

What It Is We Miss When We Don't Read Fanzines
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Every year, in the spring, there is a ritual. The coming WorldCon announces the Hugo nominees. The ritual is not the announcement, but the reaction. On Twitter, on Facebook, on blogs around the world, the questions appear: *Why isn't name-blogger-x up for Best Fan Writer?* or *How could the voters not have nominated podcast-y?* Every year these questions pop up. In 2011, a few people went so far as to assure their audience that it was all right that they had never heard of any of the Best Fan Writer nominees because they hadn't heard of them either. This despite the fact that all had written dozens, if not hundreds, of articles for fanzines around the world, not to mention major sites like *Tor.com*, *SFSite.com*, or the *Forbidden Planet* blog. All but one had been nominated before. None of them were bloggers; none of them mattered, it seemed.

Which is a shame, as the best fan writing in the world today happens in fanzines.

There is no question in my mind that there is more writing by fans today than ever before, although less of it is happening in traditional fanzines (you can discover more about the Fanzine Tradition at <http://zinewiki.com/Fanzine>). At one point, fanzines were the sole repository of fan writing. Now, much of it happens on blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. That's a positive and a negative. The positive aspect is that more people in the fandom community are participating in the art of writing. The drawback, at least from the point of view of a fanzine editor, is that fanzines are doing good stuff, but attracting a narrower audience. It happens, perhaps because many see the fanzine as a dated artifact. Some fine fan writing is happening in blogs, but the finest fan writing still happens in zine form.

The writing that takes place in blogs tends to aim wider, because they can hit more (and different) eyes more easily than a zine can. Zines can, and often do, focus more tightly on fandom, on the comings-and-goings of fans, conventions and zines, and they do so in ways that are less bound by the moment. There is an immediacy that exists in blogs that doesn't really exist in most zines, although something like *The Drink Tank* (<http://efanzines.com/DrinkTank/>) or *Fanstuff* (<http://efanzines.com/Fanstuff/index.htm>) might have the frequency to feel 'blogish.' Zines tend to live and die off of a feeling of completeness; each issue is a package tied together capturing not a moment in time, but a continuity. This feeling is where I say fanzines have it all over blogs. You are brought into a form that feeds off itself, the interaction of layout, art, and writing. Blogs feel less 'complete' in that each post is typically separate, exists for itself and may not tie in to anything else in the blog. While zines have comment sections, typically letters and emails from readers compiled for the following issue, a blog tends to have individual comment sections that are only reacting to that single post.

There are a great many blogs that deal with the field of science fiction and/or fantasy. *A Dribble of Ink* (<http://aidanmoher.com/blog/>) by Aidan Moher is an excellent look at the field of SF&F, not only by Aidan himself, but from several other big names in the field. It's an exceptional example of how one can look at science fiction from an online fandom point of view. It doesn't tend to deal with fannish concerns, such as conventions and the motions of fandom, but there is some damn fine writing.

The Book Smugglers (<http://thebooksmugglers.com/>), an excellent blog edited by the brilliant Ann Grilo and Thea James, is one of the best sources for book reviews out there; its reviews are remarkably thorough. These are what fanzine fans today might call 'sercon,' short for SERious & CONstructive, the kind of writing that a lot of zines have done away with in their pages in favor of more fannish material, i.e. material pertaining to the realm of fans and fandom.

There are still some fine zines that focus on sercon material, including the exceptional *SF Commentary* by Bruce Gillespie, now in its 42nd year. A PDF version of many recent issues is available at <http://efanzines.com/SFC/>. They look at the field of science fiction and various authors and books with a critical eye worthy of the major genre conference papers. The contributor list for every issue ranges from widely known pros to fans. Bruce's other zines, *Steam Engine Time* and *Scratch Pad*, (both at <http://efanzines.com/SFC/>) are more personal but feature the same level of excellent writing, though they tend to be more fannish in their approach.

Joe Major's *Alexiad* (<http://efanzines.com/Alexiad/index.htm>) is another zine with a fine sercon slant. Joe, a former Hugo for Best Fan Writer nominee and an excellent reader, provides articles and reviews of science fiction novels, as well as other material that may be of interest to fans, including exceptionally good reviews of candy bars. If there is a candy bar fandom, the reviews that appear in *Alexiad* are some of the finest pieces written in it. The reviews of novels, both in and out of genre, are exceptionally pointed and considered, and that makes for amazing reading.

