

DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION

The Official Newsletter of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation



SUMMER 2023



NOTES FROM NICK

An Update from RSMF President Nick Parisi

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the latest issue of *Dimensions of Imagination*. Since our previous installment, we held a virtual SerlingFest, moved a few steps closer to installing Rod's statue in Binghamton, and welcomed a new member to the Memorial Foundation's Board of Directors. A biography of our newest Board member, Paul Gallagher, can be found later in this issue.

Virtual SerlingFest was held on August 26, 2023, and featured a few familiar faces and a few guests making their first SerlingFest appearance.

Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, who hosted our "Cocktails from the Zone" fundraiser in 2022, made her first official guest appearance with us, and talked about the inextricable link between *The Twilight Zone*, Rod Serling, and



Pictured: Left- Frank Spotnitz Right: Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo

Rod's hometown.

"Binghamton is just a wonderful, quirky place," Donna said.



and a lot of themes that were percolating in our community," Donna said. "In 1924, the year that Serling was born, that's when International Business Machines really came together. (Soon) after, the flight simulator was invented here in Binghamton – that was the Link company, and also Agfa and Ansco film had a very prominent presence in Binghamton. When we first landed someone on the moon, that would never have happened without the computers from IBM, without the trainers that the pilots had trained on from Link, or without the film that was used to take the first pictures on the moon. Serling was influenced by all of this culture and spirit of innovation that really permeated this place. And I think he's just an amazing reflection of the creativity and creative spirit that we're very proud of around here."

Donna summarized the process by which our "statue project" has come to fruition and confirmed that we will very likely unveil Rod's statue in Recreation Park in April 2024. By the time that you read this, we hope to have announced an exact date and additional details.

One of the "new faces" joining us at SerlingFest was one that is sadly no longer with us. Courtesy of Gordon Webb, we were able to present the "world premiere" of a 1984 interview that Gordon conducted with Buck Houghton, who produced *The Twilight Zone's* first three seasons and who passed away in 1999. Houghton gave his take on why *The Twilight Zone* endures:

"Rod had a taste for common problems of humanity that are good at any time," he said. "He dealt with ordinary people who had problems or desires or wishes or loves or passions that were universally understood. So a story

"In many places, you can just stand there and almost feel like you've gone back in time. If you look around this place, the bus station, you look at the carousel in Recreation Park, if you just talk to the people, you can see how he was influenced by this quirky, wonderful spot."

Donna did a terrific job of illustrating how Rod's formative years coincided with a revolutionary period of advancements in Binghamton.

"There's a certain innovative spirit and a history of innovation that I think Serling was growing up right in the middle of, that also influenced many of the episodes that we are treasuring today."

One of those treasured *Twilight Zone* episodes that may have been influenced, at least subconsciously, by his childhood environment, is its very first, "Where is Everybody?" Particularly, consider the predicament of that story's protagonist, Mike Ferris, and where he's truly spent most of that episode.

"Serling was clearly grappling with new technology and space travel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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.

FOUNDATION OFFICERS

Nicholas Parisi, President
Tony Albarella, Vice President
Secretary / Archivist
Andrew Polak, Treasurer
Helen Foley, Founder

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All officers, and...
Joe Bardales
Amy Boyle Johnston
Mark Dawidziak
Gail Flug
Paul Gallagher
Mark Olshaker
Carolyn Price
Steve Schlich
Anne Serling
Jeff Serling
Douglas Sutton
Gordon C. Webb
Shelley McKay Young

ADVISORS

Brian Frey
Robert Keller
Jodi Serling
Jackie Stapleton

WEBMASTER

Steve Schlich

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Gail Flug

Big Thanks to our contributing artists this issue:

ON THE COVER: Born in Phoenixville, PA, Malcolm Monahan has been an artist since he was six years old – and a Rod Serling fan for almost as long. "I saw Rod Serling's Night Gallery in 1976 and it scared the doodlebugs out of me. In 1979, I would see *The Twilight Zone* for the first time and it became like a best friend to me." Malcolm can be found on Facebook, or if you'd like to inquire about his artwork, you can email him at limecharger@comcast.net.

INSIDE: Christopher Tupa is an artist specializing in watercolor sketching, children's book illustration and comic art. His art embodies a humorous and whimsical style with a real sense of fun, and has appeared in published works and paintings in the U.S. as well as several countries around the world. Christopher describes himself as is "a big kid at heart -- who enjoys watching cartoons and playing games when he isn't traveling or exploring the world around him." Feel free to contact him about any art projects or questions. christophertupa@hotmail.com

RSMF PROFILE

Paul Gallagher, Member, Board Of Directors

Maryland-based Paul Gallagher had his passport to the fifth dimension stamped for the first time when he was a kid, watching *Twilight Zone* reruns at his grandparents' house. He even remembers his inaugural episode: "Five Characters in Search of an Exit."

