

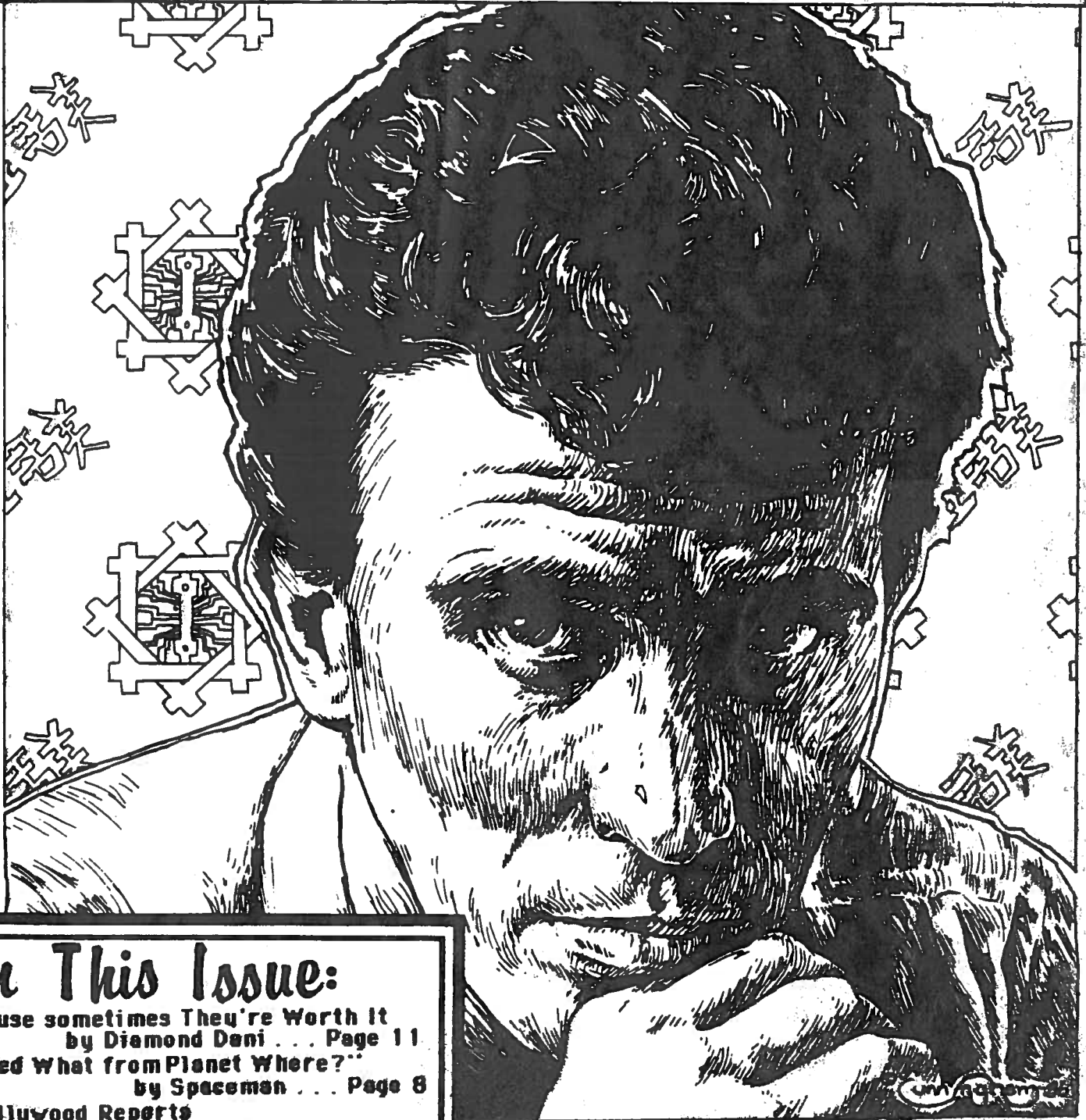
# WORLD WATCH

August 1986

# WIRE

Issue One

*The Fanzine for Friends of Buckaroo Banzai*



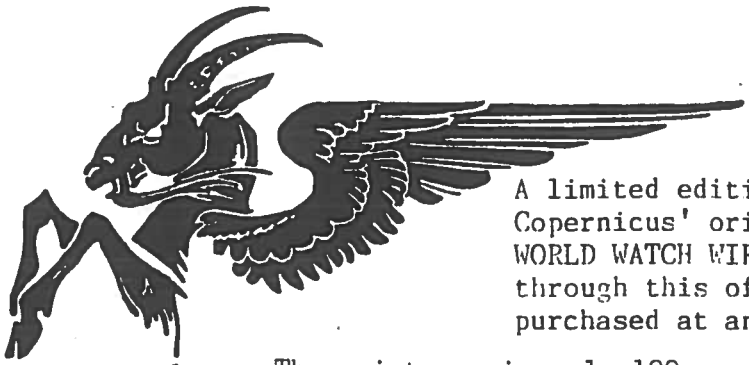
## In This Issue:

'Cause sometimes They're Worth It  
by Diamond Dani . . . Page 11

Red What from Planet Where?  
by Spaceman . . . Page 8

Hollywood Reports  
by Hollywood . . . Page 9

The Wire Bulletin Board . . . Page 19



A limited edition print is available of Copernicus' original art for the cover of WORLD WATCH WIRE #1. The price is \$7.50 through this offer only. (Normally, \$15 if purchased at an art show.)

The print run is only 100 copies, so don't delay. Make checks payable to Betty Cunningham and mail it to:

FLYING GOAT GRAPHICS  
615 Gamma Ct. #C  
Campbell, Ca. 95008



# The Penny Paradox

A Buckaroo Banzai fanzine chronicling the further adventures of the Hong Kong Cavaliers, with stories by Leni R. Sommer and artwork by Peggy Spalding.

"Ashes to Ashes, I"--Rawhide is laid to rest and the Institute must deal with the aftermath of his death. "A New Twist in the Paradox"--A new intern joins the Institute under the spectre of Hanoi Xan's evil. "Obsession"--Fox, Reno, New Jersey, and Pecos attempt to solve the riddle of Penny Priddy, with help from beyond the grave. "Ashes to Ashes, II"--old ghosts are laid to rest, as Team Banzai delves into Rawhide's past.

Price: \$10.00, ppd. Make checks payable to Leni Sommer. Also accepting submissions to PENNY PARADOX II, until 31. October 1986. Due Date: February 1987.

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS PRESS  
8509 Burt  
Omaha, NE 68114

# Voltage

The Great Newsletter Itself!

THE LEAGUE OF LECTROIDS FOR LIZARDO!

John Nevermore  
c/o April Anderson  
2610 Whitis - Unit A  
Austin, Texas 78705

# CONTENTS:

BLAZE AHEAD!  
The Editor 'n' Chief sounds off.....page 4

THE MESSAGE  
A first hand look at how the World Watch Wire works,  
as important information speeds its way to Buckaroo.....page 5

RED WHAT FROM PLANET WHERE?  
A film review of TABB; confusion as art.....page 8

HOLLYWOOD REPORTS  
Updates on the comings and goings of Team Richter.....page 9

'CAUSE SOMETIMES THEY'RE WORTH IT  
A young BBI gets a lesson in heroics and authority.....page 11

THE BULLETIN BOARD  
Somewhere on a wall at the Banzai Institute.....page 19

BUCKAROO BANZAI AND THE ZEALOTS OF PAIN  
The beginning of a four-part adventure  
in the old pulp tradition.....page 20

ART CREDITS  
Front cover art, as well as the illustrations on pages 11 and 7, are by  
Betty "Copernicus" Cunningham.  
Back cover art by Jim "Sharkey" Van Over

## THE WORLD WATCH WIRE

Jim "Sharkey" Van Over	Editor 'n' Chief
Keith "Shadow" Holt	Editor
Scott "Scholar" Wright	Printer's Devil
Billy "Low Ball" Vitro	Data Base Manager
Ellen "Marquissa" Finch	Copy Editor

## CONTRIBUTORS

COPERNICUS works with Reno during the preproduction stage of public relations. She wields a mean slingshot and makes a great omelette. BETTY CUNNINGHAM is a freelance illustrator and manages a bookstore.