There are a number of writers who write both for blogs and zines that give powerful views on the field as a whole, such as Niall Harrison, Liz Batty, John Hertz, Graham Sleight, and Steven H Silver. They can all be found writing about science fiction in various venues, both online and in paper and paper-like formats. Zines like *Argentus* (<http://efanzines.com/Argentus/index.htm>), *Journey Planet* (<http://efanzines.com/JourneyPlanet/index.htm>), and various others can be found on eFanzines.com.

On the other end you've got fannish material. Many blogs, even those with a slant towards review and literary material, will take an occasional step into the world of fannishness. There are a great many LiveJournals that deal almost exclusively with fannish content. One of the better-known fannish blogs is *File770.com*, by long-time fan and multiple Hugo Award winner Mike Glycer. It covers fandom thoroughly in a diverse number of areas. Mike's fanzine *File 770* started in the 1970s and continues today, using much of the same material as the blog. His regular writers include John Hertz, James Bacon, John King Tarpinian, and Andy Porter, which allows *File770.com* to get a wide-format view of fandom's news happenings. The writing here ranges from short news pieces to long articles and the occasional review. To read them both, you can see the difference between the blog concept and the zine concept in perfect contrast. Mike's work on the blog is informative, but when coupled with art and articles that are geared towards a longer-lasting presentation, it shines. It won another well-deserved Hugo in 2008.

Andy Hooper and Randy Byers are two of the best writers going today, and you can read their work in *Chunga* (<http://efanzines.com/Chunga/index.html>) which the two of them edit along with Carl Juarez. The material they publish tends to go into many different areas, but all maintain a feeling of connection to

fandom. They publish material from a great many other fannish writers, including Hugo-winning legends like Ted White and Stu Shiffman. *Trap Door* by Bay Area fan Robert Lichtman (<http://efanzines.com/TrapDoor/index.htm>), *Askance* by John Purcell (<http://efanzines.com/Prior/index.htm>), *Relapse/Prolapse* by English legend Peter Weston (<http://efanzines.com/Prolapse/index.htm>), and *Procrastinations* by John Coxon (<http://efanzines.com/Procrastinations/index.htm>) are all exceptionally fannish zines that still allow for writing in a wide arena of topics, but all feel as if they're a part of fandom and fannish discourse.

The paper-only fanzine *Banana Wings*, and the highly techno-soaked zine *PLOKTA* (<http://www.plokta.com/plokta/index.html>), are two of the finest zines, with *Banana Wings* featuring excellent writing from its contributors and editors (2011 Hugo for Best Fan Writer Claire Brialey, and the awesome Mark Plummer), while *PLOKTA* includes exceptional layout, art and writing from the world-famous PLOKTA Cabal group of contributors.

The Hugo for Best Fan Writer nomination lists have been dominated by writers for traditional zines. Fine writers like John Hertz, Claire Brialey, Steven H Silver, James Bacon, and even Christopher J Garcia, are best-known for their writing in zines, though Garcia, Bacon, Hertz, and especially Silver, can all be found on various online sites. Jim C. Hines, who is nominated for the first time this year, runs a very well-regarded blog, as did 2008 Best Fan Writer winner John Scalzi. Cheryl Morgan won in 2009, and while she ran a wonderful fanzine in the distant past (*Emerald City*, still available at <http://www.emcit.com/>), she won in Montreal based on her writing for various sites and her own blog. Fred Pohl, who won in 2010, did so based on his work on <http://www.thewaythefutureblogs.com/>. James Nicoll found himself on the ballot twice, being best-known for his posts to USENET in the 1990s and currently for his reviews and LiveJournal. Brialey's win in 2011 could be seen as something of a throwback as she is almost entirely represented by her work in zines, something that has not been the case for Best Fan Writer for several years.

The Hugo for Best Fanzine is slightly different. Over the last decade, nine different titles have won Best fanzine. In 2009, the fiction zine *Electric Velocipede* won, followed in 2010 by the podcast *StarShipSofa* (<http://www.starshipsofa.com/>) in 2010. *The Drink Tank*, a PDF-only zine (for the most part...) won in 2011, which was something of a shock.

