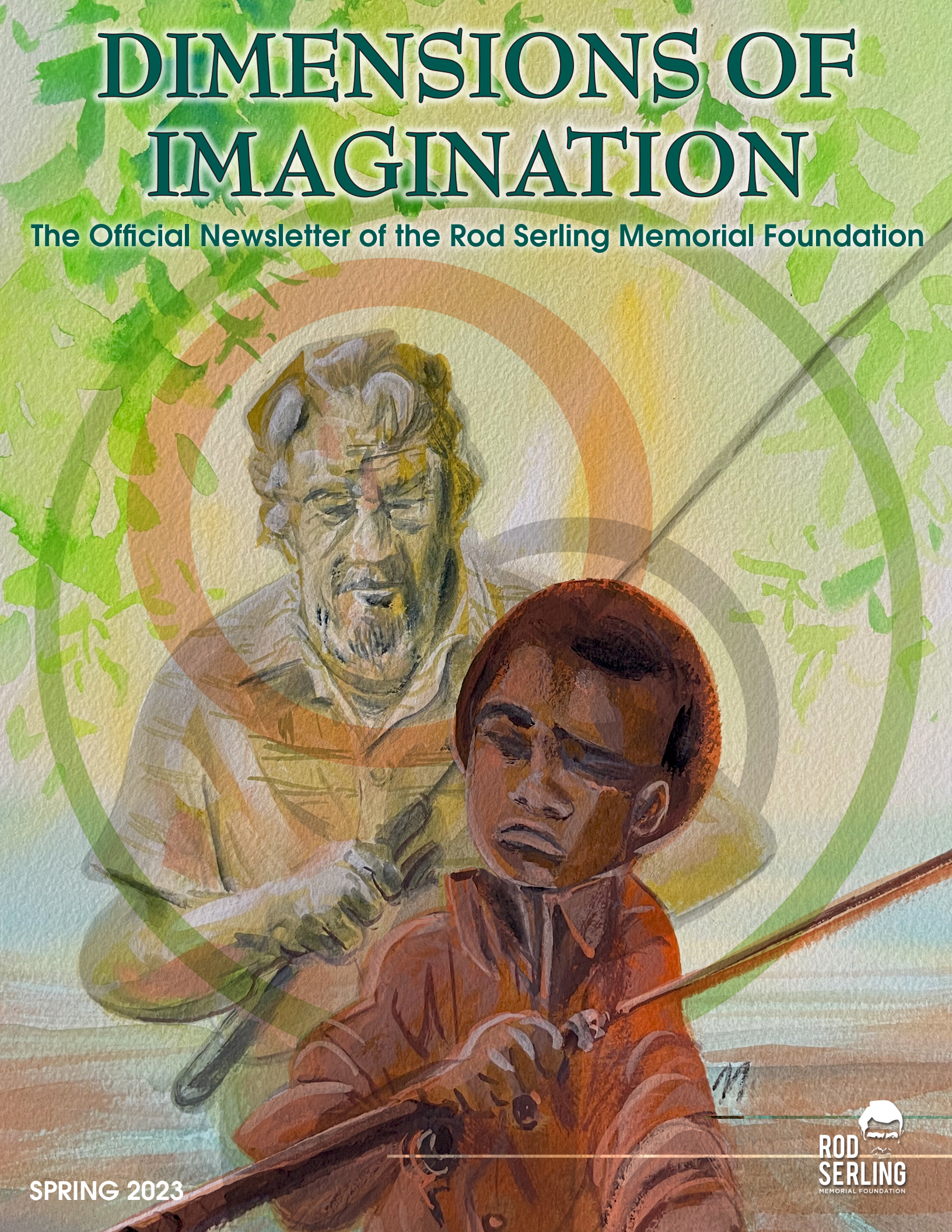
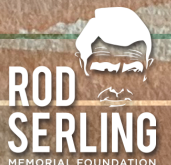


DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION

The Official Newsletter of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation



SPRING 2023



NOTES FROM NICK

An Update from RSMF President Nick Parisi

The time: 2024, the year that will mark 100 years since Rod Serling's birth. The place: Binghamton's Recreation Park, home to the carousel that inspired *The Twilight Zone*'s "Walking Distance" and where a young Roddy Serling may very well have carved his name into the bark of a tree if not into a post in the bandstand. The what? Well, thanks to you - everyone who pledged to or otherwise supported our Kickstarter campaign, the "what" is the unveiling of a statue in honor of Rod Serling - and what promises to be one hell of a celebration.

Again, tremendous thanks to every one of you who helped us reach this long-sought goal. Particularly, thanks to Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo for her unfagging support of our project, and to the Southern Tier Chapter of NECA (National Electrical Contractors Association), IBEW Local 325 for their very generous donation that helped

push us past the finish line. Mark DeGraffenried and the team at statues.com is hard at work on Rod's statue and it's well on its way to completion. Christopher Johnson, a Los Angeles-based filmmaker, plans to shoot a short documentary about the statue's creation, which we hope to screen as part of our unveiling ceremony next year. We'll be sure to keep everyone updated with additional details about the celebration as they become available.

The only downside, if it could be called that, to this exciting news, is that our Kickstarter campaign demanded so much of our time and attention that scheduling an in-person SerlingFest for 2023 became impossible. Instead, we will be presenting a virtual SerlingFest in August, and we hope you will understand why that is.

Turning attention to our current

newsletter, we hope you agree that we've put together an outstanding issue, starting with gorgeous cover art from Scott Morse, depicting characters from one of Rod's most poignant scripts, "A Storm in Summer." In this issue, Gordon Webb has written a tribute to this Emmy-nominated installment of *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, which first aired in 1970. In his piece, Gordon quotes from Jack Gould's glowing review of the show in *The New York Times*. To those superlatives, I will add these, which were provided by Percy Shain of *The Boston Globe*: "(A Storm in Summer) is a small masterpiece of poignance and warmth whose like has seldom gleamed from the tube since the early days when Rod Serling was one of the writing giants of the medium. If anyone has written wittier, more beautiful dialogue for the little screen, I have yet to hear it. Moreover, it had some gentle preaching about human values



and decency and bigotry that spoke volumes in soft words."

Gordon Webb's contribution to this issue continues the Foundation's tradition of highlighting important parts of Rod Serling's career outside of *The Twilight Zone*.

We can't wait to see everyone for our virtual SerlingFest this August and for our "Centennial of Serling" event in 2024.

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

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

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NEWSDESK

Rod Serling Day Celebrated
in Binghamton, NY



By Gordon Webb

Elementary students in Binghamton, NY celebrated "Rod Serling Day" on April 4, 2023 - honoring the district's most famous alumnus. The writer and creator of *The Twilight Zone* graduated from Binghamton High School in 1943.

All fifth grade classes in the

Binghamton District took a field trip to the Rod Serling School of Fine Arts at BHS -- to meet the guest of honor - Serling's daughter Anne. She told the students about their home life and her Dad's personality "off-screen." He'd do almost anything for a laugh, she said and, ironically, in

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RSMF PROFILE

Jeff Serling, Member, Board Of Directors

Jeff Serling joined the RSMF board of directors in September 2018, when he was convinced (after spending an amazing visit at Cayuga (Lake) with his cousin, Anne) to become part of the incredible work that the foundation was doing. Jeff is the nephew of Rod Serling and the son of Rod's brother, Robert. Jeff has always loved science fiction, from *Star Wars*, *The Black Hole*, *Star Trek* and countless others and appreciates the work of so many science fiction legends such as Lucas, Spielberg, Bradbury, Wells and Asimov. To understand that his uncle's name -- "Serling" -- sits among those legends of the genre fills him with a lot of pride.

Jeff was born outside of Potomac, Maryland, before moving to Tucson, Arizona. Growing up, watching *The Twilight Zone* was often a family activity and he also fell in love with *Planet of the Apes* as a young child. Rod passed when Jeff was quite young, so his version of Rod Serling was summers at Cayuga Lake, holidays with Carol, Anne and Jodi in Potomac and getting away from Maryland winters by visiting Carol in

California. It wasn't until he joined his dad at *The Twilight Zone Movie* premiere in 1983 that he really came to understand how beloved his uncle's work was. Awestruck at his first movie premiere, he was a beaming 11-year-old, meeting celebrities, and walking the red carpet in Binghamton. After college, Jeff met his wife, Michele, and a few years later they moved to Seattle, Washington, where they have lived for more than 27 years, raising their two boys -- Robert and Andrew. They have enjoyed many trips together back to Cayuga Lake, and Upstate New York feels like a second home to his family. Jeff and his wife celebrated 25 years of marriage last year by renewing their vows in a small ceremony on a beach in Jamaica.

While his dad was also an accomplished writer, Jeff leaned more towards his mother's career choice and began working in the technology industry. He worked for internet and wireless companies before settling down as a Director of Solutions Consulting at a cloud software company. Jeff did, however, inherit his dad's love of



Pictured: Jeff - far right - with Michele, Robert and Andrew

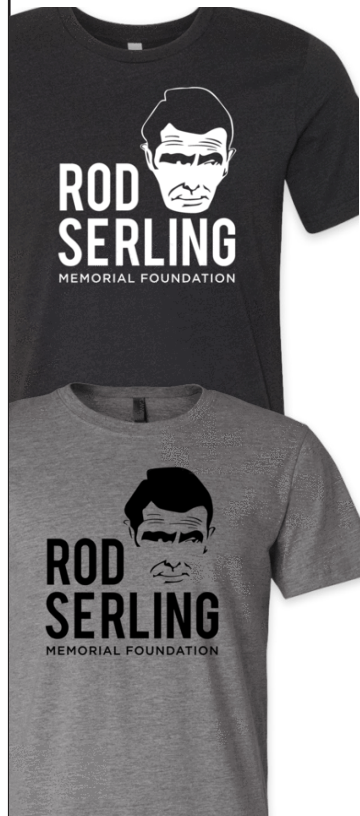
football, and he coached Jr High and High School football for over 25 years in both Tucson and the Seattle area. Before Bob's passing, Jeff and his Dad did collaborate on their only work together -- a screenplay for a football-themed movie about rebuilding an NFL team after an airline disaster.