SHADOW is the Institute's primary historian on the life and influence of Hanoi Xan. KEITH HOLT works for Memorex Corporation and collects pulp novels and movie serials.

SPACEMAN is in charge of the Social Science and Future Planning Division at the Banzai Institute. DAVID PETTUS is a 35 year old Employment Counselor with the Tennessee Department of Employment Security. He has a masters degree in sociology, with a thesis entitled "An Analysis of Science Fiction as a Special Case for the Sociology of Literature."

SHARKEY has never met Buckaroo, Perfect Tommy, Reno, or Mrs. Johnson. He thinks he saw Rawhide at a gas station, but he's not sure. He did talk to W.D. Richter on the phone once, and thinks he's a terrific guy. JIM VAN OVER has a teaching credential in High School English, but since he prefers to eat and pay his bills, so he works as a freelance copy writer.

DIAMOND DANI is an Intern at the Institute. Her residency thesis is titled "Does eating spaghetti really improve the Cavalier's performances, or is it all a thing of the mind?" EDANA VITRO works for AT&T. At home she is surrounded by stuffed animals.

HOLLYWOOD is a dedicated BBI, working fanatically to keep the fan club going against the headwind of Studio Politics. DIANE WICKES is a dedicated BBI, working fanatically to keep the fan club going against the headwind of Studio Politics.

# BLAZE AHEAD!

## The Editor's Page

Salutations Buckaroo fans! And welcome to the first issue of World Watch Wire.

The Wire came about through a somewhat bizarre chain of circumstances...none of which I will go into right now. The emphasis will be on quality artwork and writing, with lots of other stuff brought in for the fun of it. In this way, we hope to do for Buckaroo what countless of other fanzines have done for Star Trek. We intend to keep it alive, vital, real; long after we've all got the film memorized.

The universe in which Buckaroo, Perfect Tommy, New Jersey, and Hanoi Xan live is not static. It does not begin and end with Lectroids and Yoyodyne. This is simply where we came in. Obviously, they have had many other adventures and encountered an amazing variety of characters. In World Watch Wire we will be parley to these adventures; crossing paths with those characters, and sharing in the fantasy that is Buckaroo Banzai.

But there is a danger. It is more insidious than John Whorfin and more subtle than Hanoi Xan. The Danger is tunnel vision.

In these pages you will discover that not everyone shares the same world view. Some believe Rawhide was saved from death. Some feel Whorfin escaped the exploding troopship the same moment he escaped the body of Dr. Lizardo. The theories around the Penny/Peggy paradox are too numerous to mention. As a result, you will find a plethora of ideas in this, and future, issues.

When we receive a story, we check it against Earl Mac Rauch's novel, as well as the essays of W.D. Richter and Dr. Cary Sneider. These men have worked closely with Dr. Banzai, Dr. Hikita, Reno Nevada, and the men and women of the Banzai Institute. If there are no glaring inconsistencies, and if it is well written and well supported, we go with it.

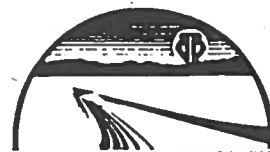
So, there are two things we need from you. The first are submissions. Any story, artwork, vignette, cartoon, poem, puzzle, trivia quiz, will be more than welcome. The deadline for issue #2 is November 1st, but the sooner we get it, the better. All submissions must be accompanied by the bio form on the inside back cover. (A photocopy is acceptable.)

The other request I have is for letters. Starting next issue, we will include a letters page for your comments and suggestions. If you have any items for the bulletin board, send those along as well.

Lastly, my list of acknowledgements. You and I both know that these are usually read only by the people who expect to see their names. Even if you don't think you'll be listed, please read them and say a silent prayer of thanks for these people. I do. They are Shadow, Low Ball, Diamond Dani, Scholar, The Marquissa, Copernicus, Felis, Catnip, Joy, Hollywood, Illinois Kate, DJ, Sunshine, Silver Fox, F-Stop, and Popcorn. A special thanks to Pam North at 20th Century Fox and Chris Michaels at Gladden Entertainment, who both said, "If it's o.k. with them, it's o.k. with us." And, of course, to Rick, Susan, Dan, and E.M.R. for starting it all.

But, I don't suppose you came here to listen to me talk.

You're right.



That's easier said  
than done, Peter.  
-W.D. Richter

## The Message

by  
Shadow and Sharkey

Rachel dropped her purse over her chair and plopped herself down. Her half-eaten pastrami sandwich went into the bottom right-hand drawer of her desk...right next to yesterday's half-eaten roast beef. Looking up from her would-be refrigerator, she saw Carl, the office lecher, stalking her. She said a silent curse.

"How's it hangin', Rachel?"

She flashed him a polite smile, and instantly regretted it as he sat himself down on the corner of her desk.

He smiled back and leaned close, tossing the manilla folder he was carrying onto her keyboard. "So, have you considered my offer?"

"What offer was that?" She lied as she rolled her chair back to put a few more inches between herself and his leer.

"Dinner, drinks, dancing...whatever. You remember." He was leaning so far forward by this time that Rachel was certain he would fall over.

She sighed. "Yes Carl, I remember your offer. Now, do you remember my answer? Let me refresh your memory. I said 'no.' Remember? And you remember why I said no? Because I find you an obnoxious, forward, ego-driven sliver of a man, and until you learn some gentlemanly behavior we have nothing to say to each other." She pulled herself back to her desk and promptly began to ignore him.

Carl, on the other hand, who had not moved through her entire tirade, stood up and walked around to the front of her desk. He looked down at her, his hands stuck halfway into his too-tight slacks. "So I guess you want to think about it."

She pelted Carl with pencils, papers, staplers, one day-old roast beef sandwich...and was met by a rousing clamor of applause from all of the women in the

office.

From behind the filing cabinet, Carl yelled to Rachel. "That folder on your desk. The boss wants it by 5. Ciao." He vanished into the outer office.

She huffed, snatching up the folder. She used to think working for the Los Angeles Times would be glamorous and exciting. That was before she'd been put in Research. Sitting back down, she began to read the file. "Hmmm." She thought. "This one looks interesting. I wonder if Phil knows about this." She reached for her Rolodex and began sifting through it looking for a phone number. She picked up her phone and dialed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The room was like a mini electronics warehouse. Computers, terminals, tubes, screens, short wave radios, walkmans, watchmans, turntables, CDs, VCRs, video disk players, beepers, walkie-talkies, intercoms, telephones, microphones, headphones, cellular phones, go-phones, and lots and lots of cables and wires filled the apartment-once-garage.

And, somewhere, a phone was ringing.

Phil Stein jerked his head up from the disassembled answering machine. A perplexed expression crossed his slightly freckled face. "Crap! Where did I put the only phone that works?" As he stood up, his wheeled stool rolled across the plywood sheet, bumping into his communications center, sending the precariously balanced action figure of Rawhide hurtling to its plastic death in the jungle of shag carpeting that covered the floor; while atop the radio set, Hanoi Xan rattled menacingly in synthetic imitation of the maniacal laughter of the insidious far-eastern crimelord.

And, somewhere, a phone rang.

Phil found the phone cord and followed it across the floor, under a table, around a step-ladder, back to his desk and into the lower, left-hand drawer where he had put it to get it out of the way.

"Hello. Phil Stein here."

"Hi Phil. This is Rachel. Look, are you still involved with that Buckaroo Banzai thing?"

He looked at the poster, autographed by all the Cavaliers, that hung over his workbench. "The Blue Blaze Irregulars. Yes."

"Well, I'm at work and I just found some information that I thought you'd be interested in. Are you?"

There was a brief pause. "What's the information?"

As she talked, Phil's eyes widened. He reached over and ripped several pages off his Far Side Page-A-Day calendar.

"My God, you're right! Thanks, Rachel. I owe you one." Click.

