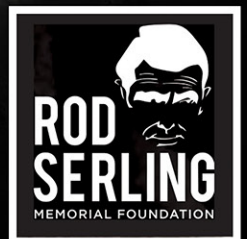


DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION

The Official Newsletter of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation



SUMMER 2022



NOTES FROM NICK

An Update from RSMF President Nick Parisi

Somehow, it is already summer 2022 – and time for another of our quarterly newsletters! So, hello, welcome, and thanks for perusing our latest compilation of news and insight from our corner of the Serling-verse.

If your local cable operator carries the Decades channel, we hope that you have recovered from binge watching this year's "Rod, White and Blue" *Twilight Zone* marathon. Decades is obviously a channel that is dedicated to nostalgia-inducing television series, but it is still noteworthy that our favorite show is where they turn when they need two days' worth of holiday programming. And what other writer could ever lend his name to serve as one-third of Old Glory?

By the time you are reading this, we will be putting the finishing

touches on preparations for SerlingFest 2022 – and we hope you are finalizing your plans to join us! Tickets are available at www.SerlingFest2022.com. A \$30.00 donation covers the entire event, from August 12th, through August 14th. On Friday, August 12, we will be at the DoubleTree Hotel on Water Street, from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. This night was initially intended to be dedicated solely to a video marathon of rare Serling appearances and shows. However, we have now added Everywhere Philosophy, one of our most popular guests from SerlingFest 2020, to the Friday night schedule. Dr. Mike and Bethany will kick off the night with a one-hour, interactive presentation on the philosophical concepts suggested by *The Twilight Zone's* "A World of his Own."

We will then screen two very rare



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.

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A celebration of the life, words and imagination of Rod Serling.

SERLINGFEST 2022

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

August 12 - 14, 2022*

Scheduled to appear

Visit SerlingFest2022.com for Tickets and Updates

Presented by the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

Preserving the legacy of an American icon since 1985

RodSerling.com

* Rod Serling Video Marathon | Friday, August 12, 7:00 pm-11:00 pm | DoubleTree Hotel, 225 Water Street
SerlingFest 2022 | Saturday, August 13, 9:00 am-10:00 pm | The Forum Theatre, 236 Washington Street
Serling in the Park | Sunday, August 14, 10:00 am-end | Recreation Park, Beethoven Street

interviews with Rod, likely unseen by almost everyone reading this. The rest of the night will be filled with screenings of more rare videos and appearances by Rod in unfamiliar settings.

Are you familiar with those "for my birthday, I'm requesting donations to" posts all over social media? Well, August 13 happens to be my birthday, so you can guess where I'm asking for donations to be directed! On August 13, we will be at the Broome County Forum Theatre from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. for our "main event." Our guests will include authors Anne Serling, Marc Zicree, Mark Dawidziak, Mark Olshaker, Tony Albarella, Amy Boyle Johnston, and me. We are also thrilled to welcome for the first time, artist

Cortlandt Hull and filmmaker Jonathan Napolitano. We will be screening Jonathan's award-winning documentary, *The Carousel*, which tells the story of the Recreation Park carousel and the *Twilight Zone*-inspired artwork that Cortlandt Hull created for it. Cortlandt will have signed prints of his individual pieces for display and sale.

The full schedule for Saturday is available at www.SerlingFest2022.com.

On Sunday, August 14, we will close out our celebration with a gathering at the Recreation Park bandstand, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bring a blanket, a picnic

Continued on following page

ON OUR COVER:

Big thanks to Scott Morse for donating his artwork for our cover. Scott is an award-winning storyteller in film, television, graphic novels and fine art. Read his incredible biography in our Spring 2022 newsletter. He lives in the Northern California Bay Area and can be found on Twitter and Instagram as @crazymorse.

RSMF PROFILE

Doug Sutton - Board Of Directors, Member

Doug Sutton has been a member of the Foundation since 2009. Born in Val d'Or, Quebec, Canada, he came to Ithaca in 1964 to study Engineering at Cornell University and ended up graduating from Cornell's College of Architecture. As an architect he designed and built a number of custom residences as well as educational projects for the State University of New York from Buffalo to Long Island.

In terms of Foundation projects, he is responsible for relocating and rearranging the current Serling display at the Forum

Theater and proposing, programming and schematic design of a Rod Serling Museum to be built in Binghamton. In partnership with developer Michael Lane, the museum was conceived as a combination of museum, TV studio (WSKG), Educational Facility (associated with Broome Community College and BCSD), restaurant/bar, Performance Hall, and housing. While the primary idea was to encourage professionals and students in television writing and production akin to Rod's example, the multi occupancy aspect was to promote 24/7

activity within the building. Located where Hawley Street curves between Washington & Court Streets, it consisted of 125,000 square feet and was estimated to cost \$43-million -- similar to the cost of the Lucille Ball & Desi Arnaz Comedy Center in Jamestown, NY. Both Doug and his wife Anne Serling-Sutton remain hopeful that a similar project can be revived.

Anne and Doug are co-founders of "Rod Serling Books"-- set up to publish Rod's eight books, which for many years had remained unpublished.



RSMF ARCHIVE

Zippo Brand Lighter

by Andy Polak

In each issue of the newsletter I like to highlight an item we have in our archive of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation that we hope to someday

have on display at a museum dedicated to his life and work.

This month is a Zippo brand lighter owned by Rod Serling — commemorating

the 1962 feature film version of *Requiem for a Heavyweight* which starred Anthony Quinn, Jackie Gleason and Mickey Rooney. The teleplay won Rod his second Emmy Award

when it aired on *Playhouse 90* in 1956. It was also the first time a Peabody Award was given to an individual script. This item was donated to our archives by his wife — Carol Serling.



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 ringspun 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.

Continued from previous page

basket, a frisbee or two, and be prepared to enjoy the kind of day that Martin Sloane would time travel for.

From 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. on August 12, just before the official SerlingFest kickoff, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo will join us for "Cocktails from the Zone" to help us raise funds for "As Timeless as Infinity" — our campaign to have a statue of Rod Serling installed in Recreation Park. Ms. Lupardo was instrumental in securing a grant for us that will cover a significant portion of the expenses involved in this project — and "Cocktails from the Zone" will help us to raise the balance needed. Tickets for this separate event are \$50.00 apiece, and also available at SerlingFest2022.com. The event will include appetizers, a token for one free *Twilight Zone*-themed drink, a presentation by the Foundation, and a sample musical performance of "Walking Distance" by

Paul Cienniwa of the Binghamton Philharmonic. Ms. Lupardo will also make a presentation — and an announcement about another incredibly exciting Serling-related project that is in the works.

Well, I think that about covers everything. I very much hope to see you in Binghamton in August.

Cheers,
Nicholas Parisi, President,
Rod Serling Memorial Foundation



ROD SERLING

ROD AND ME

By Mark Olshaker

Rod Serling never forgot the night we first met, but I have to admit that it had little to do with me.

I was fourteen years old, I already knew I wanted to be a writer, and Rod was my hero. He had created the coolest and most intriguing TV show ever, for which he enlisted his compelling presence and magic voice to make himself the most recognized writer in America; that was pretty cool, too. It was through *The Twilight Zone* that I discovered Mr. Serling, and then I went on to try to read and watch everything he had ever written. This only confirmed my ideal of an artist who was dynamic, crusading and fearless, a guy who quickly realized the unique strengths of the baby medium of television and was hell bent on bringing it to bear on the great social and moral issues of his time. That's what I wanted to be and do when I grew up.

