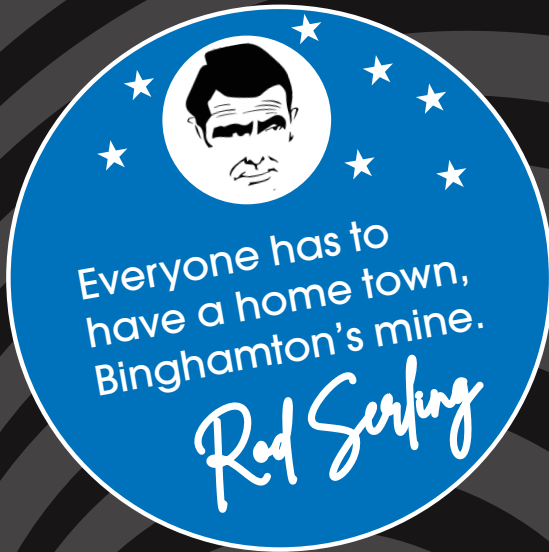


DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION

The Official Newsletter of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

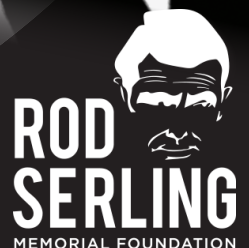


AS TIMELESS AS INFINITY
BINGHAMTON, NY

RODSERLINGMONUMENT.COM

DETAILS INSIDE

WINTER 2023



NOTES FROM NICK

An Update from RSMF President Nick Parisi

As I type this, I have just completed a meeting with a representative of the Binghamton Department of Parks & Recreation, during which we discussed details surrounding the installation of Rod Serling's statue in his beloved Recreation Park. We can now reveal that Rod's statue will be completed by the end of 2023, and that we will unveil it next year – 2024, in honor of what would have been the year of Rod's 100th birthday. We certainly hope and expect that the unveiling will be a major event and a massive celebration. As always, stay tuned to rodserling.com, rodserlingmonument.com or our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/rodserlingmonument) for details and updates.

Photos of the most recent iterations of Rod's statue accompany this piece. What you will not see is that Rod's statue will include a doorway directly behind him, on the doorframe of which will be etched "You unlock this door with the key

of imagination." Also note, Rod's face and head in the full-length photo of the statue is not the final version. The final head and face will be much closer to the profile photo that is also shown here.

The artists at statues.com worked hard to accommodate suggestions from various members of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation – most prominently, Anne Serling – and we are confident that the final version is going to be superb.

We also continue to have meetings with various parties concerning the creation of a "Rod Serling Center" in Binghamton. While this project is not nearly as close to reality as Rod's statue, our meetings have been productive in several directions and I am personally very optimistic that before long Binghamton is going to be the home of a transformative, 21st century, interactive facility in honor



of its most famous former resident. Cross your fingers, everyone!

After our most recent meeting of the "Rod Serling Center Steering Committee," I visited the Rod Serling archive maintained by Ithaca College (where Rod taught for several years). I had been there several times while researching my book, but I was recently granted access to portions of the archive that I had not previously seen. As a result, let's just say that the "Complete Rod Serling" pieces that I have contributed to prior issues of our newsletter may need some updating . . . happily, I can report that several pieces of Rod's



work, which had seemed to be lost, exist after all. More next time, I promise!

All Best,
Nick 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

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NEWSDESK

Jordan Peele's TZ Now On SyFy; Dropped From Paramount Plus

by Gail Flug

As usual, members of the Twilight Zone Facebook pages did not hold back their sentiments about the annual SyFy TZ three-day New Year's marathon. Be it overanalyzing, threads discussing the best/worst/favorite episode, or objections to how badly the network edited them for television, one particular complaint started over a week before the marathon began.

SyFy added three hour-long episodes of the Jordan Peele 2019/2020 Twilight Zone revival in place of six classic half-hour ones. The reason is simple: SyFy acquired the rights to broadcast the newer series in regular rotation and placed them in a prime-time spot during the marathon to maximize

attention.

This third revival looked great on paper. After years of development, Peele signed on to produce the project through his Monkeypaw Productions and a strong group of writers and talented actors were on board. The Oscar/Emmy award winner, whose past films addressed social issues through the supernatural, seemed the right man for the job. The series aired on CBS All Access (rebranded as Paramount Plus) in color, and later a black & white version was made available.

Despite a promising creative team, Peele's version received mixed reviews, low viewership and was canceled after two short seasons with only 20 episodes produced.

Continued on following page

RSMF PROFILE

Joe Bardales, Member, Board Of Directors

Joe Bardales has been a member of the RSMF Board of Directors since 2017. He grew up in Endwell, NY, a suburb of Binghamton and graduated from Seton Catholic Central High School located across the street from Recreation Park in Rod Serling's boyhood neighborhood. Joe and his family are originally from New York City and moved upstate when his father, a WWII veteran who served in the Marine Corps, took a job with IBM as an intellectual property lawyer. Joe would later return to New York City as an adult where he worked for several nonprofit arts organizations over the years -- including the Annenberg Foundation's Center for Arts Education, charged with restoring vibrant arts education programs in all the City's public schools. A little over ten years ago, Joe returned to

the Binghamton area to care for his aging father and quickly became involved with several theater groups in town. His greatest joy has been performing in many of Rod Serling's works including "The Time Element" (SerlingFest 2017), "O'Toole from Moscow" (SerlingFest 2021), and most recently "Walking Distance" with the Southern Tier Actors Read (STAR) and the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra in October 2022. Other favorite local productions include *You Can't Take it with You* (2015 Cider Mill Playhouse), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (2018 Summer Savoyards) and the titular role in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (STAR/Cider Mill Playhouse 2015).

Joe's first exposure to the works of Rod Serling was the 1968 movie *Planet of the Apes*, which he saw

as a small boy at the Binghamton Airport Drive-In with his parents (when he was supposed to be sleeping in the back seat) and this began a lifelong obsession with the franchise. Throw in *The Twilight Zone* reruns on WPIX while growing up, and more than a few New Year's Day marathons on Syfy, and he was hooked on Serling for life. He feels honored by the opportunity to help preserve the legacy of Rod Serling as a member of the RSMF Board of Directors.

Currently, Joe lives (once again) in Endwell, NY and works in human resources talent acquisition recruiting hospital workers for a major healthcare system in Binghamton, NY.

Photo by: Kate Murray/Studio 271



Continued from previous page

During the Syfy marathon broadcast, most online comments protested that the three episodes -- as well as the rest of the series -- were too slowly paced, too politically blunt, and contained too

much unnecessary profanity.

In February 2023, the series was dropped from Paramount Plus as part of their merger with Showtime. One could only wonder why, but a good guess is that Syfy is owned by

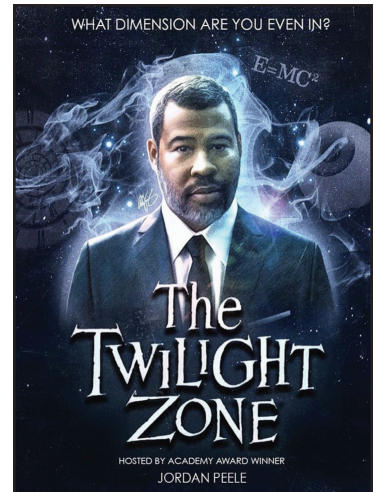
NBC, so perhaps it will end up on their streaming service, Peacock. Currently, Paramount Plus is the only streaming service to offer all five seasons of the original 1959-1964 series without commercials (the series is also available on Pluto.com -- which is owned by CBS, but with commercials and without season four).

The first *Twilight Zone* revival premiered on CBS in 1985, shortly after the release of *Twilight Zone: The Movie*. The initial response was positive, yet it slowly lost momentum and was canceled in 1987. One year later, a third season was produced for inclusion in a syndication package that totaled 69 episodes, with a mix of half-hour to one-hour shows, the latter having two to three stories each.

The second of the three revivals was not as successful. Aired by the UPN network in 2002-2003 as an hour format with two half-hour stories, it lasted one season with 22 episodes total.