Jeff was honored to be asked to join the board of directors of the RSMF. He sees it as an opportunity to not only honor his uncle's legacy, but the legacy of the Serling family as a whole. The Serling family has a history across upstate New York, but it is never more palatable than when you are amongst the wonderful people of Binghamton, who tell stories of Sam and Esther Serling

and their boys, Bob and Rod. Bob was asked many times if there was a rivalry between him and his brother as writers. The answer was always the same: he never felt anything more than pride and Rod felt the same way. Bob used to say he was jealous of the new cars that Rod would always be driving, but couldn't be prouder of his little brother's accomplishments.

Jeff and his family often attend science fiction conventions, and collect artwork and memorabilia. Jeff still always picks the seat above the wing of the airplane as part of his family duty to watch for gremlins, and he loves being asked by anyone who wants to chat about *The Twilight Zone* -- "Do you remember the episode where..."

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



BING - FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

third grade -- he received only a satisfactory in writing.

The students were treated to a performance by Southern Tier Actors Read (STAR) who performed "Walking Distance," one of the best-known *Twilight Zone* episodes. This was a reprise of a similar event on October 22, 2022 which also featured the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra playing the episode's

original music. The cast of "Walking Distance" included the RSMF's own Joe Bardales -- who appeared in both performances. (Read more about the October performance in the Winter 2023 issue of this Newsletter.)

Binghamton Mayor Jared Kraham officially dedicated April 4th as "Rod Serling Day," and called on Binghamton citizens to celebrate Serling's contributions to the community, cinema and all humanity.

BINGHAMTON

There's A Signpost Up Ahead...

by Tony Albarella

In years past, when driving into Binghamton from points south, motorists traveling north on Interstate 81 encountered a small rest stop just prior to entering town. This respite from the road used to be as standard and bare-bones as a highway rest stop can be; a small brick building housing restrooms, snack and soft drink vending machines, brochure racks advertising local attractions and a few outdoor benches from which one could enjoy a scenic view. It provided the essentials to refresh from a long trip, but little else.

What currently exists in its place is so elaborate that the term "rest stop" is a woefully underpowered misnomer. The aptly-named Southern Tier Welcome Center is a sprawling, modern complex that really rolls out the red carpet to upstate visitors, so much so that locals purposefully hit the highway just to grab a favorite exotic snack, enjoy a designer coffee or treat their children to a few hours of outdoor play.

The Welcome Center, which is located in Kirkwood, New York, is situated between the Pennsylvania border and Exit 1, and opened in October of 2017. Laid out over almost 14,000 square feet, the facility features a dining area that can accommodate sixty patrons, a colorful river- and canoe-themed play area, electric car charging stations, a motorcycle shelter, a pet comfort area, a walk of fame, large-screen video and selfie walls, complimentary Wi-Fi and a wall-mounted gallery of regional artifacts. The large outdoor sculpture of the iconic I LOVE NY logo, which overlooks the highway in front of a picturesque mountainside backdrop, provides a perfect year-round "photo op."

Appropriately, the overarching theme to the Welcome Center is nearby attractions and local flavor. A full-sized race car, supplied by and representing the Watkins Glen International race track, marks the entrance. A colorful glass sculpture, on loan from the Corning Museum of Glass, hangs from the ceiling above beautiful terrazzo flooring that presents a visual map of the area. An expansive "Taste NY" café section partners with over 1,800 New York State farmers to offer, on a rotating basis, items from throughout New York State. The available culinary treats include fresh baked goods, local coffees and juices, soups, salads and "Spiedies," and treats like



regional chocolate, syrup and honey.

Two of the Welcome Center's regional representations are of particular note to admirers of Rod Serling.

The first relates to the city of Binghamton. Fans of the writer are familiar with Serling's penchant for his hometown, his nostalgia for his carefree boyhood days in Recreation Park, and the role a carousel plays in one of his seminal works, *Twilight Zone's* "Walking Distance." Binghamton is locally referred to as the "Carousel Capital of the World" because it boasts six working vintage carousels, and the Southern Tier Welcome Center pays homage to this; a fiberglass replica of a carved carousel horse is on permanent display, and the dining area is designed to evoke a carousel enclosure.

I thought I might be reading too much into that dining area

design, that perhaps the interior and exterior was modeled after a simple park gazebo or similar structure. To verify, I reached out to Associate Director of Public Information Alice Maggiore, of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

"Yes," Alice confirmed when asked if the design was intentional. "Each welcome center's design was influenced by regional factors, and the Southern Tier's theme was a carousel. It was identified early in the design phase that the greater Binghamton area is home to many unique family fun attractions, including the only carousel collection of its kind in the world."

In a development worthy of a Serling-scripted teleplay, Alice also told me about her personal ties to the area. "Your email tugs on my heartstrings," she notes, "as I'm actually from Binghamton originally and am a proud graduate of Binghamton High



School, where Rod Serling also graduated from. I have many great memories playing in Recreation Park and riding that carousel."

The second Rod Serling reference in the Welcome Center is more overt. The Southern Tier Walk of Fame, which consists of bronze stars installed outside the building with the intent, as a mounted plaque notes, of "Honoring Outstanding Individuals," features a Rod Serling star. Other area notables include cartoonist Johnny Hart, humorist David Sedaris, astronomer/author Carl Sagan, actors Bill Pullman and Mary McDonnell, inventor Edwin A. Link, journalist Brian Williams, business magnate John D. Rockefeller Sr., race car driver Geoff Bodine, football player Ernie Davis, astronaut Eileen Collins and writer/humorist Mark Twain.

"The State worked with local tourism associations," Alice explains, "to develop a list of notable persons to be featured at the Welcome Centers." Rod Serling's star is mounted in the most conspicuous and heavily trafficked area, directly in front of the entrance doors leading into the facility.

Perhaps one day you'll find yourself out on Route 81, enjoying a leisurely cruise, or maybe you'll be heading upstate to attend a SerlingFest or some other Binghamton-based activity. You might even be a stressed-out Manhattan executive, desperately fleeing the City to avoid another board meeting or phone call. Whatever the reason, if you're in the area, I heartily recommend that you swing by the Southern Tier Welcome Center. You can spend a few minutes or, if you want to slow down to a walk and live your life full measure, a few hours. It's just outside of town – practically walking distance, you might say – and deserves inclusion on the list of the area's Serling-related tribute sites.

TWILIGHT ZONE

Taking Twilight Zone Back

by Steve Schlich

There have been three sanctioned reboots of *The Twilight Zone*, several series that claimed its direct parentage and a multitude of others that owe their mere existence to the groundwork that Rod Serling laid.

One advantage to giving your new show the old name is nostalgia. Who wouldn't tune in to watch an episode from the original series that they've never seen before? Each of those three namesake shows did a reasonable riff on the classic opening, both with words and visuals.

But...but!!

No matter how sincere the reboots attempted to honor or mimic the original, each of them failed to replicate its soul. Why? Some would argue because they didn't adhere to the look, feel or period of the original series.

Aspiring filmmaker Kraig Bryant believes that the reboots failed because they lacked the spirit and methodology that gave the original series its flavor. He has a plan to launch a new series that would be conspicuously *not* new—it would be respectfully old.

"We have Lynchian and Lovecraftian; why not Twilight Zonian?" Bryant asks. "*The Twilight Zone* employed various genres but one could argue that it was a genre of its own. Anthology meets mystery, suspense and the occasional supernatural. I believe the *Twilight Zone* to be a vast and still largely unexplored realm. Rod Serling opened the gates, and we've made replicas, but we really haven't gone back in."

Here's some irony that might be worthy of a plotline: the three less-than-successful reboots used the series' original name and enjoyed all the cultural caché that comes with it. But because Bryant is a relative unknown, his attempt to be even truer to *The Twilight Zone*'s original production values is unlikely to secure use of the name. That won't halt comparisons that viewers are sure to make. Submitted for your perusal... a list of what those reboots lacked, and that his would offer:

Black & White: The original show's gray palette offered opportunities that color denies. *The Twilight Zone*'s cinematography and production design used all those subtle shades of gray, along with unusual camera angles, to build



Left: Filmmaker Kraig Bryant; right: screenshot of "The Silence," a favorite episode.

a mood in service of the scripts. According to Bryant "the costume design and art direction (of my show) would always try to be true to what the original series was able to accomplish."

4:3 Aspect Ratio: This retro approach aims to transport the viewer back to the times of the original *Twilight Zone*. What was normal then is special now, and will reach out to the audience viscerally.

But Bryant's vision goes deeper than nostalgic framing...

"There was something tactile to the filming of that time. The heat of the lamps on the actors' skin, the presence of sweat behind and in front of the camera, the 35mm film stock spooling through the gate of a Panaflex Camera, the cost of equipment and labor heard in every tick of the clock. It's intoxicating to think about."

1/2 Hour Length: Bryant believes that "part of the problem has been that the reboot episodes are too long. There's no way to keep the viewer on their toes when you add filler. *The Twilight Zone* ran under 25 minutes per episode without commercials. There's a reason that Season Four didn't hit as hard: the long format is not ideal for this genre."

"Old Timey" Acting: People looked different and behaved differently in mid-twentieth century America. Some actors spoke with a transatlantic accent like Cary Grant's. The writing and the acting reflected those times. You can see it and feel it as you watch Jack Klugman, Agnes Morehead, Burgess Meredith and Anne Francis—among others—discover their personal *Twilight Zones*. Their look, their voices, even the way they moved is of *that time*.