Phil spun in his chair, flicking switches, urging his ham radio base station to life. As the dim orange lights grew brighter, he lifted the phone and kicked open the lower left-hand drawer. He stopped. His eyes darted from the phone to the radio to the one. A moment later, the hum of warming vacuum tubes was replaced by the beep and whir of a floppy disk drive.

"This message is too important to send through the air," he mused out loud to his computer keyboard. "Besides, this way I can add graphics."

After some simple programming, Phil snapped the telephone handset into the cradle of a modem. The rest was up to the computer.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Helooo," Mrs. Johnson's voice was full of cheer and enthusiasm. "I didn't want you to feel left out."

Big Norse looked up from her technical manual, then put it down and grinned. "Cupcakes? For me?" She took the tray from Mrs. Johnson and set it on the table next to the short wave radio. "What's in the pitcher?"

Mrs. Johnson pulled one paper cup from inside another. "Reno's calling it 'cactus juice.' He says it'll stick you if you're not careful."

She poured the green and white punch, handed one cup to Big Norse, then looked around the dimly lit room. "How'd you get stuck in here tonight?"

"My turn. Besides, I don't mind radio room duty."

"Shh. If they hear you, you'll be here for life." Mrs. Johnson perched on the table. "I don't know, though. This place gives me the shivers; like all these machines are just waiting for the chance to come to life."

Big Norse laughed. "They are. The AP and UP wire service monitors start up whenever they please. That computer you're sitting on is hooked up to..."

Big Norse almost jumped as high as Mrs. Johnson when the computer in question beeped, then lit with green letters;

USER RED BARON LOGGED IN:

Quickly, Big Norse accessed the file and the screen filled with information. Both women read the message.

"Oh, wow," was all Mrs. Johnson said.

"It's from Red Baron in North Dakota," commented Big Norse as she punched keys. The printer clattered to life, reproducing the message exactly. "I think Buckaroo should see a hard copy."

"Now? In the middle of the party?"

"Can you think of a better time?" Big Norse tore the sheet of paper from the printer and headed out the door.

Mrs. Johnson had just caught up with her as they entered the living room. She followed the tall woman through the tight group of Residents, Interns, and guests.

When they were halfway across the

room, Big Norse called out, "Buckaroo! An important message over the World Watch wire. It's from Red Baron."

"Phil?" Buckaroo set down his cup of karakoumiss then reached for the printout. The room was filled with hushed whispers as he read it to himself. His eyes closed and his face filled with intense emotion. When he looked back up at his friends, the blue of his eyes shone wet, but a smile crinkled his mouth. New Jersey lifted the paper from Buckaroo's hand.

Reno jumped from his chair. "What is it, Boss? Another plot by Hanoi Xan to undermine the well being of every free thinking person on Earth. How dare he strike on today of all DRMPH!"

Pecos carefully pushed the rest of the cupcake into his mouth. "Shut up, my love. What does it say, New Jersey?"

The lanky doctor fumbled his glasses from a shirt pocket. He studied the sheet for

a moment. "It's a mountain scape, with a Japanese style house at the top. It's very detailed. The jet car is parked in front of the house."

"The jet car?" Perfect Tommy asked, surprised.

"Yes. Uh, no. No, Tommy, not your jet car. Masado's. In the sky above the house it says, 'We mourn the anniversary of death the same day we celebrate the anniversary of birth. The world owes you more than we can ever repay. Thanks for going on, Buckaroo. On behalf of the Blue Blaze Irregulars, Happy Birthday. Signed Red Baron, BBI #42.'"

New Jersey slowly removed his glasses, replacing them in the pocket. Mrs. Johnson sniffed quietly, dabbing at her eyes with a paper napkin. Professor Hikita cried openly. Buckaroo gazed at him through his own tears.

"Domo-origato, Hikita-san."



## Red what from Planet Where?

by  
David "Spaceman" Pettus

I am pleased to see a BUCKAROO BANZAI fandom developing. There are six thousand of us now and, while that might be enough to encourage Earl Mac Rauch to write a sequel, I know all too well that a film project takes much more in backing and support to become successful.

As a film critic, I can appreciate BUCKAROO BANZAI more for what it attempted to do than for what it actually accomplished. While we give Earl Mac Rauch credit for having the vision and imagination necessary to develop the Banzai mythos, W.D. Richter deserves equal credit for his dedication and determination in bringing BUCKAROO BANZAI to the big screen. With only twelve million dollars (the average film these days costs over twenty million) and only 12 weeks shooting time as well, Richter managed to produce an alternate brand of entertainment so successful, it failed.

The Buckaroo Banzai film is a failure as much as it didn't rally the support necessary for a sequel. However, I think it failed in this respect only because W.D. Richter did EXACTLY what he intended to do.

I don't mean to say that Richter set out to fail. But it is plain to see that he did set out to take chances; to create a challenging, funny, thoughtful film about team spirit and confusion.

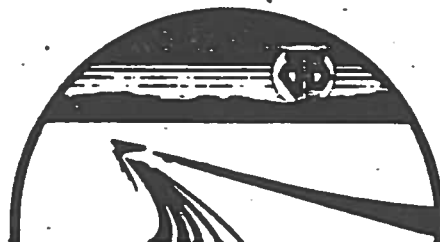
That's right...confusion.

A lot of people's first reaction to the movie is generally one word--"What?" Hey, that was my first reaction, too, but I loved the movie! Here is a film that's different, unconventional, and proud of it. The way confusion is used in BUCKAROO BANZAI is pure art. Confusion takes us through the movie. Rather than disrupting our enjoyment of the film, confusion adds an intriguing new dimension. It is used as a transition medium. The film develops in stages, moving from one confusing situation to another, adding a certain verisimilitude to the film, as it reflects the scattershot culture we live in. The movie has a purposeful cluttered look, which works in conjunction with confusion to forge a stylistic motion picture milieu that I like.

Buckaroo sees clearly despite the distractions. His goal is clear. His method confusing. And while all this makes perfectly good sense to you and I, it doesn't to the bulk of movie goers. In their way of thinking, BUCKAROO BANZAI is outlandish and confusing.

The way it was meant to be.

But they don't know that. All they know is that BUCKAROO BANZAI isn't constructed in a linear fashion. It isn't commercial enough for them. They've forgotten what imaginative movie making is about, and so they don't appreciate the fact that the film did everything it was designed to do--except make a lot of money! If BUCKAROO BANZAI appealed to the mass audience, it wouldn't be the same movie. So Blue Blaze Irregulars everywhere should give W.D. Richter credit for putting art before money, and innovation before commercialism.



**"MYSTERY IS THE SOURCE  
OF ALL TRUE ART AND SCIENCE"**

**DR. M. BANZAI  
FATHER OF BUCKAROO BANZAI**



## THE OOPS DEPARTMENT

If you check the table of contents, you will discover "The Hollywood Report" is supposed to appear on this page and the next. Unfortunately, the fates were not kind to our friend, Dianne "Hollywood" Wickes. **ALIENS** is a hit. And for someone who works at 20th Century Fox, this means more work than one would like to think about. Fanzines must take a back seat. And that's fine with me because it gives me room for, **THE BAD BUCKAROO WRITING CONTEST!** Yes, despite all my talk about quality in the World Watch Wire, I want poorly written submissions. Here's an example, sent in by BBI Crawdad:

Dr. Doom reeled back, clutching at his shattered steel mask. Half molten metal ran between his charring fingers as his henchmen stared on in stunned surprise. Buckaroo stood up from the table, brandishing his mark XXIII plasma disruptor. Easily making his way through the terrified evil minions, he lept through the window to the street below. With a sudden squealing of breaks, the huge

garbage truck ran him down, fatally injuring the triumphant physicist/rock star. As he lay writhing out the last seconds of his famous existence a shadow fell over his face. Opening his steely, yet somehow sensitive eyes, Buckaroo saw...

"Oh no!" he moaned "not Darkseid!"

The omega beams fried him to a crisp.

