

Hub Magazine

SCIENCE FICTION HORROR FANTASY

PUBLISHER
LEE HARRIS

MANAGING EDITOR
ALASDAIR STUART

COMMISSIONING EDITOR
ELLEN J ALLEN

REVIEWS EDITOR
PHIL LUNT

ISSUE 115 · 21st MAR 2010

CONTENTS:

- FICTION:** **Seeds** by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- REVIEW:** **Hawkmoon: The Jewel in the Skull**
 The Prefect
- FEATURE:** **Interview: Joe R. Lansdale - Part 2**
 Coming Soon...



EDITORIAL:

by phil lunt

Is it me or are there a lot of vampires around at the moment? I mean, not hundreds, but they're definitely flavour of the month/year when it comes to TV, film and books. Recently we've had *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, the *Twilight* series, *Let the Right One In*, *Daybreakers* etc. Fine, not so long ago we had *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* and then *Angel* which, some could argue, started the recent revolution along with Anne Rice's canon.

Just as *Buffy* was once described as "90210 with vampires...*", a fair chunk of the recent vampire epidemic appears to be squarely aimed at a certain audience. They seem to be moving away from the horror genre, entering an almost "teen romance" sub-genre of horror. OK, not strictly "teen" but definitely "romance". Fine, *Dracula* certainly had elements of a love story therein but it was well and truly a horror novel. I think the scales are tipping away from horror nowadays, though, and I must admit I prefer my vampires old school or, at least, furthering the mythos in more original ways, like in *Daybreakers*, than simply portraying vampires as the ultimate in James Dean style bad boys.

Maybe it's just me. Maybe I should move with the times and give this new shift a chance. I managed OK with *Buffy* after a while and these recent tales are, I suppose, logical modern progressions of an age old myth. What do you think of the recent vampire uprising, readers? Comments on our website are always welcome.

* In an industry magazine essay I read whilst at university, sometime between 1997-2000. Unfortunately I've not been able to find the article since so apologies.

FICTION

Seeds

by **silvia moreno-garcia**

Two teenagers bolted past him, running so fast James almost lost his balance and dropped his multi-text device, which would have been a major problem because he had no idea how to get back to the main road. The paths had twisted and turned a dozen times before he had finally parked his car close to the town square with its double arcades.

James glared at the teenagers but they kept running. He was sure they had bumped into him on purpose. They probably recognize the logo on his suitcase.

He didn't get it. Just on Sunday he watched a group of UNAM students parading around the Angel of Independence, wearing black and white Zapata t-shirts and yelling "*maiz y libertad*." Like a perfect seed and a perfect crop was somehow wrong and Germingen was the devil. It all sounded suspiciously anarchistic to him.

Fine, it was copyrighted technology and the seeds were sterile unless they were treated with Germingen's very own Germingrow. If the user agreement was not followed exactly as intended, Germingen would trigger the Trojan Horse built into the genetic map of the seed, but so what? You got large, perfect crops in return. In the end, they were doing these people a favor.

James shook his head, straightened his clothes and kept on walking until he reached the fountain in the middle of the plaza. Without people wearing a geo-location unit, all he could do was squint and wait under the harsh sun for his contact to arrive, guessing, rather than knowing, if any of the townsfolk headed his way were Mr. Total.

The wind blew a cloud of dust in James face and he sputtered and swore. His suit was nano-treated, but the dirt was probably pullulating with dog faeces and some nasty germs.

When the cloud dissipated a man wearing white linen pants, a matching shirt and hat approached him and extended his hand.

"I'm Alejandro Total," he said. "You've got to be from Germingen."

James had all of his data on the multi-text but it was going to do no good if Mr. Total did not carry his own multi-text. By the looks of it, all the farmer had with him was a crude knapsack. He would have to introduce himself the old-fashioned way.

"James Clark, Customer Satisfaction and Services Representative, Germingen, Mexico and Caribbean division. At Germingen we develop the most resistant, innovative crops to supply the farms of tomorrow—"

"That's nice," said Mr. Total, interrupting James before he could finish his speech.

