out in mind-numbing detail. We split each chapter up into sections. We write our own sections, then re-write each other's material. Sometimes one of us will follow one plot strand through; other times we'll mix it up a bit. Sometimes we've even split sections up, and there are one or two bits we've written with us both huddled round the same keyboard. It's got to the stage where it's difficult to remember who wrote what and, like [Peter] Straub and [Stephen] King, we're often writing in the style of the other. We're hoping that we can achieve a unified 'voice' through this level of interaction!

In *TM* you've looked at science/madness/religion etc. The Doctor's approach isn't to put science and religion on an equal level, in the same way the philosopher Feyerabend wrote. The Doctor's approach is to reverse the view of science, even re-establishing science as the main system of knowledge. If you are looking at an equal level approach to knowledge why doesn't the Doctor exemplify this?

The simple answer is that I don't think he does, on TV in any case. I wouldn't go as far as have the Doctor as an atheist, as Andy Lane does, but he's clearly not really very interested in any one religious (or even philosophical) idea. The Doctor is a scientist: whatever else he is, follows from that. Obviously, this changes a little with each incarnation, but I don't think that any of the Doctors are entirely happy with religious belief. Having said that, his conflict with religion in *Menag.* is purely scientific: he doesn't tread on other beliefs. Anything beyond that, I felt, would be to change his character beyond all recognition.

I suppose I'd have had similar problems (only more so) if I were, say, writing a *Trek* book,

where some of the ethos of the programme stands in even starker contrast to what I believe. It's a difficult balancing act: one's own vision juxtaposed with the style of the 'source material'.

Why did you pick the second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe for *The Menagerie*?

The second Doctor was picked for me, when the plot was still at an early stage. I was quite pleased with this, as I felt the Doctor of Gentle Anarchy would work quite well in the society I wanted to create (if that doesn't sound too pompous). Jamie goes hand in hand with Doctor, which I thought would be quite fun, because for once he's not so out of his depth. It's not so high-tech, and he feels reasonably confident during most of the book (and, of course, he's been with the Doctor quite a while now, learning all the time). I've never seen Jamie as thick, so much as poorly educated. Victoria wouldn't have worked — I wanted a contrast with Jamie, somebody who feels absolutely lost in this world — so Zoe was thrown into the deep end.

Is *TM* really a second Doctor story?

Hopefully. As I noted above, I was trying to do things with the TARDIS crew that might to some seem like I've got the characters 'wrong'. But I felt that something like *Menagerie* could have been transmitted in 1969. It's not a million miles away from *The Krotons*, I would suggest. Just the budget is a bit bigger!

What is the role of the MA?

That's very difficult to answer, and to me is at the heart of the troubling dichotomy of the MA. They need to remind one of a particular era and have that 'feel', while hopefully being modern novels in their own right. You can't have running down corridors, bad CSO or a traditional base-under-siege story, because none of these things work in a novel. On the other hand, a lot of the NAs clearly wouldn't work as Hartnell or Troughton stories, for instance. It's a difficult balancing act: Craig Hinton said I didn't succeed on either point, but I'm hoping that people will find *DGob* more satisfactory from that perspective: recognisably of its era, but also an expansion of it.

There is a lot of concern that the BBC will lose the intelligent adult-orientated style we've come to expect from Virgin's books. From what the BBC have said to you is there anything to for us fear?

No — not yet, in any case. I can't say that *DGob* as published will be adult and Virgin-like, but the delivered typescript will be! I'm as concerned as anyone as to whether the BBC understands the *DW* readership, and advertising the editor's job at this stage of the day is a bit unsettling. (Apparently the children's publishing thing is a bit of a red herring, as all BBC novelisations have technically been produced under the auspices of the children's department, because there isn't (yet?) another fiction department in BBC Worldwide.) But, to be honest, we've had very little contact with the BBC since getting commissioned, so Keith and I are just concentrating on beaver away with the book, writing it as per our original ('adult') proposal. If Worldwide request changes later — well, we'll just have to see what they are...

we give the Deeg thumbs up!!  
"Devil Goblins" has passed through unscathed.  
sorry about it. "Devil Goblins" has passed through unscathed.  
xoxo



interview by David Golding and Richard Prekodravac

# Dan Blythe

Could you tell me what you do for a living when not writing DW?

Well, I've been busy with the rest of my life. For one thing, I'm writing a PhD with an ever-approaching deadline — the title is *Aspects of the Supernatural in Selected Shorter Fiction of German Romanticism*, and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Reminds me of that scene in *Logopolis* where the Doctor and Adric are trying to measure a police box: you know, '37 dimensions?' I'm also working as a tutor for the Workers' Educational Association, which won't mean much to anyone outside the UK, but they're an organisation for Adult Education in a huge variety of subject areas, and very worthy they are, too!

Also, I have been writing a 'real' novel, which has got me the services of an agent. I've had an offer to publish it — the advance and contract are currently being negotiated and it ought to be out around the end of 1997. I'll post the publication date on rec.arts.drwho when I know it for certain.

The book is called *The Cut* — I think anyone who's only ever read my DW work will be very surprised, but I hope that the fans of the NA will want to support me by buying it. This is a definite offer to publish — it's going ahead! It's real! It's happening! I can't quite believe it yet...

[*The Cut*] may not be its title — the marketing guys have said we might have to change it, but I'm going to resist for as long as I can! My agent and editor are both on my side, too!

I've finished it, apart from any revisions the editor might ask for — it was finished back in April of 1996 and my agent has been hawking it round London ever since. It got turned down by 4 publishers. One of them didn't take to it, which was fair enough, but the others all said something like, 'Mmm, yes, we can see this is very good, but we haven't got a place for it!' — So frustrating! Anyway, it all came good in the end as I am now with one of the biggest international names in publishing. I think everyone will have heard of Penguin Books!

It's about an 18-year-old girl who hates her life in the town she calls the End of the World, which is this clapped-out seaside resort on the windswept coast of Southern England. It's got elements of a thriller and a kind of dark love story, but it's also about what binds people to their class and their background, and how hard it is to escape the niches that society puts you in. Anyway, it'll be out as a Paperback Original in late 97 or very early 98, in the UK and Commonwealth territories. My agent has retained the foreign rights, so I don't know as yet if it will be out in Europe or the USA. It depends how well it travels.

I enjoy my work teaching languages and literary criticism to adults, especially adult beginners in a foreign language — and I want to carry on with that. It's always advisable for writers to keep

their day-job, even as a back-up career, because writing is such an unstable job. Even those who have a DW book every year won't be able to do it for ever!

You've decided to write a "real" book rather than another DW book. I would like to know why you chose to do that?

I always wanted to write. Writing came first, being a DW fan came afterwards. I never imagined I would do a DW book, but I'm glad I did, as it taught me a great deal about structuring plots, viewpointing, and so on. The editors at Virgin are very professional and helpful and they gave me a great career start.

I'd like to carry on writing outside the immediate 'literary' area, but apart from another *Who* book — if I do one — then anything else will probably be under a different name to keep it separate. Maybe it'll just be Daniel R. Blythe, or Rob Blythe, or an anagram like Neil Dalbathy, which I used years ago for a piece in my school magazine! My real name will be kept for the stuff I'm writing as a serious contribution to literature — oh, God, that sounds awful, but how else can I put it?

Now that I'm a bit older I realise that I'm actually writing stuff that's worthwhile — I mean, I look back on some of the so-called novels I wrote when I was still a student and I wince a little. I was speaking to a literary agent recently — not mine, someone else's — and she had a bit of a moan about the number of novels she gets sent which are about 'people's first love affairs at Cambridge'. It's worse than that, actually, I mean, some publishers are hyping books by 19-20-year-olds who've just watched their first Quentin Tarantino film and had their first shag and think they know the secrets of life — really nothing special. Loads of people think they'll get their first novels published at the age of 20, but they've rarely got anything new to say. Wait till your ideas have settled down a bit, that's what I say — teenagers' heads are buzzing with all the new 'radical' ideas they're trying out, most of which will come crashing down after they've lived in the real world for a bit.

Would you like to write DW in the future?

Maybe, but there's a lot going on at the moment! I like the 8th Doctor, he's fresh and interesting. After all the angsty, pretentious stuff that people got into with the 7th, it'll be good to have a clean slate.

Both of your books are time-spanning adventures, which are rare in the NA. Does the time travel side of DW particularly interest you?

Oh, yes, I love *Mawdryn Undead*, for example — watched it again just the other day — and I don't understand why something like that hadn't been tried before. I'd always wanted to do a story where the Doctor was somehow trapped in the past and had to communicate with his

companions by leaving messages for them to find in the future. That in itself wouldn't have made a terribly exciting adventure, so I came up with the idea of the Time Soldiers and it developed from there. I should point out that Virgin didn't deliberately commission lots of books with ancient Gallifreyan menaces in them — it just happened that a lot of us were thinking on similar lines, and with the delay between idea and final publication being about 18 months, it's inevitable that one's idea might have been pre-empted by someone.

Could you tell us where you got the ideas for your books?

Er... I have a big box marked 'Ideas' which is left by the goblins who live in my attic. Well, actually, I've just answered a lot of this one. I got the original positive feedback on the first book about two months after I sent it in, and the commission came a month or two later. At that time, Peter Darvill-Evans wasn't sure we could fit it in with the Alternative Universe cycle, but we had a go and it seemed to work. The series aspect didn't change the book greatly. I had consultations with the other writers, but we all seemed to harmonise fairly well. Serendipity, I suppose! I actually finished it 2 months before the deadline, and sauntered into Virgin's offices with my requisite 2 copies under my arm one day — it rather took them aback! I wanted to meet everyone there, as I'd only ever dealt with them at a distance.

The second book was commissioned not long after, but it took a while to get the ideas into shape.

How do you approach writing?

Each book starts with an idea which may be part of the plot, or just a scene, or a concept. It's really different every time. It just expands from there, forward and back.