Get the picture? Criss-crossed realities, exaggerated circumstances, personal fantasy characters becoming intimate with established characters. Pull out the stops. But keep it down to one page, double spaced. Be sure to write "Bad Buckaroo Contest" on the envelope and the entry. The prize is a copy of the Marvel comics adaption of **THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI**. Already a collectors item, The Wire staff considers it an appropriate reward. So get started. We'll take entries until October 1. The winner will have his or her entry printed in issue two. Let's see how bad we can get.

And if you want examples of **GOOD Banzai** fiction, check out the ad below!

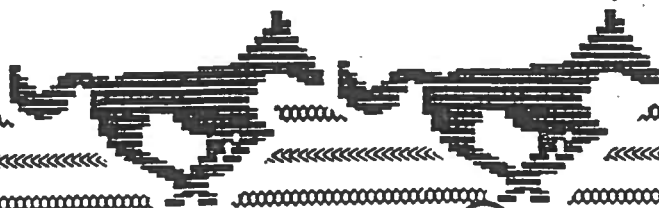
# THE CAVALIER

The Banzai Institute is a fascinating place to live and work--you run into old friends and meet lots of new people. We just couldn't wait for Earl Mac Rauch to write another Buckaroo Banzai novel, so we took matters into our own hands. **THE CAVALIER** is a collection of some long and short stories about the past, present and future of our Team Banzai friends and introductions to some of the other people who make the Banzai Institute what it is.

The directors of the Blue Blaze Irregulars have put their collective talents to work to bring you our points of view on the Buckaroo Banzai universe. The more than twenty stories have been written--individually and in collaboration--by Fern "Sunshine" Marder, Lori "Illinois Kate" Oberscheven, Denise "Catnip" Tathwell, and Carol "D.J." Walske. Artwork, cartoons and computer graphics by Dianne "Hollywood" Wickes and "D.J." 200 pages, offset print.

To order **THE CAVALIER**: Send a check or money order for \$10.00 (\$7.50 + \$2.50 1st class postage)

Please make checks payable to: Fern Marder  
Address: 342 East 53rd Street, #4D  
New York, NY 10022



BIG TROUBLE FOR TAKE OUT;  
HOLD THE FORTUNE COOKIE

by  
Jim Van Over

The menu of action/adventure films has a variety of entrees. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is a well done steak. TEMPLE OF DOOM is a poor mexican dish, continuously going up and down. RAMBO is an Italian sausage sitting like a lump in the stomach.

But John Carpenter's .BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA is a fine Chinese meal; sometimes spicy, sometimes bland, usually surprising, rich, unusual, satisfying, and, at the same time, leaving you wanting more.

Kurt Russell sinks his teeth into the role of hard driving, cliché spouting hero, Jack Burton. Or is he the hero? He could be the sidekick, and Wang Chi, played by Dennis Dun is the hero. After all, it is Wang who gets them out of all the trouble Burton gets them into. Think of Butch and Sundance.

James Hong and Victor Wong bring richness to their characterizations. Lo-pan could easily have been a flat, stereotype Asian villain in the Fu Man Chu tradition. But Hong adds both humor and sadness to the insane evil of the character. In the same way, Wong's Egg Shen displays a wry cunning to balance the standard "embodiment of Chinese mysticism."

The most fascinating aspect of this film is the three storms. As the embodiment of Thunder, Lightning, and Rain, Carter Wong, James Pax, and Peter Kwong are marvelous. Each has a distinct style. The special effects capture this, enhancing the characters. (Anyone who can tell me what the Chinese writing says in Lightning's death will be honorably mentioned in the next issue. I don't know, and this is not an official contest, but let's see if we can find out.)

The female roles are, to say the least, disappointing. They exist only to give the boys something to do and to act as plot exposition. To this end, Kim Cattrall and Kate Burton do fine. But in the age of Lea Organa/Skywalker and Warrant Officer Ripley, it's a little hard to swallow.

On the other hand, BIG TROUBLE is not a descendant of RAIDERS and ALIEN. Its roots run much deeper into American westerns and Chinese cinema. The hero is a good old boy who ends up, not kissing the girl, but kissing his horse and riding off into the sunset. Sort of.

Take a good look at the closing fight scene. It looks like the best of Japanese animation. Bright colors, flying fighters, mystical samurai-style warriors, close-ups of angry faces and sword points; all in direct contrast to the blacks, whites, greys, and Uzi's of the first fight. Western one moment, Eastern the next. The combination is...well...magical.

With the final script adaption by W.D. Richter, the movie is spattered with "Buckarooisms." Lines like "Only a dream can kill a dream," and "It's all in the reflexes" should have a very familiar ring to Banzai fans.

If you have not seen BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA, let me give you some advice. Go with fun friends, get a big box of popcorn, and relax. If you try to take it seriously, like critics around the country seem to, you'll end up chewing off your leg to escape.

After all, in what other movie does the hero defeat 2,000 years of evil wearing lipstick?



## 'Cause Sometimes They're Worth It

by  
Diamond Dani

Most of the room was lost in shadow. A swing arm lamp hung low, leaking light on the radio equipment and wires scattered across my desk. I sat hunched over a microphone.

"This is Blue Blaze Irregular 3549, shutting down for the night."

"Dear, you ARE going to sleep now, aren't you?" My mother stood in a pool of light in the open doorway, hands on her hips, mad as usual that I was up after 9:30 on a weeknight. She just never could understand that, as section leader of BBI local 104, I couldn't shut down before 10.

"Yeah, Mom. I was just taking it down for the night. I was listening to some news and forgot what time it was. I'm sorry."

"You know what I said about that. If you want me to let you stay in that stupid club, and keep that...that contraption in your room, you will shut down at 9:00. Agreed?" She finished angrily.

I nodded. "Yes, Ma. I'm sorry. I did get my homework done before I got on the radio tonight."

"Good." She looked pleased with herself. "Well, anyway, get to bed, dear. Sweet dreams."

I said "Thanks, Mom," to a closed door.

Just as I started the task of shutting down again, I heard a faint cry. I turned up the volume.

"Help! Is anybody out there?"

I went into action. Readouts and gauges came alive as I brought the base station back up. "This is Blue Blaze Irregular 3549. Who's calling for help?"

"Aahghh. This is Rawhide." His voice was raspy and full of pain. "I was run off the road a while back, Short Cut. Last I knew, I was on Highway 25, just past Jake's Place. I can't tell where I'm at, partner, but wherever it is, it sure don't feel too stable."

Wow. Rawhide knew me. He KNEW me. This was so totally far out. This was really cool. I had always kinda' believed that they knew everybody, but sorta kinda' didn't, ya' know what I mean? I mean, well, shoot. There were thousands of BBIs around the world. How could they know everybody?

"Short Cut, you still there?"

"Uhh, yah." Crap. That brought me back in a hurry. Here I was, gettin' all proud and stuff when Rawhide was out there lost. I made a quick note to kill myself later, after I saved Rawhide.

"Call HQ. Let them know you found me."

"Uh, sure thing, Rawhide." Wow! He wants me to call HQ.



He continued, "And then close down for the night. I don't want you getting into any more trouble with your mom."

"But, Rawhide,"

"Don't start that, kid. Just do what I say." He sounded mad and hurt.

"O.K." The thought of my mom getting mad didn't bother me at all. She did that all the time. "How badly are you hurt?" I was thinking that, maybe, I could use the first aid I had learned. I heard some more coughing.

"Uhhhhh..." He paused. I heard him gag real bad. It sounded like he was losing control. His voice got quiet, and he kept pausing to take a breath. "I think I got a couple of busted ribs. An' maybe a busted leg. The car's on its side, so I'm a bit uncomfortable. Just hurry, will ya', Short Cut?"

"Don't you worry. I'll take care of everything."

I jumped off my chair, then raised the ramp so I could see the rest of my bedroom. I grabbed a knife off the dresser, stuffing it in my pocket. From under the bed I grabbed my backpack. I dumped the books out and began filling it with stuff I'd need: a walkie-talkie, flashlight, canteen, first aid kit, emergency blanket, and our local's pride and joy: a radio signal direction finder. It cost us 150 box tops, but it was worth it.

