



The Eleventh issue of a weekly, or thereabouts (job, life etc., permitting), letter substitute from:
COA is still imminent - Be Prepared.
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Welcome to the Dreamstate.

Dreams are weird things, eh? That girl you had the huge crush on in Grade school, she always pops up. Then there is that bloke you sat facing at your first job, complete dick head, somehow he always manages to creep in. Not to mention all those authority figures: teachers, coaches and people behind the counter at post offices. All these people turn up, but in a safe environment, your dreams.

Well, as I showed you last week, my dreams are inevitably violent. It is rare though that anyone actually dies or there is a real loss in my dreams. Again that could be due to my attitude to death described recently as well. The obvious explanation for this is the society that I grew up in (said the guy who just killed his parent: "Have mercy, I'm an orphan after all.." - "It was society wot mad me do it..") Whilst I agree that the environment we all live in back in Northern Ireland is incredibly violent, I have been fortunate to have only been on the fringes - voyeuristically engaging in acts of violence rather than as an active, or even unwilling, participant.

The things you see, in person, in print or on television are fairly horrific enough. If, as all the academics insist, people in Northern Ireland have become inured to it, or there is an acceptable background level of violence, then the whole country must be really fucked up. If that is the case, imagine what the people who have become personally affected by acts of violence, through loss, trauma of imprisonment or whatever - how must they be feeling and thinking?

There have been a few occasions in which I have been involved directly in violence. I was attacked by an IRA man after a bungled kidnapping I witnessed, was one of the last people to leave my office building before it blew up and have handled a handgun that was used to kill many people. Rather than the wind chime it was obviously designed to be. All of these have influenced my dreams, and their violent nature - of that I have no doubt. But I still think that it is my personality which makes my dreams so violent.

The last time I hit someone in anger I had to jump up a few steps so that I could take a swing at him. Even at fifteen my brother was over six foot and, at twelve, I hadn't really started growing yet. Apart from that there wasn't even any school yard scraps, and certainly no High School or University incidents, even raging fights with friends or girlfriends never got to the verbal violence of "things we shouldn't say." Violence of any sort just isn't in my nature. Which isn't to say that a course in Judo I took when I was younger didn't help me (momentarily) when I was assaulted by a bunch of drugged-out skinheads in Derry a few years back; one guy certainly felt some pain through his drugs.

So when I experience violent situations in my dreams I'm not too worried. First of all it can't harm me physically. Although I don't know that when I'm dreaming, ostensibly, I think there is some intuitive knowledge there. Any psychological damage that might occur because of violent dreams - well reality is much worse than that, so I don't worry about that either. To be honest, I take great comfort in the scenes of violence, often highly dramatic and cinematic, that my dreams personas and NPCs take part in (a great acronym from my role playing days - a Non Player Character. People wearing Red Jerseys in the old Star Trek are classic NPCs - read: plot device.)

So why tell you all this? Well Northern Ireland is not that bad a place, for one thing. It has extremely low levels of 'ordinary' violence. Even someone who has lived there for 25 years has only encountered violent situations a couple of times, and even then they could have been avoided. The the people from back home are not emotionally scarred, bitter and angry people, with a propensity to violence. There just like me and you.

And if their dreams are not? Well, some grace is allowed, I think.

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What Julia did on her holidays... I have no idea. Why don't you ask her..? (More later.) Been an interesting week. Julia left, I did some stuff that should have been done ages ago (check out the slightly updated web page) and we finally decided to up sticks and leave out completely nutty landlady to her own devices... went into work on Friday to pick up the new schedule and got completely rat assed (no lunch) and just checked in with reality over the weekend. (Reality is okay, but his cousin is pretty pissed off...) Some old comments below, as well as new ones. This is weekly folks and if you insist on writing, I insist on publishing it. Slings and arrows and DNOs to the max. Now Read On...