Night Gallery on the Syfy channel. In 2010, when Twitter was new, he set up a page with the username 'TheNightGallery' to try and drum up interest in the show. He started out tweeting only about *Night Gallery*, but then expanded it to the *Zone*, and eventually to all things Serling. Today his follower count exceeds 38,500 fans.

Today, in addition to his full-time job as a writer and editor, he curates the Twitter page as well as a widely read blog about Serling's work, "Shadow & Substance" and a Facebook

page by the same name.

A native of the Baltimore-Washington area, he holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland. He's working on his first book, one based on his popular "Re-Zoning" blog posts, which compare *The Twilight Zone* scripts that Serling adapted from other works with the original short stories.

Read more "Re-Zoning" posts at thenightgallery.wordpress.com



By the '80s and '90s, Paul was watching the *Zone* via Columbia House videotapes, a well-thumbed copy of Marc Scott Zicree's *The Twilight Zone* Companion close at hand. After that, it was late-night reruns of

NICK: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

about a man who was desperate for a second chance to do something is just as good in 1984 as it was in '59. And since he wrote with so much compassion for the human condition, it just still works."

Another of our SerlingFest newcomers, writer and producer Frank Spotnitz, also gave his opinion on *The Twilight Zone's*

staying power:

"There are certain things – movies and TV shows – that just have grace," Frank said. "Somehow, despite the time they were made, despite the costumes, the photography, the music, they don't age. And I think *Wizard of Oz* is one of those things, *Casablanca* is one of those things, and *Twilight Zone*, I think, is one of those things.

Mark Dawidziak, author of the recently published *A Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allen Poe*, helmed most of the second half of our event, first with his presentation "Moralists in Disguise," a study of the similarities between Rod Serling and Mark Twain, and then by interviewing Scott Skelton and Jim Benson, authors of *Rod Serling's Night Gallery: An After-Hours Tour*. For more on the massive, new edition

of this book, see Scott Skelton's piece later in this issue.

If you were unable to watch SerlingFest live, the videos are still available on our Facebook page.

Thanks, everybody!

Nick Parisi, President
The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

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

COLLECTORS' ITEM! 2022 RSMF Newsletter Annual

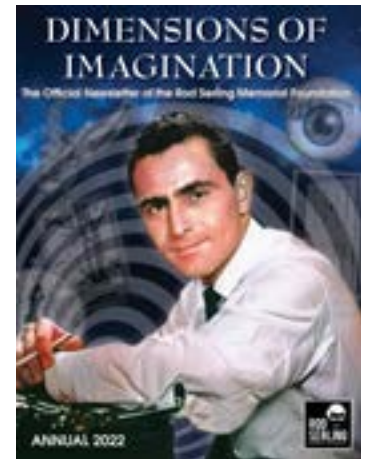
LIMITED SUPPLY

\$15 tax & shipping to USA included

This Collectors' Item includes all four 2022 newsletters, printed and bound on glossy paper for your collection.

Read About:

The Statue Kickstarter, Rod's Most Non-Political Speech, Requiem For The Loner, Walking Distance On Stage, The Simpsons, Looney Tunes, Beaver Cleaver & Tom Cruise In The TZ, Serling Center For Media & Arts In Binghamton, "Growing Up Serling" By nephew Jeff Serling, Original Cartoons By Christopher Tupa, Original Fiction, Rod And Me, Rare Photos, Obscure Productions, Christian Fans, Covers By Scott Morse, In Memoriam, TZ Clickbait, Serling Fest 2021 and 2022, Canadian Fandom, Fan Memorabilia, Ten Best Episodes Lists & much more!



This Annual was sent to anyone who donated at least \$25 during 2022. If you donated during 2023, don't fret—you will receive a copy of 2023's Annual in early 2024.

Go to RodSerling.com for details

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Rod Serling Art by Robert Keller

By Andrew Polak

We have quite a few pieces of artwork in our collection. One of our earliest possessions is this original portrait of Rod Serling with a television screen broadcasting *The Twilight Zone*. The artwork image may look familiar if you have seen one of our collectable postcards.

The artist is Robert Keller who not only is one of the Memorial Foundation's founding members but also a boyhood friend of Rod's throughout their school years. Bob served on our Board of Directors until 2010. He was an artist and the founder of the Binghamton Sidewalk of Stars where Rod was the first to be honored. He was the first curator of Roberson Museum of the Arts, a Professor Emeritus at Broome Community College, founder of the Cedar Art Gallery and Artist's Guild Gallery in Binghamton, and is a lifetime member of the Binghamton Fine Arts Society.