The evening in question took place at a large convention hotel in my home town of Washington, D.C. Serling was president of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences that year and was here to address the local chapter. My mom, Thelma, was volunteering as a producer at American University's nascent educational radio station in the early days of what ultimately evolved into National Public Radio. Her status secured her an invitation to the event and when she told me about it, and that she would bring me, I was sent into that legendary sixth dimension.

When we entered the meeting room at the Sheraton Park Hotel, the man himself – in person and deeply California tanned living color – was already sitting at the head table, along with his brother Bob. Summoning up my adolescent courage and clutching my paperback copy of *Stories from the Twilight Zone*, I approached him – strangely, I thought, no one else did – and spluttered out something about how much I admired him and that I wanted to be a writer, too.

I don't remember a word either of us said, but after introducing me to Bob and signing my book, he engaged me in about ten minutes of serious, one-to-one conversation, asking me about myself and giving the impression that he was genuinely interested in this just barely teenaged kid and his highfaluting aspirations. We talked until the meeting was ready to begin.



Above: The author and Rod at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington in 1973. Following page: Mark's priceless letter from his hero.

I also don't recall the subject of his speech, except that it excited my young imagination and validated that my hero worship was not misplaced. I wanted to go up again and congratulate him afterward, but as soon as the applause died down, he and Bob got up and quickly left.

The next day I found out why. Both daily TV critics, Lawrence Laurent in *The Washington Post* and Bernie Harrison in *The Evening Star*, reported that Rod had been having severe chest pains but insisted on doing the speech, and that right afterward, Bob had rushed him to Washington Hospital Center where he'd been admitted for a full cardiac workup. Fortunately, the tests were apparently negative. The headline of Laurent's column proclaimed, "Illness Can't Keep Serling From Speaking His Mind."

My God, I thought, the man's afraid he's having a heart attack and he still treats me like an old friend. Talk about grace under pressure... The only gesture I could think of was to send him a get-well card in care of the hospital.

About a week later, I received a letter on Rod's home stationery in Pacific Palisades. It began:

Dear Mark,

I wanted you to know how deeply grateful I was for your gracious note. It was quite the best medicine I had.

So began a relationship that would last the remaining ten years of his all-too-brief life; an unequal friendship in which I couldn't possibly give as much to him as he gave to me. We corresponded frequently by letter in those pre-Internet days,

occasionally by phone, and I saw him whenever he came to Washington. I also visited him at his house in California and was duly impressed that he had his own Xerox machine in his poolside office. I listened with fascination as he played for me one of the Dictaphone recordings through which he conceived his scripts. His magic voice even dramatized the punctuation.

Of that first meeting when I was fourteen, Rod later told me, "I thought I was going to die that night." Then, typically, he added, "You would have had the last autograph I ever signed!"

This was characteristic Rod, and I recall so many things like that he said to me over the decade I knew him. When I once asked him if he wished some of the things he wrote about on *Twilight Zone* would happen in real life, he quickly shot back, "Yes, but not to me!"

He came to embrace me as a fellow writer; made me feel valued, and encouraged me throughout my high school and college years. He understood the critical value of self-esteem to a writer, no matter what his or her level. When I got out of school and wrote my first professional television documentaries, he read and commented on my scripts.

I was truly impressed with the script that you sent off to me. It seemed deft, professional and well organized and researched.

For whatever it's worth, I think you've gone a helluva long way in the

few years you've been out of school. I'm in not infrequent correspondence with several of my ex-students who still serve as pages at networks, mail clerks, at ad agencies, and sometimes completely out of the business. Which is what makes me believe you're ahead of the game.

Mark, old friend – stay there and keep moving up. You're deserving.

What greater boost could a young writer receive?

Some of our most meaningful conversations revolved around writing itself. Sitting on the sofa in his office, I asked him across his built-in desk if the writing ever got easier. "No," he replied thoughtfully, "but you become less afraid of it." Of his 1966 script for *The Man*, in which James Earl Jones portrayed the fictional first African American president of the United States, Rod looked back on the character as unrealistically strong and stoical. "That one taught me never to write about people who don't go to the bathroom," he told me.

One time, we got to talking about his 1972 TV film, *The Doomsday Flight*, a highly popular program that had the unfortunate effect of prompting a rash of fake copycat airline extortionists. Serling was besieged by reporters wanting his reaction. "At first," he confessed, "I would say, 'As a writer for a mass medium, I am responsible to the public, but not for the public.' But after a while I got tired of that."

"So what did you say instead," I asked.

"'Fuck off!'" he explained with that beguiling grin of his.

In 1973, Rod came to Washington for a National Association of Broadcasters convention to pitch the syndication sale of *Night Gallery*. I got to spend two full days with him. We hung out in MCA's hospitality suite and in between his meet-and-greets, we sat together in the back room, where he alternated between serious conversation and terrific obscene jokes, complete with all the voices. I vaguely recall one of them as a *Twilight Zone*-like yarn about a talking vagina.

During one of the more reflective intervals, he said to me, "Y'know, Mark, right now you've got the world by the balls!" I detected a touch of envy in his voice, and

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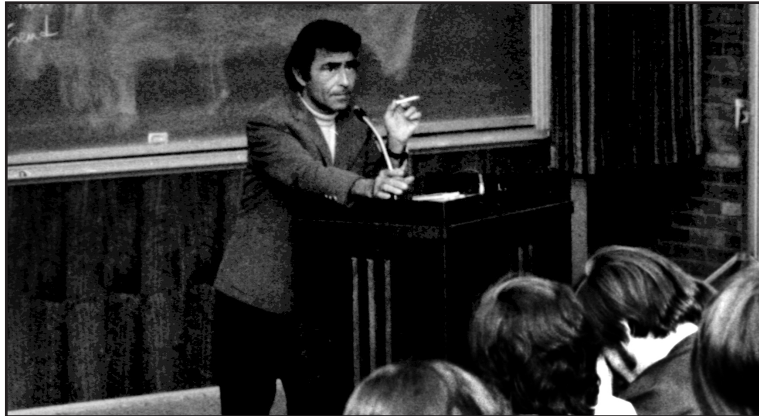
ROD SERLING

RSMF PHOTO GALLERY - Rare Photographs from The Archive

By Gordon C. Webb

Our last newsletter featured photos of Rod Serling meeting with a faculty member at Ithaca College in upstate New York. In other issues, we've included images of the writer on the I-C campus - where he taught advanced courses in screenwriting during the late 60's and early 70's. This was late in Serling's career, and he spoke often about how much he enjoyed sharing his thoughts with eager, young students.

However, shots of him in the classroom are rare... and here he is in a large lecture hall explaining some of the secrets of his success to a group of lucky students. During my own tenure on the faculty at Ithaca I taught in this



Credit: used by permission of the Rod Serling Archive at Ithaca College

very same lecture hall, and often imagined what it would have been like to take a course from the man himself.

Learning from "masters" at their craft (Serling, not Me) was a key element in the communications curriculum at I-C. The College is home to the Rod Serling Archive,

and I always used video of Serling's extraordinary work in my courses - perhaps hoping some of his magic would make its way into my own lessons.