Many question why a fanzine is still relevant when compared to a blog that has thousands of readers. One reason is that the voices you will find in a zine like *The Drink Tank* are different from those that you'll see in blogs, especially in the area of artists and writers. You will find many writers who live in both worlds, but often the material they'll produce for one form is much different than for the other. I have noted several writers, myself included, who produce work for zines that are designed to be a bit bigger, less brazen perhaps, and more presentational. The other is that zines have roots in fandom that are not as strong in blogs, leading to a focus on events like conventions and fandom history that you'll not find in many blogs. Many bloggers have become that ranting commentator who never actually participates in the events they react to; a claim held often against many zine writers of earlier days.

Zines today are places where content that is meant to stand through time ends up. It is rare that a blog post, once it goes beyond the first page of posts,

gets much traction. It may as well have not happened in many readers eyes. A zine has permanence, stands like a half-buried statue: often ignored and sometime maligned, but there, present, waiting for notice. It is in zines that our shared history exists, where wonderful expressions are found that are not merely *NOW!* Sadly, it seems that today's readers are far more interested in *NOW!* than they are in permanence, in continuity, in completeness. Some can only see that Fanzines were once something grand, but now are outmoded, passed in importance by blogs that can carry the latest info as quickly as possible. Those that read zines, and this appears to include a fair number of Hugo voters, understand the power of what is presented there, and many vote accordingly. The balance between work meant for the moment and work meant to stand for time is marked and people seem to trench defiantly on one side or the other. Both approaches are valid, and while one may over-shadow the other in number of participants, it is important to remember that great material may be found even in the shadowed valleys we may not want to pass through.

A Gambler Reads Fritz Lieber's *Gonna Roll The Bones*

From The Drink Tank Issue 306

(<http://efanzines.com/DrinkTank/DrinkTank306.pdf>)

You never play to get that feeling, that rush of winning, that thrill of hitting it big, of touching the immortality that comes with capturing lightning and bending the odds to your will. That's what the dangerous ones do, the ones who don't understand what they're dealing with. The smart ones, they play to pay the mortgage, to feed the kids. They play smart. They never go for the score, the real scores. They go for the smart money. They play blackjack, stay on the system, play poker only when the out-of-towners arrive, making sure they never sit too long at a table with another trying to make their payments. It's not a smart thing to play for the win.

That's what Mr. Fritz Lieber got when he gave us *Gonna Roll The Bones*; his entry into the original Dangerous Visions anthology. The story is kind of simple, when you boil it down the way a handicapper would when considering the third race following a downpour. It's a gambler who goes out to have a night of booze and sex and, most frightfully, craps. He meets a man, a dark and terrible man, and they play craps for hours. He goes up, only to lose it all and then realize that he's been duped. It's a dangerous vision, without question, but to a gambler, it is the ultimate cautionary tale. It basically says that the rules don't apply.

Let's look at the characters. The first one is our gambler: Joe Slattermill. He is the most damaged kind of man and the worst kind of gambler. He is abusive, and has an addictive type of personality. He loves to drink, he loves to whore, and perhaps most of all, he loves to sling the dice. He has a system, and unlike ninety-nine per- cent of other gamblers who think they have a system, his actually works. He's what's called a mechanic, able to manipulate the prop, in his case dice, to gain an unfair advantage. He can, apparently undetectably, toss die so that they'll land on specific numbers. In my life, I've only met one or two people who could do that, and one of those is a sharp who is on various banned lists. It takes an incredibly talented set of hands to be able to control that sort of thing.

Joe is a terrible person, especially terrible to his wife, who we see in the first scene. He treats her like dirt, if you frequently beat dirt just to prove that you could. Joe goes out and drinks and comes home and does all the things that heavy-handed American dramas have taught us that men who drink do when they get home. He gambles, but he cheats, which means that he wins, which means that he has nothing but Highs, and that means he has to manufacture his lows.

It's not the winning that's a problem, it's the losing, but it is the down of losing that brings on the elation of winning when it finally does happen. A winning gambler must drink, or harder, to get that downer. The ultimate proof of this might be Stu Unger, the first man to win the World Series of Poker three times. He was also quite possibly the best Contract Bridge player in history. He would gamble, win thousands, and then bring himself down with massive amounts of cocaine.

