

**JACK WILLIAMSON'S FASCINATING NEW
 NOVELLA, THE DARK DESTROYER 6**

new novelets

ABOVE THIS RACE OF MEN by ROBERT F. YOUNG	42
TECHNICALITIES by J.F. BONE	66

new short stories

THE COMPUTER CRIED CHARGE! by GEORGE R.R. MARTIN	32
MANIKINS by JOHN VARLEY	80
A JURY NOT OF PEERS by P.G. WYAL	90
THE SPIRIT WHO BIDETH BY HIMSELF IN THE LAND OF MIST AND SNOW by SUSAN JANICE ANDERSON	98

new features

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED by LINDA ISAACS	106
EDITORIAL by TED WHITE	4
The Amazing Interview: ROBERT SILVERBERG conducted by DARRELL SCHWEITZER	59
THE CLUB HOUSE by SUSAN WOOD	113
OR SO YOU SAY	121

Cover copyright © 1975 by **STEPHEN E. FABIAN**

SOL COHEN, Publisher
ARTHUR BERNHARD, Associate Publisher
TED WHITE, Editor
GRANT CARRINGTON, Associate Editor, Emeritus
LOU STATHIS, Assistant Editor
TERRY HUGHES, Assistant Editor
J. EDWARDS, Art Director
PRINT ADVERTISING REP., INC. Advertising Manager
LILLIAN FRIEDENREICH, Subscription Manager

AMAZING, Vol. 49, No. 4, January 1976 is published in accordance with the ULTIMATE PUBLISHING CO., INC., 66-48 30 Ave., Oakland Gardens, Flushing, N.Y. 11364. Editorial office, Box 5, Oakland Gardens, N.Y. 11364. Subscription rates: One year of issues: United Kingdom and possessions: £4.00; Canada and the Americas: United States and all other countries: \$8.00. Change of address: Send complete address, zip code, for subscriptions and other mail matters to be sent to Box 1, Oakland Gardens, Flushing, N.Y. 11364. Second Class postage paid at Flushing, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1975 by Ultimate Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Material herein may not be reproduced by letters, postage and a handling fee at the end will be handled with reasonable care. However, publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsold or art work, photographs or manuscripts.

A JURY NOT OF PEERS

Pg Wyal's last story for us was the controversial "They've Got Some Hungry Women There . . ." (March, 1975). He returns with a strange tale about justice . . .

PG WYAL

Illustrated by MARCUS BOAS

NEATH TRIFLE SURS ON jungle earths, the man ran. The crime was murder, and the fear was great, and he slashed through stinking jungles with the weapon with which he had slayed, smeared with filth and blood, cursing the hand of the fate he could not name. The man was hot and cold and sick and drunk with fatigue, blind with frozen fear and forgotten hate. In an aimless frenzy, he ripped through mud and snarling weeds, sloshed through rivers like tentacles and climbed hills like nests of ants. The man screamed, at nothing, the man cried, for what he had done and what it had done to him. The man ran and ran, going nowhere as fast as he could.

Unseen eyes examined him, unnamed fears pursued him. There had been a bar, and something about a woman, and maybe a quart of bitter tequila (perhaps laced with methyl alcohol), somewhere in a muggy jungle town. In a tin and clapboard quonsit hut, the man had gotten drunk and stumbled into a bloody fight over a company whore. A lieutenant from the trading company had said something about him, a slurred remark concerning mendicants and girls. "A whore's a bankrupt in-

vestment," the blond officer decided. "She's a slimy hole and nothing more, and every bitch knows she's just a dog. But with a man, you have to show him the papers of indention before he knows he's dirt." The memory was not precise; it hovered around him like a horde of buzzing flies, only the eidetic ikon of his hate and fear, released in one crimson swipe of the machete. Now he did not know nor care, but scrambled through slimy leaves and vines, seeking to bury himself forever in the fetid jungle. Through twisting plants, surrounded by a steam of hate, the man ran and ran.

Until he could run no more. Fatigue settled like an empty barrel in his chest, lodged like a bloated body in his belly. He had run for three days, through the angry forest, hunted and surveyed by searching eyes he knew were there, but could not see. He felt them peeping at him in his fireless night, turned around bug-eyed to see—nothing—as he crawled along in the unrelenting sun-blast, and heard them cackling to themselves just out of sight in the underbrush . . . or bubbling like sinister molluscs below the surface of the turbid, marshy waters. He stepped

lightly and cautiously, at first, then plunged and lumbered ahead with hoarse and coughing desperation as his energy depleted. The man had run, fleeing from imaginary adversaries and the very real baying cats and flitters, but now he could run no longer. He gave up. He surrendered. There was nothing left to do, except lie in the festering swamp and decompose, while things like lice and piranha nibbled at his flesh.