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From: Vicki Rosenzweig <rosenzweig@hq.acm.org> "Ah, yes, St. Patrick's Day. Around here, that means some of the people whose great-grandparents were Irish make a big

deal of it, some of the recent immigrants do, we have the annual fight because the people who run the parade won't let the Irish gay organization march, and large numbers of young idiots of all nationalities get drunk in the streets. And I can't help thinking--though I'm not Irish myself--that there's more to Irish heritage than alcohol, green shirts, and stupid "Kiss me, I'm Irish" buttons. I was just as pleased to be out of town (at Corflu) on March 17 this year. (=Of course there is more to Irish heritage than that. There's insurrection and rebellion, mass deaths (no pun intended), neo-fascist conservatism and generally political and cultural indifference to the rights of man. Now, if you had all that going for your country and once a year they gave you a day off to celebrate it all - you get completely fucked out of your brains as well, wouldn't you? "And tomorrow Mr. Cynicism goes on tour, Mr. Cultural Ambassador to the world will then be in residence." Schizo-what?=-)

From: PJBoal@aol.com <Pamela Boal> "Thanks for putting me on your e-mail list for TW9. I'd be delighted to have a weekly chat. Just got back from our first real trip on the boat this year. The first time since I've had e-mail that I haven't been able to check it out daily, we were gone for for six days. I wondered if it would be as cluttered as our door mat usually is. It was! 20 items and one nugget - TommyWorld 10. That was a powerful piece of writing Tommy. You wrote time for some faan fiction but I'm not at all sure if that referred to the "I'm cleaning up and....." sentence or 'So here's the real story' The latter read horribly true.Good to hear from you." (=Thanks for the nice words, See comments below on the piece and the sortof explanation given above.=)

From: bigboy@super.zippo.com (Nigel Rowe) "I guess I misread the opening to TW9 - where I thought you said you were going home. When you said "on the way home" I naturally assumed Belfast rather than your 'new' home of Toronto. I guess having you live in another city will take a little re-adjusting. Tom the Canadian, is very different from Irish Tommy. I guess home is where your fanzine collection is, which explains little in my case since I have zine collections in London, Auckland and Wellington New Zealand, as well as here. (=Well Nigel, we haven't been paying attention now have we? Tommy is the name (again! I know, I know...) and home still is where the fanzine collection is - i.e. Derry and/or Belfast.=)

In 1988 after I had been living in London for thirteen months, I took a trip to Paris for a week, of course I came down with a terrible cold which knocked me out for three days. Alone and ill in a city where I can't even request medical attention without resorting to frantic hand gestures. Stuck in a hotel where no-one cares if I live or die. It was here that I realised that I was truly comfortable at living in the UK, because all I wanted to do was go home to London and be in my familiar comfortable surroundings (a small, dingy, lonely bedsit in the East End). That's when I realised for the first time in my live that my concept of home had changed irrevocably. I've only visited Toronto once. That was in 1989 and I stayed with Larry Hancock and Jody for about four days. I liked what I saw, but it would be good to come back for another visit, and also to meet Mike Glicksohn and other fen I know there. Keep up the pubbing." (=Well you have a place to stay if

ever you're in the neighbourhood, a monthly fannish meeting (in a pub no less - every second Thursday) to attend and a whole bunch of good people to meet and socialise with. Always welcome. They sorta speak English here, but remember to keep those frantic hand gestures ready, eh? =)

From: "Linda Krawecke" <pavpub@pavilion.co.uk> "OK, it may take days for me to get my e-mail messages here at work but I do get them eventually so feel free to reply (remembering that this is an office full of people here!) Eugene has been sending along your "TommyWorld" - most, but not all - and it's good to hear that you're alive and kicking. I've started about a dozen letters to you that I haven't finished. I get bored handwriting anything more than a postcard and with no computer at home, I'm left with just my office machine to write on. Oddly enough, I seem to do work-type stuff the whole time at work and never get around to all that letter writing, fan stuff I would love to do. Funny old world. Well, all that will change soon. Dave & I are piecing together a computer of our own and I'm hoping to be on line by summer. Wish us luck. (Good Luck! You may need it...)