"Bigger, better, stronger crops make a bigger, better, stronger world," James ran his thumb across his multi-text device. "It says here, Mr. Total, that you are one of our silver maize seed users. Ten-year contract, eight percent copyright and user fee and insured GM seeds, right?"

"It's not my contract."

"Pardon?"

"It's not my contract. The governor got the contract for the whole state and we have to use the seeds. Everyone in Oaxaca has to do it. They have this state levy on us for the stuff."

"Yes, well, I'm talking about your individual sub-agreement, not the state interposed multi-lateral limited-license use agreement," he said cheerfully.

And what an agreement it was. Oaxaca had been one of the states that had resisted the GMO seeds most vigorously—there had been some bullshit about local customs, as if a piece of dough was some sacred artefact—but in the end the governor had signed the contract quickly enough.

Mr. Total shifted his feet and shrugged.

"Did you know domesticated corn originated in Mexico?"

James tapped his device twice and raised an eyebrow. "Mr. Total, you placed a call two days ago."

"We're supposed to call you if something goes wrong. That's what they said and we dialled the number."

"Very well, and please explain what went wrong," James said and he grabbed the stylo and flipped it between his fingers. The seeds were damn easy to grow, resistant to pesticides and insects. It wasn't the seeds' fault that some people were stupid. Germingen provided training for the illiterate, low-tech customers teeming throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, but there were some glitches here and there and in Oaxaca, with its Nahuatl population clinging to their dialects, it was sometimes a damned nightmare.

Nevertheless, James had managed to go from step two to step five in less than three years and he was confident that he would reach step six at the end of December. He was aiming for a month-long session of gambling in Macau with the bonus that would net him.

"Well?" James asked.

"I'm not sure something went wrong."

"Mr. Total, I drove all the way from Mexico City because you said you had an issue with your corn crop. Am I to understand that nothing has happened to it?"

"Something happened," Mr. Total said with a nod. "There's hundreds of corn varieties in Mexico, did you know that?"

James carefully blotted the sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief. He put his hands behind his back and stared at Mr. Total.

"Is there an issue with the corn?" he asked very slowly.

"We thought you might mind. When the Germingen people came they said we had to phone you and they gave us the number," Mr. Total held up an old-fashioned paper business card. "Right there, see? Customer issues. The governor says we got to use the seeds and we can't use no other seeds. My family's been breeding corn for years but no more. We got to plant your fancy seeds and we've got to use them and they're insured; so if there's any problems we phone you, you figure it out, and it's our money back and we get out of the agreement, right? In short, we don't want the agreement."

"Mr. Total, we do insure all of our crops, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. We generally solve any customer issues within two weeks and no refunds or termination of agreements are necessary. Now, what is the problem you have been experiencing?"

"There's huitlacoche on the corn."

"Huitlawhat?" James asked. The man was probably speaking Nahuatl.

"Oh, the Mexicas loved it. Absolutely loved it. Moctezuma was crazy over it. Quite the eater he was, that Moctezuma. You know, every morning fish was brought from Veracruz to Mexico City by a system of relay runners. They carried the fish fresh from the coast to the emperor's table in just a few of hours."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

The man opened his knapsack. He took out a grey ear of corn with the kernels swollen ten times its normal size. It looked like the corn had a tumor. In truth, it was covered in fungus.

"Dear God!" James yelled and he began to pound frantically on his multi-text device, photos and words plopping from the little pad until it was there in red capital letters: *USTILAGO MAYDIS*.

"It's very good in a quesadilla," Mr. Total said nonchalantly.

"Where did you find it?" James whispered as he stared at the ugly grey and black monstrosity the man was waving at him.

"Oh, it's all over my field. It's going to fetch a good price in the market."

"You're going to eat it?"

"Sure. Delicious."

"It's a pathogenic fungus. It's a pest. How the hell did it get on our corn?"

"The Mexica ate fly larvae and axolotls."

That was not the answer James was looking for. He jammed his fingers against the screens and screens

of information.

He tried to think, to formulate a plan. Evidently the corn smut had mutated and invaded their pristine, perfect corn corp.