Finding these revivals online is not easy. As of this writing, the 1985 series is not available for streaming, yet episodes are on YouTube in various qualities uploaded from VCR/DVD rips. The 2002 series is currently available on Tubi.TV.

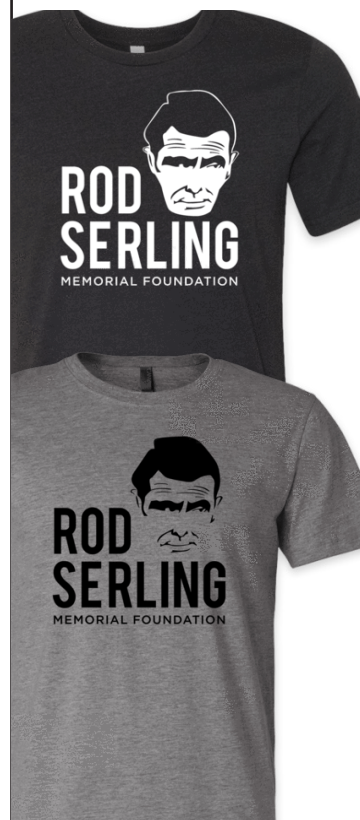
Diehard 'zoners' prefer the DVD and Blu-ray editions of the original series as they have all 156 episodes unedited, beautifully restored, and re-mastered from the original films along with commentary, and



many extras. Owning the collection on DVD or Blu-ray may be a wise investment, given that there is no guarantee that streaming sites will continue to make the series available online.

Serling's *Twilight Zone* concept is now a brand. Rod Serling sold his rights to the series to CBS shortly after the series ended production. "Twilight Zone" as a trademark relating to the show, the likenesses of the characters from the original series, and the logo are all available for licensing. Therefore, the quality of current products or reboots may have little to do with Serling's original vision. Fans who have high expectations may be wise to view each of the three revivals as independent anthology series of science fiction and fantasy, and not necessarily as reboots of the original.

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, blackberry, brown heather royal and grey. Sizes S to 4X - \$22.00 plus shipping.

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

Order through the Muckles website:
tinyurl.com/RSMFTEES

THE BOOKSHELF

Board Member Publishes Poe Biography

It is likely no surprise that many officers and board members of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation are accomplished authors, writers, and journalists. All have been impacted – consciously and subconsciously – by a master wordsmith who influenced and inspired them to tell stories with their own personal style and integrity. In February 2023, RSMF member, Board of Directors, Mark Dawidziak published his 25th book, *A Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe*, a brilliant new biography that examines the renowned author's life through the prism of his mysterious death and its many possible causes.

It is a moment shrouded in horror and mystery. Edgar Allan Poe died on October 7, 1849, at just forty, in a painful, utterly bizarre manner that would not have been out of place in one of his own tales of terror. What was the cause of his untimely death, and what happened to him during the three missing days before he was found, delirious and "in great distress" on the streets of Baltimore, wearing ill-fitting clothes that were not his own?

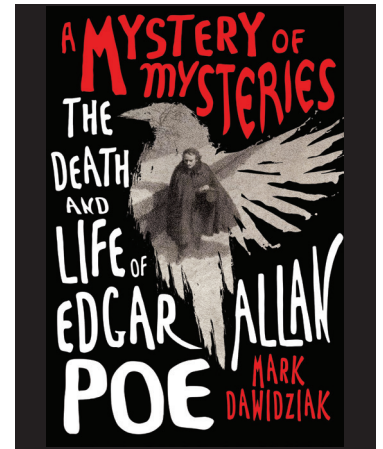
Mystery and horror. One of America's most iconic writers

died under eerie circumstances that reflect the two literary genres he took to new heights. There has been a staggering amount of speculation about the cause of death, from rabies and syphilis to suicide, alcoholism, and even murder. But many of these theories are formed on the basis of the caricature we have come to associate with Poe: the gloomy-eyed grandfather of Goth, hunched over a writing desk with a raven perched on one shoulder, drunkenly scribbling his masterpieces. By debunking the myths of how he lived, we

come closer to understanding the real Poe – and uncovering the truth behind his mysterious death, as a new theory emerges that could prove the cause of Poe's death was haunting him all his life.

In a compelling dual-timeline narrative alternating between Poe's increasingly desperate last months and his brief but impactful life, Mark Dawidziak sheds new light on the enigmatic master of macabre.

St. Martin's – ISBN 9781250792495



REVIEWS

"Revelatory...Dawidziak honors the Gothic nature of Poe's work, yet sweeps open the curtains to throw full light upon this masterful poet and shaper of American literature."

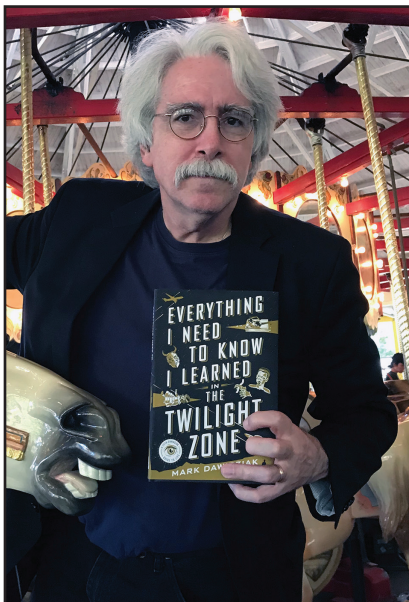
–Ron Powers, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Flags of Our Fathers*

"A poignant and realistic picture of Poe through the fascinating black prism of his mysterious death."

–J.W. Ocker, Edgar Award-winning author of *Poe-Land*

"Mark Dawidziak plumbs the mysteries of Poe's life and career with extraordinary skill and knowledge."

Daniel Stashower, Edgar Award-winning author of *The Hour of Peril*



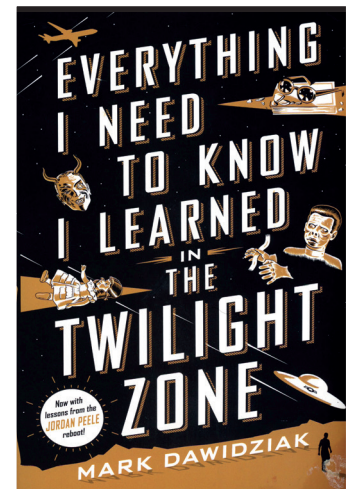
MARK DAWIDZIAK is the author or editor of about 25 books, including *The Columbo Phile*, *The Night Stalker Companion* and *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in The Twilight Zone*. He also is an internationally recognized Mark Twain scholar. He spent 43 years as a television, film and theater critic at the *Akron Beacon Journal* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. His work on the horror side of the street also includes the novel *Grave Secrets*, *The Bedside, Bathtub, & Armchair Companion to Dracula*, short stories, and comic book scripts. He lives in Ohio.

For more information about Mark and a complete bibliography, visit: markdawidziak.com

Also From The Author: *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Twilight Zone: A Fifth Dimension Guide to Life*

Can you live your life by what "The Twilight Zone" has to teach you? Yes, and maybe you should. The proof is in this lighthearted collection of life lessons, ground rules, inspirational thoughts, and stirring reminders found in Rod Serling's timeless fantasy series. This tribute is a celebration of the classic anthology show, but also, on another level, a kind of fifth-dimension self-help book, with each lesson supported by the morality tales told by Serling and his writers.

The notion that "it's never too late to reinvent yourself" soars through "The Last Flight," in which a World War I flier who goes forward in time and gets the chance to trade cowardice for heroism. A visit from an angel blares out the wisdom of "follow your passion" in "A Passage for Trumpet." The meaning of "divided we fall" is driven home with dramatic results when neighbors suspect neighbors of being invading aliens in "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street." The old maxim about never judging



First published February 2017
Updated Paperback
July 2020 – St. Martin's Griffin
ISBN 9781250621504

a book by its cover is given a tasty twist when an alien tome is translated in "To Serve Man."

No matter what kind of inspiration you're looking to get from one of the best television shows ever made, it can be found in these pages. Who wouldn't want great advice... from "The Twilight Zone"?

