



The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

Newsletter-Winter 2016/17



Since the mid-1980's this organization has been dedicated to honoring Rod Serling—one of the most talented and prolific writers in American television. This newsletter highlights the continuing interest in Rod Serling and his work—in an attempt to provide RSMF members with information from the press... on bookshelves... DVDs and the internet. Throughout the Newsletter you can follow [blue links](#) to our website, or to other sources of further information.



THE R.S.M.F.'S OWN SERLING AWARD

The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation has created an award to recognize artists that both excel in their media and embody the spirit of Mr. Serling. A standing goal is to applaud our winners' work and to expose this art to a larger audience. The [RSMF WEBSITE](#) provides web links to each of the individual works honored last year:



THE GREYSCALE provides the most direct approach of the four. Andrew Kaberline and Matthew Schott team up to form, in a sense, a continuation of *The Twilight Zone*. Characters search for themselves while revealing human truths along the way, with dark humor and irony abundant. "The Grayscale" is a creeping shadow on the wall, but as the figure nears, it becomes abundantly clear that this entity is a teacher rather than a demon attempting to frighten you.



GALACTIC JOURNEY reads much more analytically. Gideon Marcus, also known as The Traveler, writes as a man who has traveled from the golden age of science fiction (55 years ago to be exact), to tell the tales the newest genre has to offer. In transcribing his reaction to novels, comics, television, and movies, The Traveler often incorporates his own bit of insight that spreads a light on the minds and perspectives of the past. Often poignant and always thoughtful, Galactic Journey lends a warm hand in invitation to their time machine.



PEOPLE ARE ALIKE ALL OVER, the debut album from Dominic Francisco's musical project "Space Monkey Death Sequence," is far less literal than those mentioned thus far. While snippets of the aforementioned *Twilight Zone* episode play in the background, this album focuses on the raw feeling of a sleep-driven paradigm shift. What ensues is best described as a harsh, metallic, often uncomfortable dirge into the grave of Warren Marcusson and out of Sam Conrad's psyche. Francisco makes an ocean out of the lake that is one of *The Twilight Zone*'s more gloomy episodes.

DON'T HUG ME I'M SCARED picks up in a similarly dark place, surrounded by the absurd. Becky Sloan and Joseph Pelling guise a harsh critique behind the abstract dialogue of puppets in a nightmare of a children's television program. Through a series of six videos we are introduced to various household objects that spring to life and teach twisted, agenda-laced lessons to the protagonists of the show. The use of puppetry is most poignant in this series as that is what Sloan and Pelling are attempting to mirror — corporate puppetry (no photo of winners available).

In a sense, Rod's portfolio of work continues to grow. Through these four laureates we see his vision expand into several media he did not directly explore in his lifetime. Put together, these four form a great piece of art as a whole. We have no doubt that Rod would be proud to see his legacy influence all of these fine works of art. We are humbled to recognize these select few.

James McGriff



Rod Serling: Teacher, Activist, Friend

Over a decade ago, a woman wrote to the www.rodserling.com webmaster (me), wanting to talk about her contacts with Rod Serling during the Sixties—contacts that reveal how timeless Rod remains in 2016.

In 1962-63, Jeanne Marshall was Rod's student during a weekly writing seminar at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In 1968, she was the catalyst of a controversial speech that he delivered at Moorpark College in Southern California. Jeanne found Rod delightfully down-to-earth and approachable, and when she discovered that our website posted stories of personal interactions with him, [she had mementos to share](#): writings and photos. They are on our website and remain worthy of your examination; follow the links in this story.

[Jeanne's notes from the writing seminar](#) offer a fresh look at Rod's teaching style. Rod talked *to* and *with* his students, never *at* them, as you can also observe in these later [Ithaca College seminar videos](#). He encouraged students to write whatever tickled their own muses, and [grew genuinely attached to the class](#) over the several months that they met.

Five years later, Marshall arranged for a Moorpark College invitation for Rod to speak. But the event morphed into a controversy that was rooted in the troubled contours of 1968 America. The Vietnam war, the election of Richard Nixon, and a violent crackdown on protest at the Democratic National Convention were highly visible symptoms of a seriously divided populace.