James was sweating. He could imagine his clothes sticking to his body, even though this was impossible because they were nano-treated. But it was a day for impossibilities. This was not supposed to happen. The corn was resistant against anything and everything.

You could spray the toughest pesticide on it and it would survive. Well, the toughest Germingen pesticide, anyway. The seed contract also came with a binding, collateral pesticide agreement.

James could just imagine the look his boss would give him if James informed him they had lost a whole crop to a corn smut infestation. And what if it should spread? He could picture rows and rows of grey and black fungus-covered corn against a blue sky.

"We'll have to burn it all. I'll call in a team and we will get rid of the fungus Mr. Total," James said, flipping through the emergency procedures manual.

"Why'd you want to burn it? It's nice to breed it. It goes well with tamales. Look, you just make a little cut at the base of the corn..."

"Mr. Total, I don't think you understand the enormity of the issue," James muttered and after drafting a quick message, he punched in the four digit security code necessary to alert his head office of the problem.

James closed his eyes. He took a deep breath and tried to steady himself. Everything was going to be fine. The team would fly in, burn the whole thing to cinders, stomp every bit of fungus out. Then they would rescind the agreement and forget about this damn town and its rampant fungus. Blot it out. Nothing to see here.

"Bigger, better, stronger crops make a bigger, better, stronger world," James whispered.

It made him feel better. He took a deep breath and let it out.

"It's fine, Mr. Total. We are going to contain it. After all, its not like the damn thing has legs. It can't spread that far."

"That's the issue," Mr. Total took off his hat and scratched the back of his neck. "Remember when I told you the runners used to bring fresh fish for Moctezuma every morning?"

James looked up and stared at Mr. Total.

"Yeah. I think that huitlacoche is all over the country by now."

Mr. Total smiled cheerfully and put his hat on again.

"*Maiz y libertad* Mr. Clark," he said with a wink.

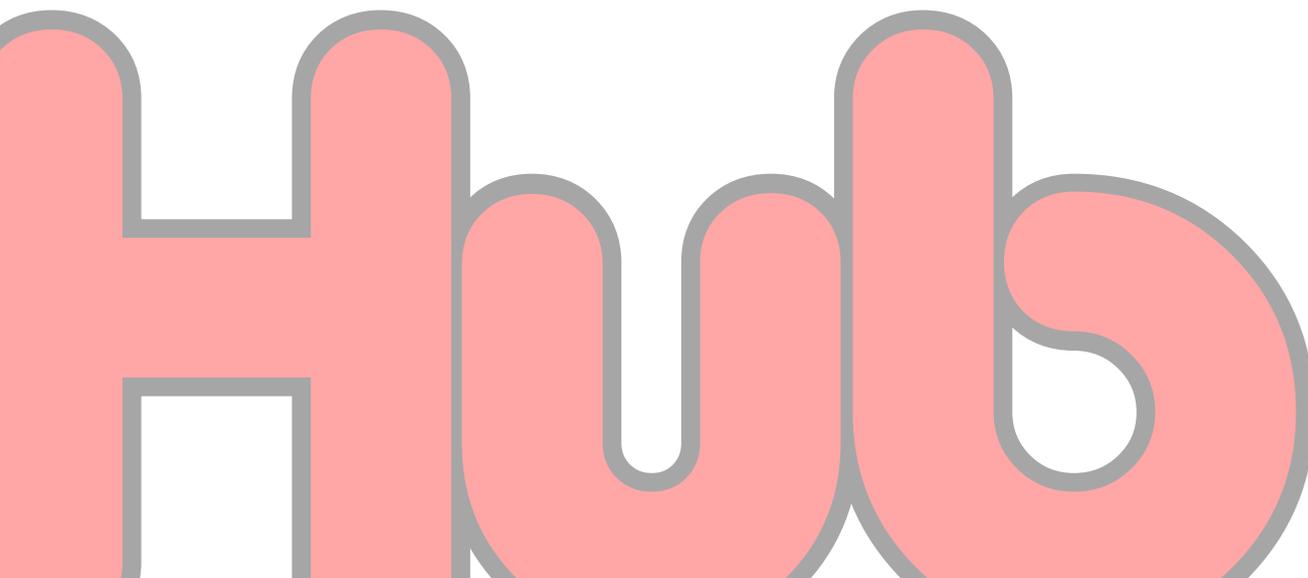
Somehow, James didn't think he'd make it to step six before December.