IN MEMORIAM - Twilight Zone Alumni Lost in 2022



By Gail Flug

Sally Kellerman (June 2, 1937 – February 24, 2022) had a non-speaking role as an office worker in "Miniature" and a more significant role as Jerrie Kirsch in the Serling-penned teleplay, "A Slow Fade To Black." That show aired on *Bob Hope Presents the Chrysler Theatre* on March 27, 1964, and co-starred Rod Steiger and Peter Furgatch. Kellerman's breakthrough role as Major Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan in the film adaptation of *M*A*S*H* earned her Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations. What followed next was a successful 60-year career in film, television, stage, and music, culminating in a lengthy and impressive list of credits and awards. Kellerman, who often sang in her movie roles, released albums *Roll with the Feelin'* (1972) and *Sally* (2009) as well as a memoir in 2013 titled *Read My Lips*. She suffered from dementia in her later years and died aged 84 from heart failure.



Nehemiah Persoff (August 2, 1919 – April 5, 2022) played Carl Lanser in "Judgment Night." Born in Jerusalem, he and his family immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, when he was 10, and he later pursued acting while working as an electrician in the New York subway system. Persoff, a self-defined character actor, went on to portray a string of foreign bad guys and rabbis over the next 60 years, aided by his ethnic appearance and ability to deliver distinct dialects and accents. His movie credits include *The Harder They Fall*, *Some Like It Hot*, *On the Waterfront*, *Al Capone*, *Yentl*, as well as providing the

voice of Papa Mousekewitz in the animated film series *An American Tail*. On television, he guested on *Gilligan's Island*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Gunsmoke*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Adam-12* and *Law & Order*. Persoff pursued watercolor painting after retiring from acting in 2003 due to poor health after a stroke. His memoir *The Many Faces of Nehemiah* was published in July of 2021. Persoff died at the age of 102 of heart failure. It is reported that his final words were "it's about time."



Jimmy Lydon (May 30, 1923 – March 9, 2022) played a patrolman in "Back There." Born into a large Irish Catholic family, Lydon and his siblings were forced to get jobs at a young age during the Great Depression. Luckily, he found steady work as an actor on Broadway as a teenager. In 1939, he moved to Hollywood to pursue film roles, and soon became a well-respected actor with parts in *Tom Brown's School Days*, *Life with Father*, the title role in the *Henry Aldrich* film series, and a role in *The Time Of Your Life* opposite James Cagney. One of his first television roles was on *The First Hundred Years* – the first daytime soap opera on CBS performed live five days a week. In addition to steady TV and movie work, Lydon went into production, helping to create hit programs, including *77 Sunset Strip*, and *M*A*S*H*. He continued to act on television throughout the 1970s and 1980s with guest roles on *Gunsmoke*, *The Rockford Files*, *Lou Grant*, and *Simon & Simon*. He died at the age of 98 in San Diego, California.

Sandra Warner (May 12, 1934 – March 13, 2022) made two small yet memorable *Twilight Zone* appearances in "The Dummy" and "A Nice Place To Visit." She launched her career in entertainment with her twin sister, Sonia, in a singing act when they were only five years old. Besides a recurring role on the television series *Mr. Smith Goes to*



Washington, her acting career consisted mainly of uncredited parts in television and movies *The Human Jungle*, *Some Like It Hot*, *The Detectives*, *Perry Mason*, and John Boorman's *Point Blank*. Her exotic looks set off a successful modeling career; she is featured on 12 album covers from pianist Martin Denny and released a recording of her own titled *Steve Allen Presents Sandy Warner - Fair & Warner* in 1958. She died at age 87 of natural causes.



Read Morgan (January 30, 1931 – April 20, 2022) played Lefty, the down-and-out baseball player in "What You Need." He was a star athlete at the University of Kentucky before leaving to study drama at Northwestern University, and then served two years in the United States Air Force. His rugged, athletic physique was deemed a perfect match for his debut role in *L'il Abner* on Broadway, leading to many of the roles he'd take afterwards. In 1959, he was cast as army officer Sergeant Hapgood Tasker on the western television series *The Deputy*, and would later appear on other action shows such as *Gunsmoke*, *Wagon Train*, *M Squad*, *How the West Was Won*, *Laramie*, and *The Outsider*, in addition to *Police Woman*, *Barnaby Jones*, and *Lou Grant* during the '70s. He retired from acting in 1994 after a small role as a card dealer in the film *Maverick*. Morgan was 91.

Bert Metcalf (March 19, 1935 – July 27, 2022) (above, on right) portrayed Don Martin, one of the unnerved neighbors



in "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street." After receiving a bachelor's degree in theater at the University of California he was drafted and served two years in the United States Navy. Most of his work in film was uncredited, contrary to his roles in television series such as *Father of the Bride*, *Gidget*, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, *The Outer Limits*, *The Fugitive*, and *Perry Mason*. In 1972, Metcalf worked behind the camera producing all but five of 256 episodes of *M*A*S*H*, for which he received 13 Emmy nominations. After the show ended in 1983, he worked as executive producer/director of various projects and sitcoms for MTM Productions. Metcalf died from sepsis at a hospital in Los Angeles at age 87. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, actress Jan Jorden, who had a recurring role as Nurse Baker on *M*A*S*H*.



William Reynolds (December 9, 1931 – August 24, 2022) starred as Lieutenant Fitzgerald in "The Purple Testament." He signed a contract with Universal Studios in 1952 but had to put his career on hold when he was drafted into the Army. After the war, Reynolds resumed his work in films, but soon got discouraged by the uninteresting roles he was offered. On television, he had steady work as the lead on *Pete Kelly's Blues*, *The Islanders*, and *The Gallant Men*. On the day "The Purple Testament" aired, he, along with director Richard Bare (who he worked with on the TZ episode and the *Islanders* series,) was involved in a plane crash with several crewmen off

Continued on following page

Continued from previous page

the coast of Jamaica. All but one survived by swimming to shore. When his career began stalling during the mid-60s, Reynolds attended university to specialize in real estate law, but Hollywood called. Reynolds was given a role on the long-running series *FBI* but was cut from the cast in the ninth season as the network thought the 41-year-old was too old for the part. It was then he retired from acting completely and became a successful businessman. Reynolds died of pneumonia in at the age of 90.



Marsha Hunt (October 17, 1917 – September 7, 2022) (above, on left) played Mrs. Henderson, the mother in "Spur of the Moment." Before that appearance, Hunt was an established actress appearing in over 50 films such as *Born to the West*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Human Comedy*, *The Happy Time*, *The Penalty*, and the musical *Panama Hattie*. Her accomplishments led to a seat on the board of the Screen Actors Guild in 1945, but her involvement in protesting the activities of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA) almost led to the end of her acting career. As a member of the Committee for the First Amendment, Hunt supported liberal ideals and freedom of speech. Because of this association, she and her husband, screenwriter Robert Presnell, appeared in *Red Channels*, a pamphlet listing 151 people within the entertainment industry accused of having ties with fascist and communist sympathizers. While she did work during this dark time, her film career picked up again in the late 1950s when the ban was lifted. Soon afterward, the semi-retired actress focused on activism became one of Hollywood's first celebrities to use her fame to endorse various causes. As a member of the United Nations Association, she brought attention to end world hunger, was instrumental in programs to open homeless shelters in the San Fernando Valley, and worked with UNICEF, The March of Dimes, and The Red

Cross. In later years she remained active addressing humanitarian issues such as mental illness, global pollution, world peace and poverty. Hunt continued acting as well, with roles in the anti-war film *Johnny Got His Gun*, *Gunsmoke*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *The Name of the Game*, *Ironside*, *Police Story*, *Medical Story*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Murder, She Wrote*. Her life and career is documented in the 2015 film *Marsha Hunt's Sweet Adversity*. Hunt died of natural causes aged 104 at her Sherman Oaks home, where she had lived since 1946.