Continued from previous page

I couldn't understand how my rich, famous and successful hero could say that about me. But I do now, though I don't expect any young person just starting out an independent life to understand his message any better than I did then.

I had hoped to launch my nascent book-writing career with a biography of Rod Serling, set against the backdrop of the development of television drama. Hesitantly, I approached him about the idea, wondering if he'd think it presumptuous or opportunistic for someone like me to become his "official biographer." His response surprised me on several levels.

Dear Mark,

How does one respond graciously to the ultimate of compliments with a corollary that the compliment has to be rejected.

With no special humility, Mark, old friend, I must tell you that nothing in my life, the thin column of accomplishments or anything else seems remotely worthy of a book. My guess is that this would be pretty much the response you'd get from any potential publisher.

If, on the other hand, you do get interest or any kind of commitment - of course I'll be available to you to respond to any and all questions and to

ponder, peruse and probe my diminishing memory for the anecdotes and recollections that you talk of.

But either way, I am complimented by your continued interest and indeed, your faith.

The fact that he was willing to make this offer to a 23 year-old kid with no published books to his credit, and that he would trust his own instincts about me enough to agree to this, speaks volumes about his generosity.

Now, the one thing other than height Rod often seemed to lack was an accurate sense of his own talent, quality and lasting importance. It's borne out in micro in the above referenced letter, and in macro with his incredibly shortsighted decision to sell his interest in *The Twilight Zone* to CBS for a ridiculously small amount of money. But in this instance he was sadly right. Publishers just weren't interested in the book at that point, having no more perspective on Serling's career and significance than he had. By the next June, he was dead. I was devastated, and the idea of pursuing the project without Rod was unthinkable.

My first published book did come a few years later and its subject was another visionary of the 1950's, '60's and '70's: Edwin Land, inventor of the Polaroid camera. But my great regret is that Rod didn't live to see the publication of my first novel, *Einstein's Brain*. His impact is there on every page.

Sometimes, I didn't even realize

his influence until I would re-read or view something I had written. Submitted for your approval: In 1990, fifteen years after Rod's death, I wrote and co-produced an episode of *NOVA*, the PBS science series, about a mysterious disease attacking children in a small town in Brazil. I began the narration:

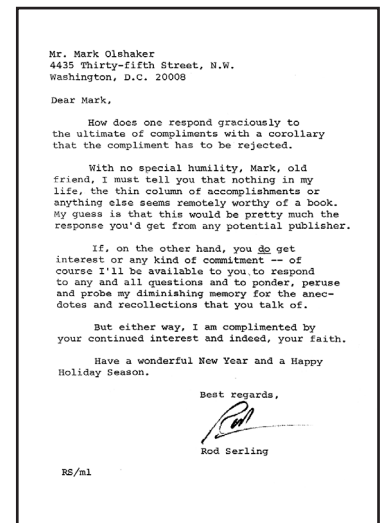
There is a secret fear that haunts the dreams of parents everywhere: That in the middle of the night, their child will suddenly become sick, and despite everything they and the doctors try to do, that child will die. In the rural Brazilian town of Ribeirao Preto, that nightmare came true.

If that's not vintage Serling, I don't know what is.

In a strange, almost mystical way, I feel he has been with me throughout my career. And I can't say how many times I've read a book or story, or seen a movie or television show I've admired, in which I realized, *This is like The Twilight Zone episode where...* That is how much he has permeated our culture.

In 2008, my wife Carolyn and I attended the Rod Serling conference at Ithaca College, where Rod had taught. It was my first public outing since my mother had passed away the month before. One of my main objectives was to meet Tony Albarella, the highly respected editor of the *As Timeless As Infinity* series of Rod's *Twilight Zone* scripts, who has done so much to preserve Serling's legacy.

At the conference, after meeting Tony and telling him how much I admired his work, I got to talking



to Rod's younger daughter Anne, whom I had met very briefly years ago when I had visited her father in California. We hit it off immediately, as did our respective spouses, and we soon developed a deep and profound friendship. I came to see so much of her father in her and I was honored when she asked me to advise her on the memoir of her Dad she was planning. My mother had brought me to the event where I'd first met Rod. Was the timing of my meeting Anne merely coincidence, or did Rod and my mom organize it from the great beyond now that she was up there with him? I don't know, but it's easy to envision anyone in my generation humming that unforgettable, repeating four-note opening to *The Twilight Zone* theme in response when they hear me tell the story.

Such was this wonderful and wondrous man's influence on all of us.

BEYOND THE ZONE

Reviews of Obscure Productions from Rod Serling's Career

By Tony Albarella

"The Velvet Alley" Playhouse 90

Aired: January 22, 1959

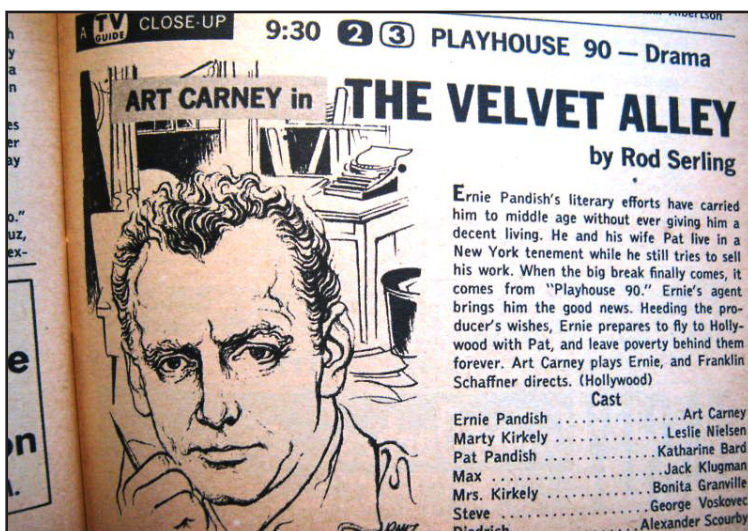
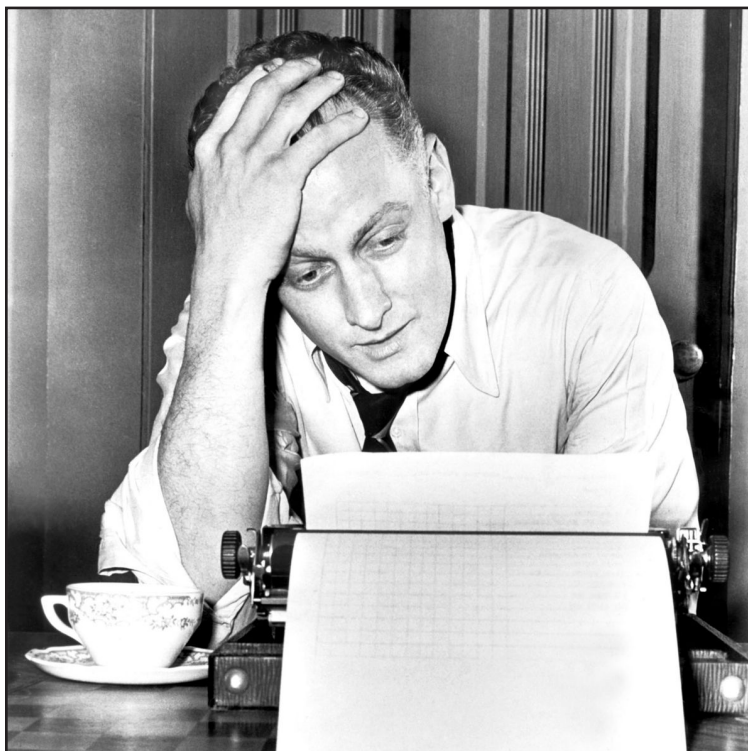
Starring Art Carney, Jack Klugman, Katharine Bard, Leslie Nielsen, Bonita Granville, George Voskovec, Alexander Scourby and David White