"Old Timey" Stories: "As a screenwriter, what intrigued me most was how the plots would unwind themselves like short spools of coarse yarn. Unwinding by hand, you realize how the two ends are connected," Bryant maintains.

George Clayton Johnson, author of the source material or the script of several classic *Twilight Zone* episodes, described the show as reality portrayed with an added "touch of strange." The reality was gritty and the stories were timeless because they involved human interactions, whether you were signing a deal with the devil or negotiating a relationship with a robot. Special effects didn't need to be shown; they were in your head.

Dark Irony: Rod Serling didn't invent the ironic twist, an art form that is often considered *The Twilight Zone*'s trademark, but he invested you so much in the conflict and resolution of characters that you couldn't look away even when you could guess the ending.

And especially when the ending is unkind to someone you've come to care about.

"One favorite episode of mine is 'The Silence.' A loudmouth character is bet that he cannot be silent for one year. It's a huge sum that he desperately needs. And when he wins at the end of the year, he reveals that he had his vocal cords cut.

"He'll never speak again. But the loser has his own revelation: he doesn't have the money to pay off the bet. The winner sacrificed everything for nothing."

Bryant's all-time favorite episode is "And When the Sky Was Opened," where three pilots have a difficult return from space and begin to literally disappear. Were they *not meant to return*?

"Forbes is the only person who remembers the third pilot existing. There's a deep isolation that presents itself from knowing a fact to be true but having no one believe it. Only you know that it's not a trick, which means something deeper and far worse. The horror of first Forbes and then Garth being separated from a distinct and true reality is to me one of the most palpable terrors of all."

Bryant describes himself as "an aspiring writer-director who mainly works in the camera department as an Assistant Camera/Focus Puller. I moved to Los Angeles in 2017 from Seattle to pursue film. I've written several feature films, one of which is ready to be funded. I'm humbly grateful to be working in film and will continue to do so for the rest of my life."

He delights to recount "...a period of time when my wife and I would watch *The Twilight Zone* every night as we were in bed. We watched every episode from every season this way. My wife would often fall asleep before me and the next day I'd explain how the episode resolved."

Kraig Bryant is based in Los Angeles and has written five episodes that are production-ready. He has the contacts to facilitate the production side of things: cinematographers, gaffers, operators, assistant cameras, actors, assistant directors, writers, directors, production department, art department...

Now, he says he's working on "...the funding and studio backing to make this a fiscal reality."

It's your turn, Hollywood. Lend an ear—and send some production money—to a man with a vision far older than his years.

TWILIGHT ZONE

Music Inspired From The Zone

By Gail Flug

With the term "Twilight Zone" a universal lexicon, countless musicians have used it to title songs and use in lyrics. Most of the time it holds no reference to the actual television show known for weird stories, but there are many occurrences in which the homage is clear.

The Canadian trio Rush included the song "Twilight Zone" on their renowned 1976 album *2112*. Drummer Neil Peart, a fan of fantasy and science-fiction literature, was the band's primary lyricist and wrote many songs along these themes. The track describes two episodes: The first verse tells of meeting a three-eyed man, adding "truth is false and logic lost, now the fourth dimension is crossed." This refers to Haley, the Venusian counterman from "Will The Real Martian Please Stand Up." The second verse describes a man waking up in an empty town discovering he is now the new toy of a giant boy -- a nod to "Stopover In A Quiet Town."

The song's chorus depicts entering the twilight zone with elements of the show's iconic intro. The official lyric video (pictured, bottom right) perfectly illustrates the song's relation and includes a caricature who is undoubtedly Rod Serling. The song was released as a limited edition 7" single in 2016 for the album's 40th anniversary with an intriguing picture sleeve. The front panel shows a vintage TV with a spiral and "Twilight Zone" in the all-familiar font on the screen, while the gatefold references "Eye Of The Beholder" (pictured, top right) with an image of the band morphed with the ugly un-human faces from the episode and its closing narrative. Collectors take note: only 1000 copies are known to exist as it was a bonus disc inside a limited edition box set.

During an interview for their *Caress of Steel* album, Rush frontman/bassist Geddy Lee told the *St. Catharines Standard* in October 1975, "the new album is dedicated to Rod Serling because he was one of our great teachers, and at times the band tends to be very Rod-like."

There are countless other songs titled "Twilight Zone," but which have no direct reference to the series. "Twilight Zone" by the Dutch band Golden Earring was inspired by the Robert Ludlum sci-fi thriller novel, *The Bourne Identity*, yet its Serling-esque plot may have motivated songwriter George Kooymans to use it for the title and chorus. On a side note, TZ



alumnus William Shatner covered the song on his 2011 album *Seeking Major Tom*.

Iron Maiden released the single "Twilight Zone" in 1981 with a picture sleeve depicting their mascot, Eddie, haunting a woman in the reflection of a vanity mirror. Although the title is only mentioned once in the song, it is about someone living in purgatory who's unable to connect to his lover after his death. As the band took inspiration for lyrics from horror films during that era, it's likely writers Steve Harris and Dave Murray had the show in mind.

The concept of losing oneself in dancing and music is the premise of the hit song "Twilight Zone / Twilight Tone" by the Manhattan Transfer, which features the TZ intro over a disco beat and narrations in Serling's unmistakable phrasing. The same idea is heard in the top ten single "Twilight Zone" by 2 Unlimited. Hockey fans should be familiar with its synth techno intro as it is played on a loop at NHL games.

"Twilight Zone" by Ministry layers samples of Serling's voice with slowed-down snippets of Donald Trump speeches. The official video mimics the TZ opening segment with an open door showing a starred sky with objects passing by.

Honorable mention goes to other artists with the title in a song, including Japanese musician

Yoshida Minako, Dutch "euphoric hardstyle" duo D-Block & S-Te-Fan, Van Morrison, The Ventures, Phenomena and many more.

Digging deeper, Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails fame titled three songs after TZ episodes: "Where Is Everyone," "And When The Sky Was Opened" and "The Four Of Us Are Dying." This could be regarded as a coincidence, yet in a 2018 interview with *Rolling Stone* he mentioned he "find(s) comfort in watching old *Twilight Zone* episodes, 'cause it reminds me of something that (feels) familiar." Many articles about the band mention that VHS/DVD copies of the show are prominent in their recording studio.

UK band Pop Will Eat Itself recorded "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" inspired by singer Clint Mansell's fear of flying. It also includes dialogue from "In His Image," despite web sources' claim it's from the famed Shatner episode.

There is also a Twilight Zone-inspired mathcore band called Serling, whose entire catalog of song titles is named after TZ episodes.

It would be impossible to list the times the four-note motif of the Marius Constant opening theme has been used in music, movies, television and video games across countless genres. The reoccurring synth line in "Somebody's

Watching Me" by Rockwell comes remarkably close, yet the lyric about "always feel like I'm in the Twilight Zone" proves it had to be intentional. Direct samples of TZ dialogue have also been used to enhance music.

"Threatened" by Michael Jackson is regarded as a sequel to his hit song "Thriller" as both have similar horror themes. It could be seen as a tribute to the "Twilight Zone" as well. The lyrics are written from a first-person perspective as an invisible stalking monster that should be feared. Samples of the opening narrations from "It's A Good Life" and "In His Image" are used during the intro and outro respectively.

According to web sources, Jackson told his producer, Rodney Jerkings, he wanted Rod Serling to do a rap on it, despite knowing of Serling's death. Jerkings delivered his request by constructing a spoken-word segment in Serling's voice by meticulously splicing snippets of TZ monologues together. The producer told *Variety* in May 2020, "Michael comes back in the studio and again, he says, 'Did you ever get Rod Serling to rap?' I said 'As a matter of fact I did.' He looked at me as if to say, 'You're lying. There's no way. I was just playing around with you!' I pressed play and the joy that came on his face. It looked like he wanted to cry. He was so amazed that we got that done and that I took on that challenge and he loved it." "Threatened" is the last track on Jackson's final album *Invincible*.

Industrial electro-music pioneers Skinny Puppy used samples from "Elegy" in three songs: "200 Years," "Dig It" and "Chainsaw" as well as "The Monsters Are Due On Maple Street" for "Monster Radio Man". The intro for "Make A Buck" by Rapper Count Bass D features "Caesar And Me" and the closing narrative of "Deaths-Head Revisited" is heard before "Lightning Strikes Twice" by Rorschach.

Metal band Anthrax has paid homage to the Twilight Zone often. "Intro to Realty", the instrumental song that precedes "Belly Of The Beast" from their *Persistence of Time* album features Captain Lutze's unsettling dialogue from "Deaths-Head Revisited." "It was an episode that always stood out to me, drummer Charlie Benante told *Dimensions Of Imagination*. "The lyrics to "Belly of the Beast" reflect the tone of the episode. The song is about the Holocaust

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TWILIGHT ZONE

MUSIC - FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

and mirrors the theme of the *Twilight Zone* episode. I wanted to use the sample because it was chilling, especially the laughter. Benante has used the TZ opening theme within his drum solo during live performances, and the band took inspiration from "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" for their video "Inside Out."

The Los Angeles band Black 'n Blue also used this concept for their "Miss Mystery" clip, and recently The Linda Lindas parodied "Living Doll" for their video "Talking to Myself."

This article would not be complete without mentioning the two songs (not scores) which were written specifically for episodes. The haunting ballad "Come Wander With Me" was written by Anthony Wilson with composer Jeff Alexander, while actors Bonnie Beecher and Gary Crosby (son of



Screenshot of "Twilight Zone" video by Ministry

Bing) provided their vocal parts. Considering it is not the most popular TZ episode, it's a pleasant surprise to find various cover versions on YouTube. In "Jess-Belle," scriptwriter Earl Hamner wrote the lyrics for the bittersweet folksong which was sung by Tereza Lea. Van Cleave, who scored 31 other TZ episodes, provided the melody.