Jack Ging (November 30, 1931 – September 9, 2022) (above, on right) played one-half of the young couple in "The Whole Truth." Before becoming an actor, he served four years in the Marine Corps and then played football for the University of Oklahoma. One of his first acting jobs was a supporting role in *The Tales of Wells Fargo*. He later had a lead role on the medical drama *The Eleventh Hour* during its two-year run, along with several guest and recurring appearances on shows including *Mannix*, *The Highwayman*, *Little House On The Prairie*, *Barnaby Jones*, *BJ and The Bear*, *Dr. Kildare*, and 31 episodes as Lt. Ted Quinlan on *Riptide*. He was killed off from that series to portray General Harlan "Bull" Fulbright on *The A-Team*. His film credits include *Hang 'Em High*, *Play Misty for Me*, and *High Plains Drifter*. Ging died of natural causes at the age of 90.



Mark Miller (November 20, 1924 – September 9, 2022) portrayed the handsome Roger in "I Dream of Genie." He graduated from New York's American Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1952 and was soon cast opposite classmate

Grace Kelly in *Private Lives* at the Casino Playhouse in Newport, Rhode Island. The two later dated and remained close friends. After starring in over 30 plays, Miller became a regular face on television with roles in *Guestward Ho!*, *The Tall Man*, *Stoney Burke*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Gunsmoke*, *Days Of Our Lives*, *The Name Of The Game*, *The Waltons*, *General Hospital*, and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. His most famous leading role was as college professor Jim Nash in *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* opposite fellow TZ alumni Patricia Crowley of "Printers Devil." Coincidentally, the first TV script he wrote for the series, "The Magnificent Muldoon," was nominated for an Emmy and guest-starred Burgess Meredith. In later years, Miller would go on to be a successful screenwriter and playwright for film and television, with notable credits including *A Walk in the Clouds* (starring Keanu Reeves), *Ginger in the Morning* (with a then-unknown Sissy Spacek) and *Savannah Smiles*. Miller died in Santa Monica at the age of 97.



Eileen Ryan October 16, 1927 – October 9, 2022) (above, on right) portrayed Nora Reagan, the long-suffering wife in "A World of Difference." Her first acting roles were on Broadway before she and her husband, actor/director Leo Penn, moved to the west coast for more work. Ryan appeared on several television shows –

Westinghouse Studio One, *One Step Beyond*, *Ben Casey*, *Bonanza*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Cannon*, *Little House on the Prairie* – in the 60s and early 70s, before taking a break to focus on her family. She returned to acting in 1986 to work alongside her sons Sean and Christopher in *At Close Range*, and continued working in film and television, often with Sean and her husband. Her later film roles include *Parenthood*, *Benny & Joon*, and *I Am Sam*. Ryan passed away at 94, just a week short of her 95th birthday. She is survived by her son Sean and musician Michael Penn; Christopher died in 2006.



Ron Masak (July 1, 1936 – October 20, 2022) had his first screen role as "harmonica man" in "The Purple Testament." Known as "the king of commercials" due to the countless volume of voiceovers and appearances he amassed, he also acted in 25 feature films and over 350 television shows. He is best known as Sheriff Mort Metzger, a recurring role on *Murder, She Wrote*, opposite Angela Lansbury. Coincidentally, Lansbury, who also passed in 2022, has a link to the TZ universe as well; her mother, actress Moyna Macgill, played landlady Mrs. Williams in the episode "Four O'clock." Along with acting, Masak will be remembered for his role in charity events benefiting Wounded Warriors, Child Help, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Masak died from natural causes at age 86.

ROD SERLING WEB SOURCES

Official RSMF Facebook page
facebook.com/
RSMemorialFoundation

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

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

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

Shadows & Substance
Rod Serling blog written by RSMF
member and newsletter
contributor Paul Gallagher
thenightgallery.wordpress.com

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

Anne Serling Books
facebook.com/
AnneSerlingBooks

The Twilight Zone Podcast
Hosted by Tom Elliot
thetwilightzonepodcast.com

ROD SERLING

Serling's A Most Non-Political Speech

By Paul Gallagher

One of the most gratifying aspects of being a Rod Serling fan is that you never have to separate the man from his work. He wasn't just a gifted writer with a keen imagination. He was an amazing human being, a man of high ideals and noble principles who used his talents to try and make the world a better place.

We had a fresh reminder of that fact recently when legendary comic actor Dick Van Dyke, who celebrated his 97th birthday in December, released a video of himself reading a speech that Rod wrote in 1964.

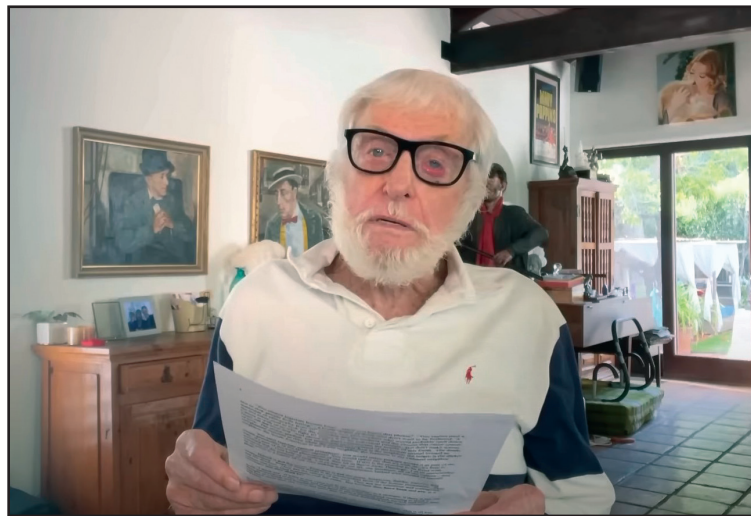
It's a speech he knew well. Van Dyke had delivered the 1,000-word address — one that very few Serling fans have even heard of — almost 60 years ago to a huge crowd in Los Angeles. Part of a multi-faith civil rights event called "Religious Witness for Human Dignity," it featured a keynote address by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

No one, including Rod's daughter Anne, knows for sure why Serling didn't deliver the speech himself. But he obviously poured his heart into it. It's full of his unique mix of clear-eyed realism and unflagging optimism.

It helps to know the backdrop, historically speaking. At the time of the event, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had passed the U.S. House of Representatives and was being debated in the Senate. It won passage there as well, appropriately enough, on June 19 and was signed into law on July 2.

When I started researching Serling's speech in March 2022 (shortly after Anne shared a quote from it on social media), I was surprised that I couldn't find it anywhere online. Anne was kind enough to send me a copy of a transcript that was printed in the July/August 1964 issue of *The Episcopal Review*. I transcribed the text below from that copy and published it on my blog last year. I hope you find it as moving as I did.

Ladies and gentlemen, this may be the most non-political speech you ever hear. And, indeed, if you look for controversy, what I'm about to say conjures up little conflict.



Top: Press clipping from *The Episcopal Review*, July-August, 1964
Bottom: Dick Van Dyke revisits his keynote on YouTube, January 16, 2023

We have reached a moment in time when restless men, dispossessed men, angry and impatient men, and anguished men look up and reach out for an elusive justice oft promised them, long denied them, but in the eyes of God and man's conscience is their due and should be their expectation. I say this is non-political and non-controversial. We're not talking now about miscegenation. Or whether a man can fence his yard. Or a hotdog vendor carefully select his customer. Or an innkeeper choose not to accommodate a particular traveler. These are the ramifications of the problem. They are not the problem. There have to be some bridges built; but first we have to acknowledge the rivers.

This is what I think is basic. This is what I believe to be the most common denominator in this spring of 1964. This must be first, the recognition and then the admission — that the dignity of human beings is not negotiable. The eminent worth

of man has no pro and no con. And the desperate need for an understanding and a respect between all men is as fundamental as the process of breathing in and breathing out.

On this spring night we look toward Washington, D.C., and hear the echoed overtones of a debate. We watch the struggle to invoke a cloture. We hear the voices of the willful foot-draggers and the hopeful sprinters as they trade and compromise and give battle for what they believe. But again, there is something happening on this earth transcendent of the Senates, the governments, the temporal voices of the champions of rights and the filibusters of wrong.

What is happening is that a whole world has suddenly become cognizant of its oneness. An idea of brotherhood has ceased to be an abstract. It has taken on a form and dimension and breadth and meaning. "Every man's death diminishes me" — a lyrical stab at truth from another century.

