



The Twenty Sixth issue of a sortof letter substitute, kinda thing, maybe weekly, maybe not, from:

40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast, BT7 3ER, Northern Ireland

E-mail: tferg@dial.pipex.com Phone: (01232) 293275

Web Site: <http://members.tripod.com/~Tommyworld/index.htm>

Available only via the net at the moment. Welcome to the new readers and see the colophon for the usual disclaimer. A mid-holiday issue, I hope the season to be jolly was for you. Thanks to Mark McCann for computer usage and computer advice. This issues dated, already, 29/12/97

Sociologically I was extremely lucky, compared to the experiences Mark McCann has related in previous issues of *Götterdämmerung*. The bunch of people I was in with were all, bar two, older than me and seemed to be a reasonable cross section of Northern Irish men. The para-military tattoos were still there, Union Jacks with UVF stitched across them, sometimes literally interesting doctors we have here. Others simply had 'Fuck the Pope' on their forearm, not nice but obviously done at the height of the troubles in the 1970s. When the lights went out around midnight actually went to sleep and they could hold a conversation together:

"It's a fucking holiday in here, away from the waynes and that bitch of a wife Jesus, a weekend without screaming kids, fuckin' idiots in the pub, your meals cooked for you and then they pay you for this shit"

As I said a typical Northern Irish man.

Unfortunately the second period was where two thirds of these people left after the first night and a new batch of people came in. These were the scary people that Mark had warned me about - complete spides. There was one guy, Jonathan, an obvious victim of steroid abuse if ever there was one, who had a tattoo on his bicep which, when he flexed his arm, had a picture of a man (a Catholic, I was reliably informed) being eviscerated. And I thought that the tattoo of a woman who opened her legs with a similar arm motion was bad

Jonathan was dangerous. Anyone who spends anytime in Harris with a mobile phone (tell tale drug dealer paraphernalia), a mashed and scarred kneecap and half a dozen vile tattoos on their wrists, neck and ankle is obviously from a "disturbed background." Strangely enough I could handle that, I have cousins and 'friends' back in Derry with similar statements of their Irish nationality and political diversity. And it wasn't that I was cooped up with this person for another three days that made me afraid, it was that he insisted on putting on his Bryan Adams video and would brook no argument. Truly, the devil's disciple.

And he had acolytes. John and Mark. No I kid you not, not disciples, but definitely acolytes. Any standard Hollywood movie dealing with the occult will tell you that the demons need acolytes. From Casper's uncles and Disney's Quasimodo's gargoyles through to Dracula's brides and Hellraiser's pin face friends. It is a horror trope that, like all literary devices, has a reality-based foundation. And boy did Clive Barker and the rest ever get it right with Mark and John.

First off they were completely stupid. A stupidity that in children is acceptable but in adults is asinine, a fawning, slavering and despicable form of 'yes men.' Jonathan's every utterance was greeted with howls of laughter and back slapping conviviality. Give them twenty years and a different environment and they would be swapping double G&Ts in the golf club before going home and raping the wife.

Secondly they had a meanness that only the stupid and weak can steep to. I was thankful that this was taken out on the staff and characters on TV as all the fluid I'd been drinking before they came in and the huge amount of blood draws left me mostly comatose and listless when they were at their most active. Whores, bitches and cunts. Really ugly words, with a venom and tone that I found incredulous this was a fucking clinic, not a bar up the Hollywood road, for fucks sake! The staff was amazing.

Finally midnight was not the witching hour for them, but the 'being a complete bastard' hour. The people in my group started their day at 7am, and most got up between 6 and 6.30am. Their group started after us, around 9am, and they didn't have half as much of a program of blood draws, vitals, urine collection etc. as we did and so slept all afternoon. Leaving them wide awake and full of vim when we just wanted to welcome the Sandman. Playing pool, shouting, jeering and slamming doors. Finally the evil bastards were forced to sit down and watch the television. They turned it up very loud they resorted to the ultimate in late night perverse torture: more Bryan Adams.

