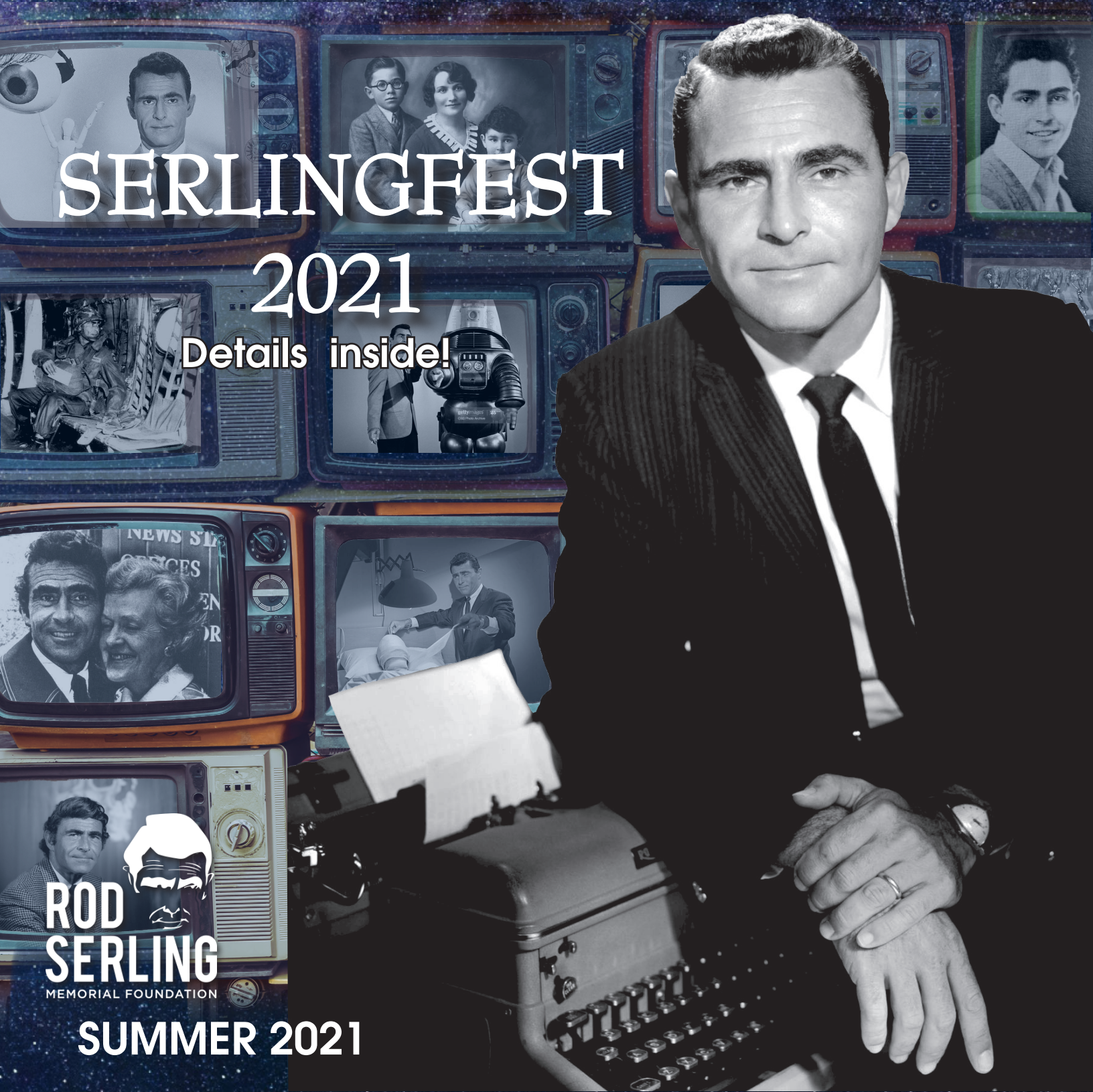


# DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION

The Official Newsletter of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

## SERLINGFEST 2021

Details inside!



**ROD  
SERLING**  
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

**SUMMER 2021**



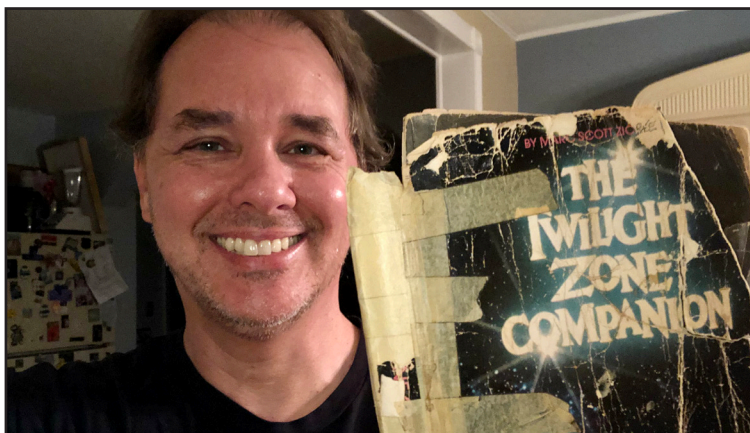
# FOUNDATION

## NOTES FROM NICK

### An Update from RSMF President Nick Parisi

Hello again and welcome to our summer 2021 newsletter. This time around, the big news is that SerlingFest 2021 is going to happen, and IN PERSON! This year's celebration of all things Rod Serling will be held October 16 and 17 in Rod Serling's hometown, Binghamton, New York, and our Guest of Honor is Marc Zicree, author of *The Twilight Zone Companion*.

On Saturday, October 16, we will be at Binghamton's Forum Theatre, which has hosted each of our previous SerlingFests. On Sunday, October 17, we will be at another nearby location, yet to be determined. Those who have attended our prior events know that we always arrange a "kickoff" to the Fest, and so you can expect events to be happening on Friday, October 15 as well. Details about scheduling, locations, and additional guests will be posted



Nick Parisi and his copy of *The Twilight Zone Companion*.

to [www.rodserling.com](http://www.rodserling.com) as soon as possible. And if you can't attend in person, rest assured, we plan to livestream as much of SerlingFest as possible online.

Our prior SerlingFests have

generated funds that have helped the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation continue its mission of educating the public about Rod Serling's creative genius. The goal of this year's SerlingFest will be to fund the creation and installation

of a six-foot-tall statue of Rod in his beloved Recreation Park, just a few blocks from his boyhood home. To accomplish our goal, we will be launching a Kickstarter campaign at SerlingFest. We have compiled several different packages of items that we will be offering in exchange for donations, including miniature replicas of the actual statue that will stand in Recreation Park and bricks that you can personalize and make part of the statue's foundation for as long as it lasts. If you can't make it to SerlingFest in person, please stay tuned to [www.rodserling.com](http://www.rodserling.com) for news about our Kickstarter – and help us spread the word!

Thanks, everyone. We hope to see you in Binghamton this October!

Nicholas Parisi  
President, The Rod Serling  
Memorial Foundation



#### OUR PLEDGE

Rod Serling's achievements in playwriting, speech making and broadcasting are considerable and important. As members of The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation, we dedicate ourselves to promote and preserve this great man's contributions to the Arts and Humanities.

We pledge to educate the public about Rod Serling's genius and his passion, hoping that they will understand and appreciate his mastery of the creative arts, his unique understanding of human relationships, his esteem as a writer, his generosity as a speaker in and around Binghamton, and his uncompromising commitment to quality.

**Rod Serling Memorial Foundation**  
**Box 2101, Binghamton, New York USA 13902-2101**

[www.RodSerling.com](http://www.RodSerling.com)

NON-PROFIT PLEDGE The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation is operated exclusively for the above and other non-profit purposes, and is registered with the IRS as a non-profit entity. No part of any net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any private member.

