



The Sixty Ninth issue of a sort-of letter substitute, kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

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Available via the World Wide Web, or as an email attachment. I recommend the Portable Document Format (pdf) or, if you insist, a word or Rich Text Format (rtf) can also be emailed. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. You are going to [TorCon III](#), aren't you? Dated, already, 01/07/03.

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## **A death in the Family, redux.**

Debbi Kerr sent me an email at the end of last month pointing me towards a wonderfully sad item on the [Plokta News Network](#).

I thought that was typical of Dave. Talk about a lack of commitment – finally decides to make the big move and then he buggers of his mortal coil. I probably didn't know him well enough to be so glib over his death – although on the number of occasions we sat up all night drinking in Leeds or at a Novacon, I got an inkling of what he was like. Cantankerous old bastard I thought and full of a righteousness indignation at the world. At the same time, a warm and thoughtful man, as well as a bloody good artist; he gave a lot to fandom and didn't get much change in return. My thoughts are with Sara, his friends and family.

I've written a number of eulogies and obituaries in TommyWorld and I wanted to write a lot more about Dave because I did like him. When James White died and I wrote about him it got some very considered replies, likewise with Vincent Clarke and Walt Willis. Eugene Doherty went so far as to say it was the best thing I had written and how come all my best writing was in the form of obituaries and eulogies?

I'm not too sure if there is an answer to that. Certainly the people who I've written about who have passed have been important to me. Walt Willis really got me into fandom, James White was important not only in my staying in fandom, but also to the whole of Irish fandom and Dave Mooring taught me how to pick out a fannish prick at twenty yards; a valuable skill which I've never forgotten. Perhaps it is the important impact these people had on my life, and how much I valued knowing them, that comes across when writing about them. Certainly even thinking about those people now brings thoughts and feelings to mind.

When I read Debbi's email I welled up and thought what a great loss to the world. I thought of Sarah who I met a few times as well and really appreciated her company – she was welcoming, friendly and talkative. I felt for her, and what she must be going through. I try to get across this empathic response, to show that the person meant something to me and let the family and friends know they were important.

So, having said all that, I'm still at a loss to write about my Dad's death; even fifteen months on from the event.

I've rationalised it down to the fact that we all knew he was going, though his passing was sudden. In fact, as many people will know, he's not been well for the best part of seven years, and nearly passed away on a number of occasions before. However I don't think it is entirely that.

Since his death my family have been trying to get me to visit his grave – with it's nice shiny new head stone – he's buried on top of his mother and father. I thought that was a bit weird when I head about it – my granny was a big woman and there wouldn't be much room in there I thought. Of course she died twenty years ago and as too many episodes of CSI have shown death is the best slimming plan. Still, weird though.

"Incest: just because you're dead, doesn't mean you can't play."

I don't know why I don't want to go to the grave. I'm not particularly religious, quite the opposite in fact and the whole grave thing doesn't grab me. I'm also not that emotional about my father's death. I have my moments, of course, but on the whole I don't think of him that much. Then there is the whole extended family politics – who has brought flowers recently, who has cleaned the grave and why haven't you been to see your dad/uncle/grandfather etc. Jesus, the man's dead and he is still causing arguments and fights! I'm not into all that family shit.

Of course all of this could be that I haven't come to terms with his death yet. That I still have a lot of issues which need resolved and I'm avoiding them, not dealing with them and getting them resolved. Whilst I agree that is probably true – it just sounds like so much psycho babble shit to me.

I'd rather just remember him the same way I remembered Dave Mooring – more fitting with Dave and my dad and more fitting for me as a person as well. Have a pint and a quiet moment of reflection and be grateful that I was able to share their lives.

Cheers!

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The next issue – number 70 already! – will be out really soon – containing letters comments and a bit of a ramble from me on stuff.

See you soon.

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.