I fit my writing in around the rest of my life. Up until a couple of years ago I lived with flatmates, which was great, but it meant that I had to keep disappearing to be unsociable when I wanted to write. Now, I live with my fiancée and we have an understanding about not treading on each other's toes — she's a teacher, so she needs loads of time and space for preparation, assessment etc. I write late at night, sometimes till about 3a.m. As for music in the background, I wrote *Infinite Requiem* to the accompaniment of Dominic Glynn's *Black Light* music, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, the Inspiral Carpets and Classic FM. These days, though, my theme tune ought to be 'Insomnia' by Faithless! The rest of the time, I am very sadly fascinated by listening to late-night phone-ins. They're great for lifting dialogue, and listening to the way people put their views across — or fail to do so!

You're doing a PhD in Literature, how has that helped you write? Does it set some goals which have been achieved by many great works, which DW books can not hope to reach? Or do you think that DW books can?

I tend to keep the two very separate. Although I enjoy my research immensely, I try to consider it as work. Writing is hard work, but it also lets you have a great deal of fun! The other problem is that I'm writing about supernatural elements and how they were used by various German writers for artistic expression and social criticism, and this is pretty far removed from *DW*. Rebecca at Virgin once pointed out to me that one of my proposals wasn't working precisely because I was thinking in terms of it as, essentially, a ghost story, and *Who* doesn't really do that kind of thing. Whenever you have an apparent supernatural force, it's undercut by the mechanics behind it, and turns out to have a rational explanation, or pseudo-rational, by which I mean one that fits in with a scientific explanation, even if the 'science' is a fictional product of a future culture.

*DW* books may not be great literature, but they are great entertainment and it really annoys me when people do them down. The NAs have taken the Doctor's adventures into the realms of real sci-fi, and some people have trouble coping with that. Mind you, it's always been the same — there are people who say the programme 'really' ended when it went into colour, for instance, or when Tom Baker left, or after the 18-month hiatus. I just think that's rather sad. *DW* is all of it, in its rich diversity, from *An Unearthly 100,000 BC in the Spaceship* (or whatever it's called this week!) through to McCoy, the NA and Paul McGann.

#### Are *DW* books literature?

Well, I might have answered that already, but I once had an argument about the merits of Tolkien with a Virginia Woolf fan, and I could not get him to accept at all that old JRRT wrote literature. He just saw him as a writer of 'glorified fairy tales'. It made me angry at the time, but these days it would just make me shrug and think, 'Well, it's his loss.' Certainly the borders between popular and 'high' culture are becoming blurred — you get serious articles on the semiotics of Liam Gallagher's posturing, and that sort of thing. You can even do a PhD in *DW* if you want!

#### How important is continuity to you?

The problem with the NA, especially between 1993-5, is that you had a lot of pretty talented people all pulling in different directions. So the Doctor was a vegetarian, and then he wasn't. The Doctor believed in God, then he didn't. The Doctor was one of the Old Ones, then he wasn't. I hate books where I find myself unable to hear the story over the sound of axes being ground... I think there is much more of a tendency among the novelists than among the screenwriters to get into Party Political Broadcasts, and that really upsets me — the Doctor ought to transcend these petty things and fight for universal good. I like that comment Colin Baker made on the *30 years [in the TARDIS]* documentary, something about the Doctor fighting for 'now what's pretty or nice, but what's good.' I like that. It fits in with my idea of the Doctor — you can't always see where he's going and you have to trust him.

As for continuity, it's fun if it arises naturally and it's annoying if it's forced.

#### Darius Cheynor appears in both your NA. Why have you chosen to carry the character from the first book to the next?

I just liked the idea of having a continuing character. Supporting characters in *Who* tend to be there to do a job and then disappear! I want to know what happens to these people after the Doctor leaves, but all too often it just isn't possible.

In *The Dimension Riders* the Doctor is engaged in destruction of bits of the new TARDIS. In *Infinite Requiem* you make Benny a psychic. In *Happy Endings* you have the Doctor ask a favour of James Rafferty, a character from your first book. It seems that you might have been setting up some future story.

Oh, I just like throwing bits in to make people think, really! The TARDIS sabotage wasn't something I really wanted to do — it was meant to be a running theme after the Doctor got his old TARDIS back, but for some reason it wasn't picked up on. Jim was going to include something about it, but I think his editing got the better of that particular sub-plot! As for Benny, I only implied she might be slightly telepathic, which was implied about Ace, too. The Rafferty comment was in case anyone ever wants to use him again... So, no hidden agenda. (And it's not often you can say that about an NA writer... oops.)

#### What inspired your characterisation of the seventh Doctor?

I tried to keep him as close to the Season 26 portrayal as I could. All the stuff I said before, really, about him being not so easy to define and follow but trusting him. He was a really interesting Doctor and very under-rated by sad people who think the show was going down the pan at the end of the 80s. It wasn't! They axed it just as it was getting really, really good again!

#### What do you think of your own books?

Er, I think they're total cack. No, I love them, actually. I don't know, really, it's not for me to say. I think I did a good job on them both and that seems to have been borne out by people's comments. The positive reactions far outweigh the negative ones. Incidentally, I think they didn't perform well in the DWM surveys because people are asked to vote for their top 3, so books like mine which most people like but hardly anyone hates are, in that system, not going to top the charts.

#### *The Dimension Riders* achieves a balance between "straight-action" books and "emotion" books...

Does it really? I'm pleased to hear that, as it's part of what I wanted. I wanted to write a book which was very obviously a NA, but which had its feet on the ground and didn't alienate the

traditionalists. It's always tricky making this distinction between 'action' and 'emotion' or, if you like, internal and external action.

The makers of the TV series *The Crow Road* did a fantastic job in putting over the parts of Iain Banks' book — still one of my all-time favourite novels — which I thought would be unfilmable. For one thing, they externalised a lot of the internal processes by introducing the 'ghost' of the vanished Uncle Rory — that isn't in the book, but his presence pervades it and the narrator is obsessed by the mystery of his disappearance. If you look at the NA, many of them would be unfilmable, and so they should be, because they're books. You could just about film *Riders* with a big budget and two weeks' location filming or OB in Oxford, but you'd have more trouble filming *Requiem*, because its content is more thematic than plot-based.

#### A trend in the NA, as far back as *Infinite Requiem* is a fascination with the supernatural...

Sci-fi, I think, has always been fascinated by the imagery of the paranormal, but not necessarily so much by what it actually means. I wanted to convey the possibilities for the fear and terror of telepathy. Some people reading this will no doubt know Robert Silverberg's *The Man In The Maze*, which is a story of how telepathy comes to be a curse for one man, and I found that very interesting. I read it over ten years ago, though!

#### Some people have accused *DW* writers of maintaining a British elitism, where you have story after story after story set in England, with English people.

Could be true. The programme didn't consciously set out to be elitist, though, it just reflected its time. You have the same problem with American series — even recently, in the *Star Trek* series, it's always *American* history they go back into whenever they have a time-travel jaunt. I thought it would be fun to do a bit of research into Hindu culture and work that into [*Infinite Requiem*], without creating a conscious 'non-white' character. I would point out that [the setting] wasn't London, though, it was a city in the North of England.

#### How many of the other books in the NA range have you read?

I used to read them all but I really haven't had time recently. It was *Time's Crucible* which inspired me to write my own, so I rate that one highly. I like *Nightshade*, *All-Consuming Fire*, *Theatre of War* and *Birthright* too. No coincidence that those are all books with a strong idea and strong plot, which get on with telling their story. Of the few I've read recently, I liked *Christmas on a Rational Planet* for its atmosphere. They're all pretty good, though, aren't they? I mean, we're not talking your usual TV-book cash-ins here. I hope BBC Books will continue a great tradition.

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# NEIL PENS WICK

interviewed by David Golding

I submitted a story to Andrew Cartmel — this was in 1988. He held onto it for ages. The story was entitled *Hostage* and was about a force of androids pursuing shape changing criminals across a jungle world; the criminals, Butler and Swarfe had stolen a 'Princess' missile. The planet was a repository of a terrible secret from the Time Lords' past. It was very quick, short scenes, lots of snappy dialogue. Andrew liked it but eventually replied that *DW* had been cancelled. This was at the time he was going on to *Casualty* and he asked whether I was interested in doing some non-*DW* stuff. I sent him a radio play that I'd done.

We kept on talking about the *Casualty* piece. In the meanwhile, Andrew acted as my sponsor for the *Radio Times* Drama Awards. This was 1990 or 1991. I wrote a 90 minute film called, *Children of the Morning*. This was another very visual piece about a murder investigation in the Sikh community. Although I like [*Inspector*] Morse, television conventions on murder mysteries are still based around White middle-class stereotypes. Again Andrew liked it.

Somewhere around here, I saw an advert that Virgin Books were going to continue the *DW* series. I sent *Hostage* — the tv. script — and received a very favourable reply from Peter Davill-Evans.

After many discussions, letters to and fro, a sample chapter (rewritten twice) and an extremely detailed scene breakdown I was commissioned in 1992. Andrew had then left *Casualty* and the new producer and script-editor seemed to want a complete change in the direction of the show.

The book was always extremely complex unlike the tv story which was a tight action thriller. From my second submission to just prior to publication, the book was entitled, *Oh Lucifer, Son of the Morning*. Peter wanted it written for the "intelligent 15 year old" "who would read the book two or three times". Peter actually simplified the book at an early stage.

In themes and style, it was always clear that this was an experiment by Virgin Books. You have to remember that the NA were a completely new product and Virgin were experimenting with the market. When I first began talking to Virgin, I am not even sure the first book in the series was available in the shops. I do remember reading it and, obviously, identifying the adult approach. I was actually quite shocked when I read *The Highest Science* — which I got in rough draft — as the book before mine — by the completely different approach. I'm not saying that *The Highest Science* isn't a good book but that the style and content was so different than mine.