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## NEWS DESK

### Marc Zicree's Latest Journey into The Twilight Zone

By Nick Parisi

In 1978, twenty-two-year-old Marc Zicree began researching the production history of *The Twilight Zone*. Just a few years after Rod Serling's death, Zicree was wading through stacks of 16mm films in Carol Serling's garage and interviewing every possible person who had worked on the series. The result was 1982's *The Twilight Zone Companion*, instantly and still justifiably billed as "the Twilight Zone bible." This revolutionary work not only became indispensable for *Twilight Zone* fans, its success provided the template for every television series "companion" book that followed.

In the nearly forty years since the book's publication, Zicree has never left the *Twilight Zone* for long. One of his many forays back into the fifth dimension involved providing commentary to 54 of the series' 156 episodes released on BluRay. Now, Zicree endeavors to complete this mission by providing commentaries for each of the remaining 102 episodes.

Over the course of one year, Zicree plans to post weekly, live commentaries about two differ-



Marc Scott Zicree will be a special guest at SerlingFest 2021 in Binghamton, NY – October 15-17.

ent episodes of *The Twilight Zone*. Once all 102 episodes are completed, these commentaries will be bundled as a downloadable collection of audio files. Zicree is offering several different versions of these commentaries with several different bonus items, which are detailed at [www.twilightzonecommentaries.com](http://www.twilightzonecommentaries.com).

We look forward to chatting with Marc about this project when he is our Guest of Honor at SerlingFest 2021.

# FOUNDATION

## RSMF PROFILE

### Shelley Young - Board Of Directors, Member

Shelley Young, our first Canadian board member, was born in Toronto, Ontario, but she currently resides in a small rural town south of Ottawa, Ontario. Most Serling/TZ fans would recognize her social media name, Shelley McKay Young, as she is administrator/moderator for over 20 *Twilight Zone*, Rod Serling and The Loner related Facebook groups.

Shelley says the main *Twilight Zone* Facebook group was less than 300 members when she joined in 2007, and since then it has exploded, currently sitting at over 42K members -- and growing! She feels strongly that

someone running the group should be a dedicated diehard fan who is involved daily, and with overwhelming group support she was welcomed into an administrative role in December 2014 - and the rest is history!

Shelley has been featured as a guest on a TZ podcast discussing two specific episodes, and she was a speaker during a panel discussion about *Twilight Zone* in Modern Times at SerlingFest in 2019 where she spoke about her role in TZ social media. She has also been a special guest host twice on the 'Radio Once More' radio show, during 2 separate

*Twilight Zone* nights featuring Helen & Johnny Holmes.

Even though she lives north of the border, Shelley has been a valued friend to the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation since joining, doing whatever she can to help promote Serling-related events. She hopes to display her extensive *Twilight Zone* collection in a dedicated TZ theme room in her home... but her husband has yet to green light this plan!

In her new position on the RSMF Board of Directors, Shelley hopes to become the "voice of the fans" - sharing thoughts, ideas,



Shelley poses with the Rod Serling stamp on display during SerlingFest 2019 in Binghamton, NY

..... suggestions and input she receives from others as she continues her mission to bring all Zoners together.

## Rod Serling Archives Closed Temporarily

By Gordon C. Webb

Ithaca College has announced that "The Rod Serling Archives" - a Special Collection housed in the College's Library - will be unavailable while inventory and maintenance is conducted. In addition to the famous Serling Collection, the I-C archives

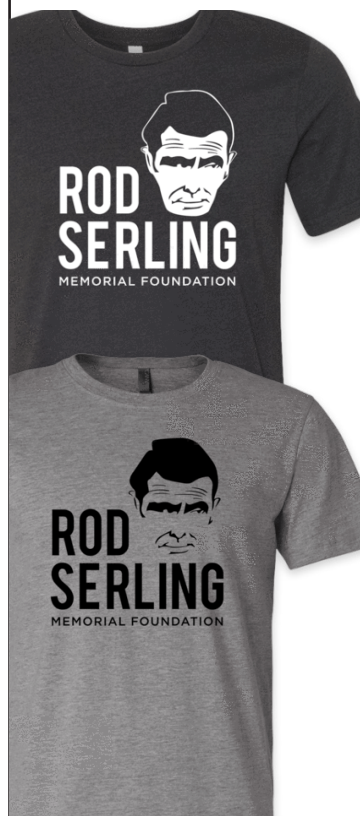
contains records documenting the ongoing history of the College since its founding in 1892.

Rod Serling -- best known as creator of the timeless television series *The Twilight Zone* - taught screenwriting at Ithaca during the late 1960s and early 1970s. His wife Carol was also connected



The original Rod Serling Archives in the Park School of Communications building at Ithaca (about 1992).

## RSMF MERCHANDISE



The RSMF has teamed up with Muckles Ink - a retail & commercial screen-printed apparel company owned and operated by Binghamton University Alumni - to print and distribute our official shirt! Proceeds will benefit the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation. It's a great conversation starter to meet fellow fans and a rewarding way to show your support for Rod's legacy!

Details:

- 52/48 Airlume combed and ring-spun cotton/polyester
- Unisex sizing
- Coverstitched collar and sleeves
- Shoulder-to-shoulder taping
- Retail fit, side seams
- Tear-away label

Available in black with white print or grey with black print; sizes S to 4X - \$22.00 plus shipping.

Muckles also offers a wide range of Binghamton and Binghamton University shirts and tote bags.

[Follow this link on the Muckles website for information.](#)

to the College as a member of the Board of Trustees for 18 years, and following the writer's untimely death in 1975 she began donating examples of her husband's work.

First housed in the Roy H. Park School of Communications, the Rod Serling Archives were established as a resource for teaching and research, and the collection has never been "open to the public." It was later determined that the "Ithaca College Archives and Special Collections" was better equipped for long-term storage, and the Serling material was transferred there during the summer of 1997. These generous gifts have continued over the years, making it the largest single collection of television scripts and screenplays by this extraordinary writer. Also included are Serling's six Emmy

Awards, the original "sponsor films" from *The Twilight Zone*'s first network run, original typed scripts for most episodes of the series, as well as other awards, photos, films and books from Serling's personal collection.

According to an Ithaca College news release, library staff "will be conducting an inventory of (all) our collections, documenting which assets are duplicated, engaging in maintenance to ensure the ongoing, long-term preservation of our existing assets, and preserving/cataloging items that have been more recently contributed."

Following the current inventory and maintenance period, the College plans to restore some limited services. It is hoped this will be possible by spring 2022.



# IN MEMORIAM

## Richard Donner, The Man Who Wrangled A Gremlin

By Tony Albarella

Richard Donner, director of some of the most successful motion pictures of the 1970s and 1980s, passed away on July 5, 2021. Film buffs know Donner as the man who helmed modern-day classics like *The Omen* (1976), *Superman* (1978), *The Goonies* (1982), *Scrooged* (1988), and all four movies in the blockbuster *Lethal Weapon* series. Television fans may realize that Donner's directorial career started on the small screen in 1960; *Twilight Zone* fans likely know that Donner directed six fifth-season TZ episodes: "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," "From Agnes – With Love," "Sounds and Silences," "The Jeopardy Room," "The Brain Center at Whipple's" and "Come Wander with Me."

Of those forays into the Zone, one – "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," written by Richard Matheson and starring William Shatner – earned iconic television status and is frequently cited as one of the top-five episodes of a series brimming with beloved classics. In an earlier RSMF newsletter, I described the joy I had in interviewing Richard Donner for a Gauntlet Press title I edited, *RICHARD MATHESON'S NIGHTMARE AT 20,000 FEET*. That interview took place on January 20, 2010. Donner shared his thoughts and memories on all his *Twilight Zone* shoots, but we focused on "Nightmare," which was the subject of the book and Donner's most popular entry.

In honor of Richard Donner, and submitted for your perusal, here are the director's memories of the 'Nightmare' shoot and the time he spent in Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone*.