Thankfully they were on a study which allowed them to smoke. So most of the day, in periods of twenty minutes, their little posse would trip out through the door to the smoking section and would spend most of their time out there. At night, though, time really dragged and we were forced to sit in the main common room with them.

Come six O'clock it was time to sit and watch the early evening news. Again, the common denominator of people in the study forced us to watch the local independent television station, Ulster Television (UTV). UTV is well known for its appalling presentation, crass stories and really bad ideas at features: Spina Bifida fashion shows, local agricultural oddities and political rallies. At the end of the terminally boring news (weather: Rain and widespread terrorism) it was time to fill in the late evening slot.

I knew from past experience that this time could be whiled away watching the videos that staff members hired out for us; a Harris favourite: the video as tranquilliser. The first period of this study was all the stuff that had been on Cable in Canada and was just released here. The only thing that made Twister was the FX, and they didn't work on TV. Tedious, but bearable.

This time round I didn't plan on Harris' household pervert and all round anorak: John. Showgirls and Bound in one night, unfortunately Bound was turned off after the first half an hour as the lights went out all over Harris. And yes, that is what I was thinking as well. Thankfully I'd seen it at the Cinema in Toronto and my impression of it was offended. As it was Halloween night over my stay we had to get some shockers, so I set myself up for a night of Clive Barker and Stephen King. Instead I got a couple of the worst of the Halloween series and The Craft, which is like Melrose Place, and the Exorcist combined:

"That is like, a totally, evil demon dude" And that babe for Party of Five said something like: " I know, but check out the red on those nails awesome!" It was like someone had seen *Scream* and thought to do a straight version. Jesus, I know Hollywood is bad but fuck.

A redeeming feature of the whole video experience was watching Leon again and realising just what a star the director Luc Besson is. I haven't seen a movie of his that I didn't enjoy on some level. Some of them have been fairly crap, but looked stunning - *The Big Blue*, for example. I also saw *Star Wars* again, and enjoyed it; again. (See *TommyWorld 3* and *5*).

This was my evening for four nights. They didn't pay me half enough to endure that.

Cheryl Morgan cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com Hi Tommy, Word of warning. If you ever go to Australia, beware. They put beetroot on everything! Disgusting habit. They thought I was crazy asking for burgers or steak sandwiches without beetroot. Love 'n' hugs, Cheryl"

Peter Halasz peterhal@pathcom.com "Hi Tommy, One of the best things about the newsletter is your unbridled optimism and faith in people. You'll have to decide whether or not that was said "tongue-in-cheek" or "straight". As always it is good to hear from you and about you. Have a great holiday and an even better New Year!"

Lilian Edwards eusl01@srv0.law.ed.ac.uk "Oddly enough this is the first of your stories that I actually have something in common with. (well I haven't killed anybody and I'm not very Catholic..) I've found beetroot utterly revolting since early childhood as well. Not only is the stuff vomit making in itself but it *pervades* everything around it. Urrghh.. in fact I had to stop reading TW this am and feel ill for a while. Though that may have had something to do with the half bottle of gin Graham and I smuggled out to the pub at the end of the Xmas party and drank neat under the table...((yes another good weekend on the social event horizon that never ends. Tonight's do with Ian etc is *the last* non-family thing till New Year and I'm relieved!! Sad eh..))

Thing was I hated apple crumble at school too. Or at least the surrounding custard which had more lumps in it than the mashed potatoes. I once sat through an entire school day not being allowed to leave the table until I ate my stone cold lumpy custard. Just couldn't do it... After that I got my parents to get me special permission to bring a packed lunch, the only one who did in my whole primary school. I was an awkward bugger even at the age of 8."

IAHF: Murray Moore, Vicki Rosenzweig, Christina Lake, Valerie Westwood, Jack Weaver and John D. Berry in no particular order. All of who passed on regards for the season as well as a few other technical bits and pieces. Thanks to one and all and have a wonderful New Year, y'all

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.