The series has moved on since 1992. I wouldn't write *The Pit* now for that market. The book series is now about something else. It got into a stride. I have my own views on various books but those are my own views.

My only problem with *The Pit* is that I don't like the villain in Victorian England. He is presented as a stereotyped character with a disability and

thus hates the world. This is a stereotype in Gothic horror but I should have challenged it.

I like *The Pit*. It is complex. Its also unlike any of the other NA I've read.

*The Pit* is written in a slow meditative manner — and this was discussed with Peter — whilst there are a lot of short scenes with snappy dialogue. That was deliberate although, I think, at times, difficult for the reader.

Originally *The Pit* was written like an Elmore Leonard or an Ed McBain. Hardly any description, lots of dialogue. It was much more stylish. Peter wasn't keen.

*The Pit* is about vision. The Manichaeian struggle between the forces of good and evil. The book is full of allusions and passing references to the battle between these elemental forces.

Is Kopyion "the other"? No. I had discussed this with PDE and also my revision of canonical Gallifreyan history. Peter was happy about the twist given on Rassilon — although it had to be couched in vagaries and possibilities. I liked the idea of challenging the idea that Time Lord morality would be late twentieth century Western thinking.

I received the Cartmel/Platt/Aaronovitch text with the details of "the other".

Kopyion was a key figure in the formation of the Time Lords. In him lies the darkest secrets of the Time Lords.

The book is about 'the shadow'. The shadow is a Jungian concept and, outside C.G. Jung, is best explained in Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (which also details the Quest structure found in *The Pit*) and in Robert Bly's excellent *Little Book of the Human Shadow*.

Kopyion is a 'shadow' for the entirety of Gallifreyan history. I was interested in exploring the darkness hinted at many times — particularly *The Three Doctors*, *Mindwarp* and *The Five Doctors*. I like the line, "and so they took it on themselves to act as second rate Gods" from the *Trial of a Timelord*.

Although I don't use it in the book, Nietzsche's "if you look into the abyss long enough, the abyss will look back at you" is what had happened to Kopyion. And, as the book suggests, is what is happening to the Doctor. *The Pit* was supposed to be the low point for the "dark Doctor".

Yes, there was a lot of religious imagery. However, there was also a lot of Lovecraftian material. I think it is a shame that Virgin didn't try and unite the Lovecraft references so that they could have tied up the continuity. Dave McIntee wrote *White Darkness* featuring the Elder Gods (as I remember) without being aware of my use of the mythology.

What do I think of the criticism of *The Pit*? I have never read a piece which appears to understand what the book was trying to do.

Radio 4 gave it an excellent review. The *DW* press gave it varying criticisms. I suppose with the nature of the book that was to be expected. I once had a long conversation with Ben Aaronovitch about the state of the fan critiques. There seems to be a lack of attempt to look at a book's intention. I wonder how many reviews were written on one read. I certainly read a few, initially, which bore no relations to what was in the book. I once had an e-mail from someone who really seemed to appreciate *The Pit* who also argued that its sales figures were effected by fan reaction. I've no idea. It still seems to sell well.

I don't want to argue with someone who didn't like the book. Fine. But, as for the question, you ask, as to why the Doctor didn't "fight" Kopyion. I — and PDE — never thought about it. We talked a lot and the beginning was always going to pose a situation where a planet had been destroyed — and the Doctor could not go back and alter that fact. I think I quoted you that line, "and so they took it on themselves to act as second rate gods".

I have no problem with the morality of it. Covert operations are always going to be amoral — in a one to one/personal sense.

We never saw Kopyion as a villain, or the villain. He was not someone to be fought. In Kopyion lies the darkness of Time Lord society. I once described *The Pit* as the *Apocalypse Now* of *DW* novels. The journey up the river to confront a Jungian archetype.

Kopyion was not a villain.

I am a Child Protection Advisor and work in different countries. For the last year, I lived in the Netherlands. I'm kept very busy and don't always have the time to write fiction. Using this specialism, I have been in discussion with an independent company for some time now about a hard-hitting series, and occasionally chat to a popular soap about episodes around child abuse.

For some years, I have been supposed to be writing for another popular series. Its difficult to always find the time.

I am very happy at what I do. I also like writing. In the late eighties, I was concentrating more on the writing.

The character in *Happy Endings* is not Neil Gaiman's Death. I am aware of his work and recently (name dropping) had a discussion with him about *DW*. The girl has appeared in other works.

Would I be interested in doing more *DW*? As I said, I wouldn't write *The Pit* again. It would depend on whether I could fit it in in my schedule. I think the books should be stylish, hard edged, character driven thrillers which someone could pick up and read without any knowledge of the programme or other books in the series. Sylvester McCoy was the 'dark Doctor' working within conspiracies. I think Paul McCann is more magical.



WARNING: CONTAINS LANGUAGE THAT MAY OFFEND!!

# JIM "BLOODY" MORTIMORE

Interviewed by Richard Prekodravac, by the magic of telephone.

It was early morning in the UK. Jim hadn't had much sleep. His computer had blown up the night before.

I understand that you, Paul Hinder and Andy Lane are big Pertwee fans, is it also true that your novels tend to go for the Big Moral questions, or rather the questioning of established/inoculated morality? How does this fascination link into, not only your DW work but also your other work such as *Babylon 5: Clark's Law*?

I think that's a really cool question actually, let me think about it for a year or so.

I think it all boils down to one very simple philosophy really. I reckon anything you do that is like a book, or a painting, or a film, or any sort of art needs to sort of do a couple of different things. It needs to communicate an emotional state, and I think it needs to thumb it's nose at established authority. I do believe that everything can come under the microscope very legitimately, and the more things that do the more reactions you get to what you write, particularly what you write. Although that's to say that's not just button pushing.

There are some things I personally feel ought to be explored, like um, I didn't realise exactly what rape was all about until I started doing the *Cracker* novelisations. Then I had to do quite a lot of research about that and came up with some information which I didn't really know before, you know I'm a sort of average bloke, and I guess a lot of average blokes don't know, really don't know what it's like to be raped for example. And I sort of feel that that sort of information needs to come, maybe you don't need to hammer people over the head with it quite so much as we all did in *Cracker*, but I do think those things ought to be explored.

The *Babylon 5* book was also a bit of a hammer to the head really. It grew out of conversation with a friend of mine who explained that he had heard about a particular incident in American political history which I can't remember, he couldn't remember the specific names involved. But you know there was this guy, he was black, he was a killer, he tried to escape and they shot him, and they gave him brain damage, then they gave him loads of surgery and lobotomise him basically, saved his life, changed his personality completely and bloody well executed him, just to prove a point of politics.

They were cracking down on crime. And that's a true story. They only regret is I can't find out what the guy's name was, apparently it happened definitely within the last 10 years, probably within the last 5 years of American political history.

It's pretty intense isn't it. So basically that was the spring board into the *Babylon 5* and then a lot of the moralising in *Babylon 5* actually came directly from research that I'd done. There are in fact instances where characters that are almost quotes in verbatim forms from characters I'd seen being interviewed in various documentaries about execution. There's a lot of quotes in there, you'll never find them, by a guy that used to be an executioner who was being interviewed.

Used to be a prison executive officer and he has killed people, he has pushed the switch and then people died. Quite a lot of the stuff that seems very moralistic in that book is in fact simply the truth, as represented by me, and I almost didn't change one word of it to be honest.

I think that's why the *Babylon 5* book particularly touched so many people in such an intense way, I mean its quite a frightening story really. And all the more frightening for being bloody true more or less.

What about your *Doctor Who* stuff, like *Parasite*. I understand that *Eternity Weeps* is pretty depressing?

*Eternity Weeps* is pretty depressing, it's also pretty funny really, I must admit it's also a bit of a — Well, *Eternity Weeps* kind of ... well ... basically what happened was last year I had a bit of a weird fucked-up year really, my dad died early on in the year.

That's all right, don't worry, I'm all over that know. So as a consequence I had a bit of a strange year, plus which my house was falling apart, didn't have any money, couldn't get any work. And then they gave me two books together, both of which I thought were going to be absolute bollocks.

One of which was a Hollywood novelisation called *Space Truckers*, one of which was *Eternity Weeps* which I was quite looking forward to doing, and hell I had to rewrite the plot synopsis about 17 squillion times.

It was already an old story by then and by that point it was getting very boring, so I stopped doing that to do *Space Truckers*. *Space Truckers* was a really terrible script, and a really bad movie, and I started off feeling really depressed about it but about halfway through it I realised it was an opportunity to be funny. So what I did because it was supposed to be a funny movie, it just isn't funny. So what I did, was I did what I did with the *Cracker* I threw away the script, started again, made it humorous. That actually was a great deal of fun, by the time I was finished I was lapping it up, it was lovely, it was really good. And then after that, which was so intensely funny, and quite a letting off of steam sort of experience after nine months of a bit of a strange year, I had to get back to do *Eternity Weeps*, which I really didn't want to do by that point.

So I really had to sort of indulge myself and be funny again, but I had to be more blackly funny. I felt it was trying to be a bit, excuse me for being pretensions, a bit Tarantino-esque. So I pointed out the humour and I pointed out the drama by making things too funny, stupidly funny and stupidly violent, in the hope it would come out a bit Tarantino-esque, now whether I hit the mark or not I don't know. I think maybe stabbing people in the eye and killing them with a paint brush is a bit over the top, but there you

go. Some times it happens in real life, not very often I'll grant you.

So basically the thought behind *Eternity Weeps* was I want to do a nasty, nasty story, but I want to make it really funny as well, I want people to laugh while they're crying. It's a bit of an experiment just to see whether I could do it. So far I've got dreadfully mixed responses which has been wonderful, I love getting mixed responses. Craig Hinton, who reviewed it in 'TV Zone' basically reviled it as a pile of dino doodoo, with no worth more than a crushed insect on the sidewalk. Everybody that has actually written to me about it has actually said that it was brilliant, they read it in a day, it was great, the characterisation was really well handled, the marriage break up between Benny and Jason was really well handled, very easy to identify with. I mean it ought to be I've been through that situation.