It is unfathomable to me that anyone could live high enough that the high from coke was actually a downer. The other character that we must consider is

Joe's wife. She's a gin drinker, which makes sense as it is the Housewife's Elixer. They live in a house with an elderly cat and Joe's mother, who seems to know the score and does nothing because it would threaten her secure living situation. Joe's wife is as combative as Joe, and that sort of connection is a long-standing tradition. Intense people seem to attract intense people, and often those intensities play off each other in ways that make them more destructive than the singular impulses would be. And like so many of those Whitney-Bobby relationships, even after terrible things, she stands behind him. When last Joe went and got himself nice and tight, he came back and beat her, got arrested and taken downtown, but she came to him and handed him a bottle through the small window.

Yeah, co-dependence: it's not just a river in China...

She also turns out to have created the entire concept of the evening that Joe encounters... maybe. Looking at the settings, we're first shown that Joe & Co. live in a world where there is space travel, but also a place which is run-down. I was on a panel with a writer who claimed that no matter where you are, a slum will always look like a slum. I can kinda see that, and the description seems to indicate that this place was the typical slum of All Places of the 1960s. Joe goes to his Casino and everything you need to know about why people go to Casinos is there. There are women. There are women who sling drinks, there are women who belly-dance for the amusement of the gamblers who all appear to be bald, mushroom-like men. In reality, more men than women gamble in casinos, though not by much. Men make up a majority of players at table games, especially community table games like Craps, Roulette and Poker. It's about 50-50 when it comes to Blackjack, and women make up a fairly large majority when it comes to Slots. The funny thing is that there was a study years ago that show that scantily-clad women bring in players of both sexes. The more attractive the waitresses are, the more of everyone that they'll bring in!

The Bellydancers are a nice touch. Theming has proven to be a big draw when it comes to casinos in the modern-age. Caesar's Palace really introduced the concept, and I think that the bellydancers are something of a reference to that. The description of the Casino as giant would seem to point to a Las Vegas like Casino, of which Caesar's would have been the biggest name at the times. It might actually be more a reference to The Sands, one of the first major themed properties.

Or maybe The Aladdin. Hard to say.

The dice girl's are next to naked, which would show this as the lowest of low-class joints. Yes, the servers at Casinos are dressed in outfits that use only a quarter yard of fabric per shift, but those that deal with cards and/or dice. In the olden days, it was important that you played at tables that saw dealers that were men. Real gamblers played at the tables where men dealt because the way to go about it was to have tables with women dealers only as a way to get the cash off of horny vacationers and not real gamblers. There are rules about what dealers can wear now, and almost every Casino has a uni-sex uniform for dealer's now. It's an interesting thing. They wear white gloves, which makes sense because the table seems to be located directly above a blast furnace.

The final character is the Big Gambler. He is the foil, in a way he's every gambler's worst nightmare. He is a mechanic, but one who makes no point of hiding it and doesn't seem to have to; he's rolling for the house. He wins big with a robot-like precision. Joe had won a huge pile of money with his 'proper' mechanics, but this Big Gambler is just weird, dark and almost phantom-like. He goes for the bet against the soul, as was obviously gonna happen from the second the story started, and then the whole house of cards come down.

The funny thing is that the entire illusion comes down at the end. It was a ploy by Joe's wife, a sort of magic done through baking. He leaves, heading home "the long way around the world." Joe's wife had released him, in a sense, and he had abandoned his wife and mother, or more honestly, had given them their freedom. Joe was holding them back, his wife running a bakery and could probably handle everything herself, because as much as they must love each, they were a two-part epoxy that ended up gluing them together in the worst way. Joe was free and would end up far away, giving Joe's wife a space to breathe in.

Gonna Roll The Bones is one of the finest stories of the 1960s. It felt like it was cutting edge from the first word, and Leiber's use of tough and tense language, combined with a story that flows gorgeously and heavily makes it even better. The best part is the realization that this is all something that has been created to test Joe, or at least give him a proposition that he must rise to. That makes this the best story for a gambler, but one that has a dark message to my kind of player -

It may all just be an illusion.

We may go and put our financial lives on the line, and we may win or we may lose, but when we step out of the casino, it may all have been nothing but some spell put upon us. We didn't win, we didn't lose, it was all some magic beyond our understanding. What could be more terrifying to someone who enjoys a trip to a casino, to play the cards? It's all an illusion, nothing is real: not the losses, not the wins. >shiver<

Let's Remake the Bad Ones **From Journey Planet 14 (<http://journeyplanet.weebly.com/>)**

OK, there are a lot of bad Bond films. Still, a bad Bond film is better than a lot of only OK movies. In my eyes, there are only 4 actual Bad Bond films - Diamonds Are Forever, Live & Let Die, The Spy Who Loved Me, and Moonraker. The problem with most of these is that the scripts were weak and they go far into the world of the lame by playing around with stupid concepts like lame villains. Or dumb sound effects.