He came out in the open, in a soft meadow, and waited. He was safe now from the jungle; he listened numbly to the trading windsong wheezing through the boughs above. He waited for a while, lying naked in the afternoon sun, not thinking. Soon, towards sundown, satellite spies picked out his aura, and down came clean men in white shirts and shorts, and even pith-helmets. They landed their white silent gravity-craft, and seized the man with routine hands, and took the man away into the sky. The forest shrank to a green plain netted by thick blue varicose veins, the writhing rivers of the jungle heart, then sank beneath the lens of grey haze, distant and flat. Inside the white capsule, the man who had ran was silent and inert.

"HOW DO YOU PLEAD," intoned the vocader voice, plain and uninflected. "Guilty or not guilty?"

The man, like the machine, was numb and cold. He shook his head. "What difference does it make? I did what I did, and you know it. I don't have nothing to say." He was a brown man, speaking with a slurred lower-class accent. He'd been a cutter for the company, working with saws and microwave beams to fell the giant trees. The trees were pulped, processed and distilled, reduced to thick



grease in catalytic refineries, and turned into plastic and drugs. The man did not know what for; he only worked in the jungle, not thinking very much. The company fed and housed him and took most of his wages back for rent and board. He did not know his slavery. He took cacao and demerol to allay his nightmares and fatigue.

The machine did not hum or click. It never made a sound, except when it spoke. His captors had handcuffed him out of sheer routine, taken him to the white jungle city, and quietly assigned him a cool, windowless cell where the man had stayed three days, eating food that came out of a slot in the pale yellow wall, watching videotapes, and eliminating with thoughtful grunts in the appropriate receptacles. He never left the room, never saw another person—neither prisoner nor guard—and was never asked a single question by anybody. All the questions and answers were already known, what remained was only to judge and convict him, to pass an almost arbitrary verdict, and decide upon his special fate. He was thus taken to the machine, taken through quiet cool halls, into a bare room with a video camera and display in one corner, to consult the master of his fate. The machine would weigh, deliberate and decide; then he would receive his sentence, whatever that might be. The brown man sat sullenly, not caring what would happen. To him, his life was already over.

"You were an employee of The Company," groaned the machine. "You attacked and killed an officer of The Company. You are Manuel Abdul Jones; you have been tried on a plea of *Nolo Contendere*, and found guilty of the crime as charged. I shall pass sentence presently. Have you any-

thing else to say?" It waited.

"We are all working for the company store," said the man without apparent sarcasm, without manifest bitterness. He studied his hands, as though talking to his grade-school teacher about some petty sin. He did not know how to deal with authority—even the abstract authority of the mute machine. The man had no authority over himself. "I got nothing else to say, nothing. Get it over with." And he waited.

The man waited. The machine thought. There was much the man did not know. There was everything the man, who had run (but would run no more), did not know. He did not know or understand the machine, upon whose function depended his life. He did not know how or why. He waited limply, and did not attempt to think. And he was wise. It would do no good.

THE ISSUE was responsibility: The world had reached a state of nearly infinite complexity, which no single person, or group of persons, could hope to comprehend. Nothing had ever happened to sweep away this monster of complexity, so the difficulty of understanding piled up, as the society had piled up. Within this endless maze, men made their daily lives. Sometimes they erred, sometimes, whether meaning to or not, they hurt themselves or other people, or broke one of the endless rules necessary to sustain such utter civilized complexity. Then somebody had to do something to ensure it wouldn't happen again. A person would have to be punished, or treated, or made an example of, or something. The problem was intelligence, sensitivity; nobody was smart or wise enough to settle the disputes

or solve the problems. No human being was good enough to judge another. To weigh a human life in the scales of collective justice and individual compassion.

So they built the machine. The Judging Machine. The collective councils of the species voted and decided, argued and convinced, and a judge was built, perfect and true. It could not lie. It could not feel. It had no selfish interests against which to balance its decisions, to intrude upon the cold process of reason. It was a machine, into which the facts were fed, from which an honest and truthful choice was made, based upon the available data.

Such a jury, not of peers, was infallible; it administered equally to all men, basing its actions upon the definitions and insights culled from all the world's shows and literature, which had been programmed into it. It had digested the human mind, as neurological functions and pathways, biochemistry and reason-patterns, the meanings, sub-meanings and root conceptions that lie beneath the syntactical surface of thought. It had charted the human brain—mind, life and energy. It was a bioenergetic device, a psionic robot, a mimicker of consciousness. Into it they had fed the equations of the Lord, the dialectical relations of the life-force, and from it spoke the voice of the Lord, ominous and clear. The machine was not man, nor beast nor living prey; it had that point around which the mind revolves and around which all minds revolve together, and as such its intelligence was infinite and pure, its logic perfect and divine.