So I guess the truth will out over time, I've got about forty letters in my portfolio at the moment saying they love it, but then again there's 20,000 copies being printed, so that's no guarantee of anything.

What was the planning behind Bernice and Jason split up? Was it something you decide or was that something that Rebecca asked you to do?

Well actually I wanted to kill him. I wanted to end that depressingly bleak and savage book with a depressingly bleak and savage killing. I wanted one of them to be responsible for the others death. Probably Benny being responsible for Jason's death, but they wouldn't let me, they need the characters in the future, so they weren't letting me have that one. However after thinking about it for quite some while prior to this book and also after the fact that Ben's book wasn't delivered on time, I'm not entirely sure of all of that story behind the continuity in the last few books that Virgin are going to do.

But essentially what happened was Rebecca rang me up completely out of the blue one day and said "Do you want to do the divorce story?". And I just leaped up and down and said, "Can they divorce each other with knives or pistols at dawn or something?" And she went "Wellll, [pause], d'no." So basically that's where it went from there, I just snapped up the chance to do a story that had character development in it which [they] very rarely do. So that sort of thing appeals to me quite a lot because I love driving the characters a bit further than they really ought to go.

*Eternity Weeps* is the first book in a new line of DW, without the DW logo. Is there anything significant in that?

I think that they just forgot to put it on. No actually what it is, I'm not sure how much of a coincidences it is actually because when I sent them the original plot synopsis about a third of it didn't have DW in it. That was a very conscious

decision on my part because at the time I had no idea they were going to do this Benny/Jason stories that they're planing to do.

And I really liked Bernice Summerfield's character, because she's a bit of a drunkard she's a bit of a bloody wino basically. And I just wanted to do this kind of a story that really delved very deeply into her character, so I thought wouldn't it be nice to bring her into center stage and have her take over the chief role in the story. And have the Doctor as sort of emergency backup, and having fucked things up a bit basically along the way.

So that's the way I presented the proposal to them and they bought that idea with a bit of tweaking and basically as I wrote it the Doctor was in it for less and less, and it worked better for him being in it less and less. Because there was less of a deus ex machina and to get them out of problems and in the end when he was in it he did fuck it up, about twice I think, quite badly, even though he managed to resolve the situation in the end, he did do it by completely killing off about a tenth of the world's population, so that was a bit intense.

This is just me postulating, but after I had sold them the synopsis then they made a decision independently of myself to do a series of book where Benny takes center stage and becomes the main character. They may well have then decided to do this as the first book without a logo on it. However it may just simply be a coincidence, I know that their philosophy has been to date that what they wanted to do was take the *Doctor Who* logo off the *Doctor Who* books because what they want to do is lay the idea in the minds of peoples like the book buyers in Smiths, who apparently are extremely stupid, that *Doctor Who* books don't necessarily have the *Doctor Who* logos on. That way when they try and sell them as *Doctor Who* books that don't have [the Doctor] in them and there is no logo on them because the BBC have taken back the license, the people at Smiths won't notice. Personally I feel this is rather denigrating to human nature, but there you go, that's their marketing decision and who am I to question it.

Half way through last year we got *Happy Endings* but you didn't turn up, what happened there?

Can I be honest? I just thought it was a really crap idea, and I hate continuity, and that sounds terribly arrogant doesn't it? And I could think of anything to write because I was not inspired at all by the idea. The only thing I was inspired to do, which I never got to do in the end, was I wanted to do a telegram from Bernice aged about 93 which basically said "FOR FUCK'S SAKE DON'T DO IT. There are going to be big problems if you marry this boy." and then the telegram breaks off halfway through. And it's delivered by time capsule and I could get to do that so I didn't do anything.

[Not being in *Happy Endings*] was partly because I didn't like the idea, partly because, without wishing to sound wanky about it, I am a *DW* fan. I love the series, but I love the potential of the series. The thing I hate most about the series is all this fucking absolutely ridiculous and tiny attention to continuity details which absolutely have no bearing what-so-ever of anything important that anyone could write about. That all sort of started when JNT started producing the program and that's basically my take on it... and I'll get off my soap box because

otherwise you'll get bored. And it will become unprintable.

So nothing personal involved, I mean Paul Cornell is a great writer and he just happens to write stories that I don't find particularly inspiring in certain details. Some of his ideas are great, some of his ideas are really fine. But that's the same with everyone. I mean my best mate Paul Hinder writes fucking cracking books and there are still scenes in them that I think could be done differently or better, but that's just my opinion as a arrogant ol' bastard that thinks he can do better than anyone else. So it's more a fault of me than anyone else.

Okay, if there was one thing Virgin could be congratulated on, was their encouragement of new authors and a great deal of the New Adventure readership are also hoping to become authors. What techniques do you use when writing?

Well, I'd just like to add, and of course it's cheaper. Well I've got this technique, I always write a plot synopsis first and that sort of never comes out to the same length twice, what I generally tend to do is start writing the plot synopsis and then realised I don't know the characters, so then I go back to the front of the document and write the characters and then what I do is I continue writing the plot synopsis when the characters are more firmly in my head until I get stuck again, and then I realise I've got to change a bit of the characters to make the plot work, so then I go and change them and come back and do a bit more plot, then I realise I fucked it up a bit and I've got to make the plot change to fit the characters, so I do that. And then the plot is finished with a conclusion and a climax, and then I look at it about a day later and think, this is half way through, and then I write the rest of the plot. The really big endings, like I did with *Parasite* and *Eternity Weeps*, the second half of the book is another story with a bigger conclusion which derives from the first story. I do that because a) I like doing it and I like complex plots and I like sophisticated characters and I like interesting character relationship and developments I also like to see characters changed by the plot, which is what *Parasite* was about basically, it was also what *Blood Heat* was all about.

But mainly I do it because I just hate short stories that have been stretched out to novel length and grossly overwritten. When your faced with a job of writing 80,000 to 90,000 words, that's quite a lot of words really to put "there was this guy, the Doctor, and there was this thing on earth and he saved the Earth. The end." You can't do that sort of story it's too big, too many words to put it in. ~~Start~~ of actually doing a book that is entirely composed of descriptions of people and places, you've got to stretch the plot out, doing interesting things, catch peoples interest, play little games with [the readers], I love that when the writer plays games with you, you think you know things. Subvert all the cliches, that's another thing I like doing, set up a big cliché and then subvert it. There's a scene in *Eternity Weeps* where Jason gets blasted back through millions of years of time to this alien planet which has been terraforming the earth, and he gets swallowed up by this sea monster and he starts talking to it telepathically and he thinks he's talking to the monster for ages and he thinks it's intelligent and then he realises it's just a vehicle for carrying this intestinal flora around, he's actually been talking to the things stomach. It's silly, but it sort of make you think, it takes an established cliché, switches it on it's head and

drops it off a tall building. And I really like doing that, when you do that well there's a nice scene of completeness about it. It doesn't work for everybody, I like it, sometimes it doesn't work, sometimes you just end up being daft. But there's always a point behind it I think.

You and Andy were the first to have a two man team writing a book, and several authors in the BBC books are also writing as a two man team. How the hell did you manage it, because it basically looks perfect?

Well, thanks, Andy and I thank you from the hearts of our bottoms, or even the bottoms of our hearts. It's perfect? Well it isn't because they didn't print the cover too well. The insides I can't vouch for. How did we do it? Well many people have asked me this story and in the end I've developed this very slick response, so basically it goes like this.

We wrote a plot synopsis which Virgin accepted, we then wrote alternate chapters and basically I wrote alternate chapters and I wrote them and well and as quickly as I could possible do them, and I really worked hard them, really worked hard on them, then I sent them to Andy and he told me they were crap. So rewrote them and rewrote them and eventually he told me they were good. And then he wrote all these chapters and he worked really hard on them and sent them to me and I told him they were crap. And by god they were. And then he rewrote them and rewrote them and rewrote them. And then no matter how hard I wanted to, and I really wanted to, because I'm a negative bastard really, I couldn't tell him they were crap any more because they weren't, they were really good. Then we sent the whole thing to Peter, he told us the whole thing was crap and we had to do it all again. And eventually through a three way process of umming and ohing and seesawing backwards and forwards we shaped that book up into the thing that it is. It was good actually, that's the silly story.

The serious story is that Andy did most of the hard science, I did most of the symbology, American Indian stuff and history. Andy did a lot of imagery himself, but it's different to mine and you can tell if you read it which bits he wrote and which bits I wrote. I actually think it meshed together pretty well in the end, because we ended up rewriting each others chapters to be more like how we would have done if we had done them which I guess is a good thing to do, but it destroys a bit of the uniqueness of the writers skill, it actually homogenises the chapters to the point where the whole thing looks like it's been consistent and well thought out which of course it wasn't. It was the first book that either of us had ever written, far longer than anyway, and it was written on the fly. I was working on a laptop computer with an LCD screen that was about ninety years old, and I couldn't read it, it was Word Perfect version 2 or something like this and it was dreadful. We were shipping each other disks, and you know. Andy kept it together in the end because he's a bit of an administrator. Some chapters went better than others, in the end they bought it. We got my mate Lee Brimmicombe-Wood to do some illustration for it which I think are rather swanky. Painted the cover for it myself and had it grossly misrepresented in print. They sent me a proof and I sent it back, this is fucking terrible, there's too much black, there's too much red, I am a printer I know what I'm talking about. Get it done again, as it says in the contract. They didn't bother doing it, that's why the cover stinks.

There you go, that's the story of Lucifer Rising.

This was kindly transcribed by David Robinson.