His art has been shown in New York City, Kansas City, Atlanta, Columbus and more. He was also the curator of the Thorn Brook Hall Museum in Norwich. As we celebrate what would have been Rod Serling's 100th birthday in 2024, Bob, who still resides



here in Binghamton, will also be turning 100! Cheers to Bob and all his work for the Foundation!

Pictured clockwise: Robert Keller in front of one of his Romantic Realism paintings; BOD members Ron Kessler and Robert Keller at the TZ@50 celebration; The original framed artwork by Robert Keller



Rod & Carol's Honeymoon

by Gordon C. Webb

After World War II, Rod Serling, who had fought in the South Pacific enrolled at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH under the G. I. Bill. There, he met his future wife - Carolyn "Carol" Kramer and the couple was married two years later. They honeymooned at a summer home owned by Carol's family near Ithaca, NY -- just 50 miles north of Binghamton - Rod's hometown.

Carol probably snapped this photo, dated "1948," with Cayuga Lake in the background. Rod proudly wears his Antioch sweatshirt, where they both graduated in 1950.

The accompanying photo shows a modern view of where the classic shot was taken - with the lake's eastern shore in the distance. The Serling family still owns the lake house, where Rod and Carol spent most summers with daughters Anne and Jodi.



NIGHT GALLERY

Rod Serling's Night Gallery: A Fiftieth Anniversary Tour

By Scott Skelton

As luck or providence would have it, the author of this article—me—and Rod Serling's magnum opus, *The Twilight Zone*, had our respective premieres on the same date in history, October 2, 1959—Serling's TV series on the CBS network, me in the delivery room of Keizer Memorial Hospital in North Bend, Oregon. This is not to say I actually believe I was destined to write about Rod Serling and his achievements in popular culture, but the coincidence isn't lost on me.

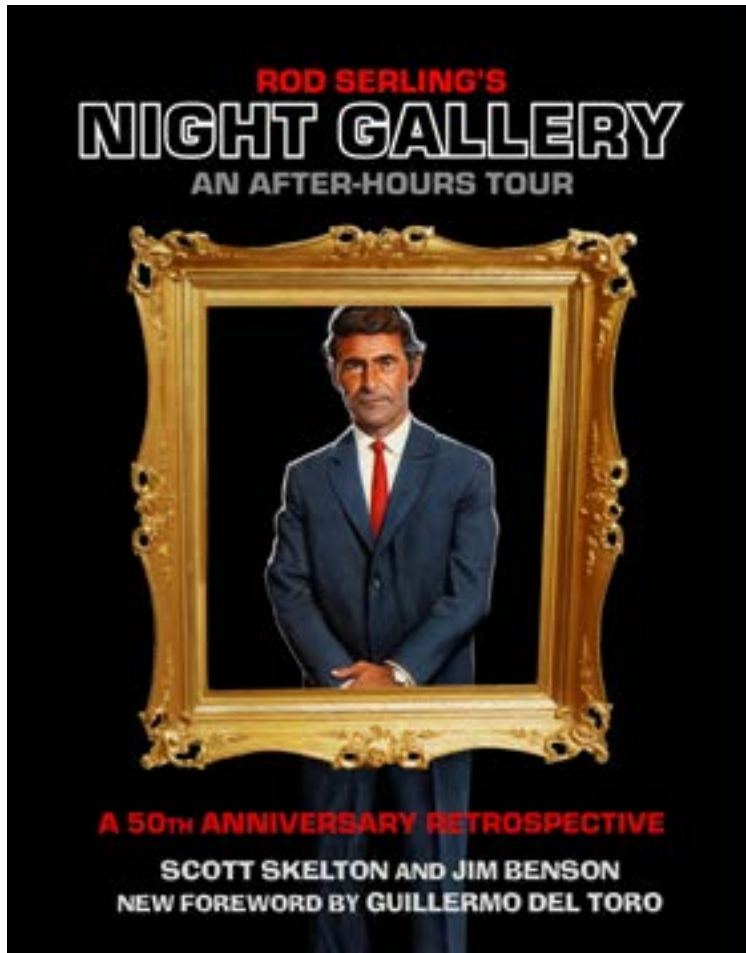
I distinctly recall seeing episodes of *The Twilight Zone* in syndication while growing up, and I remember being blown away by its imaginative premise and its storytelling mastery. I was a voracious reader in those days, and Serling and company's tales were the cinematic analog to the short stories I was devouring by Bradbury, Heinlein, Sturgeon, and others.

But I was simultaneously zeroing in on horror and fantasy literature, and my diet also included Poe, Lovecraft, and Matheson in equal measure. And this is where Rod Serling's other great television series comes into the picture—the dark fantasy anthology *Night Gallery*. For my generation, *Night Gallery* was even more potent than *Zone*, delivering original tales of the uncanny as well as artful adaptations of classic horror literature that fed our greedy ten- to twelve-year-old imaginations. For a lot of the school kids gathering in the cafeteria the day after each broadcast—sharing our impressions, reliving its chills—it was clearly our favorite show.