In that atmosphere, Jeanne Marshall's innocent invitation to her writing mentor was caught between the rock of faceless bureaucracy and the hard place of paranoid politics. Rod offered to speak for free, but college rules insisted that Moorpark pay him. And being paid triggered another requirement: Rod would have to sign a loyalty oath. As in: *I promise not to overthrow the United States*. Rod refused, recalling that the Nazis had loyalty oaths. As he explained in the speech that he finally did deliver at Moorpark, "If I were hell bent to subvert the government of the United States, I would certainly have no qualms about signing anything."

Jeanne [wrote a letter](#) to the campus newspaper, and the paper itself [published an editorial](#) about the controversy. It was all finally settled with [Rod's speech](#)—a sensitive and yes, *timeless* examination of social conflict that you could transplant to 2016 with very few edits.

Steve Schlich



"All Things Serling" — 2016 Wrap-up

The year 2016 provided ample reminders that Rod Serling's body of work is as vast as space, and that his influence is as timeless as infinity.

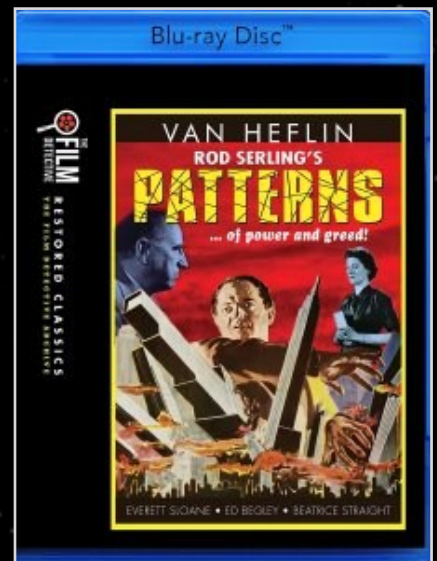
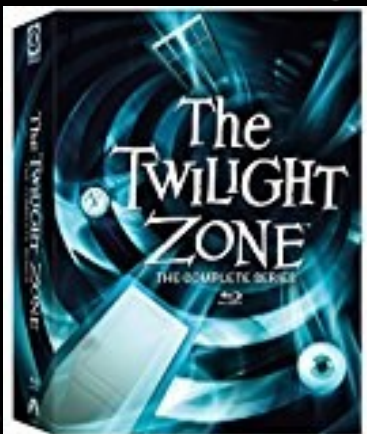
The year began with an announcement that David Simon (creator of HBO's *THE WIRE*) would be presented with the inaugural Rod Serling Award for the Advancement of Social Justice Through Popular Media (for [2015-2016](#)), and ended with Kenya Barris (creator of the ABC series, *BLACKISH*) being presented the second such award, for 2016-2017 (see p. 3).

June 2016 saw the first-ever DVD release of Serling's terrific (and tragically overlooked) western series, *THE LONER* (see Tony Albarella's review on p. 3), and September brought the first-ever Blu-ray edition of Serling's landmark feature film, *PATTERNS*. Also in September — four RSMF members presented an "authors panel" at the Roberson Science Fiction Convention ("Robercon") in Binghamton, NY.

On October 1st, Serling disciple Matthew Weiner (creator of AMC's *MAD MEN*) hosted a special screening of two Serling-scripted episodes of *PLAYHOUSE 90*, "Forbidden Area" and "The Dark Side of the Earth," at the Billy Wilder Theatre at UCLA. And on December 13, just in time for Christmas, *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* (the complete series) was re-released on Blu-ray DVD, this time in a more affordable package.

This year promises more evidence of Rod Serling's timeless influence, beginning with the highly anticipated publication of *EVERYTHING I EVER NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE*, by longtime television critic and prolific author, Mark Dawidziak, on February 28th.

Nick Parisi



SECOND "ROD SERLING AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN POPULAR MEDIA" PRESENTED IN L.A.

An emotional Kenya Barris -- creator of the ABC sitcom [Black-ish](#) accepted the "Rod Serling Award for Advancing Social Justice Through Popular Media" on November 16, 2016 at the Paley Center for Media in Los Angeles. Barris is the second recipient of the award -- established by Ithaca College to honor Rod Serling and his pioneering efforts in the television industry by recognizing a modern media professional whose work raises awareness of prejudice, inequality and society's changing social norms.