"The show was called "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" and it certainly was a nightmare to shoot. It was a good script, it was an interesting script; it was a nightmare only because it involved big special effects for a half-hour TV show at that time. How many shows had a guy in a costume hanging by wires over an airplane wing in a rainstorm, landing on a full-size airplane set suspended over a water tank, with wind and lightning and fog machines and propellers turning?

It was scheduled for a normal three-day shoot. Halfway through the second day, the producer came in and said, "We have a problem. We have to finish tonight." We had to be out because the airplane they were using on the set at M-G-M was now needed for a feature, and since we were second-class citizens to film, we had to get off the stage. That meant I had to do a day-and-a-half's worth of work in half a day. It was impossible. The only solution was to shoot through the night until sun-up the next morning, for the first time in the history of those shows. So that's what we did. It was bizarre. I was harsh with Bill and some of the actors as the hours ticked away because there was no time for frivolity – we just had to concentrate on getting the damned thing done, and we barely did. As we were leaving, the crews were coming in to change the set. I got reamed because it took me so long and we went into so much overtime. But there was no alternative.

Another problem was that we had two or three wind machines pumping, a fog machine going, and there were heavy electric motors to turn the propellers. It was a cacophony of noise that was constant and it really got to everybody after a while. The crew thought they had gotten motors for the propellers that would run outside in the rain, but the things



Left: Donner on the set of *The Goonies* Right: A screen shot of the credit for "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet"

kept shorting out, and we'd have to take apart the bottom to replace belts and find ways to keep them dry. We'd line up shots but with everything going on, mistakes would happen on almost every take and then we'd have to improvise just to keep going.

The nightmare ends there. The shoot was intense but I had a great relationship with everyone. They were fantastic -- Bill Shatner and Asa Maynor and Christine White. I remember the cast well, because while it was a tough shoot, we managed to have a lot of fun. I also had a great special effects crew. They all came from M-G-M and they were the old masters. At one point, Ed Byrnes, who was

dating Asa Maynor, visited the set to see her. He and Billy Shatner decided to work out a practical joke on me. I was busy with something and suddenly I heard an argument. I looked up, and the two of them were up on the wing, having a fistfight and yelling at each other. As I started over to break it up, I saw Billy's body fly through the air and hit the ground in the pit, twenty feet below.

My heart stopped. I thought, "Oh my God, if he's dead I have to start shooting all over again!" Seriously, though, I ran down to the body in a panic, and what I found was a dummy laying on the ground. I looked up, and there were the two of them, laughing

their guts out. It was actually what I needed to relieve the tension and it really loosened me up. I was the dummy, they had really put me on, and it was great.

Those were the kinds of things we did on that show. I loved them. I loved everyone on the stage. They were good people who worked well together. And later on, the episode was so well-received that I got back into M-G-M's good graces and was lucky enough to come back and direct five more *Twilight Zones* in that final season. "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" was a tough shoot but something I really loved and was proud of. In the years that I did TV, I was so fortunate and so lucky to be doing what I was doing. I loved it. I don't remember ever having a bad experience. I'm serious. I may have had a bad experience with an actor or a producer, but not in a show.

And doing *The Twilight Zone* was like hating Friday when it came around, because you were so entrenched in something that was so emotional and personal that you just hated for it to end. The *Twilight Zone* was a very special moment in my life and the show itself became a mentor to me. It introduced me to a kind of dramatic freedom that I had never had before. To this day I still draw upon it.



I am sorry to learn of his passing. He was a wonderful director. I don't really have many memories of the shoot. It was chaotic; it was supposed to be a 4 day shoot & they cut it in half. They kept us there all night on the 2nd day to finish it. We were all sleep deprived.

— William Shatner (@WilliamShatner) Posted on Twitter July 6, 2021



# RSMF ARCHIVE

## A Collection of Panorama Yearbooks and School Newspapers

by Andrew Polak

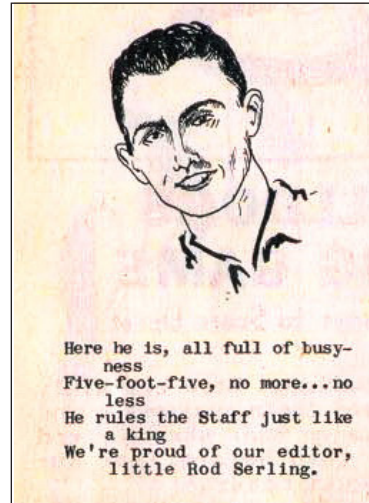
Rod Serling graduated with the January class of 1943 from Binghamton Central High School. A commemorative plaque now stands in front of the building which houses the Rod Serling School of Fine Arts. You can also find the beautifully restored Helen Foley theatre there -- named for Rod's mentor and Founder of the Memorial Foundation.

We are lucky enough to have in our collection a 1941 Panorama Annual, a 1942 Panorama Annual, two 1943 Panorama Annuals as well as four issues of the Panorama newspaper dated February 17, 1942, October 22,

1942, November 19, 1942 and December 18, 1942. Rod was 'Associate Editor - Editorial' of the latter three issues. He was featured on the front page of the first issue for being elected President of the Morning General Organization. One issue "panned" the Panorama staff including Rod with cartoons and poems.

There are some other gems -- like the small piece about the football season vs. a rival team, Union-Endicott. I've included a piece "Exit Smiling" that doesn't list an author. Powerful writing from a High School student. With the style of writing, my bet is on Rod Serling!

What do you think?



On Thanksgiving day next, we feel that you Orange and Blackers will be seeing stars, great big blue and white ones with husky-looking bull-dogs sitting on each one. No more ignoble defeats for our side, no more saying "wait for next season", no more excuses from anyone. It'll be Central's ball game next week, for it's pretty well decided around here that THIS IS OUR YEAR, Union-Endicott.

R. S.

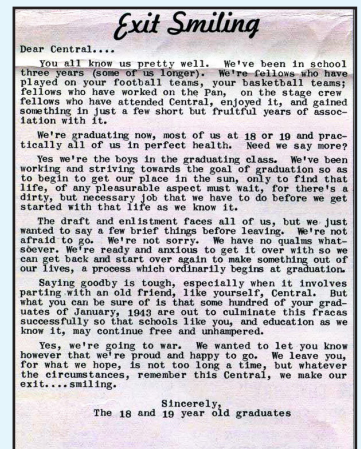
Dear Central...

You all know us pretty well. We've been in school three years (some of us longer). We're fellows who have played on your football teams, your basketball teams; fellows who have worked on the Pan, on the stage crew fellows who have attended Central, enjoyed it, and gained something in just a few short but fruitful years of association with it.

We're graduating now, most of us at 18 or 19 and practically all of us in perfect health. Need we say more?

Yes we're the boys in the graduating class. We've been working and striving towards the goal of graduation so as to begin to get our place in the sun, only to find that life, of any pleasurable aspect must wait, for there's a dirty, but necessary job that we have to do before we get started with that life as we know it.

The draft and enlistment faces all of us, but we just wanted to say a few brief things before leaving. We're not afraid to go. We're not sorry. We have no qualms whatsoever. We're ready and anxious to get it over with so we can get back and start over again to make something out of our lives, a process which ordinarily begins at graduation.



Saying goody is tough, especially when it involves parting with an old friend, like yourself, Central. But what you can be sure of is that some hundred of your graduates of January, 1943 are out to culminate this fracas successfully so that schools like you, and education as we know it, may continue free and unhampered.

Yes, we're going to war. We wanted to let you know however that we're proud and happy to go. We leave you, for what we hope, is not too long a time, but whatever the circumstances, remember this Central, we make our exit.... smiling.

Sincerely, The 18 and 19 year old graduates



# ROD SERLING

## Rod Serling, Activist

By Steve Schlich

Social Justice Warrior? Rod Serling would accept that moniker proudly. He waged those battles half a century before the term was invented. He called out racism and hatred in his scripts and fought battles over censorship in the press, despite the risk to his career.