In early 1959, Rod Serling riffed on the "write what you know" edict and unleashed "The Velvet Alley," a scathing examination of the corrupting forces of fame and fortune within his own industry. Serling's Shakespearian tragedy features Art Carney as Ernie Pandish, a struggling writer who sells out family and friends when he hits the big time; Jack Klugman as Max Salter, Ernie's loyal friend and small-time agent; and Katharine Bard as Pat Pandish, Ernie's wife.

After years languishing in obscurity, Ernie eventually sells a script that airs on a prestigious Hollywood television series. When the production scores big ratings and Pandish is offered a contract, he and his wife settle in Hollywood, where Ernie falls prey to the lure of wealth and celebrity. The story is a familiar old chestnut – man gets everything he thought he wanted, only to lose the truly important things he already had – but arrives in a shiny, contemporary wrapper, festooned with Serling's deliciously piercing dialogue.

Carney and Klugman steal the show with fabulous performances. Both actors are known for their comedic talents and portrayals, but both excelled, particularly during the Golden Age of Television, at drama. They run with Serling's words and really sell their respective characters as close friends who are ripped apart by circumstances and Pandish's decisions.

A pivotal scene occurs when Max finds out that Ernie has signed with a larger agency, forsaking their friendship for the promise of greater exposure. Brilliant in the role, Klugman shines brightest here, instilling Max with a perfect blend of anger and pain. "It was one of the better performances I did," Klugman told me in a 2005 interview. "I (as Max) never anticipated anything like that would happen, and to be betrayed by him was the last thing on my mind. It never occurred to me. I mean, we were friends, we were blood brothers. But that's the temptation of success and I've seen guys fall into that trap."



Art Carney as Ernie Pandish in *The Velvet Alley*; Listing in TV Guide

Klugman had fond memories of the show, its writer, and his co-star. "Art Carney was just the nicest human being that ever lived, ever. I adored him. Art and I had a scene in rehearsal where it was the day after the show premiered and we were reading reviews. We started laughing, and we didn't get out the lines because we were laughing so much, having such a good time. Director Frank Shaffner said, 'Gee, that's good, the spirit is so right.' I said, 'But the lines, we can't say the lines and laugh at the same time.'

"So he called Rod and told him the scene was funny but we couldn't say the lines. Rod said, 'No, no, the lines are very important in that scene. Let me

come and see it.' He came and saw what we were doing and said, 'I don't care if I don't hear one line, the spirit is right.' I loved him. Rod Serling's words are always wonderful to deliver. You don't get that today...writers today who write with that kind of compassion, in a cryptic yet sharp way. He always wrote wonderful characters, fighters, combative little guys."

Serling's penchant for weak, underwritten female characters is thankfully absent here. Patty, Ernie's grounded and sensible wife, is fully fleshed-out and stands in for the average viewer. She provides contrast to the predatory hucksters and vapid Hollywood hangers-on who engulf Ernie, and

verbally jousts with her husband as she watches him succumb to his new lifestyle. Like Ernie, Patty's arc is clearly telegraphed. She transitions through stages of grief as her marriage crumbles; initially supportive, then wary, frightened, hurt, betrayed, and ultimately resigned to and acceptive of Ernie's unfettered fall from grace.

Ernie's father Steve (George Voskovec) plays a similar supporting role, adding the perspective of parental disappointment and masculine anger. Together and along with Max, Pat and Steve represent multiple facets of familial love: wife, father, friend. Ernie's betrayal of all three is melodramatic, but provides the collateral damage that makes his story a complete, no holds barred tragedy.

Max and Patty are the primary sympathetic characters of the piece, but Leslie Nielsen's Eddie Kirkley is a well-written and wonderfully acted supportive role. Desperate to stay at the top of the heap, Kirkley is an insecure and alcoholic producer, a pitiful man who craves money and prestige as an addict craves drugs. His is a tortured, nuanced character in a story filled with archetypes, and like the "Ghost of Christmas Future" to Ernie's Scrooge, Kirkley foreshadows Ernie's ultimate fate.

In a moment of drunken sincerity, the veteran producer warns the up-and-coming star writer about the trap into which he, Kirkley, has fallen. "You know how they do it, Ernie? They give you a thousand dollars a week. And they keep on giving you a thousand dollars a week until that's what you need to live on. And then after that you live every day and you're afraid that they'll take it away from you."

"The Velvet Alley" is not an autobiography, but it does hit very close to home for Serling. The framework and a few specific plot points do come directly from his life. The writer experienced a similar rise to fame; encountered many of the types he dramatized in the teleplay; and participated in the machinations, political and procedural, of Fifties television production. He did not shut out his first agent, Blanche Gaines, but he did expand beyond her and sign with a larger agency when he became successful. Using these biographical flourishes as a springboard, Serling played out the logical, dramatic devolution of a man grappling with "the price tag that hangs on success." In short, "The Velvet Alley" is a cautionary tale...for viewers, and for Rod Serling himself.

TWILIGHT ZONE

Beaver Clever and Tom Cruise Enter The Twilight Zone

By Gail Flug

In this new section of the newsletter, we explore how *The Twilight Zone's* has impacted movies, music and television -- not in the way "twilight zone" has become a catchphrase when something is unusual... these are definite references to the show.

One of the nice things about lock-down during the pandemic was re-discovering a vintage TV show I've always loved. My morning weekday routine was watching the depressing COVID death count on the news, coffee and taking a break from reality to visit Mayfield -- home to the ideal, imaginary suburb of *Leave It To Beaver* on MeTV. Although the show is often criticized for its innocent, unrealistic view of life in the 50s, the show is clever, has fun characters and is downright hilarious! What better time to also break out the DVD boxset I was gifted to escape the uncertainties in the world.

In the episode "Beaver On TV" (season 6 / episode 21) teenager Theodore Clever (Beaver) has been chosen to appear on a local public access show called "Teen Form." He is given permission from his teacher, Mrs. Rayburn, to skip school for a few hours to do the program. Unfortunately, Beaver is in the bathroom when the producer tells the other kids that the show will be taped and will run the following week. His classmates watch the show that night, with is an earlier episode without Beaver. When he returns to school his classmates accuse him of lying to skip school and Beaver is confused, especially since he was given a transistor radio for appearing on the program. He spends the rest of the day hiding in the park where his friend Gilbert finds him.

GILBERT
Are you Theodore Cleaver, the escaped convict?

BEAVER
Oh, hi, Gilbert.

GILBERT
I've been looking all over for you, over at the malt shop and the record store. What have you been doing anyway?



Boy, this sounds like a mess that even Rod Serling couldn't even figure out.