Later in my life, I had the opportunity to revisit *Night Gallery* when it was screened on the fledgling cable channel SciFi—and I was dismayed to find it was not the same show my memory recalled with such pleasure. Shock and disbelief were the key emotions now.

Many of the episode segments had been drastically altered. Recedited. For all practical purposes, defiled. Some were shortened, some were lengthened, but all were cut to hell.

My memories of the series were still sharp and accurate, buttressed by audio cassette recordings I had made of the broadcasts as a kid—recordings that I had listened to



over and over. I was aghast at the shambles this butchery had made of my beloved childhood favorite.

My outrage became the impetus for writing a book, a companion guide for the series. Two years into my researches, I met a kindred spirit online, Jim Benson, who was as passionate as I was about striving to memorialize the original version of this abused TV series, now no longer shown anywhere in the United States, save in the butchered syndication travesty.

Between 1994 and 1998, Jim and I researched and wrote *Rod Serling's Night Gallery: An After-Hours Tour*, published by Syracuse University Press in December 1998. It received unanimous praise upon release, and we were (and still are) immensely proud of this first edition.

To be perfectly frank, however, it was not in the form we had envisioned when we began the project. After-Hours Tour went to press restricted by page-count limitations demanded from our publisher, which meant pruning our manuscript to fit its 400-page maximum. Other restrictions

meant limiting its graphic profile to 100 postage-stamp-sized photos, black-and-white only, forcing Jim and I to dismiss the use of any of the paintings used to illustrate each of the tales in Serling's fascinating introductions—so crucial to fans' memories of the series.

Over the next twenty-four years, Jim and I continued our research into the series. These investigations have resulted in a massively expanded second edition of *Rod Serling's Night Gallery: An After-Hours Tour*, one that not only matches our original concept for this book but eclipses and outstrips that vision. Published by Creature Features, this deluxe companion guide vastly expands on the original 400-page, digest-sized volume, now an 824-page coffee table book in full color. It restores all of the cut passages, revising and updating the text with the addition of deeper archival research, a crop of new interviews with cast and crew members (including Sally Field, Lesley Ann Warren, David McCallum, and Joan Van Ark, to name a few), remembrances and commentary by author Anne

Serling, and newly uncovered citations on the show from Rod Serling himself—unpublished for more than fifty years. In addition, it includes more than 900 color and black-and-white photographs, with reproductions of all of the introductory paintings. This is now the book Jim Benson and I had intended to publish in honor of Serling's final creative masterwork.

In his foreword to our second edition, Oscar-winning director Guillermo del Toro describes the effect of *Night Gallery* on his childhood—which precisely describes the effect it had on Jim and I at that age:

"*Night Gallery* left an indelible impression on me—even more so than a seminal show like *The Twilight Zone*, to which it is often dismissively compared. Not by me. I adored it.

Night Gallery is uniquely different from *The Twilight Zone*. *Twilight Zone* is without a doubt the most accomplished of the two series, certainly from an artistic-control point of view, as it is minus the infamous interventions of *Night Gallery* producer Jack Laird. But *Night Gallery* also has, in my heart, an edge, because it occupies itself with touching and poetic musings about darker subjects.

Serling was a superb fabulist at heart. Not so much trying to portray reality as much as decipher it through parable. He was a heartbroken humanist—a disillusioned romantic—one who felt the weight of the world on his shoulders, who worried about the fading humanity in the modern world and our capacity to be casually cruel to each other.

The melancholic spirit and the sense of loss—the fall from grace that preoccupies Serling time and again—these are at the core of his fantasy. The whimsical elements or the monstrous creations that are exhibited in the gallery are gargoyles in a cathedral, woven in with the saints and sinners to be considered in our spiritual journey. Serling advocated for humanity with his gallery of horror—as, I hope, do I."

A short video with further details may be accessed on YouTube at tinyurl.com/nightgalleryafterhours

Orders for the new second edition may be placed at tinyurl.com/Afterhoursbook

By Tony Albarella

Time travel stories comprise a very popular and prolific subgenre in *The Twilight Zone*. Rod Serling's nebulous fifth dimension, a place "as timeless as infinity" and in which anything is possible, lends itself intrinsically to the time travel plot, and some of most beloved episodes of the series depict people who revisit the past or are thrust into the future.

For purposes of definition and in regards specifically to *Twilight Zone*, I use the term "time travel" in the loosest, most overt sense; whether on purpose, by mistake or as the result of some cosmic intervention, *Twilight Zone* characters often experienced "classic" time travel or were otherwise pulled out of the normal slipstream of time that we all occupy.