He wasn't shy when public speaking, either. [Listen to a speech](#) he gave at UCLA in late 1966, where he urged his audience, "Don't ignore evil," consigning white backlash "...to its proper place, and that would have to be in a city dump some place outside of Pomona."

Sadly, many things that angered Mr. Serling have not changed. Take our recent—and ongoing—argument about the meaning and priorities of loyalty. Rod's refusal to sign an oath of loyalty to the United States, a hurdle to giving a speech at Moorpark College in California in 1968, laid bare the absurdity of such authoritarian measures...

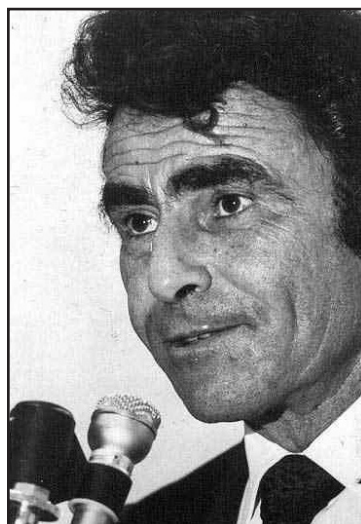
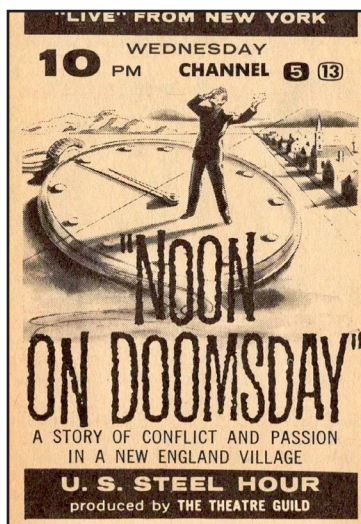
"I did not sign the oath required of me to speak here for pay. But parenthetically it might be noted that if indeed, I were hell bent to subvert the government of the United States, I would certainly have no qualms about signing anything."

He went to Moorpark, he spoke, and he conquered. [Read his entire speech](#), reproduced in the campus newspaper article "Rod Serling Rips Loyalty Oaths, The Vietnam War, And Social Inequality."

YouTube offers a healthy handful of Serling's speeches, interviews, and articles. Find a curated list of links on our web page, "[Rod Speaks Out](#)" (on the News menu). There, you can hear what he told a pre-Hogan Bob Crane about human nature. You can read his debate about TV censorship with fellow Golden Age writer Reginald Rose, his commencement speeches at Binghamton High School and Ithaca College, his affecting final interview in March 1975, and more.

The man's passion and commitment to fairness, and to our humanity, are always at the front.

I think of Rod Serling as the Shakespeare of early television, offering timeless themes of heroism and villainy. Telling tales of ordinary people fighting to survive extreme circumstances. His work examined the difficult choices that we face every day, doled out punishment



for the worst among us, cursed some of his characters with terrible luck, and offered so many a second chance.

All the while, he laid the groundwork for much that is currently on TV, and in the movies.

Despite the fantastic elements and elaborate dialog in the most famous of Serling's work, its underlying truth is very much "real world." In *The Twilight Zone*, bad guys always seem to trip themselves up: from "What You Need," and "Death's-Head Revisited" to "The Old Man in the Cave" and "The Rip Van Winkle Caper," characters are undone by their own inner demons, their pig-headedness, their greed.

Serling may have used fantastic fiction to escape the censors, but not as an escape from the world. Instead, he offered ways to understand this place where we all live: its beauty, its unfairness, its dangers. He showed ways to understand ourselves: our loves, our fears, our pleasures, our pain, our obsessions...and our cruelties to each other.

In the midst of all that, he offered the possibility of redemption. That message of hope surfaces again and again in *Twilight Zone*.

But Rod Serling had made his mark long before that iconic series—during Television's earliest formative period, a.k.a. The Golden Age of the 1950s. He recognized that

unlike stage plays or movies, early Television was a medium that excelled at close-ups and character studies.

One of his trademarks was characters facing a moral crossroads, confronting injustice and prejudice—often their own. Valid themes, but the politics of the day were frustrating for anyone who cared about justice. And the Number One fan of justice? Rod Serling, hands down.

When his scripts addressed racism, sponsors and networks censored him, to avoid angering potential customers. He fought with them publicly, in the press. He developed a reputation as "Television's Angry Young Man."

"I think it is criminal that we are not permitted to make dramatic note of social evils that exist, attribution of controversial themes as that are inherent in our society," he said in 1959 on *The Mike Wallace Interview*.

Rod was among the first to recognize the absurdity of 1950s censorship, and he was certainly among the loudest to complain about it. Jim Crow still ruled the South. Even lynchings had not ceased. But sponsors and networks alike were terrified to alienate the perpetrators of this discrimination, this hatred, this death.

Serling did not seek to silence the voices of evil, but rather to expose them: in reaction to a hate-filled—

and savagely criticized—Playboy interview of American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell, he said, "What is desperately needed to combat any ism is precisely what Playboy has given us—an interview in depth that shows us the facets of the enemy."

He responded to criticism of his own work with "The writer's role is to menace the public's conscience... He must see the arts as a vehicle of social criticism and he must focus on the issues of his time."

Rod Serling was affected deeply by the 1955 murder of 14-year old black teen, Emmett Till from Chicago, and its aftermath. Falsely accused of whistling at a white woman while visiting Mississippi, Till was kidnapped and tortured to death. Following the trial and quick acquittal, the suspects proudly confessed to the crime. In the years following, Serling wrote scripts that addressed those horrific acts in varying degrees of directness.

Each time, he was forced to modify his work to avoid offending viewers. The battles that he fought over censorship of this particular cause began in 1956, with Rod's script "Noon on Doomsday" for *The United States Steel Hour*.

It was Serling's first attempt to address Emmett Till's murder, and he recognized its potential for controversy. He performed self-censorship before submitting it, making the victim an elderly Jew and the killer a neurotic malcontent. No matter; both sponsor U.S. Steel and CBS demanded changes so as to not offend anyone. No one white, anyway.

The victim was revised to be an unspecified foreigner, and the setting became New England. They even cleared Coca Cola bottles off the set to pacify any Southerners who might be outraged. But the show still drew some 15,000 protest letters.

How dare anyone even vaguely suggest that murdering a minority was bad!

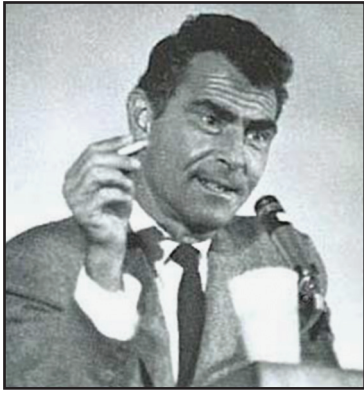
Serling's next try came two years later: "A Town Has Turned to Dust." It ran into similar censorship, despite its setting in the 1870s and its Mexican victim. He'd added a remarkable moral twist to the tale. In the climax, sheriff Rod Steiger

*Continued on following page*

**"The writer's role is to menace the public's conscience... He must see the arts as a vehicle of social criticism and he must focus on the issues of his time." - Rod Serling**



# ROD SERLING



*Continued from previous page*

confessed to his own act of racism. He shared the mob's guilt. It didn't matter. As Serling himself described, the censors "... chopped it up like a roomful of butchers at work on a steer." Quotes like that were a career risk, even for a decorated artist like Serling. But as "just the writer," he had few tools to oppose censorship.

After the politics of his script "The Arena" were censored into inoffensive babble: "I was not permitted

to have my Senators discuss any current or pressing problem...I probably would have had a much more adult play had I made it science fiction..."

He conceived and pitched *Twilight Zone* in part because as its producer and show runner, he would have the final word. He'd been a fan of fantastic fiction for years, and likely realized that such tales could slip controversial concepts past censors. "A Martian can say things a Republican and Democrat can't." And they did.

