

by VAUGHN GREENE

FOREWORD: It is not my intention to rehash the rehashed -- in other words, go over the entire Shaver controversy again. I wish only to present a chronology, together with some facts of which most men are unaware. Finally, I have some questions which should be answered, now that Shaverism is officially banished.

PART I - 1945 "Mr Shaver to see you, sir." Perhaps those were the very words which caused Raymond A. Palmer, editor of Amazing Stories, to embark on the dizziest ride fandom has ever seen. Just why did he do it? Why did he champion Shaver?

First of all, science-fiction was in a rut -- something new was needed. Then, too, the promags were rising in circulation -- but was Amazing? Probably Shaver, as an occultist, thought he might make a little money with some fiction based on same. But Mr. Palmer had different ideas, for, as he said in March of '45: "Something new must be added to science-fiction." (Amz XIX-1,p.6). So, he claimed Shaver's yarns were true. Why not? Sensationalism and hoaxes have always increased magazine circulations. Witness Poe's balloon hoax.

And here was the perfect setup: an unknown writer with a new slant, plus a number of scientific theories which had passed the test of time in years gone by -- the temptation was too much. That all this is factual is proved by one thing: Everything Shaver has claimed as his theories can be traced to other books. I list some of these source books at the close of this article.

And so, in March of 1945, Richard E. Shaver remembered Lemuria all over 58 of 'Amazing Stories' pages.

In the following issue (June, 1945) we find Palmer playing it up big by claiming he was flooded with mail. Other than angry, puzzled letters from actifen, I doubt this. He spent a full two pages haranguing the readers that Shaver was terrific. Beside the fact that Shaver seemed unusually well-versed in stf and fantasy lore, there is little else to note.

Get this: Shaver claimed he served a term in a state prison, presumably Leavenworth. A friend of mine wrote both Palmer and Shaver asking for the name of the prison in order to verify this, and got no answer. Incidentally, this is the only issue Finlay ever illustrated a Shaver epic. I wonder why?

Shaver also contradicts himself: He says he would be willing to lead an expedition into the caves. Later, he refused.

In Issue 3 (September, 1945) another Shaver cpus turned up -- one supposedly written by two Norwegians. ("Cave City of Hel"). They did not sign their names for fear of retaliation on their families by the Germans -- but, now that the war is over, how about publishing their names and addresses?

Palmer went stumping again, ending his words with "The time has come for action!" (Amz XIX-3, p.166) There was also an interesting letter from a person who heard voices, and talked to pixies and stones. (pp.170-172).

In the last issue of 1945 (December) we find RAP denouncing science (Amz XIX-4, p.3) (Evidently some reader had embarrassed him with scientific argument) and wasting eight pages (pp.165-173) in an attempt -- it seems -- to start a nationwide riot.

## Part II - 1946

There appeared in Amazing Stories a letter by one of the most amazing persons I have ever met -- Edward John. (Amz May 46, p.173) John told of a strange area in the Clear Lake country. I visited him, and among other things I learned (at various times, for I still see him occasionally) (a) he was responsible for the Texas City disaster; (b) he was responsible for the flying discs; and (c) he has complete control over the deros, etc.

It is only fair to give the other side of the story -- his mother verified ((Just what do you mean, "verified" ? - ahr)) all his claims; several people have visited the Clear Lake region and found it peculiar. Then, too, I am positive he is not (consciously) lying -- and he is one of the most learned men I know, certainly an expert on the occult and anything else. I once mentioned to him a rare cult in Vancouver, and he gave me a number of details on them, all true.

As a matter of fact, after meeting John I became so incensed with the whole thing that I wrote Palmer a ridiculous letter which I claimed was true. He published it -- if I had told him I was Martian he'd have published that too, I'll bet. (He did, as a matter of fact, publish some letters from "deros.")

Also in this ish (May) was the prize -- in which a person told about deros which bothered him to the extent that he had to pound his head on the wall -- until he was committed to a hospital! (Amz May 46, pp.175-176).

I will skip most of the letters from here on -- they get monotonously the same.

In the fifth issue, Professor Lidley (an astronomer) stated he had nothing to do with me or my letter. I was sorry to get him involved, so I wrote him explaining my purpose in so doing -- he replied good-naturedly.

Another person I ran into in San Francisco was Mrs. Emma Martinelli who believed in Shaver. She is honest and has shown me much material similar to Shaver's. More of that later.

By this time Palmer's aim had been realized -- people were gobbling up Shaver every month, and RAP would put in a few cute remarks like those in issue 7, where he denounced fandom and threatened to reveal my whereabouts, (Heh!) if I didn't give out with some information. He sent me a letter which I must admit sounded honest. (Being the rat I am, I reveal his home address to be 2514 Grant St., Evanston, Illinois.)

I also got a somewhat sloppy letter from Shaver, full of hare-brain stuff, which ended with the following:

"But it would have been obvious why something happened to him (the professor) -- so it wouldn't happen. So it don't as long as you do the

right things -- i.e., say why something might happen -- then it DON'T!" Shaver's address was McHenry, Illinois, but I received no answer when I wrote him there. Later he was said to be in Lilly Lake, Illinois. ((The two places are within a couple of miles of each other, we understand.))

### Part III - 1947

January: This issue contained the only story Shaver ever wrote that was really good: "The Mind Rovers." No kidding, it was swell -- none of Shaver's usual igloo english.

A Norman Kossuth, in this issue (AMZ XX-1, pp.176-177) claimed he got messages from the caves. Later he told me this was true, when in a peculiar aftermath, an unbalanced girl began a campaign against him by flooding people all over the country with letters saying Kossuth was threatening her!