Silvia Moreno-Garcia was born in the north of Mexico and moved to Canada several years ago. She lives in beautiful, rainy British Columbia with her husband, children and two cats. She writes fantasy, magic realism and Science Fiction. Her short stories have appeared in *Fantasy Magazine*, *Futurismic*, *Shimmer* and *Tesseract's Thirteen*. With the help of editor Paula R. Stiles and a band of eldritch writers she publishes the online zine *Innsmouth Free Press*. Silvia is also working on her first novel and be found online at www.silviamoreno-garcia.com

The anthology *Shine* (from which this week's story is taken) will be reviewed in next week's *Hub*.

***Shine* is an anthology that tries to achieve two near-impossible things: (plausible) near-future, (believable) optimistic science fiction. Stories that look today's incredibly complex, huge problems straight in the eye, and then try to find solutions (or die trying). Stories that put the 'can' back in "we can do it". If that wasn't enough, *Shine* incorporates truly global issues: from soil regeneration in China to rebuilding the ultimate surveillance tool in Afghanistan; from tentative first steps in West Africa to big steps — all the way to Mars — in East Africa; from premature wikindustries in Brazil to overdue AI recognition in Europe; from the rarity of**

ice in Summer to the abundance of plastic in the Pacific; from the Moon colony of last resort to the asteroid belt trip in tweets; and more. And a few humorous pieces — involving the roaring future of metal, the rollicking progress on a lone Pacific Island and the shenanigans of environmentalists turned *Casanovas* — showing that idealists can have both a sense of perspective and irony, as well: this is your thoughtful and witty guide to a better tomorrow!



Hawkmoon: The Jewel in the Skull

reviewed by keith harvey



by Michael Moorcock
Tor Books
rrp £8.73

On January 5, 2010, Tor Books released a new edition of Michael Moorcock's *The Jewel in the Skull* (1967) with an outstanding new cover and interior illustrations by Vance Kovacs.

Moorcock is primarily known for his Elric stories even though he has written over sixty novels. *The Jewel in the Skull*, one of his earliest, is the first of four books that comprise the first chronicles of Dorian Hawkmoon, one of the seminal avatars of the Eternal Champion, and is a heady mix of historical romance, picaresque adventure, and heroic fantasy.

Set in an alternate universe similar to our Middle Ages, *The Jewel in the Skull* begins with the story of Count Brass, a Falstaff-like character, who is holding the Kamarg, a province in the South of France, against the insane and brutal armies of Granbretan. In this parallel world, the Dark Empire or Granbretan move against all flags to dominate Europe. Although there is a definite allusion to the events surrounding World War II, the Dark Empire seems more Roman-like than National Socialist. It is interesting to note that this novel was written around the time that Moorcock composed his Nebula award winning novella—*Behold the Man* (1967), a story of first century Rome.

Before invading the Kamarg, the Dark Empire sends Baron Meliadus to persuade Count Brass to join a Europe united under the iron fist of its King-Emperor Huon. The insidious and odious Meliadus, however, on his own initiative decides to marry Count Brass' daughter, Yisselda, whether she wants to or not. At first, Count Brass is tempted to form an alliance because he believes only a united Europe will find peace; however, when Yisselda refuses Meliadus, he attempts to kidnap her and wounds Bowgentle, the court's alchemist and philosopher, in the process. Count Brass then realizes he cannot submit to Granbretan and prepares to defend his region.

With the stage set, Dorian Hawkmoon, a German prince, who is a prisoner in the dungeons of Londra joins the action. Defeat and imprisonment have robbed him of his energy and his will to live. Meliadus and the Emperor concoct a cunning plan to use magic to defeat Count Brass and to kidnap Yisselda. They implant a jewel in Hawkmoon's forehead that allows them to observe everything he does and order him to trick Count Brass and kidnap Yisselda. If he does not do their bidding they will cause the jewel to destroy his brain. Reluctantly, Hawkmoon travels to the Kamarg.