I'd love a chance to see you, or at least have a good long phone chat that doesn't cost the same as a small Ford Fiesta. You've got the e-mail address here, I hope (pavpub@pavilion.co.uk) but please put on it somewhere "To Linda Krawecke" otherwise the hardcopy of the message floats from office to office until someone claims it. Take care and keep watching the skies. (=Yeah, I saw Hale-Bopp the other night. Astonishing stuff, naked eye and all that. I must say that for a few minutes the old sensawonda (get 'em whilst they're hot) was back and in full effect. Of course then I remembered the loonies in the barn and, especially, their families and thought how easily we're impressed by the big things out there, and yet fail to miss the small and subtle wonders all around and within us. I then had another pint and failed again to chat up the barmaid... =)

From: "Ulrika A. O'BRIEN" <UAOBRIEN@uci.edu> "I'm not really Irish, sad to say. I married a sort of Scotsman in disguise. Apparently the family name got changed in a hurry at the U.S./Canada border in the matter of a difference of opinion on the ownership of a horse. The mounties for once did not get their man, but the family lineage was bollixed forever. Or so the story goes. My actual lineage is a bit vague due to a maternal line fond of extracurricular activities, but in all it seems to be mostly Swedish, a bit (probably) English, and a dab of Czech. Thanks for the two issues, I will fling myself into them forthwith, and like that there. (= "And like that there," doesn't really work unless you say it in person. Which, I hasten to add, is not a criticism, merely an observation. I say those sort of things all the time (like "cool" and, "Take a Powder, missus..." as well as, my favourite for a long time, "Boat drinks.") and they have no context or meaning on the printed page. But like, I totally know where your at, although I wouldn't go there, it's crowded now. =)

From: Steve Brewster <Steve.Brewster@Bristol.ac.uk> "Thanks for TW 10. Umm, what's the truth behind your little gun fable? You describe it as 'faan fiction' [I loathe the term 'faan', by the way, but live and let live] but what does that mean? Is it a fictionalised account of something that really happened? Or something that could have happened? Or is it just, well, a work of fiction - in which case what was the point of it? Call me a Yorkshire thicky and hit me with a pudding if you like, but I'm honestly undecided here... Liked it though.

(=First and foremost it is a dream. But, like I mention above, the root of it came through once holding a gun as a child. It was a Browning 9mm automatic (I was young then, and wouldn't know the difference in automatic guns, but I could read...), it was very heavy and quite big. It had the safety on but was loaded. I held it and aimed it at the holy picture on the wall (always a religious critic, me...) and pulled the trigger. It stuck half way towards full, because of the safety. I thought I was dead cool. The nightmares for years afterwards convinced me I wasn't. Those nightmares have now become dramas in my mind like that described elsewhere. And when those dreams don't work, well a couple of pints make the bad men go away. The events described in the last never actually happened, and I cleared this with Jo McBride before publishing, but you get the general idea.=)

From: "Lesley Reece" <lreece@u.washington.edu> "Like you, I believe it's best to be honest about emotions, but some people seem to think that's an ingenuous attitude. Hey, oxygen's for losers! Come on!" (=As we know, honesty is a double edged sword, people. You try, and yet still fuck it up. Vicki's comments last issue still stand up though.=)

From: (Mark McCann) mark@nicrc.thegap.com "Liked the TW10 item -maybe you should try a similar style for your non-fiction pieces - fictionalise them a bit - I think it would work really well. Was at the Monico last night (Just me, Eugene, Jim and Joe there but it was a god night's craic) - watched Liverpool being embarrassed by PSG 3-0 (=Paris St. Germain - a French soccer team.=) They were terrible - David James was crap... (=Liverpool's goal keeper - yep, he is crap.=) What's this shit in TommyWorld 10 about you changing address? Moving in with some bint or moving closer to work? (=Ah Mark, how I miss your dulcet tones and scything insights into my personality and to answer your questions: No and no.=) More next week.

This is being distributed to a whole bunch of friends on the net, if you received this and would NOT like to be on the mailing list please accept my apologies for this intrusion and let me know so that you will not be bothered by further ramblings. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing drop me a line.