Left: Stephen Talbot, Jerry Mathers; Right: Tom Cruise in "Vanilla Sky" - enlarged to show detail



BEAVER
I couldn't go back to school after what you told me, and I was afraid to go home.

GILBERT
Yeah, you're in big trouble with Mrs. Rayburn and everybody for lying like that.

BEAVER
But I didn't lie, Gilbert. I really was on that television show.

GILBERT
Oh, come off it, Beav. We saw the show, and you weren't on it.

BEAVER
But I was, too, on it, Gilbert. They asked me questions about teenagers having their own telephone, and they gave me this transistor radio for being so good. Why should I lie to you? You can't yell at me like my parents or flunk me like Mrs. Rayburn can.

GILBERT
Boy, Beav, this is kind of like The Twilight Zone with that guy Rod Serling.

BEAVER
Twilight Zone?

GILBERT
Yeah, you know, that's that program where people keep seeing things that aren't there and doing stuff

that never happened. I think they call it, um, psychic phenomena or something.

BEAVER
Gee, do you mean I just might have thought I was on television, like a dream?

GILBERT
Yeah, and all those people and cameras and everybody were just in your imagination.

BEAVER
Wait a minute. How could a guy who was just in my imagination give me a transistor radio?

GILBERT
Boy, Beav, you better really find out what's going on. This is spooky.

They call the TV station and confirm his name is on the list.

Operator:
I found your name, Mr. Cleaver. You won't be on till next week.
Hello? Hello?

GILBERT
What's the matter?

BEAVER
She says I won't be on 'til next week.

GILBERT
Boy, you say you were on, we saw the show, and you weren't on, and she says you won't

be on till next week. Boy, this sounds like a mess that even Rod Serling couldn't even figure out.

In the end, Beaver's dad had also called the station and got the full story.

The entire *Leave it to Beaver* series is available for free streaming at www.peacock.com.

The TZ reference in the film *Vanilla Sky* is not as obvious and needs some advance notice to find it. The 2001 movie stars Tom Cruise as David Aames, a wealthy, vain womanizing playboy living in New York City. The plot is too complicated to explain; in short, the movie is a series of David's flashbacks, nightmares and illusions while he is in a cryogenic lucid dreaming state. Does this sound a little bit like the *Twilight Zone* episode "Shadowplay?"

Director Cameron Crowe thought so too. Within the first few minutes of the film, David is seen driving his Ferrari through the streets of a deserted New York City, and parks in the center of Times Square. The scene is both breathtaking and eerie as he runs through the vacant surroundings. Keep an eye open on the Jumbotron to see Weaver from the aforementioned episode. It's quick but will bring a smile to a TZ fan if they know where and when to find it. A side note: the scene was filmed on location without CGI. For the first and only time, a movie set was granted permission to close off the area for a few hours on a Sunday morning. At the cost of one million dollars, it's likely the most expensive 30 seconds of film ever made.

My Favorite Episode Of The Twilight Zone

In the winter 2022 issue of this Newsletter, we published what some RSMF Board of Trustees members listed as their Top Ten Episodes of *The Twilight Zone*. We included a "ranking" of episodes by popularity -- as well as twelve individual lists, and in this issue -- some members explain why they chose their favorite.

"I Shot an Arrow into the Air"

By Joe Bardales

When we were asked as board members of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation to submit our top ten lists of *Twilight Zone* episodes for the spring 2022 newsletter, without hesitation I included "I Shot an Arrow into the Air" on my list. This first season episode was still fresh on my mind, having recently seen it on the big screen in Binghamton's Rec Park (Rod Serling's childhood playground in upstate New York). It was part of a Labor Day 2021 event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 15 moon landing hosted by Techworks, a museum in Binghamton that showcases technology pioneered in our area including Apollo guidance systems from IBM and the lunar module flight simulators built by Singer Link. Techworks invited the RSMF to participate, and I was honored to introduce the Foundation and the episode to the Rec Park crowd.

What makes "I Shot an Arrow into the Air" stand out to me, however, isn't the science fiction (albeit contemporaneously becoming fact) trappings of astronauts and rocket launches. To me, this episode serves as the definitive textbook example of the classic Rod Serling twist ending we have all come to expect and love. My introduction to Rod Serling's writing as a young child wasn't *The Twilight Zone* but the 1968 film *Planet of the Apes* where we see this same twist ending from "I Shot an Arrow into the Air." When Taylor first sees the twisted ruins of the Statue of Liberty, it's the same shocking revelation Corey has when he stumbles upon Reno: My God, it was Earth all along! And that moment made a six year old boy a Rod Serling fan for life.

This is a brilliantly written *Twilight Zone* episode where Rod Serling explores themes of human nature, human vulnerability despite our technological advancements, even the importance of the chain of command. The twist ending serves to drive these themes home in a way you will never forget. I invite everyone to revisit (or experience for the first time) "I Shot an Arrow into the Air" and see if it makes their personal top ten list!



Top left: Ted Otis, Dewey Martin, Edward Binns; Right: Gladys Cooper, Robert Redford
Bottom left: Donald Pleasance and cast; Right: Kenneth Haigh, Alexander Scourby, Simon Scott

"Nothing In The Dark" / "Changing of the Guard" by Gail Flug

Picking a favorite episode of *The Twilight Zone* is an impossible task. With 156 episodes that range heavy on the excellent side, it's easier to name the ones you *don't* care for. I determined my top picks from not only their superb storytelling and acting, but what I learn about the human condition. As I am going through a dark period of my life now, I go to my top two for validation.

The premise of "Nothing in the Dark" is the same in countless plots: Death appears disguised as a human to assist a living one's demise. Wanda Dunn has not left her apartment for years attempting -- to avoid "Mr. Death," and is forced to leave when the building is condemned. A handsome policeman, Harold Beldon, is dying from a gunshot wound at her front door, and she reluctantly brings him inside when his touch does not kill her. Both bond as his charm and understanding builds trust, and she feels safe taking his hand when his true identity as Mr. Death is revealed.

What makes this particular interpretation stand out is the delivery. The dialogue is engaging, while Gladys Cooper and Robert Redford's acting is flawless. The black and white cinematography is stunning, taking full advantage of the contrast between the dim apartment and the sunlight. Like drawing the death card in the

tarot, Wendy needs to accept her apprehension to death is the fear of change and the unknown -- thus the title. She gets a deeper insight into what is going on when the demolition man compares the cycle of life to tearing down old, worn-out buildings to build new ones. Perhaps the ending is predictable, yet the journey of watching the drama unfold is worth it.

"Changing of the Guard" also focuses on transition. After teaching English literature at the Rock Spring School for 50 years, Professor Fowler (Donald Pleasance) is forced into retirement. He is devastated by the loss of his job and feels that he has taught his students nothing noteworthy, stating: "...poetry that left their minds the minute they themselves left. Aged slogans that were out of date when I taught them. Quotations dear to me that were meaningless to them."

With a gun in hand and thoughts of suicide, he walks through the campus grounds approaching a monument with the school's motto: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." His intentions are stopped by school bells, drawing him into his classroom and the ghosts of his former students who've passed away. Each assures him that they remembered his lessons which motivated them through their triumphs as they faced death for the good of humanity. The professor accepts his fate and is ready to move on to the next

chapter of his life.