Although Moorcock established his unique voice and style with his first two Elric novels—*The Stealer of Souls* (1963) and *Stormbringer* (1965), the first chronicles of Dorian Hawkmoon, which consist of *The Jewel in the Skull* (1967), *The Mad God's Amulet* (1968), *The Sword of Dawn* (1968), and *The Runestaff* (1969), seem more polished and better organized.

The novel is a pleasure to read; primarily, because Moorcock's prose is articulate, fluid, inventive and descriptive. He maintains a consistent point of view throughout and he paces his plot with precision. In fact, in my opinion, no one describes medieval battle scenes like he does; as you read the work he conveys a sense of huge armies moving on a broad field through the use of minimalist-like touches of evocative language. Note in the following passage the painterly way in which Moorcock describes the coming battle of the Kamarg: "It was like a vast legion out of hell, moving slowly southward, battalion upon battalion of

marching infantry, squadron after squadron of cavalry, every man masked so that it seemed that the entire animal kingdom marched against Kamarg."

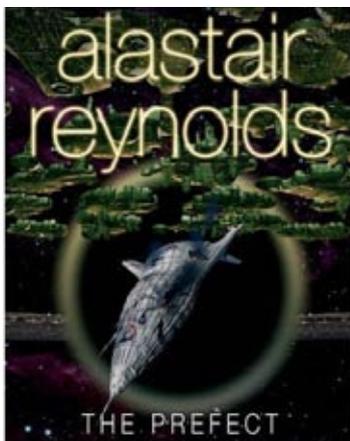
From the very beginning of *The Jewel in the Skull*, Moorcock establishes a unique world that seems very familiar to the modern reader. Irrespective of the familiar setting, however, Moorcock creates unique and evocative images, such as Count Brass, the Lord Guardian of the Kamarg, battling a baragoon, a swamp monster made up of slaves from the prior Lord Guardian; the animal-like armies of the Granbretan; and the Kamarg warriors, wielding flame lances, riding on the backs of giant flamingoes and sparing with the bird-like ornithopters of the Granbretanians. Moorcock never resorts to familiar fantasy tropes; instead, he creates beings and entities from his own imagination, which lends his writing a richness reminiscent of one of his major influences—Merwyn Peake, author of the Gormenghast Trilogy.

Moorcock is the master of the picaresque novel, which has been a staple of fantasy literature since the golden age of pulp fiction and which has been employed to great success by such writers as Jack Vance in his *Dying Earth* series and Fritz Leiber in his *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser* stories. He is acutely aware of his literary heritage and he uses these time-honored genre devices to great effect. Dorian Hawkmoon is a Byronic hero, wan and dissipated, struggling as much against his own psyche as he does against the enemy. The novel's heroic fantasy setting is true to its pulp fiction antecedents and its picaresque form speeds the plot along through a unique imaginary world. Although the novel appeared in 1967, it seems as fresh today as then.

In the world of the brick-sized novel and the interminable series, *The Jewel in the Skull* is an entertaining breath of fresh air.

The Prefect

reviewed by martin willoughby



by Alastair Reynolds
Gollancz
rrp £7.99

I first came across Alastair Reynolds through a story called *Turquoise Days* in one of the SF collections produced by Gardner Dozois. Then I came across his book, *Century Rain*. It was terrific, and so I decided to find out more about the writer and explore his back catalogue. My aim was to read them in chronological order... and yes, that does make me somewhat anal.

As much as I enjoyed the earlier 'Revelation Space' books, they began to get a bit boring and repetitive after the second one. Even *Pushing Ice* wasn't that impressive to me. So it was with some trepidation that I approached *The Prefect*.

The novel returns us to the Revelation Space universe, but this time it's a prequel, set in the glitter band that orbits around Yellowstone. The plague hasn't hit yet, the 'eighty' are recent history and the system is in existence in its full technological glory. Overseeing it all is the Panoply, the police force whose role is to make sure that voting irregularities do not take place. Why it has this role is explained in the novel and is one of the reasons for the crisis the story describes. I won't spoil the plot by giving any more details than that.