Wait. Rawhide said to let HQ know. I ran back to the desk. Putting my earphones on, I said, "This is Blue Blaze Irregular 3549, calling the Banzai Institute. Do you read me?"

"Yeah, what is it, Short Cut? This is Perfect Tommy." He sounded annoyed. "Hey, wait a second. What are you doing up now? Why haven't you closed down?" Now he sounded angry.

Wowah. Perfect Tommy knew me, too. Even if he was mad at me, this was still really cool. "I was just closing down for the night when I got a call for help from

Rawhide. He's been hurt."

All of a sudden, I heard something slam, then giggling. I heard some cussin', too. Musta' been a girl or somethin'. Perfect Tommy wouldn't giggle.

"All right. I want you to go over exactly what Rawhide said."

I told him everything I knew.

"Thanks for the info. You've been a big help. Now shut down and get to bed. I don't want you getting into any more trouble, o.k.?"

"But I can get there quicker than anybody, Perfect Tommy. That's why they call me Short Cut."

"No. We can't go endangering good Irregulars like you. Now shut down. That's an order."

"Yes, sir." I snapped. "Short Cut out."

I sat on my bed, really ticked off. I knew that area better'n anybody. I could get there quicker than anybody, too, 'specially if they have to come all the way from HQ. And Rawhide was in big trouble. "I'm going anyway." I don't care if Perfect Tommy said no. I gotta' save Rawhide.

Grabbing my pack, I headed to the window and stopped. Stupid. I was leaving without any water in my canteen, and no jacket. What an idiot. I dumped the pack onto my bed. Going to my door, I opened it a bit. Over the movie, I could hear my mom talking on the phone. I snuck the canteen down the hall and filled it in the bathroom. Back in my bedroom, I repacked my bag, grabbed my jacket off the floor, and tied it to my waist. Slipping my pack on, I decided to check on my mom again. She was off the phone now, but still watching some sappy movie. I quietly went to my window, opened it and climbed into the tree outside the backyard. The moon was out, but there were clouds in the sky and it was kinda' cold. I slipped down the tree and ran across the yard.

I climbed over the fence, ran across Joey's yard, then down State Street. I figured it would take me about 10-15 minutes to get to Jake's Place, going the back routes. I ran down Taylor, past Sammy's house (his dad's really neat -- he's a BBI and everything), to the open field behind the hardware store parking lot. One time, on the way to the fishing hole by Jake's Place, Sammy's dad figured that this way saved 2-3 miles of city streets.

After crossing the field, I had to get real near Ol' man Stanley's place. I've always hated this part of the route 'cause their ain't no fences on this side of his yard, and he hates kids. But I couldn't see the old man anywhere.

The bushes behind me rustled, and something knocked me over. I turned over to find Fred, the ol' man's dog, trying to lick me to death. Fred's this big old mutt who looks like he's half everything, and acts like he's still 6 months old. His tail wagged his body.

I sat up and looked around. Nearby I found a stick. Getting up, I patted Fred and scratched his ears. I grabbed the stick and threw it across the yard. "Go get it, boy."

Fred ran off, and I ran the other way, towards the fence that separated the yard from the city park. He caught up with me 'bout the time I got over the fence. "Sorry, boy. Duty calls."

His face drooped. The stick fell out of his mouth. He stood there, head cocked, and his tail kinda' wagging. I stuck my hand through the fence and scratched his face. "I'll come by tomorrow, after school. o.k.?" He perked up, and ran off.

Since I had stopped, I figured I'd check on Rawhide's location. I pulled out the radio detection finder. Hot dog. He wasn't near Jake's Place at all. It looked like he was in the "Big Hole." That was just up the road. I'd get there in no time. It was called the Big Hole 'cause it's about 3 miles across. A few months ago, some bar down here blew. Even Buckaroo investigated it. I don't know what happened. Anyway, I finished

taking a sip of water, repacked everything and headed out of the city park.

From here I mostly used the road. I cut threw the woods on the last corner and all of the sudden I was at the Hole.

I stood at the rim, and looked down the crater. I could see this side of it pretty well, but not much more. I finally saw the car a couple hundred yards down the slope below me, hanging off the ledge.

I got out my walkie-talkie. I hoped I'd reach somebody at this range. "This is Blue Blaze Irregular 3549, calling the Banzai Institute. Do you read me? I have located Rawhide."

"Short Cut. This is Buckaroo. Where are you?"

Oh my gosh! I gulped. It was the Chief!

"Buckaroo, I'm on the south side of the Big Hole. Rawhide's car looks like it's about to fall off a ledge. I'm going down to see if I could do anything. I don't think I can contact you down there."

"Good work. Reno, Pinky, and I will meet up with you in about 25 minutes. Do you copy?"

"Yes, sir."

"See you then, Champ. Over and out."

"Over and out."

Oh my god. He called me CHAMP.

I ran down the slope as fast as I could. The wind made it pretty cold down there. As I got closer, I smelled gasoline. Then I saw, underneath the car, a pool of gas.

I stopped at a big outcropping and dropped my pack and jacket. I ran down the slope and around the car. I found Rawhide lying half out of the car, with his seat belt still on, his chest and face bleeding from a bunch of cuts. The broken windshield covered him. All I could smell was gasoline now.

Rawhide looked up and saw me. He grunted. "What the hell are you doing here? Your mom's going to be upset."

"Rawhide." I could not believe this guy. "You're sitting in a pool of gas, bleeding to death, in a car that's about to fall over a ledge," I paused, "and you're worried about how pissed off my mom's gonna be? Ya'know, sometimes I don't understand grownups at all."

I swear I heard Rawhide laugh. Then he coughed. "Well, those things make a bit of difference. But still, your mom's your mom, right?"

"Yeah, well, I guess so." I suppose it was nice to have somebody worry about my getting yelled at.

"Now..." He stopped. He started coughing real bad.

Kneeling in the gas, I pulled the windshield off him, holding him 'til the spasm passed. Using my knife, I cut through the seat belt. "Think you're up to moving?"

He nodded, his face scrunched up in pain. His arm curled over my chest. He moaned softly.

Still holding him, I got off my knees. Bracing my feet, I pulled as gently as I could.

"Aaaguuuhh." He swore under his breath. I could feel his body curling up from the pain.

"I'm sorry, Rawhide. I'm doing this just as gently as I can."

"Yeah, sure. Just like ma' dentist." He managed a half smile.

I panted, gasping for breath. I took a step back, bracing my feet one more time. I turned his body a little, to make it easier to get his legs out, and pulled again. "Ohhhuhhuugh." I kept pulling till I got him ways from the car. I laid him down carefully, sitting down to rest.

There was a large metallic grating noise. I looked up to see the car slide across the last bit of ledge and go over. I scrambled up, grabbed Rawhide, and hauled him up the slope as fast as I could, leaving a trail of gasoline. I think Rawhide passed out, 'cause he didn't moan, or cuss, or nothin' the whole time I was hauling him. I dropped him carefully behind the rocks where I had dumped my pack.

Heading around the rocks, I started kicking dirt over our trail. I moved back down the slope slowly. Sparks flew from the scraping car. All of a sudden it hit a couple of rocks and went up.

Whush-kahwoosh.

It sounded like a thousand guns all going off at the same time. It was really awesome. The flames shot up, covering the car. After a moment, the fire snaked up the gasoline trail left by the car. I suddenly realized I was really close to the pool of gas left by the car, and that I was covered in gasoline. I leaped back up the slope. Near the outcropping I rolled in the dirt. Kawoosh! The fire had reached the pool of gas. A wave of heat washed over me.

This was totally rad.

The fire started up the trail we'd left, and stopped at the dirt break I'd created. Wow! I did it! I saved Rawhide.

I got up and ran over to him. He'd woken up and managed to lean against the rocks. Blood and dirt covered him completely.

"Short Cut, bring any marshmallows?"

I laughed. "Nah. But I did bring a blanket." I opened my pack and pulled it out. "Want some water?"

He nodded. "Yeah, that'd be nice.