[Alden Bates] noted about a couple of months ago that we were having some fun with the NA, and he suggested that if the Doctor starts getting tortured you're in a Kate Orman novel but if everyone starts getting tortured you're in a Jim Mortimore novel.

[laughs] This is the kind of thing I like to here. Every one and their brothers and sisters gets tortured. Everyone dies. That's my catch phrase at the moment, every one dies even the sheep. Because there is the wonderful bit in, you haven't read it unfortunately so it probably won't mean much to you, but there a whole loads of silly sheep gags all through this book which were leading up to a sheep story that is so disgusting that I eventually couldn't put it in there. Unfortunately it's really gross, I'll tell you what it is but your not allowed to print it because it will cause lots of offence. So all I could do in the end is have someone say, "You mean the sheep saved the Earth". And the Doctor says 'yes' because it's true, he says 'think of it like mad cow disease in reverse', he's infected it with an antiviral agent and all the other people that were with him at the time and the idea is that the antiviral agent infects the people and it gets spread-out into the population through the food chain and all sorts of things. But of course the implication is not that the sheep saved the earth, but that a sheep went out, cropped a bit of grass for a while, got chopped up and turned into mutton sandwiches and eaten by the human population and then saved the earth. Only you don't say as much. So poor old sheep, even the sheep die heroically, although it dies heroically off screen as it were.

And I can't possibly tell you the disgusting sheep story.

Going on to violence, your stuff is particularly violent, is that something particular with *DW*, or is just something that reflects the current cultural status of violence?

It's just peculiar, I don't know, maybe I'm just a sick twisted bastard that likes writing violent in my nice warm childhood heroes. Maybe I've grown up warped and twisted. I don't know, I had a really cool upbringing, my parents are great, nobody ever abused me, nobody ever didn't anything nasty to me. The only nasty things that ever happened to me happened because of my own blind stupidity and immaturity, so I've got no one to blame but myself, for any warp twistedness of my personality.

However violence in stories has always attacked me because people have such an outcry about it, I hate Mary Whitehouse. What Mary Whitehouse said about Phillip Hinchcliffe era of *DW*, which is almost my favourite era, just is obscene. Censorship is obscene. And Virgin are brilliant, because they almost never do it, which is kind of dangerous in a way, because people like me can get on their soap box and say, look, look I'm being violent, I can do this, ha haaa.

But there kind of is a point behind it as well, most of the really violent things in *Eternity Weeps*, all the violence that I write is emotionally driven, because I really firmly believe that violence is rooted to emotion and emotion in human beings is a very complex, sophisticated thing which has little self understanding. I believe that a lot of fiction does not reflect this. I believe that, for example, the current trendy fad of violent movies that

Tarantino makes, like, I don't know, name one, that French one *Man Bites Dog*, stuff like this. Well there is no real reason for the violence, it's just fucked up people doing fucked up things and kind of that's sort of true in a way. But in a way it quite irresponsible to make a sweeping statement to say that in your film that there is no balance to the fact that violence happens because lots of different things, but basically rooted back to human nature really.

So I mean everything I write I write intensely, because I'm an intense person and I like to experience things intensely. I'm circulating around the point here and kind of thinking out loud a bit but it is not breakfast time here yet and I haven't had my cornflakes and stuff. I'm sort of crunching up this hot water bottle in my hand and being violent to it because it's rubber and it springs back, people should be like hot water bottles and then there'd never be any problems. I like intense emotions, I like intense violence, I like intense responses to situations because my personal feelings is that entertains me, but there you go, I'm not everybody, this is true.

I also like realism, I like realism in science fiction particularly because the more real you make a fantastic thing the easier it is to believe the world is over run by dinosaurs and hibernating Silurians, you put a nuclear sub with a fucked up crew in a world full of dinosaurs and suddenly it's a real play because your providing a balance, there's the fantasy, there's the reality. Now the reality is also a fantasy, it could never happen in real life, put the point is you play it as if it could and suddenly you've got a more complex story. You've got the possibility for all sorts of complex story lines, you slap the potential for alzheimers disease into the Brigadier and suddenly you've got a real guy. As soon as you assume he may or may not have alzheimers you've got a moral soap box to stand on, and one of your character can explain away a bit of moral research, a bit of philosophy. Suddenly you've got a sophisticated story that's touching people in all sorts of different ways. Its not just "Jesus is that Dalek gonna get up them stairs, is it, is it, oh god it, oh it didn't, oh well never mind, we never thought it would anyway, cause it hasn't got feet."

I like trying to be clever, I like pushing myself, I like breaking my own limits and if my audience has to suffer along the way then I'm dreadfully sorry. Writing is a growth process for me, and its also communication, it's also communicating. Its arts and story telling, its personal growth, its getting on a soap box. I don't know, its all those things plus loads more I cant think of at the moment.

Both *Lucifer Rising* and *Parasite* are Artefact novels, Ben Aaronovitch in a previous interview remarked that more often than not Artefacts tend to be unknowable, abandoned or on the brink of disaster.

Can I interrupt you for a moment, I believe artefacts should be on the verge of giving birth. They're all cliché, *Parasite* subverts the big artefact cliché. Now I shall interrupted you and you can continue, sorry about that. I had to get that in because I can't remember things quickly this time in the morning.

What do you think Artefact stories are about? Why have you chosen two of your novels to be set on Artefacts. Why the Artefact?

Well basically when I was very young I had a really, really near terminal dose of 2001itis, you know Arthur C. Clarke promptly leapt into my blood stream and has been there ever since. He's the only guy that I've ever read, he's the only western writer that I've ever read that could instill a total unblemished sense of wonder in me. Even when his characters die the die serving the sense of wonder in his stories. There's a guy, can't remember the guys name Chandra or Karra or something like that, the guy in *Phantom of Paradise* eventually dies, I think the last thing he sees is a whole bunch of butterflies on top of this mountain he has just build a sky hook on, so he dies, he has a heart attack and dies, nobody gets to him in time, its dreadful, you know, but he dies serving this sense of wonder. Jupiter explodes, gets completely blown to buggery and it all done to serve this sense of wonder and advance the cause of human nature and its terribly optimistic, as my mate Lee Brimmicombe-Wood constantly tells me, its dreadful over optimistic probably but I love it because it touches some bit of resonance in me and that's what any good writing, any good art should do really. If you look at a piece of art or writing and say "that was okay" throw it away and get on with the next on then that piece of art has completely failed on every level.

Which is why I love it when people say "Why the fuck did you do that in your book, you bastard!". I got a letter the other day which basically said "I read the end of the book first because I always read the end first, you bastard." And I just went "oh, good". Sometimes it's negative, sometimes it's positive, provoking the response is the thing, you know, touching someone. And I don't mean pushing buttons to provoke someone, like Jim McGovern does when he writes *Cracker*. I mean genuine, I feel this, this is me, this is me down there, and I am communicating with you some how on an emotional level while I am writing this story, and it might even be subconscious. It all goes into the multilevel of art, the multilevels of storytelling, which I think makes good storytelling.

Why artefacts? I was abused as a child by good science fiction and I cant get it anymore, so I've got to write it, or I've got to write what I feel is a good imitation of it, you know. I think Kate Orman described *Lucifer Rising* as our tribute to Larry Niven. Basically *Parasite* is my tribute to Arthur C. Clarke really. That's very deliberate. But again I can't resist subverting the clichés which is why the Artefact is as big as half the solar system and the whole point of it is that its giving birth and its an animal, it's got no more intelligence than a flat worm. There is nothing wonderful about it, its just a thing. The only wonderful thing about it is instilled in the minds of the people viewing it, by themselves, and that is in fact human nature, that was an exploration of how we project our emotions and responses and needs and wants on the things that we see. Oddly enough nobody that has ever read the book has ever got that, nobody has ever said "ow, that was a really clever thing you did", so either the people that read *Parasite* are not typical human beings, therefore they must be aliens or something, or I did it wrong.

That's my philosophy, beyond the fact that its a big flat worm, about as big a 12 or 15 times as big a Jupiter, and its just about to give birth and its egg is a big a planet, and the tiny little monkey culture that is inside it which everybody assumes to be the decayed remnants of the Builders, ha ha another cliché subverted there, are in fact nothing more than the blooming DNA banks that carry the genetic code, you know



sperm effectively. That whole book is completely made up of wall to wall cliché subversions and observations about human nature and what we do to each every day with out even realising it. And I guess its probably no surprise that people never realise which is why they never worked out what it was about. End of soap box.

Who else do I like? Okay I love Robert Heinlein, he was one of the first two writers I got into as a kid, fascist bastard though he is, he is a dam fine story teller, don't agree with his politics at all, don't agree with his soldiering at all, however having said that he is a superb writer of adventure stories. Love CS Lewis, love the *Narnia* stories. Love John Christopher's *Tripod* stories. More recently I got into Alfred Bester's books *Tiger Tiger*, *The Demolished Man*, you know stuff like that. Which are beautiful and very deserving of whatever award they won. But I love pulp fiction as well, I love *DW*, its my favourite TV show. I really like the old Doc Savage books. Pulp fiction, pulp science-fiction particularly written by really famous people like ET Kubb (sp?), they have [to use a] pseudonym to write pulp fiction.

I love pulp fiction of any description, which is why I love Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, because he's not pretending it's anything else, and I respect it for that. I love good movies. Certain little bits of Manga I like, because they're the only people that do the big ideas, I've watched a little bit of Manga, which is a three hour movie version of a condensed TV series that never got made. Its a war story, its goodies versus badies, its the second world war where the Japanese are human beings they're morally in the wrong against the alien invaders but they've got to kick their arse anyway, so what they do is they take Jupiter and they crush it down into a black hole and they launch it into the center of the galaxy and they destroy the invaders and half the galaxy with it. Obviously a commentary on the atomic bomb, and it's a wonderfully sophisticated piece of story telling even though it's a cartoon, and it was tremendously engaging, the big ideas in it I haven't seen since I was reading Arthur C. Clarke as a kid.