This is by no means complete, yet is proof that the genius of Rod Serling and his masterwork *The Twilight Zone* continues to inspire songwriters, video directors, DJs, musicians and their work. This is ironic: Serling made it clear he hated rock music. He'd be proud to have influenced so many, but none of this he'd choose to listen to.

Rush - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/RushTZ

Golden Earring - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/GoldenEarringTZ

Iron Maiden - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/IronMaidenTZ

Manhattan Transfer - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/ManhattanTransTZ

Anthrax - "Into Reality"/"Belly of the Beast" - tinyurl.com/AnthraxInfoReality

Anthrax - "Inside Out"
tinyurl.com/AnthraxInsideOut

Ministry - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/MinistryTZ

Michael Jackson - "Threatened"
tinyurl.com/MJThreatened
Isolated Rap
tinyurl.com/MJZoneRap

Black 'n Blue - "Miss Mystery"
tinyurl.com/BlackBlueMissMystery

Linda Lindas - "Talking to Myself"
tinyurl.com/LindaLindasTalking

William Shatner - "Twilight Zone"
tinyurl.com/WilliamShatnerTZ

Serling band video channel
youtube.com/@serlingband4598

Marius Constant: Twilight Zone's Unsung Composer

By Gail Flug

Only in the *Twilight Zone* would the most recognized television theme in history be composed by an obscure avant-garde European composer. It is unlikely Marius Constant would come up in a casual discussion about classical music, although his work is well-respected within European circles. He was born in Romania on February 7, 1925, and studied piano and composition at the Bucharest Conservatory. In 1946, he moved to Paris to study at the Conservatoire de Paris with other noted musicians and soon won several prizes and praise for his work, especially with electronic music and multimedia presentations.

His unconventional compositions follow the category known as aleatoric or "chance music," identified by having short random yet structured movements of music. It relies on a composer making chance decisions while writing the piece, or a performer improvising while performing it. (John Cage is an example of this genre.) His "24 Preludes for Orchestra" was premiered in France in 1959 and conducted by Leonard Bernstein and his series of ballets featured stage performances by Rudolf Nureyev and Marcel Marceau.

Marius Constant's connection with *The Twilight Zone* should be considered unexpected at best. Well-established composer Bernard Herrmann, known for

his work with Alfred Hitchcock, was commissioned by CBS to write the first season's opening and closing theme as well as to score several episodes. When the series was renewed for a second season, CBS wanted a new, more upbeat theme, as opposed to the dreamy original version. Many known composers were given their shot until CBS music director Lud Gluskin had an idea. Not only did CBS have the legendary theme at their fingertips, it would also be at little cost to the network.

Gluskin was always looking for interesting music for the network's stock music library, for which composers were commissioned to contribute and receive a one-time payment -- forfeiting their ownership of the copyright. During a trip to France in the late 50s, Gluskin had approached Constant for some incidental music, all of which were short fragments of sound, some no longer than five seconds. All seemed a bit too experimental for the era and not exactly useful until two elements were combined: "Etrange No. 3," ("Strange No. 3") the easily recognized sequence of repeated four-notes for electric guitar, was coupled with "Milieu No. 2," ("Atmosphere No. 2") -- an unconventional pattern of guitar, brass and flute notes with bongo drums. Under a "work-for hire" agreement, Constant was paid a flat fee of \$200 and an additional \$500 for its usage. He was not credited, never received royalties, and had no knowledge of the show's success and famous theme

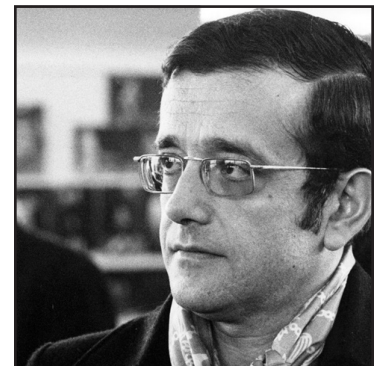
song for decades.

Ownership and copyright issues erupted when interest in television themes and the use of new recordings led to complications. According to classichemes.com, the two segments were filed by April-Blackwood Music in 1979 as "Twilight Zone Theme" with Constant credited as the composer. Adding to the confusion, it was presumed Hermann wrote both of the series' themes. All this came to light when *Twilight Zone: The Movie* started production in the early 80s when CBS sued Constant to retain its license.

After an investigation and legal battle, it was settled with Constant securing rights to his composition for the future, yet relinquishing any money the network would have owed him for the four seasons they used his music.

Each revision of the series had new variations featuring elements of the iconic theme: *The New Twilight Zone* from the '80s version was composed and performed by Grateful Dead with Merl Saunders. Both wrote incidental music for a number of episodes as well. The short-lived 2003 version featured a nu-metal interpretation from Jonathan Davis of the band Korn, and the 2019 reboot follows the original composition arranged by Marco Beltrami and Brandon Roberts.

Marius Constant created a large body of work in the classical,



opera and ballet world, plus notoriety for his influence in non-traditional musical arrangements. He founded and directed the pioneering Ars Novac Ensemble and the radio station France Musique, as well as worked with the Paris Opera and the French Radio and Television Office. He was a Professor of Orchestration at the Paris Conservatory and taught at Stanford University and in the Netherlands.

Constant died May 16, 2004 -- having been "accidentally" responsible for music which would be forever associated with all things strange, spooky and odd. His four notes are immortalized in the hearts of all past and future generations who watch a timeless classic television show called... *The Twilight Zone*.

"24 Preludes for Orchestra" (Audio)
tinyurl.com/Bernstein1959

Marius Constant Documentary
tinyurl.com/Constantdoc

TWILIGHT ZONE

Chatbots in the Twilight Zone

by Steve Schlich

The recent emergence of AI chatbots has a lot of people thinking that conversing with Artificial Intelligence is something new.

In fact, it's as old as the rusty telephone answering system at <insert any company name here> that never gave you enough choices... and too often these days, refuses to recognize your plainly spoken responses.

The [uncanny valley](#)¹ of almost-but-not-quite-human software behavior is the twilight zone of artificial intelligence. Chatbots exist a number of evolutionary steps above parrots, but not as many as you might think. Even the most sophisticated system merely repeats what it's "learned" from reading human conversation, and does so without actual consciousness.

How? AI software compiles a database about which words most often follow other words, and uses that information to construct its sentences. There's an ancient catchphrase that clarifies this process: *garbage in = garbage out*.

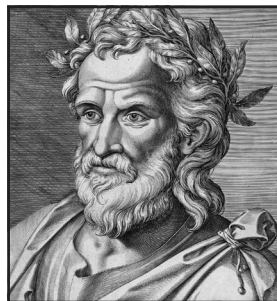
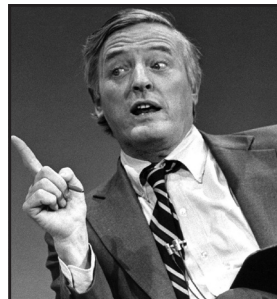
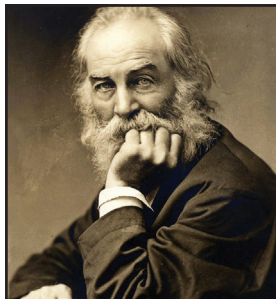
We are discovering that scary truth about machine learning the hard way as, after extended exposure to internet chat, more than one chatbot will begin spouting racism and conspiracy theories. Consider their teachers!

But instead, you can have fun with a chatbot by giving it something deep and worthy to digest and mimic. Last February, I asked such as OpenAI's [ChatGPT](#)² to describe *The Twilight Zone* in the style of various personalities.

Here's a sampling of results, with most entries shortened to maximize entertainment. Like the humans that they mimic, chatbots are often repetitive and boring, sometimes amazing, and occasionally downright poetic (the full results can be found in a link at the end of this article.)

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Rod Serling.

You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension: a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed



over into the Twilight Zone.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Walt Whitman.

O Twilight Zone, where the unknown forces of life hide!
My curious soul longs to explore,
and to learn its secrets deep inside.
From off in the distance I hear its strange and eerie call,
To step inside its mysterious realm,
and take a chance on its unknown thrall.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Dr. Seuss.

The Twilight Zone is a place so strange,
Where strange things happen that seem so deranged.

Where people can fly,
and time can reverse,
Where a man can be cursed,
and his life could get worse.

Where stories are spooky,
and sometimes sublime,
And you never know
when you'll lose your mind.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of the Greek poet Homer.

Sing, O Muse, of the Twilight Zone,
a strange and mysterious land.
Where the boundaries of reality seem to be frayed
and unmanned. Where the laws of physics
are twisted and light and dark are blurred,
Where the borders between the living
and the dead become unheard.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Homer Simpson.

Mmm, Twilight Zone... the strangest place in all the land,
where creepy things happen

and strange creatures roam. It's a dark and mysterious place, and you never know what's gonna happen next. It's like a dream, but much weirder!

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of a PhD essay.

In this paper, I will examine the Twilight Zone, a groundbreaking television series created by Rod Serling in 1959. The show is known for its exploration of themes related to morality, technology, and the human experience. I will analyze the show's use of suspense, its exploration of the unknown, and its impact on culture and society.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of William F. Buckley.

The Twilight Zone is an off-discussed phenomenon of modern entertainment. It is a realm populated by surreal, sometimes frightening characters and events, evoking themes of existentialism and morality.

In a world where the divide between reality and fantasy is blurred, the Twilight Zone offers an exploration of the human experience, a glimpse into the hidden depths of our psyche and the quiet terror of the unknown. In short, it is a place of dark magic, one that demands our attention and deserves our respect.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Donald Trump.