But in this nineteen hundred and sixth fourth year of our Lord, every man's indignity, every man's hunger, every man's search for freedom, every man's life reinforces me and revitalizes me and rededicates me. "We cannot be half-free and half-slave," Mr. Lincoln said. And now, a hundred years later, we find that we cannot be half hungry and half content; half with dignity, half with shame; half with freedom, half with a simple yearning to be free; half with prerogatives, half asking for just a few; half superior, half denied the right to prove even equality.

"You cannot legislate human love." Have you heard that phrase? "You cannot pass a law to stop people from hating" — a battle slogan of those who don't want to be bothered. A statement of philosophy from 20th century non-philosophers who would probably melt down the test tubes used to look for the microbes and the bacteria and the virus that caused cancer. Cancer is with us, so why fight it? Leave it to the individual patients. But don't make waves. Don't stir the riverbed. And above all, don't contemplate the beauty of this earth. The deeds of love. The small, gradual, but inexorable move upward of the human animal toward an enlightened moment in time when the person next door is the neighbor, the Negro is the darker neighbor, the South American is my Latin neighbor, the Japanese is my Oriental neighbor.

You can't legislate against prejudice? You would rather perhaps accept it as part of the innate personality of the homo sapien? You would rather say that it's with us, it's here to stay, it's part of the social phenomenon of our time. If this is the premise to be lived with, accepted, and — God help us — embraced, then let us throw away theology. Let us unencumber ourselves of the premise of God. Let us tear up our art, our literature, all of our culture, and let us retire to a rubble of our own making and manufacture barbed wire instead of stained glass.

Hatred is not the norm. Prejudice is not the norm. Suspicion, dislike, jealousy, and scapegoating — none of these things is the transcendent facet of the human personality. They are the diseases.

Continued on following page

ROD SERLING

The Loner: A TV Western with the Serling Touch

By Paul Gallagher

Rod Serling wielded a potent weapon in his fight for civil rights: his writing. And he didn't just tackle the evils of racial prejudice on *The Twilight Zone*, but on *The Loner*.

Sadly, many Serling fans have never heard of *The Loner*, let alone watched it. In a way, though, that's not surprising. It ran for only one season on CBS from September 1965 to March 1966. It wasn't even seen in reruns until the late 1990s, when cable's TV Land rescued it from obscurity, at least briefly. *Gunsmoke*, *Bonanza*, and other vintage Westerns live on today on retro channels, but *The Loner* seems all but forgotten.

Which is really a shame. You don't have to be a *Zone* fan to appreciate it. In fact, *The Loner* had no supernatural elements and was about as far removed from the fifth dimension as you can imagine. But it had one crucial thing in common with Serling's signature series: his incisive writing and pointed social critiques.

And that may have helped spell its doom.

The Loner, which starred Lloyd Bridges as William Colton, a former



Brock Peters stars in an episode of *The Loner*

Union officer wandering from town to town in the years after the Civil War, wasn't your run-of-the-mill Western. You'll see gunplay and other genre staples, but the problems that its characters faced were more likely to be psychological than physical. But Serling felt that CBS was pressing him to include more violence — and he resisted.

Reading the war of words that played out between him and CBS programming executive Michael Dann¹ can be frustrating for fans who wish the series could have continued for more than just 26

episodes. The two men seem to be talking past each other. It sounds like their respective visions for the show weren't really that far off.

But Dann also expressed a desire for Serling to bring in other writers and function more as a script supervisor than as a writer. And when he did that, he inadvertently signed the show's death warrant, I think. Serling wasn't about to take what he considered a serious insult lying down. As a self-described "pop-off," he made his grievances public, which hardly endeared him to Dann. *The Loner's* days

were soon numbered.

Before it went off the air, though, Serling made sure to dramatize the poisonous effects of prejudice. In "The Homecoming of Lemuel Stove," for example, Colton puts his life on the line to keep Stove (Brock Peters), a fellow ex-Yankee, from being lynched. In "Widow on the Evening Stage," he confronts hatred and bigotry when protecting a Native American woman (Katherine Ross) whose white husband was killed.

There was a time when Serling fans interested in sampling the series had no real options. It wasn't streaming anywhere (and it still isn't), and it wasn't on disc. That changed in 2016 when home-video company Shout! acquired the rights and put the series on DVD. As someone who for years had nothing but a bootleg set (20 episodes that someone recorded from TV Land), I was delighted to finally be able to buy a complete, official run of the series.

It retails for about \$14 on Amazon. If you're a Serling fan who also enjoys westerns, you won't regret saddling up — and exploring the restless world of *The Loner*.

1 Quoted extensively in Nick Parisi's excellent "Rod Serling: His Life, Work, and Imagination" (2018)

Continued from previous page

They are the cancers of the soul. They are the infectious and contagious viruses that have bled humanity over the years. But because they have been and are, is it necessary that they shall be?

I think not. If there is one voice left to say "welcome" to a stranger; if there is but one hand outstretched to say "enter and share"; if there is but one mind remaining to think a thought of warmth and friendship, then there is also a future in which we will find more than one hand, more than one voice, and more than one mind dedicated to the cause of man's equality.

Wishful, hopeful, unassured, problematic, and not to be guaranteed. This is all true. But again, on this spring evening of 1964, a little of man's awareness has shown itself. A little of his essential decency, his basic goodness, his preeminent dignity, has been made a matter of record. There will be moments of violence and expressions of hatred and an ugly re-echo of intolerance, but these are the

clinging vestiges of a decayed past, not the harbingers of the better, cleaner future.

To those who tell us that the inequality of the human animal is the necessary evil, we must respond by simply saying that first, it is evil but second, it is not necessary. We prove it, sitting here tonight. We prove it by reaffirming our faith. We prove it by having faith in our reaffirmations.

Horace Mann said, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." Let's paraphrase that tonight. Let us be ashamed to live without that victory.

I'm sure that many *Twilight Zone* fans will recognize that Mann quote. The slogan of Serling's alma mater, Antioch College, it had already been used in the episode "The Changing of the Guard." What a fitting way to conclude this inspiring address. Let's follow his advice and strive to light candles instead of cursing the darkness.

Watch the Dick Van Dyke video at tinyurl.com/NonPoliticalSpeech

ROD SERLING WROTE THIS:

Rod Serling addressed the subject of prejudice, bigotry, and the human condition in many closing monologues of *The Twilight Zone*. Here are a few:

A sickness known as hate. Not a virus, not a microbe, not a germ — but a sickness nonetheless, highly contagious, deadly in its effects. Don't look for it in the *Twilight Zone* look for it in a mirror. Look for it before the light goes out altogether. - "I am the Night - Color Me Black"

The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices... to be found only in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill... and suspicion can destroy... and a thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all of its own - for the children and the children yet unborn. And the pity of it is that these things cannot be confined to the *Twilight Zone*. - "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street"



No moral, no message, no prophetic tract, just a simple statement of fact: for civilization to survive, the human race has to remain civilized. Tonight's very small exercise in logic from the *Twilight Zone*. - The Shelter

Anyplace, everyplace, where there's hate, where there's prejudice, where there's bigotry. He's alive. He's alive so long as these evils exist. Remember that when he comes to your town. Remember it when you hear his voice speaking out through others. Remember it when you hear a name called, a minority attacked, any blind, unreasoning assault on a people or any human being. He's alive because through these things we keep him alive. - "He's Alive" Screenshot above

WALKING DISTANCE ON STAGE

The Sounds of Homewood: Musicians and Actors Bring Rod Serling's Most Personal Teleplay Back to his Hometown

By Tony Albarella

Rod Serling's "Walking Distance," a deceptively simple fantasy about a harried executive who literally revisits his childhood, is a layered, nuanced tale that rewards not only multiple viewings but viewings at various stages of one's life. When I was a child and pre-teen, I appreciated the "cool factor" setup of a man meeting himself in the past, and I related most to scenes in which Martin Sloan interacts with his younger self. In my teens and early twenties, I became aware of the lyrical quality of the writing and the flawless execution of the overall production. From my mid-twenties on, as the father of two daughters, I gravitated toward the Martin/Robert Sloan interactions, the parent-to-child relationship. In my early thirties, my mother passed away unexpectedly, and from then on I identified strongly with the melancholy sting of one final visit to say goodbye to a lost parent. Now, in my early fifties, both parents gone and both children grown, the seductive lure of nostalgia for one's past is a siren call I cannot resist.