So I got to thinking, how would I make them better?

What would I do to make these into better movies today. Three of them suffer from terrible casting decisions and that's something that can be fixed. If I had a lot of money, ten or so zeroes after a 1 perhaps, I'd remake those four today with AWESOME work!

Diamonds are Forever

OK, so then you've got the Daniel Craig Bond, the one that's rougher, more demanding, and I'd even say smoldering. To make the script more believable, you'd have to sort of move the story away from the book a fair bit. The diamond smuggling thing works perfectly, and making them conflict diamonds can tie up a number of things. The thuggier Bond, as Craig plays him, would be thrust into a world more vibrant than Bond has been in before, especially when he goes to Vegas!

Now you need the Bond Girl. There are a lot of options. The key is to understand that Tiffany Case, the central female of the novel, is a tough cookie, but she's also got that sort of vulnerability that you find in character actresses playing small roles in indy dramas. The best candidates available today would include three wonderful Canadians - Mia Kirshner, Serinda Swan, and Cobie Smulders (which sounds like a Bond Girl name already, no?). One who is just waiting for that great role that Tiffany Case would provide to make her into a real movie star after years in television. Gillian Anderson. Add her combination of sexuality, intelligence (and Tiffany Case was supposed to be intelligent, not as she was played by Jill St. John) and vulnerability. It would be a solid choice, and she would work wonderfully with Daniel Craig.

But she doesn't win it.

The best actress who physically fits the idea of a Bond Girl is the amazing Christina Hendricks. From Mad Men to Firefly, she's been awesome in just about everything she's been in. She's got badda-boom, mixed with a wonderful kind of on-a-dime emotional range that really makes her something special. I would LOVE

to see Christina Hendricks play Tiffany Case!

Now, Tiffany Case is set, so you've got to get the rest of the Spangled Gang cast. These are two brothers, Jack and Seraffimo, who run diamonds to run their organization. These two would be a good role for guys who are slightly older, but also awesome! I got a pair of bald guys (though I don't think either are bald in the book) who would be great: John Malkovich and Bruce Willis. Willis is a far better actor than anyone gives him credit for, and Malkovich is over-the-top and awesome!

Now, there's the matter of Mr. Wint and Mr. Kidd. This pair of lovers are the henchmen of the story and they need to be portrayed with something approaching the smooth terror that the best serial killers get played as. There's a guy who's already played that type of character: Paul Bettany. He's great in everything! And, I think, he'd be excellent teamed with Ethan Hawke. I like that pairing! Or, perhaps Michael Fassbender playing both roles...

A script that's good and more true to the book is important. There are a lot of screenwriters who are good at adaptations, and the best working today is John Sayles. From *The Spiderwick Chronicles* to *Eight Men Out*, he's solid every time out. I wouldn't have him direct, but writing it, absolutely. Follow that up with my man Michael Apted directing and it's perfect!

Live & Let Die

First off, NEW THEME SONG!!!!

I'm sorry, I hate Wings. Mostly, it always feels like Paul McCartney just had pieces of a bunch of songs so he just jammed them all together to make an average length song. Band on the Run and Live & Let Die are the two best examples of that. Meh! In my eyes, Bond themes need to be both of the moment (the themes of the 1960s were PERFECT for that, as were things like *View to a Kill* and *The Living Daylights*) and then they also have to treat the Bond tradition well. So, there, I go with a band like Muze. I like them!

Honestly, the way that Live & Let Die was made was a bit too cutesy. Literally, just bring the same directing/writing team, do a script that is closer to Flemings novel (which I've got friends who say it's the second best of all the books) and give Daniel Craig a bit more to work with. There is an amazing scene in the book where the villains break one of Bond's fingers. Craig can pull it off. As a story, it's a tough story from the series of novels.