During the 1950s, Rod Serling was forced to take "no" for an answer even as he won Emmys and transformed television drama. But he never stopped putting *The Truth* into his scripts and fighting to get it onto the screen. These words, from his closing narration of "Death's-Head Revisted," express that passion well:

"The moment we forget (The Holocaust), the moment that we cease to be haunted by its remembrance, then we become the gravediggers."

## ROD SERLING WROTE THIS

*The introduction to an unpublished short story, "First Squad, First Platoon," from Serling to his as yet unborn children.*

"To My Children:

I'm dedicating my little story to you; doubtless you will be among the very few who will ever read it. It seems war stories aren't very well received at this point. I'm told they're out-dated, untimely and as might be expected - make some unpleasant reading. And, as you have no doubt already perceived, human beings don't like to remember unpleasant things. They gird themselves with the armor of wishful thinking, protect themselves with a shield of impenetrable optimism, and, with a few exceptions, seem to accomplish their "forgetting" quite admirably.

But you, my children, I don't want you to be among those who choose to forget. I want you to read my stories and a lot of others like them. I want you to fill your heads with Remarque and Tolstoy and Ernie Pyle. I want you to know what shrapnel, and "88's" and mortar shells and mustard gas mean. I want you to feel, no matter how vicariously, a semblance of the feeling of a torn limb, a burnt patch of flesh, the crippling,

numbing sensation of fear, the hopeless emptiness of fatigue. All these things are complementary to the province of War and they should be taught and demonstrated in classrooms along with the more heroic aspects of uniforms, and flags, and honor and patriotism.



I have no idea what your generation will be like. In mine we were to enjoy "Peace in our time." A very well meaning gentleman waved his umbrella and shouted those very words... less than a year before the whole world went to war. But this gentleman was suffering the worldly disease of insufferable optimism. He and his fellow humans kept polishing the rose colored glasses when actually they should have taken them off. They were sacrificing reason and reality for a brief and temporal peace of mind, the same peace of mind that many of my contemporaries derive by steadfastly refraining from remembering the War that came before."



*Excerpts from Rod's letter to The Los Angeles Times in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.; April 8, 1968*

"In his grave, we praise him for his decency - but when he walked amongst us, we responded with no decency of our own. When he suggested that all men should have a place in the sun - we put a special sanctity on the right of ownership and the privilege of prejudice by maintaining that to deny homes to Negroes was a democratic right.

Now we acknowledge his compassion - but we exercised no compassion of our own. When he asked us to understand that men take to the streets out of anguish and hopelessness and a vision of that dream dying, we bought

guns and speculated about roving agitators and subversive conspiracies and demanded law and order. We felt anger at the effects, but did little to acknowledge the causes. We extol all the virtues of the man - but we chose not to call them virtues before his death.

And now, belatedly, we talk of this man's worth - but the judgment comes late in the day as part of a eulogy when it should have been made a matter of record while he existed as a living force. If we are to lend credence to our mourning, there are acknowledgments that must be made now, albeit belatedly. We must act on the altogether proper assumption that Martin Luther King asked for nothing but that which was his due... He asked only for equality, and it is that which we denied him."



*Excerpt from "As I Knew Him, My Dad, Rod Serling" by Anne Serling*

At some point during these terrible days my father also writes something perhaps intended as a letter to a newspaper or magazine editor. It is written on his letterhead and clearly typed by him, not his secretary. I read it for the first time forty-six years after it was written. I can hear my father's anguish:

"More than a man has died. More

than a gallant young President has been put to death. More than a high office of a land has been assaulted. What is to be mourned now is an ideal. What has been assassinated is a faith in ourselves. What has been murdered is a belief in our own decency, our capacity to love, our sense of order and logic and civilized decorum . . .

. . . To the Leftists and the Rightists, to the Absolutists, to the men of little faith but strong hate, and to

all of us who have helped plant this ugly and loathsome seed that blossomed forth on a street in Dallas on last Friday—this is the only dictum we can heed now. For civilization to survive it must remain civilized. And if there is to be any hope for our children and theirs—we must never again allow violence to offer itself as an excuse for our own insecurities, our weaknesses and our own fears. This is not an arguable doctrine for simply a better life. It is a condition for our continued existence."



## It's A Real Good That You Said That

By Gail Flug

Countless Twilight Zone fans have embraced this timeless show to the point of obsession. Our enthusiasm can be monotonous among the uninitiated; it can prompt amazement or annoyance when we can identify an episode by its title within three seconds; and it can produce the kind of sarcastic eye-roll usually reserved for Trekkies or Star Wars nerds. But we Zoners have feelings, too!

*Submitted for your approval: Ten ways to tick off a Twilight Zone fan*

- 10 - My favorite is "Next Stop Willoughby."
- 9 - Is that the show about



- vampires?
- 8 - This show is boring - it's too slow.
- 7 - Those effects look so fake.
- 6 - How can you love such an old TV show?

- 5 - Why are they in black and white? Someone should colorize them.
- 4 - I guessed the ending in the first two minutes.
- 3 - This makes no sense!

- 2 - I love the one with Talking Tina! And the worst...
- 1 - Rod Sterling

For those guilty of any of these, the cornfield awaits!

## ROD SERLING WEB SOURCES

[Official RSMF Facebook Page](#)

[Anne Serling Books Facebook Page](#)

[Official RSMF YouTube Channel](#)

[Dimensions of Imagination Facebook Page](#)

[The Largest Twilight Zone Facebook Group](#)

[Official RSMF Twitter Page](#)

Official page for the book *Rod Serling: His Life, Work, And Imagination* by RSMF President Nick Parisi

[Night Gallery Facebook Page](#)

[The Twilight Zone Podcast](#) Hosted by Tom Elliot

[Shadows and Substance](#)  
A great Rod Serling blog written by RSMF member Paul Gallagher

[Rod Serling Film Festival](#)  
Annual student filmmaker contest sponsored by WSKG of Binghamton, NY

[Night Gallery - Art of Darkness Facebook page](#)

[Television Academy Hall Of Fame](#)  
Rod Serling's bio and list of awards

[Official page for the book Art Of Darkness](#)

Coming soon...

*The Official Rod Serling Memorial Foundation Podcast!*

## BINGHAMTON

### Rare Photo Spotted in Famed Hometown Eatery



by Gordon Webb

Rod Serling loved Binghamton, New York and visited often – even after becoming a famous writer and TV star. This photograph is displayed at Little Venice in Serling's hometown— along with photos of actors, sports figures and other famous people. Former RSMF President, current Board member and Binghamton native Andrew Polak spotted it and took this snapshot of the original photo hanging on the wall. It shows Rod and friends enjoying a good time at this popular

restaurant which has been serving great Italian food since 1946 (I can still recall eating spaghetti there as a young boy). Sadly, no one — including Carol Serling, who visited there once with Andy — seems to know anything about the others pictured. Do YOU recognize anyone in this picture... perhaps an actor, or famous Binghamtonian? Please let me know if you know anything about this historic scene: [GordonWebb@rodserling.com](mailto:GordonWebb@rodserling.com).

*Little Venice is located at 111 Chenango St., Binghamton.*

## CALLING ALL FANS! WE ASK YOUR HELP!

*Dimensions Of Imagination* is continually expanding with more intriguing topics, exclusive articles and rare photos. And, with SerlingFest and our Kickstarter just around the corner, we ask your help.



The legal license plate of RSMF president Nick Parisi.

to cover in the newsletter? Is there a website, blog or podcast we should know about? Do you wish to share your one-of-a-kind item, tattoo, original artwork,

or an extensive collection of anything Serling-related for the Fandom section? Should we do more in-person and virtual events to enhance your membership experience?

We are committed to educating and immortalizing Rod Serling's works and achievements, but are also dedicated to fellow Serling enthusiasts who keep the foundation funded. With this in mind, we want to hear from you about interesting ideas and suggestions for our newsletter and events.