Another aspect highlighting the brilliance of Serling's tale is how well it works in its many incarnations. I've enjoyed countless television viewings: on broadcast TV, then cable, then on VHS, laserdisc, DVD, Blu Ray and streaming, as formats have evolved. There have been outdoor screenings, such as a unseasonably chilly August night about twenty years ago, when we of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation (RSMF) set up a screen near Serling's star at the Binghamton Walk of Fame, and the glorious day, during the 2009 50th Anniversary of *The Twilight Zone* bash, where we sat on the very carousel horses that partially inspired the story and enjoyed multiple viewings on monitors set up around the Recreation Park carousel.

There's been no dearth of indoor screenings, either; audience reactions were a joy to behold at a Serling retrospective held by the then-Museum of Television and Radio (now the Paley Center) in NYC in 2002, and, multiple times, at screenings held in Binghamton's Forum theater. The episode even graced the big screen, when on November 14, 2019, Fathom Events produced a 60th anniversary



Southern Tier Actors Read performers bring the production to life.

theatrical release of select *Twilight Zone* episodes.

"Walking Distance" has also lived a long and fruitful life in other forms of media. I've listened to the marvelous Bernard Herrmann score literally hundreds of times, and have enjoyed the audiobook reading of Serling's short story adaptation, performed with dynamic range by the incomparable Cliff Robertson, maybe a dozen times – usually in the car on my way up to Binghamton. In 2002, another audio adaptation was released for the *Twilight Zone Radio Dramas* series, and TZ-related podcasts have covered and deconstructed the episode on multiple occasions.

Then there are the various written versions of the story, including that short story adaption by Serling himself, first published in 1960 in the Bantam collection *Stories From The Twilight Zone* and reprinted many times since. My first dog-eared copy dates back to childhood. The teleplay saw limited print in the Carol Serling-edited premiere issue of Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone Magazine*, in April of 1981. School curriculum and textbook versions have been published, as well as a graphic novel adaptation. In 2003, I spent many a happy hour with Serling's original actual script from the Ithaca College Archive, and it was my joy to publish it, complete with revisions and trimmed scenes, in the initial volume of *As Timeless as Infinity: The Complete Twilight*

Zone Scripts of Rod Serling.

Perhaps the most visceral variations of "Walking Distance" are the live versions of the story. It's been performed as a play, and in 2009, Binghamton television station WSKG staged the episode (along with "Mirror Image") as a live TV broadcast. As a member of that live audience – which included Carol Serling, both Serling daughters, Anne and Jodi, their respective spouses, and other friends from the RSMF – watching the drama unfold in front of actual television cameras was the closest I'll ever come to the adrenaline-filled days of live television.

Until last year, I thought I'd experienced every version of "Walking Distance" conceivable. But on October 22, 2022, I found out that it's never too late to encounter a sparkling new facet of this well-worn gem. On that night, the Binghamton Philharmonic held a one-time-only performance of Bernard Herrmann's evocative score for "Walking Distance," utilizing a full orchestra (including a concert pedal harp, a gorgeous instrument to behold and one featured prominently in much of Herrmann's work). The event included a reading of Serling's teleplay by performers from Southern Tier Actors Read (STAR).

I'm a fan of and frequent listener to film and television scores, but I'm no music critic; I lack the language to adequately review

a musical performance. What I can hope to impart to you is the experience from an audience member's perspective. As familiar as I am with the source material, I found this hour-long performance to be both emotionally involving and surprisingly fresh.

Assembled by Binghamton Philharmonic Executive Director Paul Cienniwa and led by guest conductor Michael McGehee, of the Los Angeles-based Hollywood Studio Orchestra, the event took place in the Helen Foley Theater at Binghamton High School. Rod Serling himself, back in his teenage drama days, trod the very stage boards on which the performance was held, and the theater's namesake, Helen Foley, was Rod Serling's mentor, teacher and one of the original founders of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation.

In a creative and quite ingenious move, two performances of Herrmann's "Walking Distance" score were given. The first half-hour consisted of the orchestra playing the music in isolation, allowing the audience to experience it in a pure and uninterrupted format. One of the more enjoyable aspects of a live orchestra performance, for me, is the interplay between aural and visual stimulation; I can close my eyes and let the music wash over and through me, then open them to marvel at all the artists on stage, immersed in graceful waltzes with their individual instruments, vigorously performing solitary roles that somehow blend together to weave one cohesive whole. Encountering this with a piece of music that is so familiar and deeply personal for me allowed it to reach me in ways I did not imagine possible.

For the second half-hour, nine actors from STAR joined in and, under the steady direction of Judy McMahon, embodied various characters in a reading of Serling's teleplay as the orchestra accompanied them with the score. This allowed the audience to listen to the score in context, alongside the story, and gauge how well the cues matched up with and highlighted the dramatic beats of the teleplay. There was even an assist from a vintage, mechanical carousel organ, on loan from the Endicott Rotary Foundation, when calliope music was required.

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WALKING DISTANCE ON STAGE

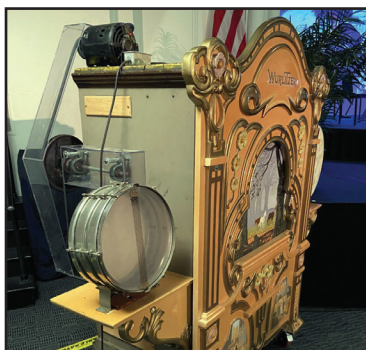
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The actor reading perfectly complemented the live orchestral performance. A full theatrical presentation, with actors moving about on a set, with props and under full lighting, would have distracted from and thereby diminished the music. Instead the audience enjoyed the balance of actors bringing out the eloquence and emotion of Serling's dialogue in a static, contained way, backed by the sight of horns rising and falling, of hands and bows flowing over strings in rhythmic precision.

Several friends, fellow RSMF members and Serling-event regulars were present at the show,



Left: Conductor Michael McGehee leads the way into Homewood
Right: A vintage Wurlitzer carousel organ provides sounds from the past.



and enjoying it alongside them capped off an already marvelous evening for me and my wife. The large majority of the audience,

however, was made up of people unfamiliar to us, presumably symphony patrons and admirers. It was reassuring to note that Serling's

work found a new audience and his words fell on fresh ears.

Equally reassuring is the fact that this intoxicatingly different iteration of "Walking Distance" took place eight days shy of the 63rd anniversary of the episode's original airing. This speaks to the timelessness of the teleplay and bodes well for the promise of future incarnations. Rod Serling's bittersweet tale posited that you can't go home again, that there is, indeed, "only one summer to a customer." In contrast to this theme, there seems to be no end to the number of times and ways that "Walking Distance" can be presented to audiences...and hit home for them.

Bernard Herrmann - The Genius Behind The Score

By Gordon C. Webb

If you linger after a movie ends to watch the credits - as I do - you probably recognize the names of some top film composers, such as Jerry Goldsmith, Maurice Jarre, John Williams, John Barry, Dimitri Tiomkin and, of course, Bernard Herrmann.

Known for his work on the films of Alfred Hitchcock, Herrmann might also be considered a "Twilight Zone regular" since he contributed the scores for seven episodes. And, while the iconic, four-note ("do-do-do-do") melody is thought by many to be the original theme - *The Twilight Zone* premiered on October 2, 1959 with Herrmann's slow, more pensive opening theme underscoring Rod Serling's voice-over narration. And, that first episode - the series pilot "Where Is Everybody?" - has very little dialog, and featured Herrmann's haunting score as the main character explores a town apparently devoid of other humans. One script in particular - "Walking Distance" -- is considered an example of Serling's best writing, and Herrmann's haunting themes for this episode reflect the composer's feeling that music "can invest a scene with terror, grandeur, gaiety or misery." Serling loved the background music for "Walking Distance," and wrote to Herrmann -- calling it "one of the most beautiful music scores I've been privileged to hear."