A sense of wonder is what its all about, or a sense of amusement, a combination of those two and you've got it dead right. Buzz Aldred and John Barton Healy did it with *Encounter With Time*, Stephen King has never done it although he has shit me up very tremendously in a couple of his books. There's a guy called Thor Heyerdahl who wrote about Easter Island and sailed his little raft around the world a couple of times he's a sort of explorer type character and

his books install a sense of wonder because they describe reality in such a wonderful way, his experiences and travelling experiences are really cool, he did a Kon Tiki expedition and he went to Polynesia and places like that. I've been reading a bit of Oliver Sacks who is a bit of a psychologist/psychiatrist, one of the two anyway, and his case studies are very, very interesting, wonderful people like there was a story he wrote called *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat* and its all about a guy who had an illness where his brain substituted the word 'wife' for the word 'hat', but it didn't just substitute the word it substituted the image as well, when he saw his hat he saw his wife, and when he gestured or spoke towards his wife it was his hat. Interesting, quirky little bits of human nature really appeal to me. Iain Banks doesn't, Iain Banks is boring. I love *The Sweeney*, I really love *Space 1999*, I could go on forever.

I found [psychological disorders] very fascinating while I was researching it for *Cracker*, but to be honest its intense. I don't think I'd be able to help anyone, I don't really think I'd be able to understand what was going through peoples heads if someone hadn't actually written it down in a book or told me. I could use it, I know how to use things, I know how to use the tool, I could never invent the tool if you know what I mean.

I'm somewhat of an imitator, but I'm a sort of developmental imitator. If I see an idea that I like but it isn't developed fully I will steal it, absolutely shamelessly, but I will make it 20 times better than it was. Well in my opinion anyway. I stand to be corrected on that, I may be wrong, which is I guess what doing art is all about really.

But I like originality and I try to employ it whenever I can, and whenever I can't I try and disguise it.

Your novels are probably the most hard SF in the series but they also go for the Big Moral Questions, such as in *Parasite* we look at various aspects of Life, also at religion. Do you think that hard sci-fi and morality go hand in hand? What do you start with? A moral question and then a plot or situation such as the artefact., or do you start with the plot/setting and tailor a theme around it, which invariably turns out to be a Big Moral question as fandom seems to label them.

That's a good question, a really good question. It implies I have a lot of control over my work, in fact I have no control over my work. I write

completely from the balls really, Andy on the other hand plans everything out the on the nth degree, I don't, I can't, it never stays the same, something always changes, something always goes wrong. I'm not skillful enough to stick to a plot synopsis, I always get better ideas, or let the ideas develop over the three or four months it takes me to write a book.

Somebody once actually wrote a letter to *Dreamwatch* or to one of the *DW* magazines in which he said "my god, *Parasite*, just this, what the fuck is going on, all it is is a huge commentary on abortion, whats going on, this isn't *DW*" I read that letter and leapt up and down with glee, because obviously that thought was no where near my mind from the day I conceived it to the day it was published. There was nothing to do with abortion in that story and I read that letter and I thought "oh my god, there was my subconscious working, maybe there is something that could be interpreted as a commentary on abortion in that book". So there's that person projecting they're experience and needs onto my book. I absolutely guarantee there was no deliberate commentary on abortion in that. All it was was a genre subversion, subvert the clichés, you know, its not a big artefact thats clever, its a big artefact that dumb and its giving birth. And maybe what was in there was the commentary, which was absolutely subconscious on my part, but if it wasn't I'm totally unaware of it. I've read the book several times since and I suppose I can see where someone would think its about abortion, but as far as I'm concerned there's fuck all about abortion in there.

To have somebody say that about something I've written is actually rather wonderful because it means that a) your subconscious actually works a lot better than conscious, which is great because it mean you never have to think about anything again b) it means your a bit lucky, which is nice when you do art. I think there's a lot of subconscious equals luck really and also it means that I've managed to do something with a few layers in, make it a bit cleverer that the average ho-hum every day science-fiction novel. And that for me is the root of why I do it. I just don't see it done very often. If there were two or three writers out there that were writing what I like, I wouldn't be writing basically because someone else would be doing it and what would be the point. I'd have to try and do something else, I'd probably end up writing romance or something.

Dear Sir/Madam.

I am writing in support of Nakula Sonala's application to remain resident in the United Kingdom. I have read Jim Mortimore's work and understand that Nakula has in part been responsible for scenes I have enjoyed. I support Jim and Nakula's desire to work more fully together in future and therefore support Nakula's application to remain resident in the United Kingdom.

← SAVE A FRIEND BIT.  
Do a good deed for  
Jim. Write care of:  
27 Colston Rd,  
Easton, Bristol,  
BS5 6AA, UK.

or via  
Paul Hinder's email  
100773.3554@compuserve.com

# DAVE STONE: the interview, by Richard Prekodravac who died in "Burning Heart".

Many reviewers, perhaps too many reviewers compare *Sky Pirates!* to the stuff of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett.

One of the appendices to *SP!* which I (perhaps mercifully) cut was written seriously and made just that point: it's impossible to write anything funny with an SF/Fantasy basis now without being automatically compared to the buggers. In fact, one of the hidden agendas of *SP!* itself was to deal with two bloated entities, who each in their different way have twisted an entire world around themselves. The appendix also noted how the shadow of Pratchett and Adams had all-but obscured the people doing funny stuff long before they came along — people like Harrison, Leiber and the late Bob Shaw — and it was started off when some brainless moron who couldn't read publication dates told me that he didn't like the [Fritz Leiber *Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser* book I lent him 'cause it was a Pratchett rip-off.

Now don't get me wrong — Pratchett's work is sublime, and the man himself seems kind to small fluffy animals. It's Pratchett qua phenomenon I have a problem with. It's responsible for the countless witless knock-offs that can only result in a backlash, and you write in his shadow whether you want to or not. Case in point — funny footnotes, annotations and addenda have a long and noble history in fiction, and one of the points of *SP!* was to overload on stuff like that. The problem is, of course, that they're now a Pratchett trademark — and it's about as nonsensical a situation as copyrighting the letter 'e'.

Quite simply, I sweated blood over the footnotes — making damned sure that they were actual annotations rather than Pratchett-like stylistic flourishes. I even considered doing what [George MacDonald Fraser] does in the *Flashman* books, numbering the annotations and listing 'em at the back. Rebecca talked me out of it, but on the whole I wish she hadn't — because people took one look at the footnotes, totally failed to grasp the fundamental difference, and just went 'Pratchett rip-off!' Bugger.

Incidentally, something like twelve years ago I was touting around the manuscript of my first ever book — a vaguely comedic SF adventure which I later strip-mined for my *Armitage* comic scripts. One guy was interested enough to ask for a rewrite and tried to put it out in conjunction with Gollancz. Nothing ever came of it.

The guy, though, was Colin Smythe, and this was just after he'd put out Pratchett's *Colour of Magic* and it was starting to become a success. There but for the grace of gods ...

The image people have of you is a basically utter nut, probably brought on by too much speed or a genuine mental disorder.

I don't do drugs any more (stay tuned for my not-so-harrowing account of half-hearted heroin abuse if I ever get around to it) at least, nothing stronger than hash and the occasional E. As far as speed's concerned, I'm the sort of person who people try to buy the stuff off, 'cause I look like I'm on it even when I'm loaded with Mogadons. The last time I took it was when, for various

reasons, I rattled off *The Medusa Seed* in ten days and no sleep — and reading it is like a descent into the madness of Hell.

The twistedness, I think, simply comes from a love of jokes — not just laughing at new ones, but enjoying the basic and inherent structure of old chestnuts like 'I say, I say, I say, my dog's got no skin'. Pretty much everything I write is structured like a long, involved joke, complete with punchline — in *Wetworks* the global conspiracy was run by Mickey Mouse, in *Death and Diplomacy* it was all the fault of Pinky and the Brain ...

Sitting down and writing, though, is like pulling teeth for me. I know people who spill out hundreds and hundreds of pages and then have to edit down, but I've never been able to do that. Every book has been this horrible slog of pushing up the word-count inch by inch, until I hit the minimum and go, sod it, that'll do — by minimum, of course, I mean the size that the work has to be rather than just what I've agreed on in the contract.

The result of all this is that when I put down an idea or an image it takes up as little space as possible, simply because I can't be arsed to write any more about it — so where someone else might have, say, one discrete idea per page, I'll have four or five, all probably going off on several disjointed tagents from each other. The end result is a kind of seething surface mess, something like what the Turkey City people called 'eyeball kicks'. Thing is, this incredible churning chaos isn't the result of any energy on my part, it's simply apathy ...

What is your characterisation of the seventh Doctor?

My perception of the Doctor is quite simply that he is an alien life-form. Trees and insects are our cousins and brothers compared to him. He (and other Time Lords for that matter) are so utterly outside what we can conceive of as possible that our brains are forced to come up with the nearest available equivalent and paste it over — in the Doctor's case a little guy in a hat. Cartmel said pretty much the same in *Warhead*, I think.

The point is that the Doctor is benign, and he maintains this facade whenever possible out of simple decency. I think he exists in several extra dimensions, that the guy we see is merely the visible projection of himself into dimensions with which he can cope — and that he uses it like a kind of glove puppet to interact with the people around it. If you imagine something like a Muppet compared to the man with the hand up its backside out of shot, it explains in one fell swoop the manic and slightly ridiculous little clown with the vaster, less knowable and sometimes rather frightening presence behind it.

*Death and Diplomacy* is a far less flamboyant and energetic novel than *Sky Pirates!* however the jokes are more clearly pointed to its targets. Can we expect something different again with *Burning Heart* and *Ship of Fools*?

If people expect *Burning Heart* to be light, they're going to get a bit of a shock. It has

humour in it, but of the gallows variety. I was trying for something bleak — and then I read the proofs and realised just how harrowing and soul destroying it really was. Be warned: the wrong people die and their bodies are defiled.