February: No Shaver story! Halleluyah!

April: My confession that I pulled a hoax on the hoaxers (AMZ XXI-4, p.168) seemed to do something. Up to this time Shaverism was coasting; suddenly RAP cuts loose with a three-page editorial again. I think Palmer decided on a change in policy.

I might add as an afterthought, I got some interesting letters after that. One: A threat from Steve Volto Dero; another from a man who was going to start an anti-atombomb colony in Baja Mexico; another from a Kentuckian who objected to my saying half of AS's readers were hillbillies; another from a person, whose in 18 typewritten pages told me all about what a great person he was, and so on.

Incidentally, Palmer failed completely to adequately answer my questions!

In another issue, Palmer published a letter which claimed (believe it or not) that polio could be cured with hot manure! Mrs. Martinelli told me she had written Palmer about this and he said it was all a mistake. Yes.

The last straw was when Palmer immediately yelled that the Shaver cult should have full credit after the flying discs appeared.

### Part IV - 1948

The sensationalism had worn off. The crisis came: Palmer promised definite proof of Shaverism. Definitely. But when he muffed it next month by referring to another magazine, he saw the handwriting on the wall. The organized fen were agitating for a boycott, and some writers were deserting him. He stopped.

In a whip-like series of maneuvers he dropped Shaver, took fandom to his bosom, put a column in the mag for their benefit, and dazzled them with prizes.

((We feel that this version of the events attending the exile of the Mystery is not quite accurate. The statements of Rex Ward and of Rog Graham that his column is not a propaganda medium have proven entirely correct to date, and your first sentence: "The sensationalism had worn off" is probably both RAP's main reason, and a sufficiently good one, without bringing in the fanfeed.))

In Fantastic Adventures a true frankenstein-like story appeared ("The Secret of Elena's Tomb" by K.T.V. Cosel, FA IX-5, Sept. 47). Richard Shaver and Margaret Rogers wrote books on the subject. Shaver had a small magazine of his own, and another magazine came out with Shaver material. The circulation of Amazing doubled, and so did the mailing lists of occult societies such as the Round Robin, Es-sense of Kosmos, Brotherhood of White Temple, Vadorians, etc.

Palmer could sit back and relax indeed. He had been well repaid for the time and effort expended in the greatest hoax of modern times.

### Epilogue

Palmer, although he did a great deal of work, really muffed the Shaver Mystery. For one thing, he failed to realize the main attraction of his mag during this era was the incredible letters he published, not the dull Shaverian fillers. But after all, he didn't do so badly. RAP is one fellow to watch -- anyone with his foresight and the courage to take such a daring risk (in a commercial sense) is to be commended, regardless of the moral issues.

It is strange that during all those months no fan ever saw or interviewed Shaver. What a fanzine article that would have made! Recently ASS has come out in LOKI with some disgusting articles on sex (which he seems to drool over and use like a monkey wrench. ((wench?)) I hope, unless his writing shows more evidence of normality, he will not get into fanzines on his name alone.

In conclusion, I admit this article is quite obviously prejudiced. Perhaps in another article I will present factual material in support of Shaver's theories. But in a last word of caution, let me warn that because facts parallel some of Dick's ideas, that doesn't mean there is a correlation. When this is realized, RAP's entire defense and "proof" of Richard S. Shaver's ideas collapses to the ground. Amen.

### SHAVERIAN SOURCES

(Number of asterisks denote relative importance)

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|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Bancroft - <u>Native Races</u>                            | Philostratus - <u>Appolonius of Tyrania</u> |
| Baring-Gould - <u>Book of Folklore</u>                    | Plato - <u>Timaeus Criticae</u>             |
| *Blavatsky - <u>Secret Doctrine</u> (perhaps even Vol.IV) | Rosacruzian Scribes -                       |
| Bolton - <u>Chilam Balam</u>                              | <u>Cosmic Conception</u>                    |
| Carrel, A. - <u>Man, The Unknown</u>                      | Spence - <u>Gods of Mexico</u>              |
| Curtis - <u>Letters From The Teacher</u>                  | Sugrue - <u>There is a div-</u>             |
| Eddy, Mary Baker - <u>Science and Health</u>              | <u>er</u> (supplement)                      |
| Ferguson, E. - <u>Science of Being</u>                    | Wilkins - <u>Thoughts Thru</u>              |
| *Fort, Charles - <u>The Books of Charles Fort</u>         | <u>Space</u>                                |
| Keyne, J.P. - <u>Theory of Gravity</u>                    | Bible                                       |
| Illion, T. - <u>Darkness Over Tibet</u>                   | <u>Book of Mormon</u>                       |
| *Lloyd, J. - <u>Etidorpha</u>                             | <u>Book of the Dead</u>                     |
| Landowne, B. - <u>Prophecies of Melci Zedio</u>           | *** <u>A History of the</u>                 |
| *Merritt, A. - <u>Dwellers In The Mirage</u>              | <u>Hermetic, Masonic &amp;</u>              |
| <u>The Snake Mother</u>                                   | <u>Rosacruzian Orders</u>                   |
| ****Newborough - <u>Oahspe</u>                            |                                             |
| Oliver - <u>Earth Dwellers Return</u>                     |                                             |
| *Ouspensky, P. - <u>A New Model of the Universe</u>       |                                             |
| <u>Certain Organum</u>                                    |                                             |
| **Phylos - <u>A Dweller On Two Planets</u>                |                                             |