Is there a topic you want us

We promise our board of directors will consider everything, and placement in the newsletter is not guaranteed, but let's hear it! Send your thoughts, links, and photos to [GailFlug@rodserling.com](mailto:GailFlug@rodserling.com).



### You Shop Amazon Gives

When you join AmazonSmile you can make a donation to the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation every time you shop. Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to us. Sign up at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

# THE COMPLETE COLLECTION OF...

## Rod Serling in Print

By Nick Parisi

Our autumn 2020 newsletter included a discussion of the complete collection of published *Twilight Zone* scripts. Our next newsletter covered a complete Rod Serling DVD collection, and our most recent issue offered a complete list of Rod's produced teleplays and screenplays. In this issue, we'll undertake the somewhat more straightforward mission of addressing a complete collection of Rod's published prose fiction, with occasional detours into essays, forewords and scripts.

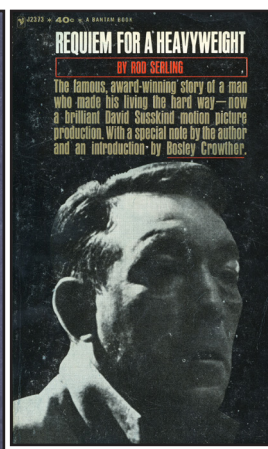
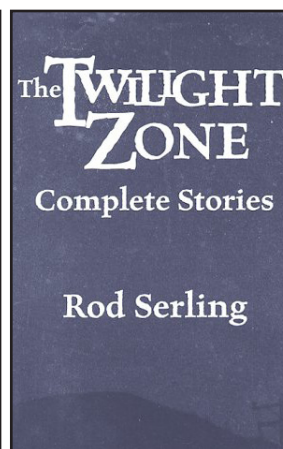
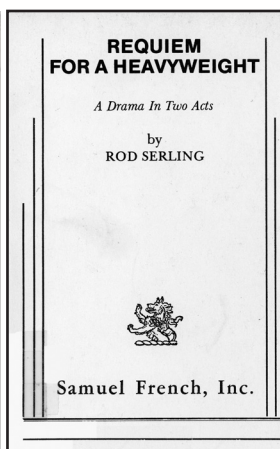
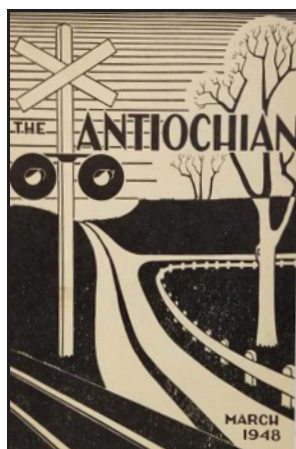
During his lifetime, Rod Serling published six collections of prose fiction, one collection of teleplays and commentary (*Patterns*), and one novelization (*Requiem for a Heavyweight*). The earliest of these, *Patterns*, was first published by Simon and Schuster in September 1957, but if we are going to give this discussion the same "completist" treatment as our previous installments, we must begin much earlier than that.

Rod's first piece of published fiction was a short story, "The Good Right Hand," in the March 1948 issue of *The Antiochian*, the literary magazine of Antioch College, which Rod attended from 1946 until 1950. This boxing-themed story has often been cited as a rough first draft of "Requiem for a Heavyweight," but the plots of the two are significantly different. Rod's second publication was also in *The Antiochian*, "The Air is Free," a radio script in the October 1948 issue.

As might be expected, original copies of these issues of *The Antiochian* are virtually impossible to find.

After graduating from Antioch, Rod completely transitioned into writing teleplays and screenplays and his next publication was the teleplay for *Studio One*'s "The Strike" in *Best Television Plays* (1956), edited by Gore Vidal.

The aforementioned *Patterns* followed in 1957. The first book to bear Rod's name alone, *Patterns* collected the title teleplay along with *Playhouse 90*'s "Requiem for a Heavyweight," *U.S. Steel Hour*'s "The Rack," *Kraft Theatre*'s "Old MacDonald Had a Curve" and lengthy essays about Rod's experiences writing for television. That same year, "Noon on Doomsday," Rod's controversial teleplay for *U.S. Steel Hour*, was published in *Television Plays for Writers* (edited by A.S. Burack) along with an essay discussing the genesis and censorship of the teleplay.



Once *The Twilight Zone* debuted in October 1959, Rod apparently felt that hosting the series, serving as its executive producer, and writing most of the episodes was not quite enough work to do, and so he contracted with Bantam Books to write short story adaptations of his own teleplays for the series. Rod had not written prose fiction since his college days, and he admitted to "sweating blood" while writing these adaptations. In April 1960, the first of these collections, *Stories from the Twilight Zone*, was published. It contained short story adaptations of "The Mighty Casey," "Escape Clause," "Walking Distance," "The Fever," "Where is Everybody?" and "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street."

The second collection, *More Stories from the Twilight Zone*, was published in April 1961 and contained "The Lonely," "Mr. Dingle, the Strong," "A Thing About Machines," "The Big, Tall Wish," "A Stop at Wiloughby," "The Odyssey of Flight 33" and "Dust." The third, *New Stories from the Twilight Zone*, followed in May 1962 and contained "The Whole Truth," "The Shelter," "Showdown with Rance McGrew," "The Night of the Meek," "The Midnight Sun" and "The Rip Van Winkle Caper."

In 1962, *Doubleday* collected fourteen of these nineteen short stories and published them in a hardcover book club edition, *From the Twilight Zone*. In 1986, Bantam Spectra published all nineteen stories as *Stories from The Twilight Zone*. This collection was later released as *Twilight Zone: The Complete Stories* (TV Books, 1998).

To promote the release of the feature film *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, Bantam published what could be called a novelization in 1962, but at the time was billed as a "reading copy" of the screenplay. This latter description more

accurately describes the book as Rod did not flesh out his script quite enough to justify the more substantial implication of the term "novelization."

In September 1967, Rod's first and only collection of original prose fiction, *The Season to be Wary*, was published. It included three novellas: "Eyes," "Color Scheme" and "The Escape Route." Rod would later adapt the first and last of these as segments of the *Night Gallery* pilot film (the only time he wrote scripts based on his own stories instead of vice versa).

Once *Rod Serling's Night Gallery* began as a weekly series, Rod renewed his relationship with Bantam Books, delivering short story adaptations of six scripts that were published as *Night Gallery* in November 1971. This collection included "The Sole Survivor" (televised as "Lone Survivor"), "Make Me Laugh," "Pamela's Voice," "Clean Kills and Other Trophies," "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar" and "Does the Name Grimsby Do Anything to You?" -- based on an unproduced teleplay. *Night Gallery 2* followed in December 1972 and contained "Collector's Items" (televised as "Rare Objects"), "The Messiah on Mott Street," "The Different Ones," "Lindemann's Catch" and an original story, "Suggestion."

*Night Gallery 2* was Rod's final published fiction until the appearance of two anthologies edited by Carol Serling in 2009 and 2010 for Tor Books. The first, *Twilight Zone: 19 Original Stories on the 50th Anniversary*, contained an unproduced treatment/outline titled "El Moe." The second, *More Stories from the Twilight Zone*, included Rod's short story, "An Odyssey, or Whatever You Call it, Concerning Baseball." Rod's three collections of *Twilight Zone* stories, two collections of

*Night Gallery* stories, as well as *The Season to be Wary*, *Patterns* and *Requiem for a Heavyweight* are all available in new editions via [www.rodserlingbooks.com](http://www.rodserlingbooks.com).

Miscellaneous:

Four additional short story anthologies bear Rod's name. *Rod Serling's Triple W: Witches, Warlocks, and Werewolves* (1963) and *Rod Serling's Devils and Demons* (1967) include introductions written by Rod, though reliable sources claim that they were ghost edited by science fiction writer Gordon R. Dickson. *Rod Serling's Other Worlds* was released posthumously (in 1978) as was *Rod Serling's Night Gallery Reader* (1987), which collected eighteen stories that had been adapted for *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*, including Rod's "The Escape Route."