*Ship of Fools*, on the other hand, is going to be a hoot.

What is *Burning Heart* all about?

It's about 250 pages. Hahahahahahaha! Oh dear me. I do apologise.

It's basically about the Church and State, in the generic sense of the words — no actual Baby Jesus bashing. It's about how belief-systems and power-structures dehumanise people, kill their souls and twist their every good intention into atrocity. It's about abuse and loss, and how that makes the abused into monsters.

It's also got Peri running around in a leather catsuit and has a penguin in it. Fnerk.

You are at the moment writing a Benny NA, is the approach you take to writing a Benny NA different to writing a Doctor NA?

None of my *Who* stuff has exactly been continuity-led — but it's always there in the back of the mind when one writes, like a lead balloon in the backbrain, and that comes through in the subliminal sense. The nice thing about doing the Benny book is that we're inventing an entirely new continuity — it frees you up a hell of a lot to know that people are now going to be pointing at other people's stuff and going 'You can't do that! On page 245 of *Ship of Fools* Dave said ...'

The really interesting thing is some of the stuff that's coming off the Internet. I tend to use a lot of found objects in my stuff, and in this case I went on Usenet and asked people if they wanted to be horribly murdered and how. The result is that I now have enough ways of killing people for about three books, most of them in *incredibly* horrible ways that no sane man could dream up in a thousand years, and several of them set to music. There are some really sick puppies out there ...

Are you interested in writing an eighth Doctor book in the BBC range?

I've actually got a story called *The Dying Fall* — it's the final part of this trilogy that I'm always on about and it seems just right for the eighth Doctor. Thing is, I think I'd need one hell of a lot more clout than I've got at the moment to get it past a *Who* editor — without giving the game away, it's weird, and weird in a completely different way from *Sky Pirates*. Possibly it'll have to wait until I start publishing original fiction.

I have to admit that I quite like the eighth Doctor — he's a kind of 'By criminy, it's time to save the world and I'm just the chap to do it!' guy. I can see him in the sort of simple, fun adventures that would appeal to kids who couldn't care less about the history of the show (tm) — and that's just the sort of people any new attempt at resurrection should be aimed at.

*The Shadow of Weng-Chiang*  
by David A. McIntee  
review by David J Richardson

With the MA trying to copy, er, emulate, er, draw every last bloody bit from the TV series, it was inevitable that we'd see a return from everyone's favourite 51st century war criminal. Except, of course, that the title to this book is somewhat deceptive: the whole story is about the possible return of Mr Greel. This is no bad thing — it allows a proper development of the story and its characters, rather than trotting out the old villain to repeat all his lines (or, in this case, just to rasp noisily).

Instead, we have the mysteriously preserved Hsien-Ko, who has her own very personal reasons for wanting the return — or, more accurately, the diversion in time — of the Butcher of Brisbane (snigger). She's hardly the swaggering villain of tradition, being more misguided than megalomaniacal. We also get to see the story from her point of view, and her longing to settle down to a normal type of life with her lover and second-in-command, Kwok. Nonetheless, her ruthlessness and rather special ability of being able to 'jump' from place to place make her quite a threat to our regulars.

Our regulars, of course, being Doc 4, Romana 1, and K-9 2. This story is slotted after *The Stones of Blood*, and sees some rather weak excuses to convince the TARDIS and tracer that the fourth segment to the Key to Time lies in this time. In fact, much of the 'science' that forms the basis of this story just didn't ring true to me. This makes it just as well that the intrigue and atmosphere of the 1930's Shanghai works so well. With a corrupt police force, Tong gangs on the loose and the battles between Japan and China, there's no end of trouble before we come to the real opposition.

Now for those of you waiting for all the copying of the original series, we have the return of everyone's favourite pig cortex Mr Sin (oh dear, he says, I already used that phrase in the opening paragraph). Sin gets to return to his original life — being an assassin. Unlike everyone else in *Who*, it's somewhat believable that he could use ventilation shafts to get to his targets. Well, somewhat. Freed from the sanitised and cast-limited screen adventures, he gets to kill dozens and dozens and dozens of people. Most of these come with a rather large little jaunt he takes near the end of the book when, as usual, his master underestimates his blood-lust, and lets his baser instincts take over. There are that many 'fountains of blood' in this book to, well, make an awful mess. And if you thought he was nasty before — now imagine that he can 'jump' instantly from one point to another!

And the story? Well, it's a page-turner, if a bit of a run-around. I've no liking for the first Romana, but the Doctor is quite his usual self, and the other cast are all quite well written and interesting. The plan by Hsien-Ko is quite ambitious and original (and a tad worrying in its scale!), and don't assume any of the characters are quite who they seem. Okay, it's not a patch on the original — but hey, it's a good read. Unfortunately, as I keep saying, there's precious few of the MA that seem to progress beyond that point!

*The Death of Art*  
by Simon Bucher-Jones  
review by Cheradenine Zakalwe

Virgin field five new authors this year in the NA range. Four of these are excellent new additions to the writing stable. Unfortunately, there's always got to be one bad apple ... in this case it's Simon Bucher-Jones, with his *Death of Art*. Art isn't the only thing which dies in this book.

This is the third primary book in the Psi Powers story arc. The best thing that can be said about this is that a) it gives us the origins of the mysterious Brotherhood, and b) it fully embraces psi powers, unlike any other book in the series (with the possible exception of *So Vile a Sin* ... but we'll have to wait and see).

[Sonic Screwdriver review mode] Here's what you need to know so you can skip the book: with the changing French government, a capable telepath/mind-controller manages to rise to power. He also infiltrates the Shadow Directory, and replaces many key people's minds with mental copies of himself. Thus he manages to live pretty and protect himself. However another man, given extreme psi-powers by an alien race, wants more. He wants to rule the world. Two Brotherhoods are spawned, in opposition to each other. By the end of the novel, what started as little more than Masons-type operation has expanded into a shape-changing reality bending superpower and then collapsed into the Brotherhood we meet in *SLEEPY*. [Enough of this]

Apparently there are some really clever references to Edgar Allen Poe ('quoth the raven', etc) in this novel. I'm not a big Poe fan, so I missed them. This is also the book that reformat the TARDIS. A book shouldn't be judged on cute references alone though.

We do get to see telepaths, pyrokinetics, telekinetics, the usual swag. But we also get to see psychometrists, uber-mutants, mind-jumpers, seers, reality-benders, teleporters, the whole swag more commonly seen in *X-Men* or *Judge Dredd*. This is refreshing.

However to get to this you have to wade through a very messy plot, boring writing, surprises that aren't surprises. It's a bit of a dog's dinner. The whole death of art business, which threatens to raise its head a few times, doesn't really go anywhere. Characterisation is bad. The Doctor works. But Roz and Chris are kept separate, as they are in the books either side, so the reader can only agonise over their relationship (or lack of). Roz is handled badly, with some really clunky 'future' references. As a plus, she does get an excellent dream sequence which not only ties into the plot of the book, but also into the Tsuru the Hare mythology (from *the Also People*). Chris, after initially looking capable, ends up being stupid, especially when acting like the fifth Doctor, who he didn't really meet in the previous book anyway. Speaking of bad continuity, am I the only one tired of Ace cameos? The universe is getting crowded...

In an almost unique event the cover is exactly how it is described within the book!

*Twilight of the Gods*  
by Christopher Bulis  
review by Polly Morgan

*Twilight of the Gods* is a second Doctor/Victoria/Jamie MA, that, although well-written fails to live up to the best stories from the Troughton era. The main cause of this failure is not inherent in Bulis's writing style (which is clear and well-paced), it's in the subject matter that he chooses to write about. There's nothing necessarily wrong with writing a sequel to *The Web Planet* (or sequels in general), as long as the subsequent story does not significantly undermine the first story (which *Twilight of the Gods* fortunately doesn't do), and contains new elements within it that are interesting and add to the original setup.

This is where *Twilight of the Gods* really seems to fall down as a novel — the Rhumon conflict on Vortis, even (or should that be especially?) with its resemblance to the Cold War politics of the last four decades, fails to inspire more than a passing interest past the first third of the novel. It doesn't work as a basis for exploring a culture because it's not different or subtle enough, and it doesn't work as satire because it isn't particularly funny. It doesn't even rate as being cute.

The characters, although reasonably well-fleshed out, remain clichéd. The Doctor, Jamie and Victoria also spend way too long running to, from and between the two Rhumon factions and the Menoptera, and although this is traditional in early *Who* stories, it doesn't add much interest to the novel as a whole. What stands out about the novel is the excellent characterisation of Victoria. It was a very good decision to use her to direct most of the early stages of the story, as it effectively masks the lack of action in the plot for a while. It's a shame that more of the other characters aren't better developed, because as it stands *Twilight of the Gods* seems to fall between being a character-driven and plot-driven novel. It is also (like many of the MA) about one hundred pages too long.

Basically, this leaves *Twilight of the Gods* as a light-weight page-turner (and not all page-turners are light-weight), something to read on a reasonably long bus or train trip, but ultimately lacking in originality and punch. In the end, it's probably best described as neither excellent nor terrible, but simply mediocre.

Normally there'd be a picture of a book here. But there isn't. Oh well. "Please don't hate me," as Bill Clinton once said.

REVIEW PAGES ON A SENSIBLE PLANET.



**Damaged Goods**  
by Russell T Davies  
review by David Golding

I haven't developed any theories about the quality of any NA by judging from their page count or front cover. I will say that the front cover of this book is ugly however, a disincentive to any prospective buyer. In a great NA tradition it doesn't look much like the scene as described in the book. It's more like a kiddie's comic picture. And *Damaged Goods* doesn't paint a kiddie's comic picture with its text. This is adult dirty realism.