In the science fiction realm, time travel generally takes on two forms: "hard" time travel, wherein a physical, external apparatus is invented or used to navigate time, or "soft" time travel, in which characters are transported via some fateful – and unexplained – modus operandi. Examples of "hard" time travel in *The Twilight Zone* are the episodes "Execution," "Once Upon a Time" and "No Time Like the Past." "Soft" time travel Zone tales include "Back There," "The Odyssey of Flight 33" and "The 7th is Made Up of Phantoms."

The series explored several thematic niches or subgenres of time travel. There was the ever-popular "escape to a simpler past" theme ("Walking Distance," "A Stop at Willoughby," "The 16MM Shrine," "Static," "Young Man's Fancy," "No Time Like the Past," "The Incredible World of Horace Ford") and stories in which time travel provided a second chance to right the wrongs of the past ("Nightmare as Child," "The Last Flight," "Spur of the Moment"). TZ covered out-of-time love stories ("The Long Morrow," "Miniature") and out-of-time anti-love stories ("A Short Drink from a Certain Fountain"). There were episodes that rewarded sympathetic characters ("The Big, Tall Wish," "In Praise of Pip," "A Passage for Trumpet," "A Hundred Yards Over the Rim," "Kick the Can") or, conversely, meted out retribution for wrongdoing ("Judgement Night," "The Rip Van Winkle Caper," "Of Late I Think of Cliffordville"). The show featured time travel with a lighthearted



Top: Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour in *Somewhere In Time*
Bottom: Tom Cruise in *Vanilla Sky*

bent ("Once Upon a Time," "A Kind of Stopwatch," "Showdown with Rance McGrew") and examinations of lives lived beyond their natural time ("Long Live Walter Jameson," "Queen of the Nile"). Even the unofficial pilot episode, Serling's *Desilu Playhouse* production of "The Time Element," used the time travel hook to conceptually launch the series.

Never, in this writer's humble opinion, did *The Twilight Zone* do time travel better than in "Walking Distance." This episode used time to strike an emotional chord, and maintained a deft balance between wish fulfillment and the regret, longing and inexorable loss that is inevitable with the passage of time. While many time travel tales hang their hats on the fantasy aspect of such stories, "Walking Distance" focuses on the dramatic canvas the story paints. For what would Martin Sloan's trip to his past matter, if not for his strong ties to his childhood and the places and people that formed it?

Because "Walking Distance" never fails to rock me to my emotional core, I'm attracted to movies that are similarly character-driven and involve loved ones intersecting across time in one form or another. If films like this appeal to you, I heartily suggest that you give the examples below a spin around the block. Some are well known, other a bit more obscure; some are convoluted mind-blowers, others are straightforward and unapologetic tearjerkers.

I won't dwell on overlong plot descriptions you can find online, but I will briefly remark on why these films move me and which original Zone episodes they most closely resemble. Not every movie I've enjoyed that fits the TZ time travel criteria is here, but this list includes ten relatively modern films that feel, to me, to have been directly inspired by *The Twilight Zone*. They've left indelible impressions on me, and I've watched many of them more times than I care to admit.

Do you have recommendations of similar Zone-like time travel movies, gems hidden deeply away or in plain sight, that I might have missed? Please let me know, and we'll happily share your suggestions with other Rod Serling and *Twilight Zone* aficionados in a future issue of this newsletter.

Submitted for your perusal, in no particular order:

***Somewhere In Time* (1980)** – An eloquent and moving time travel romance, with the added incentive of having been written by the incomparable Richard Matheson. It's also a fairly faithful adaptation of Matheson's even better novel.

Twilight Zone Antecedents: "The Long Morrow," "The Trouble with Templeton," "Miniature"

***Groundhog Day* (1993)** – A legitimately funny comedy/drama that is equally adept in presenting a Serlingesque moral-code improvement character arc.

Twilight Zone Antecedents: "The Last Flight," "Static"

***Frequency* (2000)** – An alternate timeline intersection thriller with a touching father-son subplot. While Serling's flair for dialogue is obviously not present, the plot feels like one of his, right down to the nostalgic call-backs and the tightly knit, small neighborhood, everyday-joe characters.

Twilight Zone Antecedents: "Walking Distance," "Spur of the Moment," "A Hundred Yards Over the Rim," "The Last Flight"

***The Lake House* (2006)** – A leisurely romance in which two lonely people who occupy out-of-sync timelines connect and communicate via letters left in a mailbox. Unlike most films of this type, the intersecting timelines span only a mere two years, rather than decades or generations. It has the warm soul of an Earl Hamner-penned *Twilight Zone* episode.

Twilight Zone Antecedents: "The Long Morrow," "A Kind of Stopwatch," "The Bewitchin' Pool"

***Vanilla Sky* (2001)** and the original film on which it was based, ***Open Your Eyes* (1997)** – A mind-bending tale with a heavy Charles Beaumont flair, this thriller/romance takes viewers on a wild ride, all the while holding a time travel element in its hip pocket.