One of their operatives, who are known as Prefects (hence the title of the book), is investigating the destruction of one of the habitats that make up the glitter band. This man is Tom Dreyfus who, like all main characters, has a bit of a past and a strange present, all of which is revealed during the course of the story.

Naturally, his investigation doesn't go according to plan. There is a treacherous Prefect who is working

against Panoply, but thinks he's doing the right thing. I won't tell you what happens to him, but it isn't pleasant.

It gets even more interesting and complex when Aurora gets involved in the plot to takeover the glitter band. Who and what she is I'll let you find out when you read it.

Within a short space of time, there are millions of dead and dying, nuclear explosions and treachery galore. Add in an ultra secret organisation protecting an evil machine, human frailty and the ever-threatening presence of the Ultras, and you have the makings of a great story. And it is a great story.

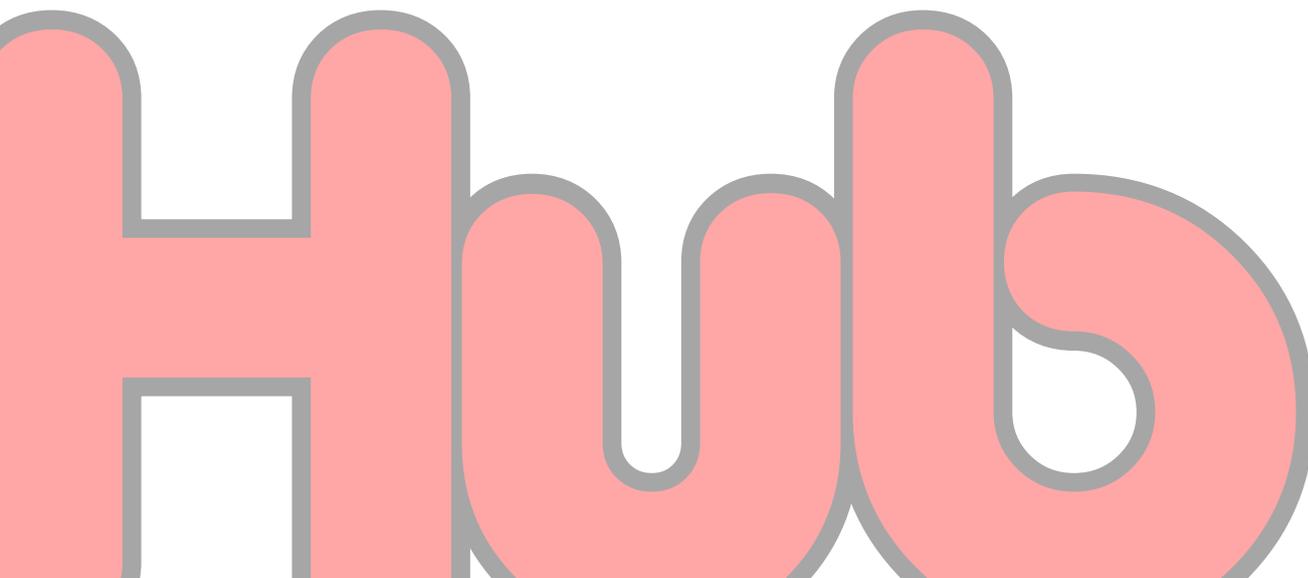
There are other elements in the story too. One of his deputies, Ng, has to install some new voting software into the cores of the ten thousand habitats and this plays a surprisingly large and important part of the novel. Add into this mix an eleven year old mystery that had a personal impact on three of the main characters, a hidden secret organisation directly involved in that mystery and you get a very complex and compelling story.

After reading *Absolution Gap*, I felt that Reynold's story telling had become long winded and the characters and settings had become dull. This book is anything but, and despite being 500 pages of densely packed text, it is fast paced and shows signs of great editing and thought.