This story of the shift from feeling worthless to realizing his impact on others is heartfelt and compelling. To stir up similar introspections and the awareness of knowing that you made a difference in someone's life can be overwhelming -- a sentiment I often deal with personally. I can't list how many *Twilight Zone* episodes have moved me by their subtext... yet another reason the series is timeless and still relevant today.

"THE LAST FLIGHT" By Mark Olshaker

When *Dimensions of Imagination* editor Gordon Webb asked each of the Rod Serling Foundation board members to list their favorite *Twilight Zone* episodes, I was surprised that I was the only one who included "The Last Flight," Richard Matheson's first-season yarn about a World War I British fighter pilot who inexplicably lands his single-propeller biplane in on an American Air Force base in France of 1959.

When second lieutenant William Terrance Decker (Kenneth Haigh) of the Royal Flying Corps tries to convince the general (Alexander Scourby) and major (Simon Scott) who are holding him in custody that his story is for real, it just so happens that the Americans are awaiting an inspection visit from British Air Vice Marshall Alexander Mackaye (Robert Warwick), hero of the Blitz,

Continued on following page

My Favorite Episode Of The Twilight Zone

Continued from previous page

who saved thousands of lives during World War II. Back in 1917, Mackaye and Decker were flying partners, and Decker tells the incredulous and suspicious Major Wilson that he has just abandoned MacKaye to a circle of seven German fighter planes which clearly must have killed him. Decker admits he is a coward but suddenly comes to the recognition that this unfathomable transport into the future must represent his second chance and his bid for moral redemption. He escapes his confinement, runs across the tarmac, finds his plane, revs the propeller, climbs into the cockpit and takes off into the mysterious white cloud that delivered him here.

Air Marshall Mackaye arrives shortly thereafter, and when Major Wilson asks if he has heard of Lieutenant Decker, the aging English officer wistfully responds that Terry Decker saved his life in a dogfight and downed three German planes before he was shot down.

Aside from the fabulous irony for which the *Zone* became justly famous, "The Last Flight" is a brilliant example of tight, super-efficient storytelling, exploring themes of courage in the face of crippling fear, personal responsibility and the redemptive capacity of the human spirit. Perhaps most impressive from a perspective of the writer's craft, though this is a tale of war and conflict, the main action is *dialogue*; intriguing, character-driven dialogue. It's a script and a production that offers just about everything you'd want from the greatest anthology series in television history.

Incidentally, Rod once told me that when fans brought up their most memorable episodes to him, the one they mentioned most often, by far, was "Eye of the Beholder,"



Left: Rod Taylor, Jim Hutton, Right: Ivan Dixon, Steven Perry and Kim Hamilton

which appeared on nearly half of our top-ten lists. If nothing else, I think this shows how these stories continue, in their second half-century, to speak to so many of us.

"And When the Sky was Opened"

By Steve Schlich

"And When the Sky was Opened" was the very first *Twilight Zone* I ever watched, and it tickled my young mind in a way that I thought only books could. I'd gone straight from reading about Dick and Jane and their dog Spot ("See Spot run. Run Spot, run!") to science fiction short story anthologies -- Harlan Ellison... Damon Knight... Roger Zelazny... Isaac Asimov. I loved the way that genre expanded my thinking.

That episode had the best of science fiction's magic: not only *What If*, but also *What Then*—and a protagonist whose fear you could feel. Thank you, Rod Taylor, Richard Matheson, and Rod Serling! There was an oh-so-spooky scene where Taylor's wide-eyed character backed onto a porch, and the starry sky behind him seemed to close in. Tension gripped my stomach. I was certain that he would simply disappear into that thin night air. But he didn't! The terrifying *noir* of it just hung there. It was my first delicious

TZ twist.

And the final horror of Jim Hutton's character seeing proof that reality itself had changed? My mind was permanently blown and *The Twilight Zone* elevated to legend with a single episode. After that, I couldn't get enough.

"Big Tall Wish"

By Anne Serling

"Big Tall Wish," broadcast on April 8 1960, is one of my favorite episodes most especially for its simplicity and sheer humanity.

The majority of the actors in *Big Tall Wish* were African American and as Marc Zicree wrote --in *The Twilight Zone Companion* -- "In 1960, casting blacks in a dramatic show not dealing with racial issues was something practically unheard of, but this was a deliberate move on Serling's part."

The episode is about the relationship between Bolie, a has-been, broken down boxer and Henry, a little boy living in his ghetto apartment building who adores him and wishes him "the big tall wish."

"If you don't believe it, it won't

be true!" Henry pleads. But Bolie professes he is too old to believe in magic and the results are reversed. Bolie suddenly finds himself on his back in the ring as the referee completes the ten count. This time, Bolie returns -- injured, defeated, and dejected. But Henry still believes in him and still idolizes him; "You looked like a tiger even so. You looked like a real tiger. I was proud of you, real proud."

Later, Bolie Jackson goes into Henry's room and thinks about what he would have to do next. There would be no more fighting, no more comeback... but tomorrow he and a little boy were going to a baseball game. "Tomorrow," Bolie tells him, "we'll get some hot dogs in the park, you and me."

As I wrote in my memoir *As I Knew Him: My Dad Rod Serling*: "When I saw this years after it first aired, long after my father died, I was struck by the tenderness of the relationship between Bolie and this little boy. The program, although sentimental, has an edge of steel and never glosses over the harsh reality and struggle for the poor and marginalized. In the end, it is the magic between this little boy and a down-and-out fighter that triumphs."

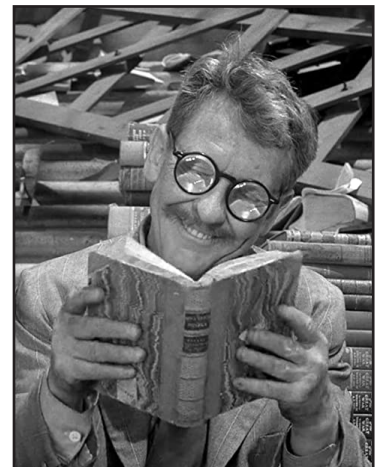
Did Rod have a favorite Twilight Zone?

Someone once said that if you asked John Lennon to name his favorite Beatles song and you didn't like his answer, you should wait until tomorrow and ask him again. Something similar could likely be said about asking Rod Serling to pick his favorite *Twilight Zone* episode. Serling cited several favorites over the years. In a 1970 interview with author James Gunn, he answered the question this way:

"Oddly enough, I thought the two best shows we did (were) one I wrote and one I didn't write. One was an original by Dick Matheson called "The Invaders" with Agnes Moorehead, which was in a sense

pure science fiction with a very O' Henry-ish twist, and the other was an adaptation of mine -- a very free, loose adaptation of a . . . short story called "Time Enough at Last" about a myopic bank teller who at the end of the world breaks his glasses just when he's able to read all that he's ever wanted to read, which was sheer, pure, beautiful irony. And in terms of production values, the adaptation I mentioned was gorgeously done. We used an MGM backlot with existing sets that were already there and it looked like a movie. Poor Dick Matheson, on the other hand, suffered what is really one of the clinical problems of doing science fiction on TV. This (story)

desperately required eight-inch little men to walk across the floor of a room and suddenly we are made aware of the fact that this woman who we thought was normal is actually an extraterrestrial giant and the two men who are the invaders are actually young American astronauts. So, all we could use, because we couldn't afford opticals and we couldn't afford montage effects, were little wind-up rubber men and they walked precisely like little windup rubber men. And I thought it totally destroyed the illusion and pointed out to me, you know, the desperate, built-in problems of doing proper science fiction on television."