A classically-trained musician, Herrmann began composing under Aaron Copeland at Juilliard, and formed his own orchestra at the age of 20. He started working for CBS in 1934, where he began



composing and conducting for Orson Welles' series *The Mercury Theater on the Air*. He worked with Welles on the infamous "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast which created nationwide panic in 1938, and Herrmann went on to compose the score for Welles' *Citizen Kane*, which earned an Academy Award nomination for "Best Score of a Dramatic Picture." He won the Oscar in this category in 1941 for *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

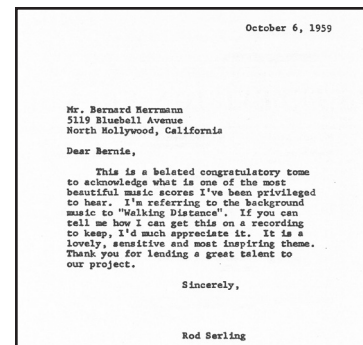
Herrmann's collaboration with Alfred Hitchcock is legendary, but he had to convince the director to use music at all in his 1960 classic *Psycho*. He created the screeching violin theme for the film's shower scene - which is still studied by film students as an example of how music on the screen can complement and intensify a visual story. One of the first film composers to experiment with "electronic sounds" - Herrmann also collaborated with "Hitch" on *The Birds*... which contains not a single note of music. The film's

soundtrack features bird sounds created by a device called a "mixturetrautonium."

Bernard Herrmann created countless music scores for radio dramas, films, television shows, stage shows and even a few radio commercials. Following a career that spanned more than 50 years, he died on Christmas eve, 1975 - just months before the release of *Taxi Driver*, Martin Scorsese's film featuring the composer's final work. His music for *Psycho* and *Vertigo* are included on The American Film Institute's "25 Greatest Film Scores of All time."

Twilight Zone scores by Bernard Herrmann:
"Where Is Everybody"
"Walking Distance"
"The Lonely"
"Eye of the Beholder"
"Little Girl Lost"
"Living Doll"
"Ninety Years Without Slumbering"

For a complete filmography and more visit: bernardherrmann.org



Above: A letter dated October 6, 1959 sent to Bernard Herrmann:

Dear Bernie,
This is a belated congratulatory tome to acknowledge what is one of the most beautiful music scores I've been privileged to hear. I'm referring to the background music to "Walking Distance." If you can tell me how I can get this on a recording to keep, I'd much appreciate it. It is a lovely, sensitive and most inspiring theme. Thank you for lending a great talent to our project.

Sincerely,
Rod Serling

WALKING DISTANCE ON STAGE

An Interview with Dr. Paul Cienniwa - Executive Director, Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra

By Tony Albarella

TA: Can you describe how the "Walking Distance" performance came about?

PC: My wife and I moved to Binghamton on April 4, 2020. The following day, we walked through Recreation Park, and I saw the "Walking Distance" medallion in the bandstand. At that moment, I remembered that Rod Serling had grown up in Binghamton, so, upon returning to the apartment, I looked up "Walking Distance" and saw that the incidental music was by Bernard Herrmann. The project was born!

The original plan was to simply have the orchestra perform the excellent incidental music, but, through the encouragement of local Serling fans, the project developed into the unstaged screenplay reading with orchestra, carousel organ, and more.

TA: Performing the score in isolation and then again in context with a dramatic reading of the script was an inspired format. Can you tell me how that developed?

PC: Years ago, I was music director for a production of Handel's Alcina in Boston. Halfway through rehearsals, I commented to the orchestra that all that acting was getting in the way of the music! With "Walking Distance," I was concerned that the audience wouldn't appreciate Herrmann's score if they only heard it under the spoken word. While our approach (i.e., a play-through before the reading) could have seemed pedagogical, it was anything but. I feel that the audience connected better to the music and its integration to the screenplay through the opportunity to hear it out of context and then within.

TA: Now that the program has been composed and successfully

performed, are there any plans for a possible repeat performance?

PC: One early concept for the production was to have "Walking Distance" performed annually in Recreation Park – sort of a Serling "Shakespeare in the Park." I'm not sure if we'll pursue it at this time, since there are many moving parts and a whole lot of funding that needs to be in place. Even if we don't get there, that shouldn't stop anyone from conducting an annual Serling in the Park, even without incidental music. "Walking Distance" could be read at each event, along with a selected screenplay. In time, the entire cycle could be covered!

TA: Bernard Herrmann wrote the score for seven Twilight Zone episodes, including the series pilot, as well as the original main theme. Might we see a future expansion of this concept into Herrmann's other Twilight Zone work?



PC: I think that's unlikely, since this project was really built around Recreation Park, the carousel organ, Binghamton, etc. The Binghamton Philharmonic is very likely to perform more of Herrmann's music over the years, but I'm not sure we'll see something as elaborate as our "Walking Distance." Then again, if the right funder comes through . . .

Photo by Robert Leger

An Interview with Joe Bardales – Southern Tier Actors Read

By Tony Albarella

TA: How did the Southern Tier Actors Read become involved with the "Walking Distance" production? Did the Binghamton Philharmonic contact you or did you learn of the event and offer your services?

JB: The Binghamton Philharmonic reached out to Judy McMahon, co-founder of Southern Tier Actors Read (STAR), to direct and cast the dramatic reading of "Walking Distance." I've been a member of STAR and have worked with Judy for over a decade now as an actor, and previously we both co-directed Rod Serling's "O'Toole from Moscow" at SerlingFest 2021. That wasn't the first time Judy and I co-directed a dramatic reading together; in 2014 we co-directed "The Farnsworth Invention" by Aaron Sorkin, the story of Philo Farnsworth and the invention of television. SerlingFest 2021 was also when Dr. Paul Cienniwa announced the Binghamton Philharmonic's production of Bernard Herrmann's score for "Walking Distance," and that Judy would be directing the dramatic reading of the script. I asked Judy to keep me in mind when she was casting, and she reached out to me early in 2022 to play the part

of Martin Sloan's father, which I enthusiastically accepted!

TA: Did you rehearse the read separately from the orchestra, or together with them?

JB: We rehearsed separately from the orchestra, but Dr. Cienniwa accompanied us on piano so we could get a feel for the music and get an instinct for where the dramatic beats lined up with the score. It wasn't until the night before the performance that we were able to work with the full orchestra, and wow, did that take everything up to a whole new level! Bernard Herrmann's music was so beautiful and inspiring, and we are so blessed to have such a talented, world-class symphony orchestra in Binghamton.

TA: What were rehearsals like and how many times did you meet to prep for the event?

JB: We had several rehearsals, first an actors' meet and greet and table read of the script in Judy's dining room in the summer of 2022. Andy Horowitz and I previewed one of our scenes together at SerlingFest 2022 in August and got together on our own to rehearse, later adding in Nick DeLucia, our narrator, Judy, our director, and

Dr. Cienniwa. In October, when the entire cast convened for rehearsals for the full Binghamton Philharmonic production, we needed a space with a piano, and the Phelps Mansion Museum in Binghamton kindly allowed us use of their ballroom stage the week before the performance. It wasn't until our last dress rehearsal the night before the performance that we were able to use the Binghamton High School stage and rehearse with the full orchestra. Naturally, the new space required us to make some last minute adjustments and collaborate for the first time with our guest conductor, Michael McGehee. The entire process was so professional and everyone, actor and musician alike, gave their all.

TA: As an active RSMF board member and member of STAR, how did it feel to play a role in participating in and enhancing a Serling event? The room was packed and the audience response enthusiastic – did you enjoy the evening from the performer's perspective?

JB: I don't think the full gravitas of the event hit me until the actual performance on Saturday night. The combination of Rod Serling's words and Bernard



Herrmann's music was magical, exhilarating, and I took it all in and enjoyed "being in the moment" as the performance unfolded. You couldn't ask for a better audience—the connection between the performers and the audience was almost palpable. It was a feeling of something special, something once-in-a-lifetime, a celebration of Binghamton, our community, our history. As a board member of the RSMF, I was both honored and humbled to be part of something so big promoting the life and work of our native son, Rod Serling. Much like the plot of "Walking Distance," the performance felt like we had gone back in time to the early days of television, even if for just a moment.