Barris praised Serling, noting that as a child he often spent Thanksgiving watching a marathon of Serling's "Twilight Zone" on television. But he said that it was only when he grew older that he truly appreciated how Serling's work encouraged viewers to think hard about serious issues — something that Barris has tried to do in his career. "I think that I've been given a unique opportunity to tell a story and start conversations, and I think that's the most important thing that any artist can do," said Barris. *Black-ish* star Marcus Scribner introduced Barris. He called Barris a role model and praised his willingness to let audiences think for themselves about important societal issues.

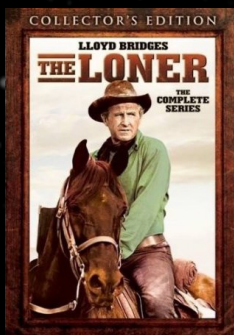
Diane Gayeski, dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College, also made introductory remarks. She drew a comparison between Barris and Serling as artists willing to engage in difficult dialogues through their work. "Kenya Barris is the person who deserves this, and is the person who in our minds takes Rod's legacy and moves it forward and lives that every day," said Gayeski. From 1967-1975 Serling taught at Ithaca College, now home of The Rod Serling Archives — an extensive collection of television scripts, film screenplays, stage play scripts, films, unpublished works, awards, and other materials.

View the [complete award presentation](#) (a "live" recording — [scroll in about 4-minutes](#) for the Ceremony)



More about "THE LONER"

In our last newsletter we announced the DVD release of Serling's series *The Loner* ... here's an excerpt from a full review of the new release by RSMF Archivist TONY ALBARELLA:



The Loner: The Complete Series is not only complete but of excellent quality. All 26 black-and-white half-hour episodes are present and accounted for, and look and sound about as crisp as one can expect from non-restored prints of a show from this era. The packaging includes interior cover art and disc labels, making for a very professional-looking presentation. *The Loner's* lone extra is a roughly half-hour documentary on the show, custom produced for the set, and is the source of perhaps my only gripe about this release. "The Wandering Man's Burden: Making *The Loner*" is a bit of a lightweight affair that focuses primarily on Lloyd Bridges and quickly skims over the development and demise of the series.

The Loner is all Serling. He personally wrote 15 episodes and all of them drip with his signature style. In fact, the episodes not penned by Serling stand out in such stark contrast that no writing credit is needed to tell which is which.

(Be sure to visit the RSMF website for [TONY'S full review](#) of *The Loner: The Complete Series*).

MYSTERY IMAGE CONTEST

In each Newsletter, several "mystery" images from Serling productions are presented for you to identify. The entry with the most correct answers will receive an RSMF gift (T-shirt, etc.). In case of a tie, the first correct entry received wins.

WINNER: Summer 2016

The winner was drawn from among all those with correct answers.

David Quillen-South Gate, CA

Other finalists:

- Roger Scarlett-Edinboro, PA
- Paul Giammarco-Cumberland, RI
- Glenn Palmer-Ithaca, NY



ANSWERS:

1. Seven Days in May
2. The Time Element
3. Forbidden Area

NEW CONTEST



E-mail your entry, identifying images by number, to:

GordonWebb@rodserling.com

DR. CHRISTIAN AND THE TWILIGHT ZONE



Much has been written about Serling's 1949 script, "To Live a Dream" that gave him his first national audience on the popular *Dr. Christian* radio program. In May 1949 Serling and his wife traveled by train from Yellow Springs, Ohio to NYC to attend the live announcement of the show's award-winners and for Rod to be interviewed on the air by the show's star Jean Hersholt.

When the radio drama of a boxer and a hopeful young boy did air on December 7th, 1949, Hersholt closed by saying, "... I know you enjoyed tonight's story by Rod Serling, a G.I. student at Antioch College and a veteran of the Pacific. His ambition is to be a writer and I hope this will be a long step towards achieving his goal." And it was.

Many Serling scholars have pointed out that Serling's continuous refining of a story about a boxer being denied greatness in the ring was first penned while Serling was at Antioch and he would continue to polish until the groundbreaking drama "Requiem for a Heavyweight" in 1956.