TWILIGHT ZONE

SERLING'S RE-ZONING EFFORTS: "THE FOUR OF US ARE DYING"

By Paul Gallagher

Ever assume, when you first watched *The Twilight Zone* as a kid, that Rod Serling wrote every episode?

I've had a number of people tell me they thought that, and let's face it: It is a logical assumption. He personally introduces each tale, and they all conclude with his distinctive voice wrapping up the proceedings with a memorably wry comment or two.

But no, other fine writers contributed some terrific stories. Still, Serling wrote a staggering 92 of the 156 episodes, or nearly two out of every three. No wonder he admitted to feeling burned out as the series entered its home stretch.

Not every Serling script was an original, however. Sometimes he adapted the works of other writers. He'd pay for the rights to a story, then turn it into a *Twilight Zone*.

This might sound like relatively easy work, but it wasn't. In many cases, he took the basic idea and turned it into a script that barely resembled its ancestor. Such was the case when Serling turned George Clayton Johnson's story "All of Us Are Dying" into "The Four of Us Are Dying" for *Twilight Zone*'s first season.

Johnson would go on to script some classic TZs himself, including "A Penny for Your Thoughts," "Nothing in the Dark," "Kick the Can," and "A Game of Pool." Many more TV and movie credits would follow. But for now, he was an unknown writer who'd penned the tale of a man with



Left: Peter Brocco and Don Gordon; Right: Cover of book by George Clayton Johnson



a miraculous ability to disguise himself.

His agent had renamed the story "Rubber Face." And Serling thought it had potential. It's easy to see why. The idea of a man who could change his face instantly to resemble almost anyone, only to have it backfire on him in the end, is very intriguing. As an irony-laden fantasy, it fit right into the Serling-verse. But it needed quite a bit of work before it could become a *Twilight Zone*. Commented Johnson:

"I was enchanted with what Rod Serling did. I was amazed at the detail and richness he added. He used my little short story as an armature for his statue. I knew my story very, very well, and I watched the way that Rod Serling had sort of taken the windshield wiper off of my car and stuck a new car under it. I think he did

an admirable job, and I know I learned a lot about adapting short stories for television by watching what he did with my story."

So what did Serling do? For starters, he gave the main character motivation. In Johnson's story, he goes from person to person, each one recognizing him as someone else, but he seems to be doing it simply because he can. Serling has him check into a hotel with "some newspaper clippings, an odd talent, and a master plan to destroy some lives."

In the short story, he doesn't appear to have much control over the changes, let alone a plan. It's almost as if drawing close to a particular person causes him to magically morph into someone who has some importance to him or her. That's interesting, but Serling's take is more sinister. It also makes the ending seem more like a case of poetic justice than mere bad luck.

And in a touch that could only come in literature, we don't know that he's changing his face until more than halfway through the story. There's a bit of a "huh?" factor for the reader as each person he meets addresses him by some other name. For TV, of course, this wouldn't fly. In Serling's adaptation, we know what he can do from the beginning.

Virgil Sterig, the hood who confronts the crime boss who had him killed? All Serling. The main character in the short story does meet a woman who carries a torch for him, but their meeting isn't nearly as touching as when the trumpet-playing Johnny Foster reunites with poor, love-

struck Maggie.

Perhaps the most telling change comes at the end. In each case, he's killed. In the short story, it's because he pulls into a gas station and the attendant recognizes him as a man he vowed revenge on years earlier. Why, exactly, we don't know, but he proceeds to bludgeon the man with the pump handle. It's a grisly little twist to be sure, and filled with Hitchcockian irony. But it lacks the pathos of Serling's dénouement, as an outraged father guns down his son, a boxer named Andy Marshak, for what must be some incredibly bad family history.

As we watch his face change from identity to identity, Serling concludes:

"He was Arch Hammer, a cheap little man who just checked in. He was Johnny Foster, who played a trumpet and was loved beyond words. He was Virgil Sterig, with money in his pocket. He was Andy Marshak, who got some of his agony back on a sidewalk in front of a cheap hotel. Hammer, Foster, Sterig, Marshak -- and all four of them were dying."

But Johnson, now \$500 richer, had seen his story brought to life. And a *Twilight Zone* classic was born.

This article was first published on "Shadow & Substance," Paul Gallagher's blog dedicated to the works of Rod Serling (thenightgallery.org). Paul also runs the "Night Gallery" Twitter page (twitter.com/thenightgallery), which boasts more than 34,000 followers.

ROD SERLING WEB SOURCES

Official RSMF Facebook page
www.facebook.com/RSMemorialFoundation

The Original Twilight Zone Facebook group
www.facebook.com/groups/TheTwilightZoneGroup

Dimensions of Imagination
Official page for the book *Rod Serling: His Life, Work, And Imagination* by RSMF President Nick Parisi
www.rodserlingdimensions.com

Shadow & Substance
A great Rod Serling blog written by RSMF member Paul Gallagher
thenightgallery.wordpress.com

Night Gallery - Art of Darkness
Official page for the book *Art Of Darkness*
www.facebook.com/NightGalleryArtOfDarkness/

Anne Serling Books
www.facebook.com/AnneSerlingBooks

The Twilight Zone Podcast
Hosted by Tom Elliot
www.thetwilightzonepodcast.com

SerlingFest 2022 Facebook page
www.SerlingFest2022.com

Twilight Zone on MeTV
Includes schedule, episode guide and trivia
metv.com/shows/the-twilight-zone

TWILIGHT ZONE

Jesus in the Twilight Zone

By Steve Schlich

Foundation member [Jason William Karpf](#) is a believer... in God, in Jesus and in the Twilight Zone.

Christianity and Rod Serling's fifth dimension have more in common than some might imagine, at first. Karpf, a child of Hollywood and a lifelong fan of fantastic fiction, explains...

"Christians love sci-fi—from students I teach at Christian universities to fellow grandparents in my Bible study group. My ministry entails showing how Christianity and science fiction go together, namely with their shared lesson that playing God leads to trouble.

"I use *The Twilight Zone* extensively in my teaching series, *Christian Sci-Fi Night with Professor K*. Rod Serling is familiar to attendees as a cultural icon. I explain how Serling used parables in keeping with the master storyteller, Jesus Christ—interesting stories to impart valuable lessons.

"Science fiction and fantasy were the tools of parable for Serling, allowing him to slip in messages about bigotry, indifference, paranoia and pride past nervous censors and narrow-minded sponsors.

"The episodes' tight narratives make them perfect learning content. At 60 years old, they are a pop-culture time capsule, yet students marvel at their relevance in the 21st century."



Left: Jason William Karpf; Right: 2021 book "Brimstone 1"

Karpf has an intriguing background, including as a child television actor and a four-time *Jeopardy!* winner. He's a successful marketer, speaker, novelist and teacher, and discovered his calling to Christ in his forties. He has favorite episodes of *The Twilight Zone* that he uses to demonstrate Christian principals...