Twilight Zone Antecedents: "Perchance to Dream," "Shadow Play," "A Stop at Willoughby"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

TWILIGHT ZONE

The Narrate Your Own *Twilight Zone* Competition Is Back!

By Steve Schlich

Imagine a new *Twilight Zone* episode. Write Rod Serling's opening and closing narrations. Give it a title and send us your entry!

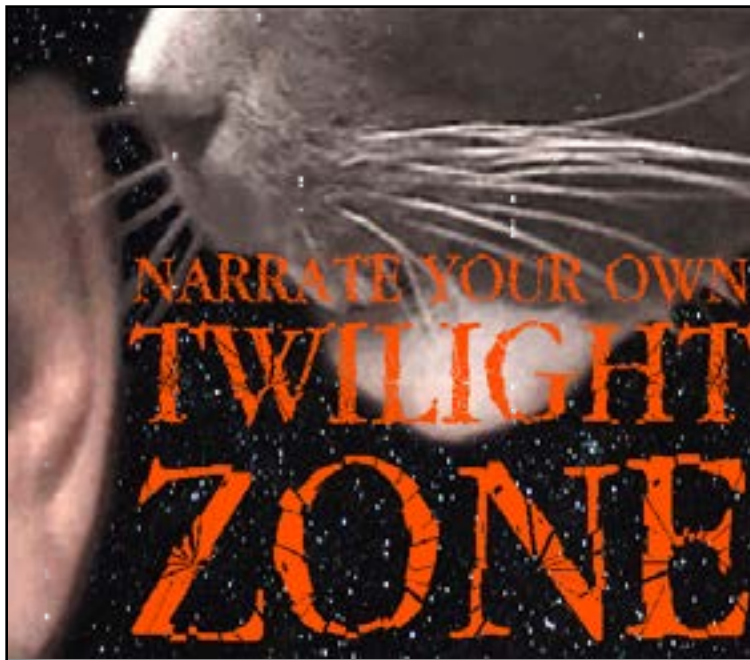
ENTER OUR CONTEST

We took a year off but the contest is back! Convert some of your pent-up energy into a *Twilight Zone* episode that is worthy of immortality—via our video treatment. Let's have some fun! Or...pick a villain or two (there's no shortage) and give 'em what they deserve.

The very first, first place winner in 2017, "Split the Difference" by Joseph Dougherty, is a near-perfect example to study: it contains a unique idea, a classic and easily understood *Twilight Zone* twist, and sentences that fit Rod's rich baritone perfectly. It's a delight to watch and read. Check out all of our winners at our website (link below) to see what works and what the judges like.

THE RULES - HOW TO WIN

Don't write a treatment; it is more like a 60-second pitch. And it's OK to leave some mystery; stimulate our imagination! Every previous entry—including all winners—is just a click away. See the buttons above. Warm yourself up by writing new narrations for an existing episode, and read them aloud to friends to see if they recognize which episode. Then write the narrations for your original idea.



- Previous winners are invited. We're starting a new cycle and everyone has a blank slate.
- Maximum word count, excluding titles and labels: 150 words total, both narrations combined.
- Maximum entries: 2 per person.
- Title and Narrations only. Any additional content will be ignored.
- We will not consider a previous entry

DEADLINE:

Halloween 2023 (October 31)

A IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT GENERATIVE A.I.:

The next Rod Serling will not be a robot. We're asking you to resist using ChatGPT or similar software to make entries. Of the A.I. output that I've read, human writing is still better...far more creative, original, and sensitive. That's what we seek here: writing from the heart that reflects the beauty, the ingenuity, and the respect for humanity of Rod Serling's scripts. Give it your all! You're better than computer code that simply generates the most likely word that would follow the previous one.

JUDGING

Judging by Rod Serling Memorial Foundation board members, using these criteria:

- Originality
- How easily we can imagine Rod speaking your words
- How well your narrations suggest the imaginary episode

PRIZES

Immortality! The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation offers to you: your personal area of our *Twilight Zone*. We will announce the winners in time for Rod Serling's birthday—Christmas Day 2023—and present a video that features them. The video will be accessible from our website www.RodSerling.com forever!

Stephen Dexter will perform the winners of the 2023 Narrate Your Own *Twilight Zone* competition. It's your chance—two of them!—to hear him perform Rod Serling performing your winning narration.

NOTE: We will publish all the entries on our website. By entering, you are granting permission to publish your entry (with your byline and copyright notice attached) on the rodserling.com website.