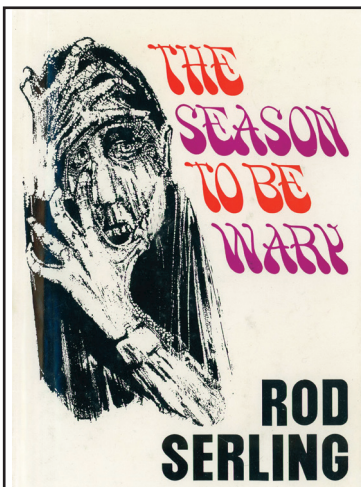
In 1961, Rod provided a foreword for *B.C. Strikes Back*, a collection of B.C. comic strips created by friend and fellow Broome County resident, Johnny Hart, who later donated the sketch of Rod that is the basis for our Foundation's logo.

In 1963, Rod contributed an essay to *My Most Memorable Christmas*, published by Pocket Books and edited by Gerald Walker. This essay was republished in the January 1982 issue of *Twilight Zone: The Magazine* as "My Most Memorable Christmas" (the essays in the book by that name are all untitled). *Twilight Zone: The Magazine* published several of Rod's *Twilight Zone* scripts during its eight-year history, but for our purposes here, we will instead mention only a few previously unpublished pieces that appeared in that magazine's pages. The September 1982 issue included Rod's radio script, "A Machine to Answer the Question," which had been produced on the series *It Happens*

*Continued on following page*



# THE COMPLETE COLLECTION OF...



Continued from previous page

to You in 1954, and the March/April 1983 issue included Rod's notes for a potential *Twilight Zone* feature film. These notes incorporated an outline that J. Michael Straczynski adapted into "Our Selena is Dying," an episode of the 1980s incarnation of *The Twilight Zone*. Straczynski later wrote a short story based on his own teleplay and Rod's outline, which was published in *Tales from the New Twilight Zone* (1989). All of Rod's original *Twilight Zone* scripts (plus the script for *Desilu Playhouse*'s "The Time Element") were collected in *As Timeless as Infinity: The Complete Twilight Zone Scripts of Rod Serling*, a ten-volume series edited by Foundation Board Member Tony Albarella and published between 2004 and 2010.

After having narrated the films *In*

*Search of Ancient Astronauts* and *In Search of Ancient Mysteries*, both produced by Alan Landsburg, Rod provided a foreword to Landsburg's similarly themed book, *The Outer Space Connection*, and narrated the documentary film of the same name (Bantam, 1975).

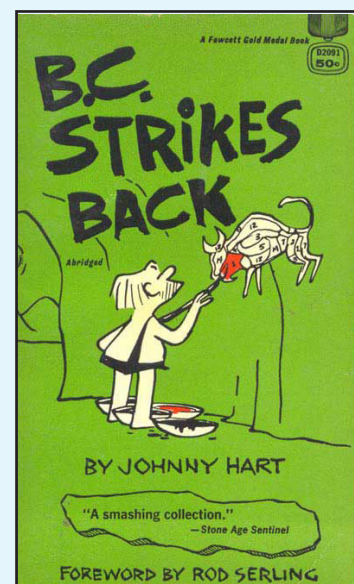
Becoming a Broadway playwright was one of Rod's greatest unfulfilled dreams. Ten years after his death in 1975, "Requiem for a Heavyweight" made it to Broadway. Coinciding with this production, Rod's play was published by Samuel French as *Requiem for a Heavyweight: A Drama in Two Acts*.

NOTE: Various pieces of Rod's work have been republished hundreds of times. This discussion focuses on the first publication of each not including graphic adaptations.

I've never written a foreword before for anyone, least of all an elf-like cartoonist with guileless eyes, an ingratiating smile and a capacity for martinis that is astounding considering his size. Precisely why Hart requested this assignment from me is unknown. I rather think it's because I laugh at his jokes and about one third of the time, I'm able to discern some inner and hidden meanings in his wild, woolly, Left-Bank asides.

It happens to be a fact that Johnny Hart is an unusual kind of guy and an unusual kind of humorist. His drawings and his wit can best be described as bold — and boldness is in short supply in the entertainment field nowadays. There are very few practicing humorists, cartoonists or authors who are willing to take an uncharted dip into a strange pool. To Mr. Hart's credit everlasting, he'll swim anywhere, wearing any kind of bathing suit.

To the uninitiated Hart reader, all this will seem pretty meaningless until you read and look at what he's written and drawn. To the Hart fan, this becomes somewhat redundant because you've already become familiar with this imaginative gremlin who makes you look at his pictures twice

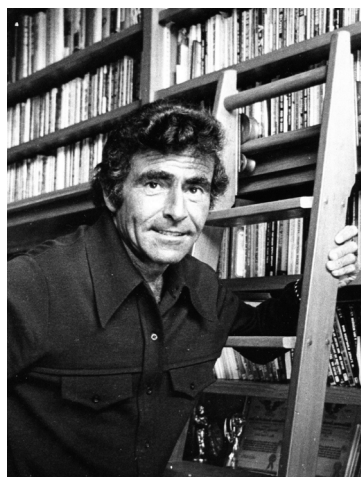


and reflect on his dialogue at least three times.

It all boils down to this: In the welter of ruttish, threadbare, third-hand humor that we're exposed to day after day, the freshness of Johnny Hart is an air-conditioning unit in a Bedouin tent on the Sahara. It feels good. And that's why I'm writing this foreword — as meaningless as it is — for nothing. So just don't sit there, Johnny Hart, with your leprechaun puss — go ahead and make me laugh!

Rod Serling

## COMPLETE LISTING OF "ROD SERLING IN PRINT" (first publication)



- "The Good Right Hand" (short story), *The Antiochian*, March 1948
- "The Air is Free" (radio script, co-written by William Rega), *The Antiochian*, October 1948
- "The Strike" (teleplay), *Best Television Plays*, 1956

- *Patterns* (four teleplays and essays), 1957
- "Noon on Doomsday" (teleplay and "Author's Comment"), *Television Plays for Writers*, 1957
- *Stories from the Twilight Zone* (short story adaptations), 1960
- *More Stories from the Twilight Zone* (short story adaptations), 1961
- *New Stories from the Twilight Zone* (short story adaptations), 1962
- *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (a "reading copy" of the feature film script), 1962
- Untitled Foreword, *B.C. Strikes Back*, 1961
- Untitled Essay, *My Most Memorable Christmas*, 1963
- Untitled Introduction, *Rod Serling's Triple W: Witches, Warlocks, and Werewolves*, 1963
- *Rod Serling's Twilight Zone* (short

- story adaptations of "Back There," and "Judgment Night" by Walter B. Gibson), 1963
- *Rod Serling's Twilight Zone Revisited* (short story adaptations of "The Purple Testament," "A Hundred Yards Over the Rim," "The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine," "The Man in the Bottle," and "Mirror Image" by Walter B. Gibson), 1964
- *The Season to be Wary* (three original novellas), 1967
- Untitled Introduction, *Rod Serling's Devils and Demons*, 1967
- Untitled Foreword, *The Outer Space Connection*, 1975
- "A Machine to Answer the Question" (radio script), *Twilight Zone: The Magazine*, September 1982
- "Notes for a Twilight Zone Movie" (including outline for "Our Selena is Dying"), *Twilight Zone: The Magazine*, March/April 1983

- *Requiem for a Heavyweight: A Drama in Two Acts* (Broadway play script), 1985
- *The Twilight Zone: The Original Stories* (adaptations of "One for the Angels" and "Changing of the Guard" by Anne Serling), 1985
- "Our Selena is Dying" (short story, co-written by J. Michael Straczynski), *Tales from the New Twilight Zone*, 1989
- "El Moe" (treatment/outline), *Twilight Zone: 19 Original Stories on the 50th Anniversary*, 2009
- "An Odyssey, or Whatever You Call it, Concerning Baseball" (short story), *More Stories from the Twilight Zone*, 2010
- *As Timeless as Infinity: The Complete Twilight Zone Scripts of Rod Serling, Volumes 1-10* (collection of all 92 of Serling's *Twilight Zone* scripts, plus "The Time Element," edited by Tony Albarella), 2004-2012

# BEYOND THE ZONE

## Reviews of Obscure Productions from Rod Serling's Career

By Tony Albarella

Some years ago, I started this column for our website. The goal was to review and call attention to Serling's lesser-known television productions. With the advent of our newly-expanded newsletter, we've decided to resurrect this column. Some entries, like this one, will be updated reprints; new reviews will also follow in future issues.