I wrapped the blanket around him, then held the canteen while he sipped some water.

"Uh, Rawhide? Think I could practice my first aid on you?"

"Think you can do it?"

"A'course! I'm a Blue Blaze, aren't I?"

"You sure are. I'm proud of you. You've done a helluva job."

Rad. He's proud of me. This was great. I'd just opened my pack when somebody walked up.

"I told you Reno, we shoulda' brought the hot dogs."

I turned. It was Buckaroo. And Reno. And Pinky. Oh, my god. This was just too much. All my heroes were there in front of me.

Rawhide answered, "Nah, I want marshmallows."

Behind Pinky came 2 paramedics. I put my first aid kit back into my pack. "Guess I won't be needing this."

Buckaroo stepped around Rawhide. "Hey, Short Cut. Why don't you help Reno and Pinky and the firemen, while I help these two put Rawhide back together."

"Sure thing, Buckaroo."

The 3 of us went up to meet the firemen. They made us put fire-jackets on, and handed us extinguishers. We were told to stick to the perimeter, putting out the smaller fires.

While we walked, I told Reno and Pinky what had happened. I was finally starting to come down from my high and started to feel tired. Buckaroo signalled when they had finished with Rawhide and called us over.

"Pinky, take the extinguishers back to the firemen, and meet us up at the ambulance."

"Right, Boss." Pinky grabbed them and left.

Buckaroo looked at Reno and me. "I need you guys to help carry Rawhide up the

slope. You up to it, Short Cut?"

I wiped some dirt off my nose. "Sure am, Boss."

"Good. Grab your pack and let's go."

They had put him onto a stretcher. Reno and Buckaroo got the front, the 2 paramedics got the back, and I carried the med-kit and the I.V. bottles. Rawhide looked better. They'd cleaned him up, and he'd gotten some color back into his face. He was quiet the whole trip. We got him up over the rim and over to the ambulance.

"Just a minute, guys." Rawhide spoke up as they tried to put him into the ambulance. "Over here, Short Cut."

I walked back to him. He grabbed my hand and shook it. "Good job, kid. You saved my life. I owe you one, partner." Then he signalled for them to load him into the ambulance.

I dropped my hand to my side. I was numb all over. He had called me "partner." He was really proud of me.

Buckaroo broke the silence. "Reno, why don't you and Pinky ride with Rawhide? I'll be over as soon as I take Short Cut home."

"Sure thing, Boss. Nice workin' with you, Short Cut."

"Same for me, Short Cut," added Pinky as he followed Reno into the back.

Buckaroo closed the doors, rapping on them as they drove off.

"Come on, Short Cut, let's get you home." Buckaroo said. He was silent as he led me over to the jeep. After making sure I was buckled in, he started the engine, and pulled out onto the highway.

"Banzai Institute, this is Buckaroo. Do you read me?"

"Sure do, Boss. What's the status?" answered Perfect Tommy.

"Short Cut found Rawhide and got him to safety before the car blew. Reno and Pinky are escorting him to the hospital. I'll be there as soon as I get Short Cut home. So, send somebody over in the morning to check on the crater. The radiation levels were unusually high. Buckaroo out."

"Will do. Banzai Institute over and out."

That was all he said. It was strange. There I was, riding with my ultimate hero, and we were both silent. I didn't know how to start. I mean, what do I say -- 'How's the weather, Buckaroo?' or 'What new medical techniques have you developed?' How geek-ish. I would start to say something and stop, embarrassed. I began squirming.

Buckaroo musta' noticed, 'cause he turned to me and said "Well, Short Cut, I agree with the others. You did a good job out there. Thanks for helping." He paused. "But what's your reason for disobeying, not only Perfect Tommy, but your mom as well?"

I didn't understand. He said I did a good job out there, but he's mad at me for doing it? I don't understand. This was awful. He was mad at me. I don't believe this. I could just die.

"Well, I'm waiting."

"Uh, I did it to save Rawhide. If I hadn't a gotten there when I did, he woulda died when the car went up."

"According to Rawhide, the car didn't start sliding until you hauled him out. So he would have been safe until we got there."

"Oh." I paused. "But maybe not. He'd been trying to get outta the car by himself. If he had rocked it the wrong way, he coulda' sent it down the slope."

Buckaroo thought for a bit. "O.K., but what about disobeying your mom and Perfect Tommy?" He pulled over to the side of the road.

I squirmed around. "She doesn't understand what Blue Blazes are all about. If

she did, there wouldn't have been a problem. I tried to tell Perfect Tommy, but he wouldn't listen. He was too worried about what my mom would say."

"Have you tried talking to your mom?"

"Yeah, but she doesn't listen. She thinks you're just some comic book hero. She tells me to stop playing make-believe. I'm to grow up and put away my childhood toys. There's no time for foolishness in the real world."

I stopped trying to hold back my tears. "But Buckaroo, this is the real world. I like helping people. With somebody's life at stake, would I be a real Blue Blaze if I stood by waiting for someone else to come along and do the saving, just 'cause I might get grounded for a week?" I turned my whole body to face Buckaroo. "I care about others, Buckaroo. Isn't that what the Institute is all about -- helping others? I mean, if I had wanted to be like all the rest of the people in the world and not care about others, I wouldn't have joined the BBI."

I tried to catch my breath, but I couldn't. "I don't mean I'm happy about disobeying my mom and Perfect Tommy. I'm not. I thought about it, and decided that it was better to disobey them than to let Rawhide die."

I quit yelling and slumped over. It wasn't fair. I knew I had done the right thing, and he didn't understand. He was just worried about following rules.

Buckaroo was silent the rest of the way home. I gave up worrying. There wasn't any point to it anymore. I knew I'd be grounded for at least a week, and I'd have to get rid of the radio and stuff. But it was still worth it. People are more important than anything else in the whole world.

We pulled up across the street from my house. Buckaroo killed the engine and turned to face me. "I've been thinking about what you said, Short Cut. Most of it was right. And I have to admit that Rawhide probably would have died if I hadn't been for you. But it doesn't necessarily make it right



for you to go disobeying your mom. I mean, your mom's your mom, right?"

I nodded, hanging my head. "Rawhide said the same thing to me."

I turned away to stare out the side window. "But I've tried talking to her, Buckaroo. I just can't get through to her. She just sees the comic books and the cereal, and doesn't understand." I started feeling really bad now. I couldn't even get Buckaroo to understand.

"Hey, don't look like that." Buckaroo put a finger under my chin, raising my face. "I thought you did a great job. You saved the life of my best friend. You worked hard with Reno and Pinky, and you defended your principles. I'm glad your a BBI."

If I thought I was in shock before, I was wrong. Too much had happened tonight. Mouth half open, I sat there, unable to think.

"Short Cut, do you think it would help if I talked with your mom?" he asked softly.

I nodded as I wiped the tears off my face.

Buckaroo put his hand on my shoulder. "Well, come on. Looks like your mom's put the porch light on. She must have heard us drive up. Why don't you let me handle this?"

"O.k." I unbuckled myself and followed Buckaroo up the driveway.

My mom opened the door before we got there. "Thank you, sir, for bringing my child home safely," she said to Buckaroo. She looked at me and snapped, "Chris, get in here."

Buckaroo stopped me with a hand on my shoulder. "Just a minute, Mrs. Anderson. I'd like to say something first."

Mom really looked at Buckaroo this time, and she kinda' changed. She went soft over, just like she does after seeing a happy movie on TV.

"I am Buckaroo Banzai. You see, ma'am, thanks to Chris here, a friend of mine lives..."

She interrupted him. "Oh, you're the one in the comic book. I didn't even know you were real."

Buckaroo smiled. My mom got all mushy. Yecht.

"Yes, there is a comic book in my name. A friend of mine was in a car accident 2 hours ago. Thanks to Chris' prompt response, my friend will live. I'm very grateful."

"Chris saved your friend's life? All because of that stupid radio?" She paused to think.

Why is it mom can't understand plain English. Buckaroo just said that.

Buckaroo nodded. "So, on behalf of my friend, I would like to ask a favor of you."