See past winning narrations and entry information at: tinyurl.com/twilight-zone-competition-2023

TIME: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

The Age of Adeline (2015) – This heartwarming film is a bit contrived in plot development, but makes up for it with a charming fairytale quality. It exudes the sentiment and philosophical flavor of a George Clayton Johnson episode. *Twilight Zone Antecedents:* "Kick the Can," "Long Live Walter Jameson," "Queen of the Nile"

The Jacket (2005) – Another disorientating thriller/romance with a brooding, off-kilter quality, this movie's gritty cinematography and powerful performances offset a tender message of connection and sacrifice. *Twilight Zone Antecedents:* "Perchance to Dream," "Miniature," "The Trouble with Templeton"

About Time (2013) – An endearing,



Brad Pitt in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*

life-affirming examination of time, love, family and wish fulfillment, this delightful gem maintains a near perfect balance between comedy and drama, and features a strong time travel-related father-and-son bond. *Twilight Zone Antecedents:*

"Walking Distance," "In Praise of Pip," "Back There," "Once Upon a Time"

Donnie Darko (2001) – At turns sinister and funny, and always complex, this cult classic interweaves time shifts,

psychological intrigue and potential mental illness, but supports it all with a foundation of familial sacrifice. Another untamed film that feels as if it burst forth from the mind of Charles Beaumont. *Twilight Zone Antecedents:* "Shadow Play," "The 7th is Made Up of Phantoms," "Spur of the Moment"

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008) – Based on an F. Scott Fitzgerald short story that actually predates *The Twilight Zone* by decades, this film nonetheless feels like a humanistic, movie-length Zone. The offbeat structure does not technically dabble in time travel, but it turns the youth versus age dynamic on its head and has a sweeping, emotional scope. *Twilight Zone Antecedents:* "Kick the Can," "A Short Drink from a Certain Fountain"

Serling's Re-Zoning Efforts: "To Serve Man"

by Paul Gallagher

Remember how the Kanamits in "To Serve Man" looked? Short, fat and hairy, with pig-like faces. Three fingers on each hand. Walking around in green shorts. Hard to forget that image. Wait, what?

If you're confused, it's because you're picturing the way the Kanamits looked in one of the most famous episodes of *The Twilight Zone*. The description I just gave was how they looked in the short story that Rod Serling based his script on.

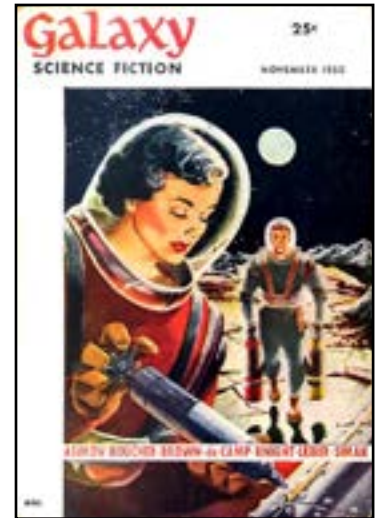
As readers of my first two "Re-Zoning" articles may recall, whenever Serling adapted an existing work, he wasn't shy about revamping the source material quite extensively. He wasn't one to simply take the story as is and put it in script form. Sometimes he used the basic idea to create a whole new tale.

But not always. When Serling adapted Damon Knight's story of the same name (which first appeared in the November 1950 issue of *Galaxy* magazine), he retained the overall story pretty faithfully. In both, the Kanamits bring peace and plenty to a suspicious Earth, win everybody over, then just before the main character is set to board a Kanamit vessel, a translator friend gives him the shocking news that the book titled "To Serve Man" is a You Know What.

However, Serling did make a number of crucial changes. Some were cosmetic. The main character in Knight's story is Peter; Serling renamed him Michael. The aliens are Kanama (singular) and Kanamit (plural) in the story; Serling makes it Kanamit (singular) and Kanamits (plural). Serling also changed the gender and identity of Michael's translating friend. In the story, it's a man named Gregori; in Serling's script, it's a woman named Susan.

But other changes were more substantial. Perhaps the most striking is the one I opened this post with: the Kanamits went from the Orc-like creatures of Knight's story to the tall, regal, robe-clad beings in the *TZ* episode. Serling even added the touch about them speaking telepathically; in the story, they apparently speak like anyone else.

Perhaps Serling altered their appearance for budgetary



reasons. CBS frequently pressured Serling to economize on *TZ*, and creating the aliens of Knight's story sounds like it would've been expensive. But I think he realized that recasting the Kanamits as he did would make it easier for people to finally trust them. Sure, they're tall and intimidating, but they're not repulsive.

Even more importantly, he changed the structure. It's Serling who came up with the scenes of Michael aboard the Kanamit vessel. They bookend the episode, turning the main story into a flashback. In Knight's story, the Kanamits have already arrived, and within a few paragraphs we're at the famous lie-detector scene (which, interestingly, is carried over to Serling's script almost word for word).