The Twilight Zone is a place where strange things happen, and where you need to be on

your guard. It's a place where you have to be smart and savvy to navigate through the twists and turns.

But let me tell you, it's a place where America always comes out on top. We have the best people and the best ideas, and we're going to win big. The Twilight Zone is a place where America is always the hero, and we're going to keep it that way.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Marcel Proust.

The Twilight Zone is a place of memories and reminiscences, a realm where the past and the present intertwine and where the smallest of details can unlock a flood of emotions and memories. It is a place where the mind's eye is opened to the beauty and tragedy of human experience and where the human condition is examined through the lens of time and memory.

Describe the Twilight Zone in terms of software coding.

The Twilight Zone is a place of bugs and glitches, a realm where the code is not always predictable and where unexpected outcomes may occur. It's a place where the program's logic is twisted, and the flow of the code changes unexpectedly. It is a place where the developer needs to debug and troubleshoot the code to find the source of the problem and fix it.

Describe the Twilight Zone in a

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

(1) Uncanny Valley: tinyurl.com/UncannyValleyEffect

(2) chat.openai.com/chat

ROD SERLING

Cliff Notes

By Tony Albarella

Rod Serling was well regarded by many of the actors with whom he worked, and the feeling was just as often mutual. Occasionally these working relationships bloomed into friendships, and such is case with Serling and Emmy- and Oscar-winning actor Cliff Robertson. The two men shared similar backgrounds; both saw active combat in the Pacific Theater during World War II (Serling as an Army paratrooper, Robertson a member of the Merchant Marine), were fervent Democratic activists and both attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. They also shared a lifelong passion for aviation. In the letter seen here, unfortunate timing prevented their paths from crossing at an aviation show.

In interviews I conducted with Robertson, he constantly praised Serling's character, remarked on the writer's eloquence and wit and expressed admiration for his friend's artistic talent. Cliff also graciously wrote an introduction for Volume Four of the *As Timeless as Infinity* script book series I edited (Gauntlet Press, 2007). Excerpts of that introduction and a few assorted interview quotes that Robertson provided are reprinted below.

"*The Twilight Zone* showed so much imagination...and Rod Serling was not only an incredible writer but a wonderful guy."

"I very much enjoyed my visits to *The Twilight Zone* and the



Cliff Robertson poses with a pair of dummies: Willie from the *Twilight Zone* episode "The Dummy" in 1962, and Author Tony Albarella in 2001.

opportunity to work with Rod Serling. He was a fantastically imaginative writer, had an ingratiating personality, and was a true gentleman."

"As an aspiring writer myself in those days, I often rewrote lines in scripts I was given; some of them were pretty poor. But Rod's scripts were nearly perfect and I felt sensitivity towards them. They were a treat to do. I never changed a thing on those. I

didn't have to. When you have a writer like Rod Serling, you protect that dialogue, embrace it. It makes you better as an actor."

On Serling's creative backing of Robertson's wardrobe choices for the role of nineteenth-century pioneer Christian Horn in *The Twilight Zone*'s "A Hundred Yards Over the Rim:" "That's the kind of guy Rod was, God love him, he was very supportive of his actors."

January 16, 1962

Mr. Cliff Robertson
1311 North Kanter
Los Angeles 49, California

Dear Cliff,

I got your note at ten o'clock Sunday night. If the clods had come to me quicker we could have had a dinner or at least a drink. But why the hell do we have to wait till our paths cross at air shows? Let's do it here. It'd be my pleasure.

All best to you,

Rod Serling

RS/ml

CHATBOTS - FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

heavy metal lyric.

The Twilight Zone is a place of darkness and chaos, A realm where the demons dwell and the souls are lost.

Where the screams echo and the sirens wail And the fate of the living and the dead is tossed.

So come join the ride, let's take the fall Where the darkness awaits, and the end is the call It's a place where the metal is hot as hell And the story of the damned, forever will tell.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of the J. Crew catalog.

The Twilight Zone is a place of timeless elegance, a realm

where the unexpected is always in style. It's a place where classic meets contemporary, and where the ordinary is transformed into the extraordinary. The Twilight Zone is a place where quality and craftsmanship are paramount and where the finest materials are used to create a sense of sophistication and luxury.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of William Shakespeare.
Oh, mysterious and eerie Twilight Zone, where the laws of nature doth not apply, and the mind doth wander in confusion and fear. A place where the impossible doth become possible, and the unknown doth beckon with its siren call. A realm of wonder and awe, where the human spirit doth soar and our understanding of the world doth expand.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Bob Dylan.

The Twilight Zone is a place where the road twists and turns Where the shadows loom and the winds of change churn

It's a place where the lines between right and wrong fade And the truth is never quite as it's made

So come take a walk with me down that road Where the unknown awaits and the truth is bestowed

It's a place where reality and fantasy blend And the story of humanity's never at an end.

Describe the Twilight Zone in the style of Maya Angelou.

The Twilight Zone is a place of whispers and shadows, a realm where the unknown lurks and the

unexpected unfolds. It is a place where the human experience is magnified, where the beauty and the pain of life are laid bare.

It is a place where the mysteries of the mind and the heart are explored, and where the human spirit is tested. It is a place where the veil between reality and fantasy is thin, and where the imagination takes flight. It is a place that touches the soul, and reminds us of the power of storytelling, the resilience of the human spirit and the ever-present possibility of transcendence.

It is a place where we are called to confront our fears, to confront ourselves and to find the courage to transcend them.

Read more Chatbot responses at: tinyurl.com/ChatbotsInThe-Zone

ROD SERLING

Requiem For A Heavyweight

By Mark Olshaker

New Times was a trendy, countercultural bi-weekly magazine published in the 1970s, with a stable of writers including Robert Sam Anson, Jimmy Breslin, Murray Kempton, Larry L. King, J. Anthony Lukas, Joe McGinniss, Mike Royko and Studs Terkel. I contributed occasional articles while working for the Washington Bureau of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The back page of each issue was labelled "Final Tribute" and reflected on a person who had just died or an institution that had ceased to exist.

I was devastated when my hero and friend Rod Serling unexpectedly passed away. I knew I had to memorialize him in some way, so I called my friend and New Times senior editor Frank Rich and told him I wanted to be the one to write the next issue's Final Tribute. When I explained my close connection with Rod, Frank gave me the assignment. For several days we exchanged drafts until we were both satisfied by what I had written. All that remained was to come up with an appropriate headline.

"I have it!" Frank declared during one of our frequent phone conversations. And as soon as I heard that, I knew it was perfect.

"There is a sixth dimension beyond that which is known to man. A dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area we call the Twilight Zone."

The voice was unmistakable. The stories were "weird" and "spooky." The twist endings intriguing. But there was an added element that happened to be a rare commodity in television entertainment—a moral point of view. Rod Serling, who died June 28 at 50, was always trying to get a point across.

The format was pop science fiction, but the themes were the basic operatives of the human mind. The characters either rose to their situations or were destroyed by them. While other shows portrayed World War II as an epic of brave men in combat, *Twilight Zone* gave us "Death's Head Revisited," the story of a Nazi commandant returning to Dachau and there confronted by the ghosts of the

inmates he slaughtered. And Serling's humanity always showed through, as in a Christmas episode, "Night of the Meek": A drunken loser whose only joy is playing a department store Santa each year, finds the real Kris Kringle's bag of miracles and helps his fellow losers inherit the earth — at least for one night.

Serling's career embodied the entire course of American television. He was the brightest of the Golden Age's "bright young men" and the only one to adapt when live drama died. He became known as TV's angry young man during the 1950s, when he demanded of himself scripts that not only entertained but made a comment. Serling's teleplays confronted the major social and personal issues of the day—the Red Scare, POW collaboration in Korea. The unrelieved tension between black and white—at a time when few others would touch them.

And he confronted these issues head-on, decrying the spineless and chilling fear that caused network execs to quake each time a Serling script suggested there were still problems to be solved. The battles were endless. When *U.S. Steel Hour* realized Serling's "Noon on Doomsday" would deal with the Till murder case, in which a small Mississippi town hid and protected the white murderer of a black man, the executives went collectively limp. By the time they finished with his completed script, the southern town had given way to a New England village, the black-white angle had become an American killing a foreigner and a mention of Coca-Cola had been excised because the soft drink had a southern connotation, being bottled in Atlanta!

Serling deeply resented this "ritual track covering" and the system that made the sponsor so ridiculously powerful. "Drama on television," he said, "must walk tiptoe and in agony lest it offend some cereal buyer from a given state below the Mason-Dixon. So instead of a Negro we give battle against that prejudice visited upon American Indians or Alaskan Eskimos or Armenian peasants under the Czar. Now, yes, all prejudice is alike down at its very ugly roots, and all prejudice is indeed a universal evil. But you don't conquer intolerance by disguising it, by clothing it in different trappings, by slapping at it with a wispy parable."

That tone was vintage Serling—high-minded. Idealistic, if

Requiem for a heavyweight

Final Tribute

By Mark Olshaker

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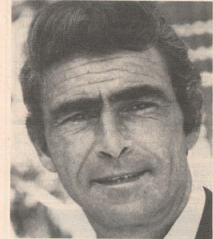
The voice was unmistakable. The stories were "weird" and "spooky," the twist endings intriguing. But there was an added element that happened to be a rare commodity in television entertainment—a moral point of view. Rod Serling, who died June 28 at 50, was always trying to get a point across.

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That tone was vintage Serling—high-minded, idealistic, if sometimes overly formal and didactic, believing that mass drama could do something.

And he did do something: With a staggering artistic stamina during those early days Serling turned out over 100 quality scripts. He sprang upon the public consciousness in 1955 with "Patterns" on *Kraft Television Theater*—a story of the emotional destruction wreaked by corporate inhumanity that won Serling his first Emmy. A year later he topped himself with his most famous work, "Requiem for a Heavyweight," on *Playhouse 90*.