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street: "I use it as the inaugural lesson in *Christian Sci-Fi Night with Professor K*. Hysteria and hate abounded in the McCarthyism of the 1950s. These fatal flaws proliferate in the digital era of the 2020s."

Time Enough At Last: "I like books,

just like Henry Bemis. As a child of the Cold War, I like subterranean refuges just like Bemis. Armageddon might suit him until compounded ironies prove there are no winners in a nuclear war."

The Obsolete Man: "Knowledge is the enemy of oppression. Romney Wordsworth is master of his own fate as he defies a dictatorship of the future. His most potent weapon: the Holy Bible."

It's a Good Life: "Nobody illustrates the danger of playing God better than Anthony Fremont, that telekinetic/telepathic six-year-old. But admit it: the dinosaur TV network and a three-headed gopher would be cool!"

On Thursday We Leave for Home: "Captain Benteen, the all-too-human leader of castaways on a hell-world, transforms from dedicated savior to desperate dictator to literal lost soul. It's stunning and relatable."

Nightmare at 20,000 Feet: "William Shatner is a fragile Everyman who sees 'something on the wing.' The biblical prophets suffered the same torment: warnings disbelieved, sacrifice required in the name of salvation."

The Old Man in the Cave: "Once again, we ignore the prophets at our own peril."

My own observation is that Christianity and the Twilight Zone both advocate for a compassionate approach to humanity: offering a second chance to people in need. In "A Passage for Trumpet," the angel Gabriel grants suicidal musician Joey Crown the possibility of redemption. And in "One for the Angels," pitchman Lou Bookman willingly sacrifices everything for the future of a child.

As a concluding narration might describe...

We can all find common ground if we open our hearts to it. Rod Serling and Jason William Karpf found theirs...in the Twilight Zone.

Karpf is a Realm Award finalist, novelette category, for his story "Basilica Obscura" in the Christian Science Fiction anthology *Wonders of the Galaxy*.

A Spooky Visit to Rod's Gravesite

By Steve Schlich

Rod Serling was not a believer in the supernatural, by his own admission. Like so many of us, he enjoyed fantastic tales...and found them useful as vehicles to comment on controversial real-world issues. Foundation member Don Watkins offers us an entertaining reason to reassess our own non-beliefs. He writes...

"In the summer of 2019, my wife Susan and I heard from a friend about the Rod Serling gravesite in Interlaken, New York. We were ready for a road trip.

"I grew up in the Village of Cayuga. When *The Twilight Zone* came out, we noticed the name of the production company and figured it out. Rod's family's camp was right across the lake from us. Very cool. Now, at the age of 72, I realize just how much my attitudes and world view were



Rod's grave marker in 2019, decorated by fans. Note the keys, broken eyeglasses, and the photo's future date stamp.

shaped by his.

"We found the cemetery and the marker. I took photos with my little Kodak digital camera. A few days later, I printed a couple out and noticed the date on them: July 12, 2022. Three years into the future! I checked the camera

date and it was correct, 2019. The photos before and after the cemetery pictures were dated correctly. Only the cemetery photos had the future date."

Watson sifted through various possibilities to explain the phenomenon: "When my

camera loses charge, it resets automatically to the date it was made: Nov. 2007. But there were no charging issues anyway."

"We returned last year for another visit. Carol's marker had been added. Susan got me Anne's book for my birthday. What an absolute joy to read!

"My job for the last 46 years has been Land Surveyor. I have seen all kinds of strange. However... considering the place and the fact that the camera went forward in time, I like to imagine it was Rod saying hello. Maybe it was, maybe not. But we had fun, and it opened up a new avenue to read and think and talk about. Rod would like that."

Indeed he would! Thank you, Don. This is a delightful fantasy. Or is it something more? Such magic is bound to happen from time to time, as we travel in and out...of the Twilight Zone.

My Twilight Zone Collection

By Charles Lerner, M.D.

My passion and my hobby revolves around *The Twilight Zone*. There are no words that can describe my respect for the creator -- Rod Serling. The original television series was actually a little before my time.

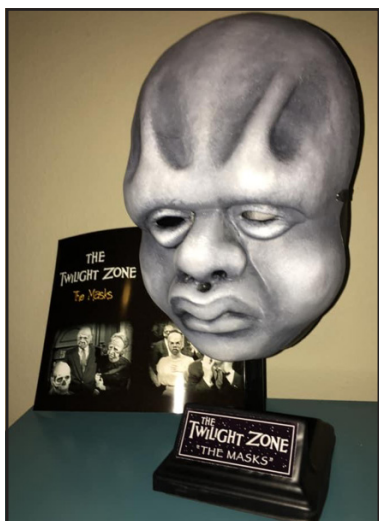
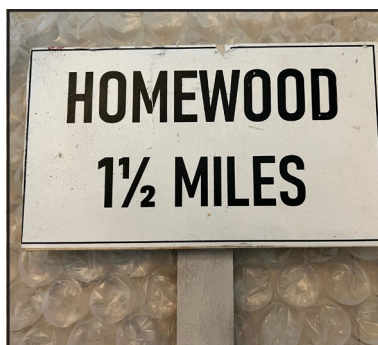
I can remember watching the original series as a youth. Looking back, I always enjoyed science fiction and horror movies. My mother and father would take me to the movie theater. My love of horror movies was born.

My love of *The Twilight Zone* has grown over the past 10 years. My collection of *Twilight Zone* memorabilia has allowed me to escape my regular day-to-day job as a Medical Doctor. It allows me time to relax and enjoy a world of imagination. *The Twilight Zone* allows me to rest from all the stressors that I go through every day and I find comfort in watching episodes over and over again. I spent countless hours looking to add to my collection. At this juncture, I have a great number of collectibles from the *Twilight Zone*. My search continues every day but has become very difficult in that I am trying to find certain autographs that are almost impossible to find. I find it hard to stop exploring new avenues and ways to gain knowledge

on *Twilight Zone* topics, and be involved in multiple Facebook groups devoted to the *Twilight Zone*.

My collection is quite large. I have five large glass cabinets that contain most of my collectibles. Many of my newest collections have begun to just pile up in the room. I actually need more shelf space. I have my collection organized in episodes. For example, I may have 10 items from "Living Doll" that would take up one shelf. Actually, it is quite nice the way it is organized. I have had my friends and family over to look at my display. They are quite impressed. It is nicely arranged. My collection does involve rare autographs, signed photos, original set used pieces, and quite a number of replicas. I am constantly on the look to gain new items. In fact, I am looking every single day to add something new.

Who are we without our collections? Apart from our physical features, our collection of things makes us distinct from the next person. I am extremely lucky to have the love of the *Twilight Zone* and my collection. My grand daughter has shown interest in the TV series. My hope is to pass down my collection to her so that the *Twilight Zone* continues to live on and enjoyed by future generations.



Above: A portion of Dr. Lerner's collection at a glance; Various autographs and stills; Mystic Seer ("Nick Of Time") replica signed by William Shatner; Left: Replicas of TZ props: Homewood signpost (*Walking Distance*) Golden Thimble, (*The After Hours*) box camera (*Most Unusual Camera*) and Wilfred Harper Jr. mask (*The Masks*)

Dr. Charles Lerner, MD is a Internal Medicine Specialist in Orlando, FL.