TWILIGHT ZONE

Your Next Stop... The Looney Zone

By Gail Flug

It's a glorious thing when two of your favorite fandoms are combined in one. Such is the case with *The Looney Zone*, a comic book published in July 1997 by DC Comics, a subsidiary of Warner Bros. As the name suggests, all the stories within this issue are inspired by *Twilight Zone* episodes starring the Looney Tunes characters.

The cover has a gray-scale Bugs Bunny standing in front of an open doorway, dressed in a suit and giving a Serling-esque introduction:

You're pursuing another book, a comic not only of words and pictures, but that of the mind. A stand-up act in a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of the imagination. That's the "rabbit season" sign up ahead -- your next stop The Looney Zone!

As pictured, the elements inside the open door feature popular Looney Tunes references, all of which are in the five stories. The writers, who are non-credited, certainly did their homework as each parody cleverly mirrors its episode perfectly, right down to Bugs introducing each tale with a monolog.

Story 1 - Untitled

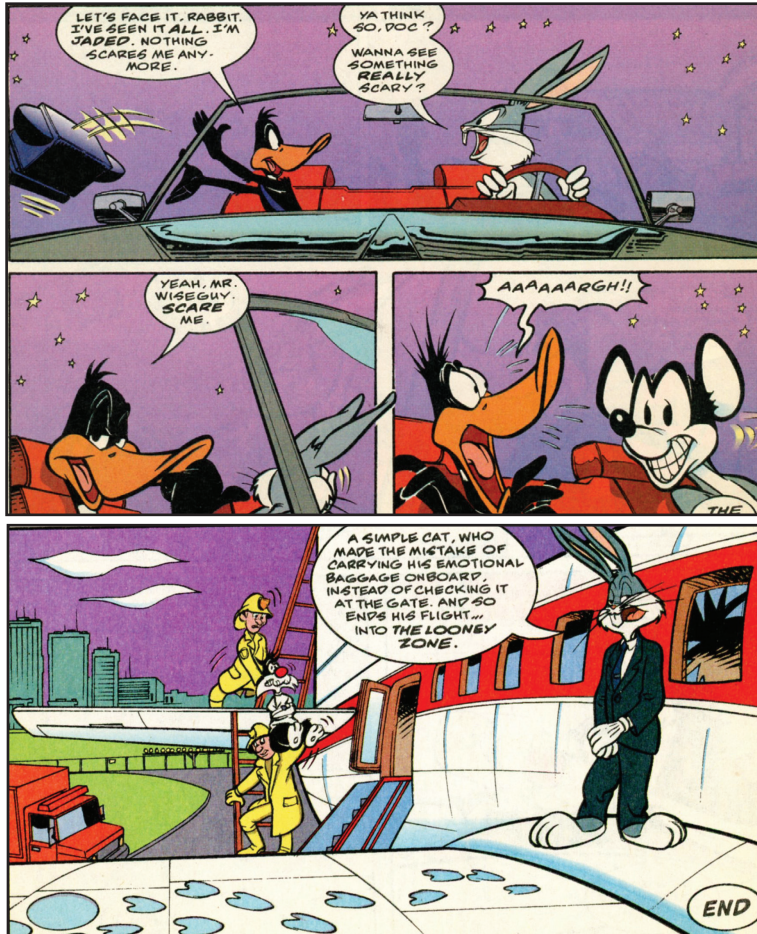
A strange occurrence in a small town. An unidentified flying object crashes. Evidence of an alien life form? Nothing but tracks leading to a diner. You've heard of trying to find a needle in a haystack. Try finding a Martian in a diner... while grabbing a bite in the Looney Zone.

In a parody of "Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up?" a spaceship has crashed next to a diner at the same time that a busload of tourists enter. With reason to believe the spaceman has mixed in with the crowd, an unhinged Daffy Duck is singled out and taken away by state troopers claiming he must be the alien, despite the obvious as Marvin the Martian is seated next to him at the counter.

Story 2: "Le Hitchhiker"

Greetings from any town, any place, where an ordinary Sunday drive crosses a border and leads you into the Looney Zone.

Penelope Pussycat leans against a freshly painted post, which



leaves a white stripe down her back. She meets Pepé Le Pew at a toll booth, and he falls instantly in love, thinking she is also a skunk. As in the *Twilight Zone* episode, "The Hitchhiker," Pepé in pursuit magically appears at various stops of her journey, such as on the radio, on roadside signs, and in the back of a school bus. Disguised as a motorcycle cop, he stops her for speeding but is hit by a truck knocking him into a ravine. Penelope looks into the rearview mirror and is horrified to see Pepé sitting in the backseat holding a rose.

Story three: "The Dummy"

For your consideration a two-bit ventriloquist and a dummy ... of course, it's hard to tell which is which once the curtain rises on the Looney Zone.

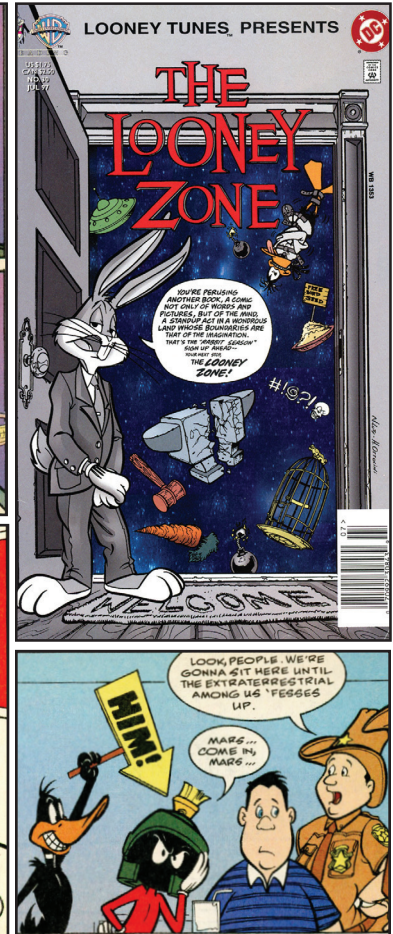
This story opens with Daffy as a ventriloquist performing in a dive bar with his so-called 'balsa-for-brains' dummy that looks like Elmer Fudd. Daffy insults Witch Hazel from the stage, and she decides to have some fun at his expense. After his poorly received performance, Daffy goes backstage and finds his

dummy can speak by itself. With dollar signs in his eyes, Daffy seizes this opportunity and becomes a hit. During a sold-out show in Las Vegas - with Wayne Newton as his opening act - Daffy sees Witch Hazel at the craps table and calls her out from the stage for making too much noise. Daffy wakes up in the morning to find that the dummy has become human and their roles are reversed.

Story four: "Nightmare of 20,000 Tweets"

Portrait of a frightened feline ... a common house cat, fresh from a visit to an animal psychiatric hospital. Now he's flying home, a new cat ... stripped of his innate desire to prey on parakeets. But this will be no joyride for our tortured Tom ... for tonight he travels coach into the Looney Zone.

Sylvester is finally going home after an extended stay in rehab. During a catnap, he is woken up by tapping on the window and sees a deranged Tweety Bird destroying the wing. To stop him from crashing the plane, Sylvester breaks the window and is face to face with Tweety, who says, "Hi, puddy! Coffee, tea, or me?" After



an emergency landing, Sylvester is rescued, but no one believes what he saw ... despite Tweety's footprints on the wing.

The final pages recreate the opening scene of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* with Bugs and Daffy driving down a deserted open highway. Daffy wishes that something would happen to break the boredom, and an anvil falls from the sky. Daffy shrugs it off, saying that he's jaded and has seen it all, to which Bugs asks if he would like to see 'something really scary.' Bugs looks away, then turns around to show his actual face as a likeness of Mickey Mouse.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no information online about this comic's worth as it has very limited availability. Other issues from the series published around the same time are available through eBay and collectors' sites, and do not carry jaw-dropping prices. As a collector of Looney Tunes and *Twilight Zone* memorabilia, my long-desired copy popped up on Amazon for less than \$20 - a small price to pay for a brilliant comic covering two classic favorites.