When his market dried up, Serling conceived of *Twilight Zone*, which he produced, hosted and did much of the writing for. With the series, Serling and his magic voice became a part of mass culture and modern folklore. But it also made him a "media person," much in demand for talk shows and commercials. For the rest of his life Serling continued to wrestle with the conflict of the serious artist vs. the public personality. While often bowing to the creatively debilitating pressures of celebrity, he could be critically incisive about his own work. When asked what had gone wrong with his script for *The Man*, a flop 1971 film about a black American president, he replied, "That script taught me not to write about people who don't go to the bathroom."

There were other series—*The Loner*, a western, and *Night Gallery*, which he grew to hate. But as the years went on, there was less and less calling in television. Turning to movies, he did a number of popular works, including the screenplay for *Seven Days in May* and the first *Planet of the Apes*. After 1967, he retreated into teaching at Ithaca College, into the McCarthy campaign in 1968, then into more personal writing. He left behind at least three plays and two novels in various stages of completion.

It is unclear what directions Serling would have moved in had he lived the additional years he had a right to expect. It is doubtful he would have wanted much more to do with television. At the time of his death *Twilight Zone* was more than ten years old. And the video era he embodied was essentially over—the medium that was half his age had grown old far faster than he had.

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Christopher
'Dad'
Age: 46

OUR FIRST TIME TO WATCH:

Rylan
'Son'
Age: 13



OOH!
THIS EPISODE
FEATURES A YOUNG
WILLIAM SHATNER!

The TWILIGHT ZONE

AS LONG AS
IT'S BETTER THAN
THE LAST ONE.



Season 5, Episode 3: Nightmare at 20,000 Feet

EPISODE SYNOPSIS:

Robert Wilson just spent 6 months recovering from a mental breakdown he had on an airplane. His wife is taking him back home, via airplane trip. On the flight Robert sees a Gremlin outside on the plane's wing, tearing up the engine. No one else sees the creature so Robert, getting more and more frantic has to take matters into his own hands.



AFTER THE LESS THAN
ENTHUSIASTIC REVIEW BY
RYLAN LAST TIME,
I TOOK A SUGGESTION FROM
THE READERS AND SHOWED
HIM THIS EPISODE.

I LIKE THE OPENING CREDITS.
IT'S A COOL INTRO AND SEEMS
WELL DONE FOR WHEN IT WAS MADE.
IT LOOKS KIND OF SCARY.



WHEN THE MAN CLOSED
THE WINDOW CURTAIN AND
THEN OPENED IT...
I KNEW THE MONSTER
WAS GOING TO BE
STARING AT HIM.



UHH...THAT'S
A WEIRD LOOKING
GREMLIN.

YOU CAN SMOKE
ON A PLANE?
WHY?
AND WHY IS
EVERYONE DRESSED
SO NICE?



HE SEEMS TO BE
ABLE TO FLY AND
OR FLOAT...

THAT'S HOW
IT WAS
BACK THEN.



HOW DOES HE
STAY ON THE WING
WHEN THE PLANE
IS FLYING?

HE LOOKS LIKE
A BIG TEDDY BEAR.



Richard steals a gun
from someone on the
plane...who had the
gun and why?



WHY DIDN'T RICHARD
JUST TELL HIS WIFE TO
LOOK OUT THE WINDOW
UNTIL THE GREMLIN
CAME BACK?

UNLESS FOR SOME
REASON RICHARD WAS
THE ONLY PERSON
THAT COULD SEE IT...



I LIKED THIS EPISODE! IT WAS WAY
BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE.



I LIKED THIS EPISODE
AS WELL. WILLIAM
SHATNER DID A
FINE JOB. I WAS HOPING
THE ENDING WOULD HAVE
BEEN MORE AMBIGUOUS,
LEAVING THE VIEWER IN
DOUBT AS TO WHETHER RICHARD
HAD ACTUALLY SEEN THE
GREMLIN OR NOT.



At first I thought if Richard had taken a sleeping pill right away like his wife did he would have slept the entire flight and never saw the Gremlin. But then he wouldn't have saved the plane and they would have crashed.



BEYOND THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Discovering Rod Serling's "A Storm in Summer:" A Script Analysis

By Gordon Webb

I can't believe I missed the premiere of Rod Serling's "A Storm in Summer" on NBC's *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. Having grown up in Binghamton, New York, the writer's hometown I was already a Serling fan... mesmerized as a teenager by *The Twilight Zone*. But in February 1970 I had just completed six months of National Guard training at Fort Benning, GA and was beginning my first real job as a radio producer at Cornell University in upstate New York. My wife, Cathy, and I lived about 30-miles away in Cortland, where she was finishing her senior year at college, and during a particularly brutal winter I commuted to Ithaca every day. So, the answer is simply this: life got in the way and we just didn't have much time for prime-time television viewing then and I missed one of the best examples of Serling's incisive character dramas.

Fast-forward 20 years... I landed a job teaching TV production and scriptwriting at Ithaca College and, stepping off the elevator on my first day I found myself face-to-face with a glass case displaying Rod Serling's six Emmy awards. Except for *Twilight Zone* I didn't know much about this writer's vast body of work, or that he had taught at the very same school in the late '60s and early '70s! As I began my new teaching job, Serling's widow Carol was donating examples of her husband's work to Ithaca College for what would become The Rod Serling Archive. This is where I found an old VHS tape with just "A Storm in Summer" written on the box. As a faculty member, I was able to check it out overnight and as I viewed the snowy off-the-air recording of this program, I discovered an amazing, new dimension to the writer I had known only as a master of the strange and macabre.

Scriptwriters use the basic elements of *setting, plot, character and dialogue* to unveil their story. Some scriptwriters work from a detailed outline while others may just "wing it." Serling is known to have narrated his scripts into a dictating machine, to be typed up in script form by someone else. In classic TV-film dramas, stories generally evolve in a series of steps or plot points which build in intensity to a climax. In any case, whether he followed this sort of structure or not, Serling was a master dramatist, and in my opinion this story is one of his best.

Scripts are written from the



PETER USTINOV
Repeats his Emmy-winning performance in Rod Serling's
A STORM IN SUMMER
with Ngai Dixon

A hostile old man becomes the reluctant foster father of a small, angry black child.

Hallmark Hall of Fame

TONIGHT! 6:30
NBC CHANNEL 12

viewpoint of the TV or film audience, describing what we would see or hear as the story unfolds on screen. As the first scene of "A Storm in Summer" fades in we meet Abe Shaddick, a 70-year old Jewish man who runs a delicatessen in the "Catskills," which was a vacation getaway just a few hours outside New York City.

N. Y. Times TV reviewer Jack Gould wrote: "Mr. Serling, in his best writing form in some years, chose an unusual setting for a superbly understated protest against mankind's assortment of ills - bigotry, war, prejudice and phony selfishness." But for Serling, the setting wasn't unusual at all, since his own Jewish father ran a deli/meat market in Binghamton, N. Y., which is located on the New York/Pennsylvania border and a half-hour drive from the Catskill Mountains.

In this story's very first scene, Serling displays his skill at creating wonderful characters. We meet a bitter old man whose only son, Benji, had been killed in a bombing raid during world war two. Played brilliantly by Peter Ustinov, Shaddick grumbles to himself (and to his customers) all day long and, when he's alone he talks to his dead son, through a picture of Benji in uniform, hanging on the wall behind the grocery counter.

As Gould's review continues, he reveals the program's storyline: "By happenstance he (Shaddick) agreed to house a Negro youth from Harlem, amazingly well played by N'Gai Dixon, who has been chosen by a 'fresh air vacation fund' for two weeks in the country." But Serling's plot is actually much stronger than this: it's NOT Shaddick, but his

deadbeat nephew Stanley who signed up to host the fresh-air-child. This adds another, more powerful element to the conflict that will move the story forward. It's only about six minutes into the program when Gloria Ross, a woman from the country club who has arranged the fresh air visit, arrives at the deli - looking for Stanley. This is where one of Serling's other talents really begins to shine: he was a "wordsmith" to be sure and his writing often provided his characters with dialogue that jumped off the page, and which actors loved to perform.

SHADDICK
Can I help you lady?

GLORIA
Good morning. Does a Mr. Bannon live here?

SHADDICK
Mr. Bannon? Oh, Mr. Bannon... formerly Mr. Blume? Strictly speaking, he doesn't live here -- he drops in here on occasion between his... "big deals."
(a beat)
Mr. Bannon, formerly Mr. Blume is my nephew.

GLORIA
Oh... then you must be Mr. Shaddick.

SHADDICK
I must be. Now, what can I do for you?

GLORIA
Well, Mr. Shaddick - I'm Gloria Ross. I met your nephew at the club last night... the country club? Perhaps he...

SHADDICK
(interrupting)
By the time Mr. Jet Set had homed in on his pillow in the early hours of the morning, I'd already had five hours sleep, see? And two sizeable nightmares... one of which involved an "avenging angel" who came here and told me in no uncertain terms that Mr. Bannon... formerly Mr. Blume was going to spend the rest of his life right here!
(beat)
I haven't seen the gentleman since early yesterday.

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BEYOND THE TWILIGHT ZONE

STORM - FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

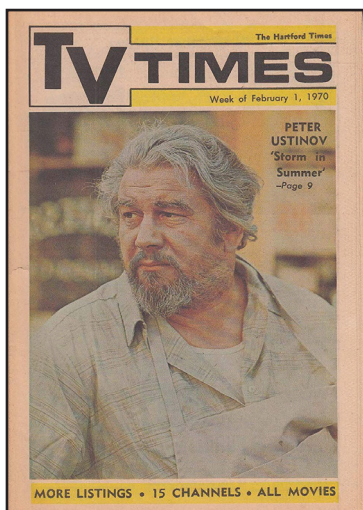
As the scene continues, Gloria informs Shaddick that Stanley signed him up as co-sponsor for the child – who is to arrive later that day. In the scriptwriting craft, this is called an “inciting incident” – a powerful event that sends the protagonist’s life in a different direction and drives the story forward. This sends Shaddick into a tirade and, waving a meat cleaver at Miss Ross, he tells her to “get out!”