Bond Girl - Solitaire

She's a fortune teller who is the girlfriend of Mr. Big, the heavy. She's played by the great Jane Seymour in the film version and she was AWESOME! Who would play her today? My choices include the great Olivia Wilde, Diane Kruger, best

known for her roles in the National Treasure films, would be awesome too. Violante Placido has all the necessary components to play Solitaire, but to me, you need someone with the ability to act as if she's shut herself off from the world AND be the kind of woman who would fall for a rake like Bond. For that, I go with Emily Blunt. There's a certain ethereal quality to Emily that I think would work.

Now, Mr. Big. Here might be a good choice for a change as over the years, accusations of racism in the way that Mr. Big was written and portrayed have been raised. Of course, you can change that by writing things with the bare similarities there, but written with a careful eye. I mean, it's not easy to have a voodoo practitioner portrayed as he was in a film set in today's world. Or the way that the Harlem gangsters were. Look at the work Sayles did in *Brother from Another Planet* as a way of seeing how it can be done in a genre film. I'd also say that casting a great actor in the role would be a good idea, though Idris Elba can't play every role in every remake that requires sensitivity in portraying a Black character from an era when things weren't quite as enlightened. Andre Braugher is another great choice, but I'd go with an idea they've used Joe Don Baker with over the years.

Then again, you need Felix Leiter in the movie too! Jeffrey Wright has done a great job playing Felix, though he was underused in *Quantum of Solace*.

This one, by the way, needs to be about 3 hours long to make it really work!

The Spy Who Loved Me

` This is a different Bond. Daniel Craig would be perfect, because this is slightly grittier a tale and a rougher, tougher Bond is called for. That is a part of why Moore really failed in the movie, because for all his sly ability to play Bond as slickster, I never buy his violence. This one also requires a great deal of work in the area of script, as the one they shot off of was pretty well awful. but, you also can't rely on the book, so I'd say you'd have to take the original film and tweak it. The basic story of *The Spy Who Loved Me* isn't bad, it's just the way they shot it, the way they scored it, and perhaps worst of all, the way they cast it.

The two things that have to change and become more modern are the henchman and the score. Marvin Hamlisch was a great composer, but the discoized version of the score used a lot of the elements of the former scores and was really bad. A lot of the scores have aged very well, I've been listening to the *From Russia with Love* score lately and it holds up very well, but *The Spy Who Loved Me* is NOT *From Russia with Love*.

SO, let's go with Craig as 007, but who do you get for Asamova, the Russian who loves James? Now, An Eastern European would be best, and in my eyes there's a wonderful actress that I've seen many times in Cinequest films. Ana

Franic, an exceptional actress whose turn in *The Beautiful Blue Danube* was the highlight of Cinequest in 2008. Alexandra Maria Lara, a WONDERFUL German actress who is far too little seen by American audiences, would be amazing. Julia Snigir is going to break big in the US soon with her turn in the next *Die Hard* movie and she's amazing in *Inhabited Island*. Mila Kunis is not appropriate for this kind of role, which makes me think that this is what a casting director would do. I certainly think that the woman who would have the best chemistry with Daniel Craig here is Snigir, but he's got chemistry with everybody.

And then there's the iconic henchman: Jaws. So, you've got a guy with metal teeth, who's huge, who has amazing strength, who has amazing resiliency, and who doesn't really talk. He's iconic, and the kind of foil that it would be awesome to see Craig go up against. Some say that Jaws is one of the reasons both *Moonraker* and *The Spy Who Loved Me* are awful, but I retort that it was the way the writers dealt with an awesome character that ruined him. A uber-powerful villain who fights like a horror film monster is awesome! There are a few guys who I think could pull this off, though perhaps not as well as Richard Kiel, who could easily be seen as the only good thing from *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Matthew McGrory, who was the giant in *Big Fish*, would have been perfect for it, but sadly, he's passed away. Kevin Durand, you'd recognise him from movies like *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and *Smokin' Aces*. He's something like 6'7 or so. WWE wrestler Kane could be there, as he's actually not a bad actor and has done a couple of movies before. There's a tie for who would be best to play the role, and interestingly they are both actually wrestlers. The first one is Dalip Singh, better known as Giant Singh, who would be amazing if they wanted to go in a direction with an Indian villain (and he's got a mug on him!), but the other guy you might have seen in the first Robert Downey Junior *Sherlock Holmes* movie. Robert Maillet played the big guy who beat up Holmes and then gets zapped. He's a very funny guy in reality and very nice to boot. Either of these guy would work. If you wanted a guy who is a more traditional actor, Götz Otto from *Iron Sky* is another great choice.