The individual stories are weaved in expertly and there is very little wasted space. Instead of detailed technical descriptions over every escape and death, only some of them go into detail. What he has left out is as good as what he has put into the story.

Although I guessed parts of the ending, there are some strong hints all the way through, other parts came as a surprise, especially regarding the plague that we know about from the previous books. I get the feeling that there is still another story to be told here, and if so all I can say, is 'bring it on'.

There's only one word to add to this review: Firebrand. Let the reader understand.



FEATURES

Interview: Joe R. Lansdale - Part 2

with richard whittaker

In the first part of this interview, published last issue, Joe Lansdale talked about how growing up in rural East Texas, with access to a broad array of authors, made him the multi-award winning, genre-spanning writer he is today. In the second part of this two-part interview, the author of *Bubba Ho-Tep*, *Leather Maiden*, *Savage Season* and *Jonah Hex: Two Gun Mojo* talks about his career to date, genre hopping, how his sister-in-law met Elvis Presley, and being asked to write *Batman*.

(Parts of this interview have previously been published in the *Austin Chronicle*.)

Hub Magazine: How would you describe your career?

Joe Lansdale: I have name recognition, I sell pretty well. I'm a best-seller in Italy, I sell lots of options to films and I do screen plays. I'm not complaining. I've made a pretty good living without having to put a sack over its head and do it for Old Glory, so to speak.

HM: Looking back at your body of work, there're a lot of similarities to Quentin Tarantino and his fearless melding of art house and grind house. When he said he was going to do an homage to a Italian exploitation movie, he instead turns *Inglourious Basterds* into a treatise on propaganda.

JL: I think he and I are kindred spirits in that we recognize the power of genre, and that you can get things across to people in a more interesting and convincing and sometimes entertaining way than in some of the more stiff-ass kinds of fiction. It doesn't mean that everything I write has great literary merit, but it often has merit beyond – well, that's my intent, at least. A lot of times I will write something because it's a good story, and I will write it, and I will tell it, but sometimes I want to write a good story and I want to have a subtext to it. I think a lot of genre writers over-inflated that because they want to have some importance, but too many don't have enough respect for that and so the fiction doesn't have that echo. So when you get through reading a good piece of fiction, it should have some echo beyond that last page.

HM: A lot of authors get into one groove, and it's very hard for them to move out of it, but like Tarantino you're a real genre-hopper, from historic western to crime to horror and.

JL: I've done comics and films as well. I've done everything wrong, from what I was told on how to do it. I didn't find one area and specialize in it, or find one area and do minor work in another. I just moved from one area to another and I think it came from when I was a kid and I just read everything, and I loved everything that was good to me at that time. Of course, when you get older, you look at a lot of things that you read and realize it's not that good. But I developed a passion for a lot of different genres, and I think that's really good. I'm just following the stuff I love. When I first started, I just wanted to sell, I wanted to have that opportunity to make a living, but after about three or four years, I began to think, perhaps erroneously, that I had something a little more unique than I had expected. So I decided to make my own brand on anything I wrote, so it wouldn't really be about writing a crime or a historical, it would be about writing a novel with my name on it.

HM: While you've had great success as a novelist, you first made your reputation as a short story writer, especially writing for magazines.

JL: You had a lot when I was coming through. Back then, people were complaining that there were fewer

magazines, but there were a lot more of them then than there are now. There was a lot of science fiction magazines, a lot of mystery magazines, there were all kinds of general magazines that bought fiction, like *The Saturday Evening Post*. All of those magazines were influencing me, and by the time I was ready to write there were still women's magazines, men's magazines that were willing to buy fiction, so markets were there. They didn't really begin to go away until the '80s, and even then you had *Twilight Zone* and things like that. So I was working for a lot of magazines and small press magazines, because there were a lot of those, but I was mainly writing for anthologies. I had a knack for writing for those. People would ask me and I would write them, and I sold a bunch of stories that way.

HM: Some authors seem to regard short stories as an inconvenient stepping stone to full novels.

JL: God, I don't feel that way. That's a horrible thing, because I love short stories.