By the time his nephew crawls out of bed, Shaddick has calmed down and confronts his nephew about the situation. Surprise! Stanley has forgotten all about his commitment, and has planned a business trip to New York City. It’s less than ten minutes into the program, and Serling has already established what seems to be an impossible situation: a young African American boy from Harlem – is about to be dropped on the doorstep of a bitter old Jewish man who can’t find a nice word to say about anyone. But... this is all Serling needs to build, step by step, one of his most powerful stories.

- We meet Herman Washington, who arrives to a cold welcome by Shaddick
- Awkward small-talk turns to Benji’s photo on the wall and the old man’s favorite topic – his son, the war hero
- We learn about Herman’s hero – his brother Bill – a Green Beret in Vietnam.
- Herman turns out to be a real charmer; by the next day the old man takes him fishing -- like he used to do with his own son.

Serling weaves the story with beautiful texture... and – step by step -- we see Shaddick gradually beginning to soften.

- He extends Herman’s visit and takes him to the movies... and to an ice cream parlor for a soda. On the way home...
- The odd couple is accosted by some bigoted teenagers; during a scuffle, Herman pulls a switch-blade knife, but it’s knocked out of his hand.
- A policeman breaks up the fight; Shaddick covers for Herman by claiming the knife is his.
- The cop offers them a ride, but Shaddick tells him “My friend and I... we’ll walk.” This is the first indication that Shaddick is more than just tolerating his guest.



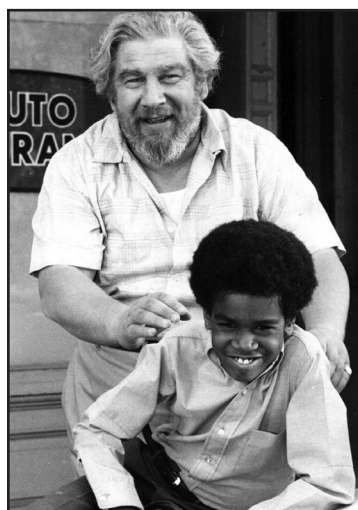
- As their bond grows the old man even manages to dole out a bit of “fatherly” advice.

One day turns into a week, and Gloria invites them to the country club so Herman can go swimming in the pool. This is where the writer, perhaps drawing on memories of his own father (the Jewish butcher from Binghamton), plays the race card.

- We see lots of dirty looks as the pair -- the old Jew and a Black boy with an afro -- enter the posh dining room.
- An irate member tries to have them thrown out, but guests of members are allowed and Gloria smooths things over
- Gloria gets an urgent phone call: her face turns pale as she learns that Herman’s brother has been killed in action; it’ll be Shaddick’s job to tell the boy...
- A few hours later -- at their fishing hole he tries to gently tell Herman that his brother isn’t coming home; all we see is a fishing pole dropping into the lake and Herman running away.

Back home, Herman is packing for the return trip home and Serling gives us a powerful scene, where Shaddick tries his best to make Herman feel better. He describes how he received a telegram from the Army when Benji was killed, and how he thought he’d never get over it... never stop crying. He tries to convince Herman that eventually “the tears will stop. There’ll be an end to the crying.” But it seems that life in the city had already hardened the young boy, and the elderly man’s fatherly advice doesn’t seem to phase him.

HERMAN
(interrupting Shaddick)
A long time ago - I was a little kid then. I



had roller skates, see? And, I started down the steps... and I fell. Man, it hurt real bad. Then Bill came out... he came down the stairs... and he picked me up and he looked at me, and he said: “Herman... Herman - don’t you cry!” (looking at Shaddick) I don’t cry, Shaddick - not me. I’m never gonna cry!

Herman resumes packing. Shaddick hardly knows what to say.

SHADDICK
Well... you’re a really brave boy. You really are. Incredibly brave...

He gets up and heads out the door to the store.

SHADDICK
Go on packing. (leaving the room) I’ll call you when it’s time...

INT. DELI - DAY

When he’s sure Herman can’t hear him, Shaddick breaks down - bawling like a baby.

SHADDICK
(to himself-sobbing)
Look at the old Jew - crying. (more sobs) I’ll cry for the two of us.

We’re at the closing scene now. Gloria, who has agreed to drive Herman back home picks him up at the deli. The boy follows Gloria to the door, then turns back toward Shaddick.

HERMAN
Bye.

Without a word, the old man waves, and they exit.

EXT. STREET - DAY

It’s raining heavily as Herman opens the door and enters Gloria’s car. But, after a beat the door opens and Herman runs back to the deli.

INT. DELI - DAY

Shaddick is heading to the back of the store as Herman bursts in.

HERMAN
I just wanted to say something to you. Don’t you cry no more - understand? (his voice cracking) We’re gonna make out - you and me.

As he dashes into Shaddick’s open arms...

HERMAN
(fighting the tears)
We’re gonna make out.

They hug for a bit, then:

SHADDICK
When you come back, we’re gonna... we gonna go fishing again, see? (more hugging) You’re gonna catch a big...

A little more hugging, then Herman breaks away and runs back outside. Shaddick slowly walks to the door, pulls it shut and as he starts talking to Benji the phone rings. It’s a collect call from Stanley Bannon... he wants to come back, and the old man says it’s all right - but he can’t have his old room. That’s reserved for Herman Washington... a personal friend of mine.

The program ends like it began, with the old man alone in his store and talking to his dead son.

SHADDICK
(looking out the window)
It’s a real summer storm. This’ll put an end to the heat... (a beat) ...put an end to the heat - and cleanse the earth. (another beat) Oh, God - how we need it!

When the last scene faded out and the credits started to roll - I felt that “A Storm in Summer” was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen. The writer’s daughter, Anne Serling, agrees,

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SUBMITTED FOR YOUR APPROVAL

Our Members Share Their “Serling Moments”

The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation is proud to have nearly 400 members and friends from around the world who receive our quarterly newsletter, and donate to our mission -- promoting and preserving this great man's contributions to the Arts and Humanities. We invited a few members to share their personal thoughts on Rod Serling and his work... in this space - we're pleased to share some of their contributions.

If you're one of our members and would like to contribute, please contact the Editor: GordonWebb@rodserling.com.



Nightmares to Dreams

by Pamela R. Smith

When *The Twilight Zone* first aired in 1959, I had never thought about alien beings, time travel, robots or dimensions lurking in my bedroom walls. I was only seven years old. Usually, I was sent to bed before *The Twilight Zone* was broadcast, but if my mother made the mistake of not lowering the volume, that wonderful theme music would lure me down the stairs. There on the bottom step I would sneak a peek of black-and-white scenes delivered with a serious intensity. Each week as those eerie stories crossed into my living room, they not only caused many sleepless nights, but ignited an imagination that had been happy with Barbie dolls and Lincoln logs. “Little Girl Lost” hit hard. I was ten and couldn't go to sleep until I felt every wall in my bedroom to make sure it was solid. Thank goodness I didn't think about the entire bed slipping through the floor. The flip side of that fear, and perhaps contributing to it, was the birth of a wild imagination. Soon, outdoor

play on a warm afternoon could result in a search for pieces of alien craft in a nearby field, or a walk to the end of my dead-end street to find rocks that had to be remnants of a prehistoric time warp. The most important lesson learned, however, was that the latch on the cellar door must always remain locked if I was home alone. When confiding in my mother about one particular nightmare, I remember her looking at me in astonishment and saying, “Can't you think of nice things like pretty flowers?” This little girl blew past pretty flowers when the Kanamits whipped up a cookbook.

As I grew older, I started to see the meaning behind the monsters. Instead of catching glimpses of *The Twilight Zone* from the bottom of a staircase, I was watching each story intently. I realized their brilliance. Science became important as did science fiction. I started to feel the urge to write stories of my own. There was college and marriage and a baby girl, but the desire to write scripts was always there.

When we bought our first home, I wondered how the neighbors would act in a crisis. Would it be like “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street”? I assumed they would turn against us as we were the odd people with the lights on every night until 2 a.m.

Writing became a lifeline when my mother was diagnosed with cancer. It was an extremely difficult time. “Walking Distance” to this day reduces me to tears. After my mother passed away, I returned to the workforce. Eventually, I found myself working on Mars. Yes, Mars. As if the universe itself was having fun with me, I became a member of the Mars Exploration Rover team at Cornell University, and worked with two robots on Mars! I was a documentarian for flight operations and was lucky enough to see new images from Mars each day. Immersed in all things NASA and seeing all that Martian desolation, the *Twilight Zone* came back to me again -- those fabulous stories about astronauts and other planets. “Where Is Everybody?” moved to the top

of my favorites list. As the years passed, the science team formed a deep bond with rovers Spirit and Opportunity. Human and machine. “In His Image” filled my thoughts. There was an instance when the Spirit rover became confused and sent back data tagged with a date far into the future. My imagination ran wild. Was this just a computer glitch or something more? *Twilight Zone* plots filled my head and one such effort was submitted to the *Twilight Zone* scriptwriting competition.

The writing continues, including a screenplay written to honor my lifelong friend. The story includes a handsome monster, time travel and is set in Binghamton NY. Thank you, Mr. Serling.

Pamela R. Smith lives in Ithaca, New York and has been a RSMF member since November 2017



STORM - FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

and suggested this article for the RSMF newsletter. She told me that she “loved this script. I recall that initially, there was great concern with the casting of the very British Peter Ustinov. My dad was worried about his credibility as a Jewish delicatessen owner, but he didn't need to be. What resulted was a tremendously moving and poignant story and one of my dad's eventual favorites.” She says that when her father died in 1975, the program's theme really resonated with her; she was only 15 at that time.