Now, one of the things that would be the most important to change would be to have those recognisable elements, Asamova and Jaws, but not have a totally lame premise. Going to the novel isn't a good idea as it's one of the most different things that Fleming ever wrote. It doesn't even have Bond in it for 2/3 of the novel! Still, there are a lot of good things that could have been done with these characters that they didn't even attempt. Imagine that it's done as Putin's Russia and the current MI-6. are locked in a period of co-operation trying to ferret out a series of Indian spies. Or something like that.

I maintain that *The Spy Who Loved Me* was, by far, the worst Bond (at least *Moonraker* had the first twenty minutes) and the one that should most be re-done.

Moonraker

Now, this has the worst portion, the worst moments, but I thought that the first part of the film was actually pretty good. It wasn't until we got into Space that things really hit new lows, including a lover for Jaws. This one requires smart Bond, and while Daniel Craig is great in the realism department, the other Bond I would really love to see, and if you go with a script that toes much closer to the original novel (and in this case, that would be awesome!) It's gotta be David Tennant. Now, I know what you're thinking: David Tennant. as Bond? There is an inherent playfulness in Tennant that can work very well as a Bond. Dare I say it, he's basically a skinny Connery. He would be amazing as James Bond, and here, especially with the section where Bond doses Sir Hugo Drax and cheats him for tons of dough playing Bridge.

And there's another casting moment you've got to get right. Drax might be the most fun you get to have as a Bond villain. That scene at Blades, M's club, is amazing. I could think of one guy who they would 100% cast in it, but also would only be OK: Eddie Izzard. He's a natural villain, he's a great actor, and I'd love to see him try, but I think there are a couple of folks who would be awesome. The first one in my eyes has been in a Bond film before: Ulrich Thomsen. He's an awesome Danish actor (often teamed with Mr. Mads Mikkelsen) and could be great. The other guy, who would play very well and has that sort of feeling about an actor who plays villainous better than almost anybody is Michael Fassbender. The guy is amazing. Of course, he can't play everything, so what are you gonna do?

The story needs an overhaul, but one thing with today's world stage, Russians can be bad guys again!

Then there's Gala Brand. She's a Bond girl who would be so much better than Holly Goodhead, who was played with almost total fail by Lois Chiles in the Moore Moonraker. She's an interesting character, one of the less thorough of all of Fleming's women. That's saying something. When I finally read more of the novel, I realised one, you have to have Jaws back if you're gonna try to do this novel as a movie, and two, there are a limited number of women you can turn to in situations like this. The one who jumped out was Gemma Arterton, who was already a Bond Girl, but I did see a fine performance from an actress named Lyndsy Fonseca in the film Kick-Ass which I believe would stand her well in the world of Bond girls. Of course, that would require accent work! On the other hand, I could totally get behind Felicity Jones of *Hysteria* and *The Tempest*.

But the key is get it back to the book! This is one of the books that should have been deeply mined instead of just lightly used. Keeping Jaws, because he's a

great henchman, would be awesome, but get rid of all the space stuff (except for the part where they're trapped in the area where the rocket is about to take off!) and you've got a much better movie.

SO, four re-makes! That's what the franchise needs.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

THE GOULSTON ST. GRAFFITO & THE DOUBLE EVENT

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The Juwes are the men that Will not be Blamed for nothing

After the phrases 'From Hell', 'Dear Boss' and 'Sincerely, Jack the Ripper', those twelve words are the most famous in the entirety of Ripperology. There have been entire schools of theory based around them, interpretations of the words, the grammar, the spelling. The word "Juwes" appears nowhere else in the history of recorded literature. There is the Double Negative, and the question that everyone asks - was it written by Jack the Ripper.

TO me, it has another important aspect to it. What did it mean to The Ripper. I think there is an answer to that, and it lies in the fact that this was the night of the Double Event.

First, the murder of Elizabeth Stride just inside the gates of Dutfield Yard, off Berner Street. This was just a throat ripping, and it happened likely as a coach was rolling in, interrupting the killer, not allowing him any time to do any of the nasty work he had become known for. He fled, not being seen leaving, but possibly being seen immediately before the killings by Israel Schwartz. The man, likely with blood on him, but probably not too much, went off into the night, possibly hiding in the shadows as the driver of the coach went into meeting that was going on inside the building. At this point, it gets kinda philosophical.