Due to space restraints, this reprint has been truncated. The original version contains detailed excerpts of Serling's rich, vibrant dialogue, and I encourage you to [explore it online](#).

"Slow Fade to Black"

Bob Hope Presents:  
The Chrysler Theatre  
Aired: March 27, 1964  
Starring Rod Steiger,  
Robert Culp, Sally Kellerman  
and Anna Lee.

For those familiar with Rod Serling's thematic predilections, "Slow Fade to Black" treads familiar ground. It offers another example of the author's pre-occupation with fading power, personal loss and the inexorable passage of time. That's certainly not a bad thing, as the topic resonated deeply with Serling, and this teleplay ranks among his better iterations of it. Serling is in his element here, building and knocking down sandcastles in his favorite dramaturgical sandbox.

Rod Steiger stars as Mike Kirsch, an aging movie mogul who has lost touch with the state of modern moviemaking. With all his attention, passion and love invested in his studio, he has neither need nor patience for his wife and daughter, whom he alienated years ago. In recent years his arcane approach has lost his studio millions, yet Kirsch cannot adjust to the changing times. He continues to cling to the belief that the way out of the hole is to produce a movie that harkens back to the old days and the old ways.

Steiger overacts in typical fashion, but his delivery is not as hysterical as it was in Serling's earlier script for Playhouse 90, "A Town Has Turned to Dust." In fact, the slight over-exaggeration of expression actually fits his anachronistic character quite well. Cutting, bombastic and irascible, Kirsch is very much a product of an earlier Hollywood era.



**POWER STRUGGLE**—Robert Culp, Rod Steiger and James Dunn (from left) co-star in "A Slow Fade to Black," from 8:30 to 9:30 o'clock tonight in color on The Bob Hope Theater over NBC and Channel 40. The drama about a powerful studio head (Steiger) whose tottering empire is falling into the hands of Wall Street interests was written by Rod Serling, formerly of Binghamton.

Clippings from newspapers. Left: The Binghamton Sun. Right: Daily Herald, Provo, Utah

Mike Kirsch is an amalgam of several Serling characters. He's Andy Sloane from "Patterns," the worn out executive who will not exit the stage; he's Martin Sloan, the empty and restless media man in "Walking Distance;" he's Randy Lane, the lonely, past-his-prime salesman in "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar." Kirsch's closest parallel is probably Ernie Wigman, the aging bar owner who struggles to maintain his hold on life, a character from another Serling-scripted *Bob Hope Presents* *The Chrysler Theatre* entry, the 1963 Emmy-winning "It's Mental Work." Of all these characterizations, Mike Kirsch is the most cynical, the hardest-edged, the most obstinate and the most alone.

In a pivotal boardroom scene, Kirsch is asked by a group of stockholders to resign. They own controlling stock in the company, and if he refuses to leave, they promise to oust him in a vicious proxy fight. Kirsch believes his best chance of fending off this attack is to score a box office success, and he hurriedly calls a meeting with investors and his trusted young assistant, Peter Furgatch, to try to sell a script he feels is perfect for the occasion.

Furgatch is played with wonderful subtlety by Robert Culp. Furgatch is to Kirsch what Fred Staples is to Andy Sloane in "Patterns:" a friend, a confidante and an eventual replacement. And like Staples, Furgatch is a complex character who is torn by a sense of loyalty to his mentor, a hunger to get ahead, and the realization that his over-the-hill boss cannot function in the best interests of the

company.

When Kirsch pitches his movie idea and asks Furgatch to back him up with a positive assessment that the young man does not share, Furgatch is obligated to give his honest opinion. Kirsch, angered and feeling betrayed, fires Furgatch.

Kirsch returns home to his last chance at salvation: Gerry, his emotionally estranged but financially obligated daughter. (Kirsch pays for her apartment and luxurious lifestyle, and she resents him for it and for neglecting her and her mother in every other facet of life beyond the monetary.) As Gerry, Sally Kellerman delivers another of this episode's marvelous performances.

Gerry owns enough company stock - a one-time gift from her father - to allow Kirsch to regain controlling interest, and he demands that she sign it over to him. Paula Kirsch (Anna Lee), Gerry's mother and Mike Kirsch's subservient, habitually drunk wife, is present at the argument but refuses to defy her husband. Kirsch threatens to air Gerry's dirty laundry, her "weekend drunks" as a teenager and "two trips to the doctor" when she was in college.

The next day, Kirsch returns home and is confronted by Gerry, who informs him that she has signed her stock over to his opponents, effectively putting him out of business. Dejected, Mike leaves to dress for a dinner he must attend, at which he'll be the recipient of the "Producer of the Year Award" (the only real over-the-top moment of convenient irony in the play). As he reaches the foyer,

### Original Serling Drama Set For 'Bob Hope Presents' on Friday

"Slow Fade to Black," an original Rod Serling drama starring Rod Steiger as a Hollywood movie czar approaching the end of his reign, will be presented on the "Bob Hope Presents" color series Friday at 7:30 p.m. on Channel 2.

Robert Culp, James Dunn, Anna Lee and Sally Kellerman also star in this story about a once-powerful studio, head whose tottering empire is falling into the hands of Wall Street interests. Series star Bob Hope appears in a cameo role as an award ceremony emcee.

This production marks the third Serling assignment to date in the weekly series.

An "Slow Fade to Black" opens, movie magnet Mike Kirsch (Steiger) is soon to receive the "producer of the year" award when he learns he is only hours away from losing control of his studio.

Clutching at straws, Kirsch tries to garner controlling shares in the studio by taking those belonging to his alcoholic wife Paula (Miss Lee), and asking for those owned by his rebellious daughter, Jerrie (Miss Kellerman). Kirsch faces



**DAUGHTER-FATHER CONFLICT**—Sally Kellerman and Rod Steiger enact a rebellious daughter and a once-powerful studio head father in "A Slow Fade to Black," airing Friday, at 7:30 p.m. on Channel 2 in color on "Bob Hope Presents." Robert Culp and James Dunn co-star in the original drama by Rod Serling of the struggle for control of a collapsing movie empire.

he meets Furgatch, just walking in the door to deliver news he didn't want Kirsch to hear second-hand: The studio has terminated Kirsch and hired Furgatch to replace him.

That evening at the event, with Furgatch and all the stockholders and industry people present, Kirsch is handed his award. He takes the podium and berates the crowd, eviscerating those "who had this business handed over to you like an inheritance and a legacy, all of you, you who never had to bleed or scramble to give birth to it or keep it alive..."

The episode closes with Kirsch alone in a screening room, weeping and watching an old silent movie that he asks the projectionist to run over and over again. His career and his studio were his identity and his life, and came at the price of his family. Now he has lost everything.

"Slow Fade to Black" is a powerful story, expertly acted and beautifully written. It is dynamic and direct, yet sprinkled with subtle moments, such as Kirsch reaching for the Oscar on his mantle and finding it covered with dust, or when Kirsch calls to a grip in the rafters of a set, knowing even his lowliest employees by name. Playhouse 90's "The Velvet Alley" featured a writer engulfed in a crash-and-burn Hollywood tragedy, and *The Twilight Zone*'s "The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine" essayed the decline of the movie industry from the perspective of an aging actress; "Slow Fade to Black" fuses the two and pulls no punches in doing so.