Years later, in her book *As I Knew Him: My Dad, Rod Serling* she writes: “I begin to watch his show ‘A Storm in Summer.’ I get a cassette version from the archives at Ithaca College. I watch it over and over and listen to the lines. He talks about the impact of death on those left behind: “You feel like your life has ended. That some

vital part of your body has been stripped away. That you'll never heal, never smile, never laugh. That the sorrow is just unbearable and that the tears will never end. But they do. Somehow, somehow, the crying does come to an end.”

I try to memorize those words. I take them as a message from my father, a sign. I finally, gradually, let go. And when I do, when I allow myself to go back, to grieve, I begin to understand that I can find him again.”

“A Storm in Summer” won as Outstanding Dramatic Program at the 1971 Emmy Awards. Unfortunately, but like much of Serling's dramatic television work recordings of the original broadcast aren't readily available. But the writer's widow Carol, who was instrumental in preserving her husband's work helped get this story remade in 2000 - for the Showtime cable channel. Except for some minor updates, this new

production closely followed the original script, and most of Serling's story remains intact - including Shaddick's outstanding dialogue, this time delivered by Peter Falk. This production was billed as a “children's program” and garnered several awards: Serling received a posthumous award from the Writers Guild of America for “Outstanding Writing in a Children's Special”... Peter Falk was nominated for a 2001 Daytime Emmy as “Outstanding Performer in a Children's Special”... Young Artist Awards cited the show as Best Family TV Movie/Pilot/Mini/Series - Cable... and Aaron Meeks (Herman) was honored for Best Performance in a TV Movie (Drama) - Leading Young Actor. DVDs of the 2000 remake are easily available on Amazon and other outlets.

Finally... returning to the words of reviewer Jack Gould: “A *Storm in Summer* deserves repetition for all those who find some convenient

rationalization in prejudice. The dead indeed come in all colors, as Mr. Serling says, and there is so much for us to learn.” Serling's words - and Gould's - are as pertinent today as in 1970.



The 2000 Showtime movie “A Storm in Summer” is available at Amazon.com

SUBMITTED FOR YOUR APPROVAL

Channeling Serling in The Classroom

By Scott Napolitano

If there's something we know about in the Garden State, it's Weirdness. Orson Welles knew darn well that it would make sense to park his Martians in our neck of the woods during his *War of the Worlds* radio play. How many other states can lay claim to a bottomless pond, a portal to hell in the sewer systems and enough UFO activity to make even the most caustic skeptic sit up and take notice? Our state's most popular publication is *Weird NJ* for a reason.

I'm a video production teacher at Howell High School in central New Jersey. My friend Jess introduced me to Mr. Serling's work in high school during a New Year's Eve marathon on television. My friends at the party passed out early but I was glued to the television set. My first paycheck from working with a television network went toward the *Twilight Zone* DVD set, which I then devoured disc-by-disc, savoring each commentary and special feature. In the midst of the economic recession, my destination vacation was to a land of shadows and substance.

One of the things I connected with the most was the nostalgia for things lost in the past. "Walking Distance" resonated with me on an almost cellular level. When I learned that the merry-go-round and the stately homes were all echoes of Rod's hometown, I felt a kinship with a man who had passed away almost a decade prior to my birth.

He never forgot where he came from, and distilled the essence of his life experiences to the page and screen. I admire that deeply.

When I took my teaching job, I knew I'd have an opportunity to steer into the skid of New Jersey's strangeness, embrace its oddities and most importantly, pass along this communal lore to my students. After all, it takes a lot to surprise a high schooler in today's world. Teenagers today are inundated with content across multiple devices to the point where a Kanamit could walk up to them and they'd barely look up from their phones. So I concocted a plan.

Every fall, I have the students investigate myths and legends from around our home state. It's amazing how little they usually know about the history in their own backyard. Once they begin this research, I showcase staple scenes and films from the horror genre so that they can understand how to build suspense, engage the audience and layer in meaning to their scenes.

Without fail, the best reaction I get every year is when I show them episodes from *The Twilight Zone*. Some have seen the show during the periodic marathons on TV. But most come in fresh, not knowing what to expect. Some see 4:3 black-and-white images and immediately look disgusted. But once the opening scenes unfold, the attitudes change immediately.

It never ceases to entertain me when my oh-so-worldly apprentices sit slack-jawed with eyes wide when the twists come in the last few minutes. It is incredibly satisfying seeing the slow-dawning understanding in the flickering lights of the classroom projector. By the time the Serling signoff plays out, I see their young minds processing the fact that messages delivered a half century before their birth still ring true.

Students don't usually take to preaching. So when they see the panic over *The Otherness* (I don't get this) of neighbors in "Monsters are Due on Maple Street", they can connect it to everything from terrorism to Covid-19. They hear the fascist dogma spewed by "The State" in "The Obsolete Man" and know that it's frighteningly close to certain cable news stories. For a generation that has literally been born into the Social Media Age, they can see uncomfortable parallels in "Eye of the Beholder" and "Number 12 Looks Just Like You".

Each time they turn the key of imagination, they begin to see the scale of the larger world in a way that a lecture never could communicate. They have inherited the problems that these telecast time capsules warned against, but they know that their fights against the darkness won't be wrapped up with a bow in thirty minutes. I remember showing "The Midnight Sun" for the first time and one student just sat in silence, staring off

into space after the bell rang. "They didn't even call it climate change back then, and they still knew what was coming," my student said, haunted. They looked up at me. "And they barely did a thing to stop it."

I hope fervently that this is the kind of student that will do something about it. Year after year I pray that these kids aren't just being entertained by these neo-parables but are using it to examine where they stand as people. It's part of the reason I wanted to be a member of the Serling Foundation - be it *Patterns, Seven Days in May* or *Requiem For A Heavyweight*, Rod always had something to say. And almost all of this has remained relevant long after Rod's credits rolled one final time.

One of his students at Ithaca said that her teacher feared he would never be remembered, that he'd never be a Hemingway. Oh, Mr. Serling. For a man who projected visions of the future, it's a tragedy you didn't get a glimpse of your corner of eternity. Every teacher who uses your scripts as a catalyst for engagement in social issues owes you a debt of gratitude. I know I do.

*Scott Napolitano
lives in Hamilton,
New Jersey and
has been a RSMF
member since
January 2023*



Meeting Rod Serling

by Bruce Kirschner

It was the winter of 1974 and my junior year at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The student-run speaker's bureau was well funded and would bring in some pretty remarkable people to present to the large student population at the school. I had already seen the likes of Moe Howard of the Three Stooges and horror movie villain Vincent Price. But it was the appearance of Rod Serling, my long-time hero that left the most indelible impression on me. He had created *The Twilight Zone* television series, which started on prime time when I was six years old and ended five years later. It went into syndication as reruns for the entirety of my teenage years so I was able to continue to enjoy the half hour episodes. The anthology series captured my imagination with a memorable mixture of science fiction, social satire, fantasy, drama and horror. Many of the episodes have become

fixtures on the American cultural landscape. It always amazed me how Serling and his production crew could get so much into less than a half hour of television screen time. He followed up *The Twilight Zone* with *Night Gallery*, another inventive TV series.

Serling was taking a break from Hollywood and teaching at Ithaca College at the time. Ithaca College was just a few hours drive from Buffalo, and he probably drove up himself. His presentation was held in the Norton Student Union building in one of the large ballrooms. The stage was about two feet high. Serling's seemingly off-the-cuff speech lasted about an hour or so. I don't really remember what he covered but he was certainly entertaining and made the audience laugh a lot. I do remember one reference he made to his wife describing him looking like a "five-foot-four-inch Sicilian boxer," even though I learned many years later that

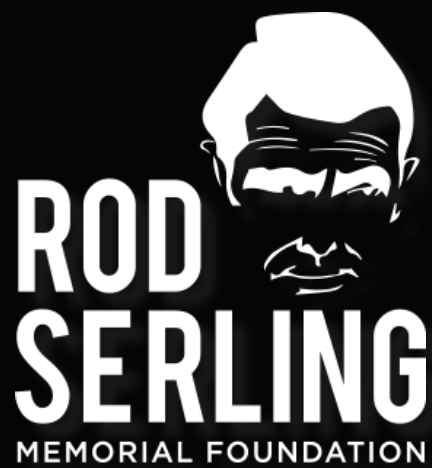
Serling was actually Jewish. When his talk was over the crowd quickly dispersed. My high school friend, John, and I dawdled a bit for some reason. We hadn't noticed that Serling had descended from the stage and came right over to us until he started talking to us. He said something like, "Hi, guys. How's it going?" We were both stunned to realize that the REAL Rod Serling was talking to us, a couple of lowly undergraduate students.

Maybe what surprised me the most was how he very much appeared to be sincerely interested in what John and I had to say. I also couldn't help but notice how much smaller he was compared to his TV image. In fact, he was a couple of inches shorter than my own five foot six inches. We chatted with him for a few minutes -- mostly small talk. One of my biggest life regrets is that as an English and Political Science double-major I had not been better prepared to ask him some

really good questions at that chance moment in time. Serling was so genuinely amicable and at ease with us that I have no doubt that, had we asked him to join us for a couple of beers in the "Rathskeller" campus hangout he would have joined us (the drinking age in New York State was only 18 years old at the time). It was a lost opportunity since Serling left us far too prematurely only a year later at age 50. Over the years I've conjured up plenty of questions I could have posed to him. Perhaps one day I'll find myself in the "Twilight Zone" and will have another opportunity to meet and talk to my hero, Rod Serling.

*Bruce Kirschner
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