HM: On the other hand, sometimes people take a perfect idea for a short story and overstretch it for something longer, like when Richard Kelly adapted *Button, Button* into *The Box*. How do you tell what's a novel and what's not?

JL: I will give him this, he had balls. He went for it, but I thought, wow. There's a built-in detector for me, and I just know. There's been a few times when I've started a short story and it's become a novella, once a short novel, but that's rare. I normally know right off which it is, and it's just a feeling or a mood for what form fits it best. I prefer short stories to anything else. I love writing novels, and I would really not want to have a career that didn't have novels in it - especially financially- but I like the challenge, and I have my own peculiar take on how to write a novel but short stories are my real passion. I think I've had about 20 short story collections: Most of them are reprints of some of the older stuff, but most of them are stuff that had never been collected before. For me, that's the real gem of writing short stories.

HM: While even just selling an option can be a great pay day, film adaptations are a notoriously thorny issue for writers.

JL: Sometimes you want to see 'em made, but sometimes you see 'em and you wish they hadn't. I've had two of mine done, and I was pleased with both of them. They were both small - *Bubba Ho-Tep* and a *Masters of Horror* episode for [US cable station] Showtime.

HM: *Bubba Ho-Tep* has become a real cult favorite. What was the genesis of that story?

JL: I had a title that I thought would be funny for a mummy movie. It was just kind of a joke, but that title was with me and my brother, who's 17 years older than me, married a girl that he's still married to that he met in Memphis, Tennessee. Well, she went to school with Elvis Presley, and my brother also went to record at Sun Records and get a record career going. Well, his didn't do as well as Elvis, but he'd met him, so there was that very loose connection. I hate to say it, but I'm old enough to have been here when rock and roll was invented, so when it came along it had a big impact on me. Then John Kennedy was the first president that I truly had some understanding of. I remember Eisenhower before him, but he really fascinated me. It seemed like these were two guys that ended up not where they should have. My mother ended up in a nursing home because of an automobile accident, and she required 24 hour services, so I was there a lot. I listened to the way people talk, and when I was asked to do this Elvis story, the title, the Elvis information and background and the interest in JFK all just collided.

HM: Both of your films were directed by Don Coscarelli (creator of the *Phantasm* series.) How did you get to work with him?

JL: He read the story and he just thought it would make a really good film. I already knew him because he'd

tried to option *The Drive-In*, and I think he did option *Dead in the West* for a while. I thought it couldn't be made into a movie, and told him so, but he was persistent and after two or three years of options he asked me to write a script. I didn't think it paid enough, so I told him no, so he wrote a script. I read it, had a few little concerns, but I liked it and then he got Bruce [Campbell] and Ossie [Davis], and the rest happened.

HM: You've also written some comics that have that same mix of the Southern and the supernatural, like DC's *Jonah Hex*.

JL: That's my favorite of all. *Two Gun Mojo* is the first thing I did.

HM: DC also let you lose with Batman, including bringing him and Jonah together in *The Animated Batman*. How'd that happen?

JL: They called me and asked me if I'd do it. I'd written a *Batman* novel for DC comics, and I'd written a young adult novel for them. I've been very fortunate, I've never asked to do a comic job, they just came to me and asked me if I wanted to do it. They asked me if I wanted to do the comics, I did. They came to me and asked me if I wanted to do the books, I did. They came to me and asked me if I wanted to do the films, I did. So I was very fortunate that I didn't have to beat the bushes for that work.

(Next issue: Joe Lansdale talks about the state of the publishing industry, gives his advice for writers looking to turn pro, and discusses whether rumors of the death of the short story have been greatly exaggerated.)

COMING SOON

Hub Easter Doctor Who Special

To celebrate the start of the new series starring our favourite Time Lord, our Easter edition (issue 117) is a *Doctor Who* special. Guest-edited by Scott Harrison, and focussing on the first five Doctors, the issue also has contributions from the following Who alumni:

Andrew Cartmel
Simon Clark
Joseph Lidster
Paul Magrs
and Mark Morris

In the run-up to the *Who Special*, Scott is interviewing some of these writers on his blog at <http://scottvharrison.blogspot.com/>.

Be sure to check it out!