What do you want from the NA? Do you want to see the Doctor and co visit brave new worlds? Do you want to see how they react and alter in relation to these brave new worlds? *DW* hasn't always brought us the Neverending Good Fight, but it has always brought us new worlds, new characters, new situations. Worse stories retread old ideas; better stories bring us amazing new scenes. *Damaged Goods* follows in this tradition, and it is a better story.

We all know who the Doctor and his companions are. We can't and don't expect them to change very much. Readers complain when a regular 'acts the wrong way'. In many ways, the regulars are the eyes we put in to read a *DW* story. It is true that some of the best NA give us a new way of looking at the regulars. But some of the best NA don't try to change our way of looking, but give us something we wouldn't normally have looked at.

So Russell Davies drops us into the world of Thatcher's Britain. The Evil with a capital E is from Ancient Gallifrey, but Davies never lets us lose sight of the world we are in. How can we care about what happens to the world, to the people, if we don't know them well, if we don't see them suffer under the Evil?

Somebody once suggested that a book containing emotional and physical madness should be written in a dispassionate manner (unlike, say *Hummer*, where the reader is involved directly in the madness). Somebody should be happy. Davies utilises this style extremely effectively. We're always standing at one remove from the action and we squirm as we watch. We see the cocaine trade and the evil with a little (more solid and real and painful) e that accompanies it. We see the suffering in human life met with tragedy. We see how these mix to unleash the Evil of the story. In the end, in the Appendices, after the Evil is vanquished, we are whipped back into the pain and despair of the story we have seen, but we are also given hope. Small h, real human, hope. What Davies says is true, and it touches us. At the end of the day, the Evil doesn't touch us.

Fred Nile wouldn't like this book, but the good Doctor wouldn't like Fred Nile. Fred would never walk through the door of the TARDIS. Davies' style has been likened to that of Clive Barker, which is interesting, as Matt Jones has likened the TARDIS to the puzzle box of *Hellraiser*. Fred Nile wouldn't play with that box, because he cannot understand real human love or human hate. If you see only Evil in this

book, then you are missing out. Appreciate the world you eye in *Damaged Goods*, it is the world that some people see every day. It's taken a long time for the Doctor and co to pay an extended visit.

**Cold Fusion**  
by Lance Parkin  
review by Dizlet Sma

What characterises the MA? That they are too long. That they include pointless continuity. That they try to answer every continuity problem in the Whoniverse. That they don't belong to their era. That they don't characterise their regulars correctly. That their prose is lifeless and boring. That they offer nothing new and alive to the canon. All of this. Mostly.

Then along comes a book that can't be characterised like this. And it is a MA.

There's the seventh Doctor on the cover, illustrated beautifully by Alister Pearson in his NA linen suit, though, typically, absent fedora. And this is a seventh Doc MA: it takes place between *RotLD* and *Death of Art*. But PDE said that the MA would cover Doctors 1-6, and so this book does. It is the fifth Doc who's prominent on the cover, and it is his book. Don't make the mistake of many readers and expect a seventh Doc book.

This is a crossover between the fifth and seventh Doctors. It shows the fifth Doctor and his companions in action, as shown on TV. It shows how the seventh Doctor and his companions, acting as in the NA, intrude into this story. Everyone acts just like you would imagine they would act. Tegan is a mouth on legs, Chris tries to hit on Nyssa, Adric is a little so-and-so, Roz is wise and confident. Far from a cold fusion, this is a warm and vibrant meeting. Parkin's prose glitters without extravagance, as it did in *Just War*. In a year with three other brilliant new authors, he manages to be the best new voice.

*Cold Fusion* doesn't belong in its era exactly. It is a piece of retroactive continuity. The seventh Doctor, his companions, the other, Adric's death, the Adjudicators, the TVM, proposed TVM background, none of this could have made it into the story after *Castrovalva*. It's not just a matter of history, these element just don't feel right for the period. But do you know what? I didn't notice that once while I was reading the story.

Okay, the book is one big fix for the fan-perceived 'temporal orbit' You Can't Change History By Going Back In Time problem of the TVM. I didn't notice that either. This book is fun. More than *Happy Endings* or *RotLD*, this is a beautiful present from Virgin to the fans.

It's the best MA. Until next month...

**Bad Therapy**  
by Matthew Jones  
review by Jade Otyemnota

Apologies for a bit of a rag-tag review ... this one left me a little bruised, but in hopeful recovery.

Matt Jones is another of this year's wunderkind. He writes confidently, evoking strongly the feel of the time in which the novel is set, 50's Soho. In some small ways there are similarities to *Damaged Goods*: period Britain, realist, strong emotional content, gay pride, marginalisation of traditional Evil elements. Jones doesn't really care about what the Killer Cab is made of, or how it works, or how the Dolls work. Plot devices don't exceed their worth by warranting lengthy expositions. It is the emotional details of the Dolls and the bird/globe that are examined. It is the position that people don't exist by themselves that is examined.

Chris has been left alone following the opaque events of *So Vile a Sin*. Roz is dead. He now has to find how he exists. Does he exist as Chris? Or Chris and the Doctor? Or only as Roz and Chris? And what about Gilliam, left stranded with a man she doesn't love?

The seventh Doctor is at his most human in this novel. This is how Paul Cornell left the Doctor at the end of *Human Nature*. Someone who loves Greatly, but tries to love Small. Someone who eschews violence.

Characterisation? Oh yes. I forget to mention because there were times when I forgot that I was reading about characters. Times when I thought I was reading about people.

Familiar tropes of the NA are re-examined well. We see the effects of every action, from the initial fateful landing position of the TARDIS onwards. There's treasure in the details. Read the book to find out more.

For the record: since July, the NA/MA have contained extensive references to the TVM. New decor for the TARDIS, new attire for the Doctor, jokes about inhumanity, glimpses of the eighth Doctor. Little snippets. *Bad Therapy* seems to me like the first fully-formed response to the TVM. I'm reliably informed that it isn't. Oh well, so much for the validity of my reading.

But consider Matt Jones's impassioned response in DWM that making the Doctor heterosexual takes away some of his uniqueness; witness the Doctor accepting homosexuality in *Bad Therapy*, embracing all sexuality. See the revival of Grace and Chang in the TVM; witness the Doctor's speech about being unable to cheat death in *Bad Therapy*. And there's more. The book, apparently, contained this material before the TVM. Perhaps Matt Jones, like all *DW* authors and fans, wanted to show us his vision of *DW*; perhaps the TVM managed to sum up all the of his assumptions about what *DW* isn't.

I liked the TVM. But I liked *Bad Therapy* more.

↓ BBC Books Schedule: ↓

...cos fuwaz hnb sht ytm nainaw! vb tgb an,em

The Eight Doctors (Terrance Dicks) Vampire Science (Orman + Blum) War of the Buteks (John Peel) Genocide (Paul Leonard) The Bodysnatchers (Mark Morris)  
The Devil Goblins from Neptune (Topping and Day) Murder Giances (Steve Lyons) The Ultimate Treasure (Chris Bulis)

ADIEU!! GOODBYE!! AUF WIEDERSEHN!! DOSVEDENYA!! AU REVOIR!!  
INFORMATION COMES AT A PRICE: STEPHEN COLE IS THE EDITOR OF BBC BOOKS

# BROADSWORD

## The 1996 Sgloomi Po Awards.

Welcome to the 1996 Sgloomi Po awards. After the success of last year's awards, and thanks again to the eleven people who voted, we have decided to do it again, simply because no one's stopped us.

The year has been an interesting one: We were deeply saddened by the loss of 'So Vile A Sñand shocked by John Peel's Skaro revelations. We began 1996 with Lance Parkin's 'Just War', and finished with his 'Cold Fusion', as he dared to write an Adric story. But perhaps the most incredible event of the year was in May, as Bernice Summerfield married Jason Kane.

This year's Sgloomi Pos are just like last year's awards. You've read the books; now read the categories and nominate the book you think deserves to win a Sgloomi Po.

This year new categories have been included, including a special internet category. But all pale to insignificance against the ultimate prize, the Golden Sgloomi Po, won last year by Dave Stone - who will win this year?

The novels are restricted to those released in 1996 according to the UK release schedule (the novels eligible are listed below). You don't have to read every novel to vote, however voting will be open until late March 1997 so that every country has a chance to read all of the novels.



### New Adventures

Just War, Warchild, Sleepy, Death and Diplomacy, Happy Endings, GodEngine, Christmas on a Rational Planet, Return of the Living Dad, The Death of Art, Damaged Goods, Bad Therapy.

### Missing Adventures

Downtime, The Man in the Velvet Mask, The English Way of Death, The Eye of the Giant, The Sands of Time, Killing Ground, The Scales of Injustice, The Shadow of Weng-Chiang, Twilight of the Gods, The Speed of Flight, The Plotters, Cold Fusion.

Voting is open until late March 1997.

Please send your votes to:

153 Wardell Rd  
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203 (Australia)

or on the Internet to:  
navaz@geko.com.au

# Broadsword

## The 1996 Sgloomi Po Awards

### Voting Form

- The Sgloomi Po for the best character in a novel
- The Sgloomi Po for the best returning character in a novel
- The Sgloomi Po for the best cover
- The Sgloomi Po for the most incredible/ridiculous technobabble
- The Sgloomi Po for the best author biography
- The Sgloomi Po for the strangest thing the Doctor has done this year in a New or Missing Adventure
- The Sgloomi Po for the best line in a novel
- Special Internet Category: the Sgloomi Po for the best rec.arts.drwho identity/person in a New Adventure or Missing Adventure
- The Silver Sgloomi Po for the New Adventure you would like to see win a Silver Sgloomi Po
- The Silver Sgloomi Po for the Missing Adventure you would like to see win a Silver Sgloomi Po
- The Golden Sgloomi Po for the novel you wish you had written

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Voting is open until late March 1997.

Please send yours votes to:

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Dulwich Hill NSW 2203 (Australia)

or on the Internet to:  
navaz@geko.net.au