"Yes?" My mom stared at him with a funny expression on her face.

"Don't be too harsh on Chris." He paused mussing up my hair. "We had a long talk about doing the right thing. I think it will help."

My mom smiled. "Sometimes it's just so difficult with Chris. None of the other kids acted up like this."

She looked at me. "You know you're grounded for the next week."

"I figured that. I'm sorry I ran off without telling you. But I was in a big hurry."

Buckaroo answered for my mom. "You're never in too much of a hurry to let your mom know where you're going. Right, Mrs. Anderson?"

My mom agreed with that. After a long pause, she said, "Well, I guess you can

keep that radio. And I'll let you stay up until 9:30 to do that signoff thing of yours, but only if your homework is done."

"But, mom, I need to stay up until 10..."

Buckaroo interrupted. "Don't push it Short Cut. I'll let the Watch Wire know that you have to sign off early."

"Gee, thanks, Buckaroo." I turned to Mom. "And thanks, Mom."

Buckaroo gave me a gentle shove and I walked up to my mom, who hugged me.

Buckaroo said, "Thanks ma'am, for letting Chris stay up later. I know it's tough raising a Blue Blaze like this one, but sometimes it's worth it."

Buckaroo smiled at my mom again, then turned and left. Mom, still all mushy, hugged me 'til my eyes bugged out.

"Well, Chris, it seems you had an exciting night. I think it's time for bed now, don't you agree? I'll be up in a minute."

"O.k. mom."

I stopped at the door. "Uh, mom?"

"Yes, dear?" She turned towards me.

"Thanks for understanding."

"That's o.k. dear. Sometimes it just takes me awhile."

She turned back, and stared out from the porch. I went up to my room. About then I heard Buckaroo's car start up and drive away.

I decided to make one last call before I turned the radio off.

"Buckaroo, do you read me?"

"Sure do, Short Cut. Are you in bed yet?"

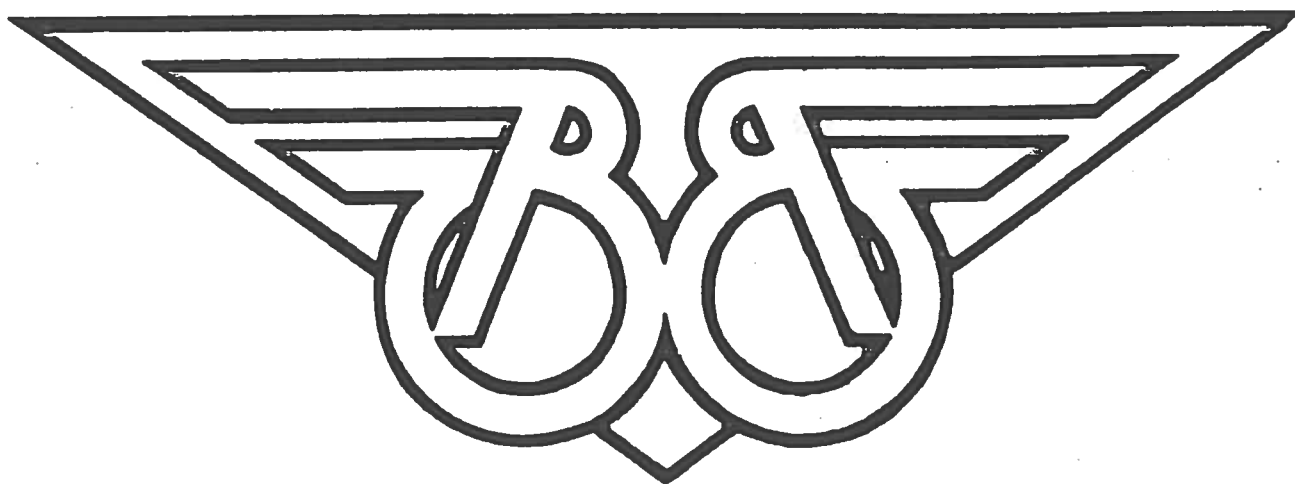
I laughed. "On my way. I just wanted to say thanks a bunch for talking to my mom. She's not so bad most of the time."

"No, she's not." He paused. "That's just my way of saying thanks for saving Rawhide's life, Champ. Remember our motto: You treat me good, and I'll treat you better."

"Buckaroo, over and out."

"Over and out."

"This is Blue Blaze Irregular 3549, shutting down for the night."



# BULLETIN BOARD

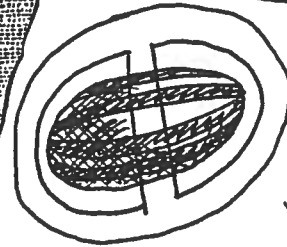
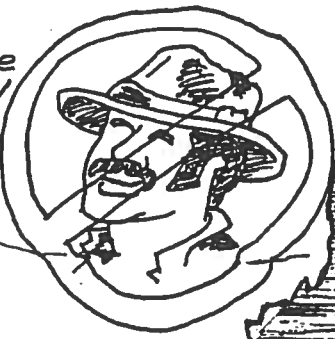
Wanted: Any copy of the novel, Mark of Yorro by Johnston McCullay. I'm not rich, but will manage. Contact me @ World Watch Wire - Popcorn

↖  
Reno -  
Can you come up with a better sign?  
Buckaroo

CATNIP,  
GREAT  
PARTY ⚡  
xoxoxo  
Sharky AND  
SHADOW ⭐

Boss;  
I'm no Tom Orzechowski.  
Why not open it up to the BBIs? They're a creative bunch...  
Reno

BANZAI INSTITUTION FOR BION  
THE BLUEBERRIES IN THE FRIDGE WERE MINE. ANYONE FOUND WITH A BLUE TONGUE WILL BE SHOT!  
JONMY

No more WATER-MELONS!  
Felis  
No more Felis! Water-melon  
  


# Buckaroo Banzai and the Zealots of Pain

by  
Jim Van Over

## Chapter 1 Invitation to a Wedding

Sammy Kreuger had never much minded pain. If, as a child, he skinned his knee, he would watch impartially as his mother disinfected, bandaged, then kissed the wound. It was only pain and would go away. Even the time the doctor had removed the policeman's bullet from Sammy's arm, he had sucked in his lips to keep from hollering. This was a thousand times worse.

The pain had snuck up on him. It had come from nowhere. Now it was everywhere. It was in his legs as he struggled through the darkness, away from the ditch where he had left his car. It was in his fingers from clawing toward the gravel driveway. A lone nightbird's chirp shot needles into his ears. His breath hurt, his stomach pinched, his eyes ached as he strained to focus on the large white gate set firmly in the white stone wall. And his head hurt worst of all. The pain attacked through his skull, then spread to the rest of his body. It twisted and writhed like a termite boring tunnels as it feasted on his brain. He screamed, for the zillionth time. It hurt his throat.

Straining to lift his head, Sammy again set his sights on the looming gate. He fought the gravity of pain, forcing himself to his feet. The pinch in his stomach turned to nausea. He lurched forward, stumbling, lunging, and found himself leaning against the stylized "double b" decorating the gate, symbolic of the man he was struggling to see. He had endured so much pain. Surely he had the right.

Another wave of agony washed through his withered frame. He shuddered, screamed, grabbing the circular design for support as his legs collapsed. The weight of his body slammed into the metal gate. The resounding "woomp" hurt more than the impact. He shrieked again. He slid to the ground, whimpering. His mind retreated, conjuring up images of dark men with quivering, outstretched hands, a plane spiraling into the mouth of a dinosaur, he and Maxxie running

from a thousand police cars the night they'd killed old man Frankford.

Suddenly, Sammy pitched backward. He wailed, vaguely aware that someone had opened the gate.

He laughed at the pain.

He had made it.

Hands dragged him inside, checking his wounds. Questions were asked, but he didn't care.

He had made it.

He laughed at the pain. The pain laughed at him.

And the pain won.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. Sidney Zwiebel bent over the examination table, studying the body for the third time. His brow knit as he straightened up, adjusted his glasses, and scratched his head, all for the third time.