What is not widely known is that Serling wrote, at a minimum, two other scripts for the *Dr. Christian* radio program. Neither script has a date but by comparing the typeface on the scripts -- it's obvious that the first, "The Dust By Any Other Name" was written on the typewriter he had during his college years and the second, "The Long Black Night," was written after graduation but before 1953.

"The Dust By Any Other Name" tells the story of a *Dr. Christian* recalling a man, Abner Bodner, convinced that his is "composed of one part the milk of human kindness, one part of the fruit of human compassion, two parts of unselfishness... and just a ...a 'smigeon' (sp) of compatibility" can allow men - even children - to admit mistakes and show mercy in their justice against their aggressors."

Serling used this script as a starting point for his *Twilight Zone* episode "Dust" that originally aired January 6, 1961. That story is about a man waiting to be executed for killing a child, by accident, while drunk. After the hanging rope breaks, the "dust" creates a sense of mercy among the town people, including the child's parents, and an agreement is reached that there has been enough death and the execution is halted.

The second drama, "The Long Black Night," is the other part of this *Twilight Zone* episode. There is no dust... but a hit-and-run accident that injures an eight year old little boy. *Dr. Christian*, after reading what the newspaper has written, points accusations towards a man in the doctor's care, without any evidence beyond speculation of people (in this way reminiscent of "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street") that creates distrust and flames prejudice. In many ways, the language is true to what Serling would continually write about his entire career: a mob full of emotion taking away an individual's rights. *Dr. Christian* warns the reporter, "it is the kind of justice that comes without the privilege of judge and jury. It's the kind of mistaken justice that comes from a community turned into a mob... a mob beset by emotions, misgivings, frustrations, and complete lack of logic or sense of fair play. If we let things take their course... if we allow ourselves time to cool off - our temperatures - and our thought processes, we can do more good toward capturing the persons responsible than going off half-cocked as a thousand self-appointed deputies..."

Eventually the man who did hit the boy is found... it was "some fool who'd had too much to drink...driving through town. After it happened he got the idea of putting it off on someone else...a hitchhiker...your patient....Guy said he couldn't stand his conscience any longer..."

The first script ends with the *Dr. Christian* giving a soliloquy, just as Serling did at the end of *Twilight Zone* episodes. *Dr. Christian* explains why the "dust" could never work because, "it was destined for failure from the beginning because its inventor supplied it with hope and optimism without technical perfection." But Serling ends the radio play with why this common man, this believer, is a success, "Because his courage; his sincerity; his faith; his honesty were what will still be needed as long as men work and struggle for peace. They'll be a part of the tools to achieve that peace. (PAUSE) They give medals to men who help win victory in war. They deserve them. All of them. But let's not forget the Abner Bodners - the little people who don't know very much about bullets and bombs - only the hearts and consciences of men!"

Of course, Serling was writing during the Cold War era... a time when just making an accusation could cause you to be investigated, demeaned, or publicly assaulted through intimidation.... just like today's political climate. What Serling was advocating was mercy. Serling never shied away from stating his moral convictions of equality of all men. Serling was asking for justice, not to be blinded by emotions or persuaded without evidence... nor was Serling asking us to do nothing. Serling above all else was asking us to look at the world, to treat each other with kindness and, with cool heads, acct.

Amy Boyle Johnston

ROD SERLING -- THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

When I consider many of the themes prevalent in Rod Serling's work — they echo values from sermons at our local Unitarian-Universalist church. Not that U-U's are big on "sermonizing... in fact when I attended my first U-U service back in the 70's I felt as if I was attending a college lecture (our church in Ithaca, N.Y. was a stone's-throw from the Ivy League campus of Cornell University).

Many Unitarians were raised in another religion, but later joined this liberal denomination whose cornerstone centers on justice and human rights. While there's no required "doctrine" — most Unitarian Universalists believe in:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another;

Perhaps one of the denomination's "seven principles" says it best: "respect for the interdependent web of all existence." If this sounds like a slogan for The Sierra Club or another environmental organization -- it's much broader than that. And this is where, in my view, Unitarianism and "Serling-ism" come together.