Imagine that you've killed before, at least twice, possibly three or more. You've managed to increase your devastation every time, feeling more and more release with each kill. Here, he did not get his release, he had to stop or get caught. He managed to keep his head enough to hide in the shadows, then to make his way out of the yard into the streets, all while not being seen, or not being seen very closely, and then getting across to Mitre Square.

And all the while, it's building up in him.

You see, he's got to get the release that the rippings have given him. It's built up in him. He knows these streets, he must since he's had to navigate them to keep from being seen. He must have known the paths of the beat cops, the cycle times, the locations where people would not much congregate. He had to be that familiar with the area, and here is where it gets crazy. The pair, the Ripper and Catherine Eddowes, were seen together at about 1:35am, the last patrol of the area by a foot cop was at 1:33, the next one would pass by at 1:45.

In that window of time, that narrow point, the Ripper had managed to murder Catherine Eddowes, rip open her abdomen, remove her kidney and uterus, and make his way off, likely dropping with blood and gore. He likely wiped his knife on a piece of fabric he took from Eddowes' body, possibly a rag used as a menstrual pad. He took off and heading down toward wherever it was the Ripper rested, probably on the other side of Commercial Street. And along the way, using a dark and typically deserted section of London where there are few homes, but lots of day-open businesses.

And along the way, he stops. Looking at the wall of one of the buildings, there is something written, perhaps during the day, pebbly only recently. It is strange, not for the sentiment, but for the fact that it is here, along his path.

The Jewes are the men that Will not be Blamed for nothing

Up to this point, every moment in the ninety or so minutes since he picked up Long Liz, he has been running on adrenaline, and then rage, and now something strange has crossed his path, and he pauses. Some would have you believe that he wrote it, possibly to throw the area into a state of race rioting, believing that he was indicating the Jewish population of Whitechapel, and dropped the filthy cloth as his way of signing it. To me, this is not right; that would not be the action of a man with the kind of rage that The Ripper obviously held. It would be the act of a different kind of anger. If he was an Anti-Semite, the Ripper might have stopped to admire the sentiment. If he was not, he might have taken a moment to see how it fit with his situation. There is no way he could have continued feeding off of that rush, and now he was here, in front of something he did not expect, maybe something he did not see when he was planning it all.

And that is when he comes down.

He crashes, right there, he drops the cloth, perhaps he had wanted to keep it as a trophy, or perhaps he had merely held on to it as he had too many other variables on his mind. He came to the graffito and it all just stopped. He took it in, dropped the cloth and moved on, into the night.

I don't think he would have written it. If he brought that up as a wink at all the theories, at the accusation of Leather Apron, or as a part of the general near-riot state that the community was in at the time, he'd have been a very different killer. If he had been an anti-Semitic murderer trying to spread fear in that community, why were none of his victims Jewish? Wouldn't he want to ply his trade in that category as well? If he wrote it as a part of a Royal Masonic Conspiracy, don't you think he'd have used some sort of other sign along the way. Yes, a killing at Mitre Square, and then a reference that could be read as referring to three killers from a Masonic tradition would seem to make sense as a Masonic reference, but it just doesn't make sense.

This was also a change.

There were no Whitechapel Murders in October, 1888. He hadn't taken more than two weeks off in plying his murderous trade since the end of August and was getting better at it, working faster, taking greater risks and going further. Why would he stop for more than a full month? What made him take a pause?

Whitechapel had changed.

That graffito, something so simple, showed that he had to re-evaluate the entire area, had to recalculate his plans, his paths. The graffito was not a message from him, or even meant for The Ripper, but it told him that things had to change, that he had to adapt. This signaled the end of the Whitechapel he had planned for. Even if the Eddowes murder was an improvisation, it was based on information, observation, and now this was something that wasn't in the plan. He had laid plans, one of which was interrupted, and another where he knew the thin margins he had to deal with and made it succeed, but this writing on a wall was not a part of the plan, and that made him step back, change directions. He had a moment of clarity at the graffito.

The murder of Catherine Eddowes was the last done outdoors, where he had to worry about timing and patrols. The graffito exposed a simple truth: no matter how much he learned about Whitechapel, it could all change, and that was unacceptable.