"What is it, Doc?"

The security guard's voice didn't startle him as much as it interrupted his already jumbled train of thought. He focused, yanking at the tie of his velour bathrobe as he turned towards the man. "What, Rick? It's late. I'm sorry, what did you say?"

"S'okay. It's not late. It's early; 4 A.M. I just wanted to know if you found anything."

Again, the dark eyebrows creased at the bridge of his nose. Again he pushed at his glasses. "No. Well, yes. And no. I have discovered the cause of death, I just don't know what caused it." His voice trailed off in a sigh as he began a fourth examination. Then his head jerked up, "Oh, and Rick, my friends call me New Jersey."

Rick grinned. "Yeah? I'm from Massachusetts myself."

The examination room door opened. A man turned slightly sideways as he strode

through, filling the doorway. His size was emphasized by the suddenly close quarters of the room. His voice boomed off the tiled walls. "The boss just got here. The chopper down about thirty seconds ago."

"Oh, good," Dr. Zwiebel relaxed noticeably. "Thanks Front Four."

The dark giant smiled and nodded, stepping alongside Rick.

The door was just finishing a double swing when it was pushed open again. Three people walked in. The first was an attractive, dark-haired woman in her early twenties. Her alert eyes and fresh clothes denied the early hour. She studied a manilla folder, listing off items with crisp efficiency. "And Pecos has taken Dr. Hikita to Sweden for that conference. Pinky has the night off, but he's got a beeper. I woke Billy. He's firing up his computer. Tommy isn't answering his gophone. And Penny and Reno are still asleep."

The man behind her nodded at each item, even as he moved to the body on the table. His lithe, athletic frame slipped past three other men with ease. His clothes were rumpled and a slight pink accented the intense blue of his eyes. "Thank you, Mrs. Johnson. Would you wake Reno, have him stand by in the lab, please. Then call the New Brunswick police, let them know what's happened. Rawhide, What time is it?"

The third person in the room was a tall cowboy with hands that looked as gentle as they did strong. The soft voice could not disguise a natural resonance. "1:13 our time, 4:13 for these guys."

"Okay. Mrs. Johnson, when you reach Perfect Tommy, tell him if he's not here by 5, I'll let Pinky into his closet with the spray paint."

Mrs. Johnson's smile outshone the scrubbed floor. She caught the door on its second rebound. "With pleasure, Buckaroo."

The man, Buckaroo Banzai, now turned his attention to the doctor and two guards. He grinned at the sight of New Jersey in his thobe, heavy glasses, and rubber gloves. "Morning, Sid. How's the late show?"

New Jersey chuckled in return. "Morning, Buckaroo. Better let Rick and Front Four start this story."

B. Banzai turned his attention to the Blue Blaze security guards. "Well, men? What's up?"

They exchanged quick glances, then Rick began. "About two this morning, we were patrolling the main yard. Front Four had just checked the garage locks when we heard a loud thump."

"A thump?" New Jersey interrupted.

"Yeah. I thought some kids were playing wall ball off our front gate, so we ran over there. Then we heard the scream."

Buckaroo nodded toward the body on the examination table. "His scream?"

Both men nodded. Front Four picked up the story. "It must have been, because when we opened the gate, there he was, grabbing his head, yelling about snakes and 'I made it. I made it.' I didn't see anyone else, so we dragged him in and tried to find out what was wrong. We asked him a few questions then..." his massive hands gestured at the still form.

Rawhide let out a low whistle. "Buckaroo, do you think..."

Turning to the body, B. Banzai reached for an extra pair of gloves. "Yeah. Yeah, I do. What have you found, Sidney?"

New Jersey shifted uncomfortably under the watchful eye of his employer and colleague. He removed his glasses, pointing with the ear piece. "Well, it's as simple as a coronary failure, except for these purple blotches on the head. As near as I can tell, several of the blood vessels in the skin have burst in the temporal and frontal regions. There is very little sign of trauma in the major veins, however. See, here's an example." He tugged back the thinning hair. "Just the small veins and capillaries."

Dr. Banzai readjusted a high intensity lamp. Leaning close he asked, "So, what do you think?"

"If it wasn't for the obvious coronary symptoms," Dr. Zwiebel said shifting his weight, "I would say this guy died of severe fever."

Still without looking up, Buckaroo clarified, "You'd say the heat of an intense fever caused the capillaries to burst?"

Zwiebel nodded, saying nothing. Buckaroo stood up, peeling off the gloves. "I agree." He looked past New Jersey to the cowboy still standing by the door. "The same. Exactly."

Rawhide's rich whistle filled the room again.

New Jersey shifted his attention from Buckaroo to Rawhide, then back to Buckaroo. "The same? What do you mean? The same as what?"

The guards moved to help Buckaroo wrap a dark green body bag around the corpse. "The same as the one in California. Any ID?"

"Oh, yeah." Rick opened a small metal cabinet and began removing items. Wallet, keys, small change, a pocket knife, nail clippers; all were placed on a stainless steel tray. "His name was Sammy Krueger. Billy's computer tags him as a small time crook. All the usual affects," Rick held up some papers. "And this." He handed the folded packet to Buckaroo who glanced at it, then passed it to Rawhide. Rick continued, "Airline ticket to Florida."

Rawhide examined the enclosed itinerary. "Plane leaves in three hours. Looks like he isn't going to make it." He removed another, smaller piece of paper. "What's this?"

Front Four glanced at the scrap. "We were waiting to ask you."

Buckaroo took the small page of note paper, examining the message scrawled across it. New Jersey read over Buckaroo's shoulder.

"Stop the pain. Wed the shark.' What that?"

B. Banzai turned his head to look at

his friend. "A clue. Rick, wait with Mr. Krueger here until the police arrive. Front Four, check with Mrs. Johnson and Big Norse. See if Perfect Tommy has checked in. Rawhide, call Reno in the lab and have him meet us in the computer room. Sidney, get dressed. I think we've a long trip in our future."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mac the Shark, Greg 'Shark' Michaelson, Joey 'The Shark' Notino. Buckaroo, there must be hundreds. And this is just the East coast." In the space of five minutes, Billy 'the Kid' had accessed the FBI files, requesting information on all known criminals with 'Shark' as an alias. "How do we know which one is our man?"

"Is there one called John Sharkface?" Reno had been waiting in the computer lab when they arrived. He had been studying the cryptic note ever since. His reference to the near-apocalyptic encounter with aliens from the eighth dimension brought a chuckle from Billy, but Rawhide's no-nonsense stare sobered them both.

"How many are listed in Florida?" Buckaroo spoke softly between mouthful of orange danish.

"Let's see." Billy lightly punched the keyboard. "Three. No, two are deceased. One. James 'Sharkey' Korngold. Arrested four times for extortion, three acquittals. Five years in Leavenworth. Now he runs a charter service out of Longboat Key, Florida."

Buckaroo sat up. "Chartering what?"

"Um, boats and planes."

"That's it. Mrs. Johnson, call the airport. Everyone else, boots and saddles."

He scooped up a cup of coffee on his way to the door. Only New Jersey hesitated long enough to ask, "Boots and saddles? What about Perfect Tommy? Where are we going?"

Reno turned in the doorway to wave the note. "We've been invited to a wedding."

To be Continued:



**WORLD WATCH WIRE**

c/o Jim Van Over  
1118 Oakmont Dr #2  
San Jose, CA 95117  
(408) 984-1412

***BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION  
AND RELEASE FORM***

**RELEASE:** I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby grant my permission for Jim Van Over to use my original material entitled - \_\_\_\_\_ in his non-profit newsletter, *World Watch Wire*. I grant to him also my permission to reprint my material up to three times. I understand that aside from allowing my submission to be printed and reprinted that I retain full rights to my work.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATED:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** In each issue of *World Watch Wire* a paragraph of information will be printed about each contributing author or artist. Please tell us a little about yourself(s) - as much or as little as you'd like. Anonymity will be preserved if requested, but we prefer to say something about everyone.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Blue Blaze Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any Blue Blaze Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