I discovered this connection while reading [A Critical History of Television's *The Twilight Zone*, 1959-1964](#) by Don Presnell and Marty McGee. Most of this book's content simply lists each episode with synopsis, cast and a brief commentary. But one outstanding feature is a breakdown by Genre/Theme. This listing of their "top-ten" themes shows the number of episodes related to each:

- HUMAN CONFLICT & CIVIL UNREST (26)
- RELATIONSHIPS: love & marriage (23)
- ISOLATION & LONLINESS (19)
- FAMILIES (18)
- AGING (16)
- HYPOCRISY & PREJUDICE (15)
- IMMORTALITY (9)
- WORLD WAR I & II (8)
- NUCLEAR WAR: threat or aftermath (7)
- POLITICAL OPPRESSION (6)

According to a 2007 article in [UU WORLD](#) magazine, the Serlings attended the U-U church in Santa Monica -- near their west-coast home. And both of the Serling daughters (Jodi and Anne) were married by Unitarian ministers in Ithaca, NY.

Where did the themes listed above come from? Rod was born to a Jewish family in Syracuse, NY and was always proud of his Jewish heritage. But after moving to Binghamton, NY when he was two -- he experienced anti-Semitism while growing up in this conservative, blue-collar city. During World War II he was a paratrooper in the Philippines -- where he was wounded, and saw first-hand the horrors of war. Or, it may have been his college days at Antioch, which the [N. Y. Times](#) labeled as "the most liberal of liberal arts colleges." This is where he met his future wife Carol Kramer -- whose family was Unitarian.

In any case, Serling's moral views are evident even in his early work. A case in point: his 1955 Emmy Award-winning script -- *Patterns* -- where a greedy corporate CEO hires a young executive to, essentially, force an older man

out. The CEO badgers the old guy until, in a state of panic over losing his job, he dies of a heart-attack -- leaving a wife and young son behind. Whether consciously or not... Serling seems to be expressing his U-U beliefs in this powerful story about "the evils of corporate greed." And later, his groundbreaking series *The Twilight Zone* would be made timeless through its universal themes that still resonate today.



Jodi Serling — walking down the aisle with her Dad — at the U-U Church in Ithaca, NY (1974)



Patterns—Kraft Television Theater, Jan. 12, 1955



Well-wishers wave to the Serlings as they leave for their honeymoon (L-R: a friend of Carol...Rod's brother Bob...their mother Esther... Carol's parents...Carol and Rod)

R.S.M.F. PROFILE

Andrew Polak—President

Andy was born in Binghamton NY and attended Binghamton North High School . He graduated from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Albany NY) with a degree in Pharmacy and is currently a community pharmacist in nearby Vestal, NY. He grew up a fan of *The Twilight Zone* and *Night Gallery* — later realizing Rod Serling shared his hometown.

That prompted him to look further into Rod's prolific career which garnered a great respect for his talent. Helen Foley, who founded the ROD SERLING MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, was a family friend and that's how Andy became involved — joining the Board of Directors in 1989. He has held the offices of treasurer, secretary and currently president.

There have been many great moments being part of RSMF. Some highlights include attending Rod's Hollywood Walk of Fame ceremony, two TZ conventions in Hollywood, several Rod Serling Conferences at Ithaca College, many local film festivals, a celebrity TZ reading at the NYC Paley Center, and being able to participate in Larry Kassan's "TZ@50" celebration here in Binghamton. One of his greatest joys, though, is hearing from RSMF's scholarship winners and knowing how proud Rod would be knowing these students were being honored in his name.

While having fond memories of RSMF'S past, Andy is looking forward to our future and several exciting upcoming projects. Stay posted for more details!



Andy — riding the RECREATION PARK CAROUSEL in Binghamton — recently refurbished in memory of Rod Serling

From...



the PHOTO
ARCHIVE
at the RSMF

(Find lots more on
our [website](#))



Rod and Carol dote on daughters Jodi and Anne in December 1959. Photo: Binghamton Press



Rod swimming with skis, Cayuga Lake, August 1960.
Source: Dick Smith

GOT QUESTIONS ?

Members of this distinguished organization know a fair amount about Rod Serling... but if there's something you've always wondered about...or have questions about an obscure Serling work — just [send us an e-mail...](#) and one of our resident "experts" will try to fulfill your request in a future newsletter.

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The caricature of Rod Serling on our masthead is by the late Johnny Hart — internationally-known cartoonist ("B.C." and "The Wizard of Id")... another creative genius who called the Binghamton area "home."

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