But it's what he does with the Big Reveal that shows Serling's innate understanding of the TV medium. In Knight's telling, Gregori takes Peter aside to tell him how he cracked the code of "To Serve Man", and the story ends with

the legendary "cookbook" line. It's literally the last sentence. In the *TZ* episode, Serling has Susan rush up as Michael is boarding the Kanamit ship. She blurts out the line, he looks shocked and tries vainly to escape. The vessel departs, followed by another scene of Michael aboard the ship, arguing with a Kanamit — and then addressing the audience directly (hardly the norm on *TZ*).

This change greatly amplifies the drama of the Big Reveal. And let's face it — the whole episode hinges on that line. Serling (a former boxer) knew how to make a punch land. Knight draws blood in the original story, but Serling turns it into a knockout blow.

Some *TZ* experts, like *The Twilight Zone Companion* writer Marc Scott Zicree, have noted how deciphering the Kanamit book would have been impossible by any conventional decoding methods. Lacking a Rosetta Stone of sorts, how could they ever figure out an alien language?

Knight, to his credit, at least has Gregori work at the Kanamit embassy, where he begins learning their language, so his deciphering abilities seem more plausible. Serling simply has Susan keep powering away, and lo and behold, she does it. I think, though, that he realized most viewers would be too gobsmacked by the Big Reveal to care. And he was right. Serling wraps things up with one of his most darkly humorous narrations:

The recollections of one Michael Chambers with appropriate flashbacks and soliloquy. Or more simply stated, the evolution of going from dust to dessert. The metamorphosis from being the ruler of a planet to an ingredient in someone's soup. It's tonight's bill of fare ... from *The Twilight Zone*.

Our compliments to Chefs Serling and Knight. "To Serve Man" is quite a dish.

Christopher
'Dad'
Age: 46

OUR FIRST TIME TO WATCH:

Rylan
'Son'
Age: 13



I SAW ONLINE THAT THIS EPISODE IS ONE OF THE BEST EPISODES ACCORDING TO THE FANS!

The TWILIGHT ZONE

I HOPE IT'S AS GOOD AS THE ONE WITH THE AIRPLANE AND THE GREMLIN.



Season 1, Episode 22: The Monsters are Due on Maple Street

EPISODE SYNOPSIS:

One evening, a meteor (maybe), flies over Maple Street and shortly after all the power goes out, the phones stop working and the cars won't start. The inhabitants of Maple Street wonder what is going on and a young boy tells them he's read about this sort of thing in books; it's an alien invasion and the aliens may already be among them. The whole street grows suspicious and begins to turn on itself.

Tommy



I'm Charlie. I'm loud and obnoxious and cause problems and turn out to be a terrible person...
...but I have this really cool Hawaiian shirt!



The young kid, Tommy, knew all about the possible alien invasion and how they operate because he reads sci-fi books. The adults teased him for it but he was the only person that had any clue as to what could be going on.
That's why it's important to read things.



OK. SERMON OVER.



THE NEIGHBORS THINK THAT IT'S WEIRD THAT LES GOODMAN STARES AT THE STARS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT BUT THEY DON'T QUESTION THE LADY THAT WAS UP LATE WATCHING HIM THRU HER WINDOW.



THIS EPISODE SHOWS HOW EASILY PEOPLE CAN TURN ON EACH OTHER AND FOR STUPID THINGS, TOO. JUST FOR BEING A LITTLE BUT DIFFERENT.. IT MAKES ME ANGRY BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE STILL LIKE THIS TODAY! WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT. IF SOMEONE IS JUST LIKE SOMEONE ELSE THEN THAT'S WEIRD I SAY!



CHILL OUT POPS!

I BET LES IS AN ALIEN!



It doesn't take long for the neighbors to turn on each other and find small differences to single out and attack.



WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO ON YOUR RADIOT HUNT!!



IT'S TOMMY! HE KNEW ALL ABOUT THE ALIENS! GET THE KID!



Turns out aliens were causing the power outages in order to create chaos and make the humans turn against one another.

THEY PICK OUT THEIR MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY AND IT'S THEMSELVES.



VERY GOOD, THOUGHT PROVOKING EPISODE.

IT'S A VERY SOBERING EPISODE THAT ILLUSTRATES MOB MENTALITY AND HOW EASILY PEOPLE FOLLOW OTHERS, CAN BE MANIPULATED AND DON'T THINK FOR THEMSELVES.



IT WAS GOOD! I LIKE THE AIRPLANE ONE BETTER THOUGH.



ROD SERLING'S CLOSING LINE IS POWERFUL, AND TRUE, SAD BUT TRUE.



THOUGHTS AND PREJUDICES ARE WEAPONS AND TOOLS OF CONQUEST AS WELL AS BOMBS.

Aliens look like humans