"Equal justice before the law," the priests and programmers of the machine had called for, and ordered the machine to think the thoughts of

real law and order. It uttered the ten commandments, it mewed the code of Hammurabi; it pronounced the eight-fold path, and elaborated upon the four Right Thoughts; it issued a treaty; it beat fifty men at Go, simultaneously. It was a game-player and judge, a strategist and conner, mimicking all psychologies at once. It could speak to all men in all languages, regard any problem from any side. Its understanding was therefore perfect. The machine meditated. The machine weighed, deliberated, and spoke. The machine spoke with a certain tone of voice, authoritative and absolute.

But it was programmed with more than facts, and reasoned with more than mere deduction. It had absorbed the motives, too. The collective guilt and uncertainty of society were invested in the machine. Its reason was guided by an outside source—a cold objective light of truth . . . or so it seemed.

Nobody knew just what to think. No one had ever agreed whether the machine was always right, or right no more often than a human being (for its intelligence was really no greater than an average human's—it merely thought with the logic of an undistracted outside source—a robot, an oracle, a Godhead). But the machine's decisions were always abided. Nobody wanted to take responsibility for another man's life. So they always left it up to the machine.

The people then were too civilized; they knew better than to judge.

"I HAVE THOUGHT it over very carefully," moaned the mechanical voice of the machine, "and reached a decision in your case."

"That's good," said the man. "Let's get it over with."

There was a hesitation. "Not so fast," said the machine.

"What do you mean? What're you talking about," quavered the nervous voice of the man. "We're finished. You said so. It's over, and we're through. I don't have to go through so more of this shit. Tell me my sentence and send me away. I'm tired of playing little games like this."

"I will be the judge of when we are done," said the machine. "And I shall also be the judge of what are games and what are not, and what the game is to be. I am the master of games, and the master of games is the player of none."

The man who had ran felt his palms turn cold. "You are playing a game with me. You're playing a game with my life."

"You played a game with another," droned the machine like a methodical wasp. "You played a game and lost. You do not understand the rules."

"There ain't any rules and there ain't any game," the man whined. His cold palms began to sweat. "There is life and death and whatever comes in between."

"I am the judge," said the machine. "I determine what is right and who is wrong. You are not the judge. You thought you were the judge, however. You judged. You judged another man, and sentenced him, and executed his thoughtless sentence. You are a murderer, a killer, a worthless taker of life."

The man who had ran was furious. "But he was judging me! He was judging me! He was judging me to be dirt."

"Perhaps his judgment was not inaccurate," sneered the cold voice of the machine.

"What do you mean? What're you talking about? They did it—he in-

sulted me! Twenty years . . . a guy gets tired of getting kicked around. One of those times, somebody kicks you and you gotta kick back. So I kicked. Even a dog will fight back if you push him into a corner.

"Are you equating yourself with a dog? Very well, perhaps you are one. If you were in a corner, it was ultimately your decision that put you there. If you are a dog it is because you have decided to become one."

The machine spoke with mathematical precision, it was a creature of logic and facts, speaking a jargon of moral equations, a patois of manipulated certainties and axioms. But it was also a creation of laws of statistics and probability, like a human mind. The machine was a gambler, spinning the wheels of fortune in its own casino—and the laws of chance favor the house. According to the rules of the game which the house has established. If you play the gambler's game, you must abide by the gambler's rules.

And the man (who could no longer run) sat in his chair like a spoiled child and sulked impotently. He was a little man, a short fat man with greasy skin. Thus the vidcamera saw him; the machine took his appearance into consideration along with everything else. The man smelled—the odor of foul pork or dead butter. This also the machine registered. He was barely literate, educated by the Company only to the minimum level his childhood tests showed useful and necessary to the Company. Not the kind of man any sophisticated person would want to know. He wasn't very smart, so he had to work for a living—with his body and his hands. His life was not a pleasant one; his attitudes were negative and dour . . . his face tense and glaring.

as though he had something bitter and rancid in his mouth. All these values the machine took into account.

There was nobody to speak for him at this trial; that nonproductive custom had been eliminated long ago, so he spoke alone. There was no witness to see his side. He sat alone. And because he was the only human in that empty room, it was completely silent, except for the echo of his fast and frightened breathing. It was as if he was contaminated, unclean—some kind of vermin to be kept isolated from other human beings. The man suddenly smelled his own sweat and stink, and wished he could go through the locked door and run into the cool streets. Had there been a window, he might have jumped through it—but there was none, so he sat trapped and listened to himself speak in confusion and uncertainty into the microphone, unto the one who judged.

"You have not finished speaking," the machine muttered.

"I am finished."

"No, you are not finished," the machine said, "because I am not finished. The problem is still unresolved. I cannot decide until all the evidence is in, until I have examined the problem from all possible sides, and the evidence is neither in nor fully examined. You must tell me your story again."

"I have no story to tell. I got nothing to say."

"You will speak. You must speak. I must know. Tell me."

The man looked up with tired and empty eyes. "I was mad. I couldn't stand it no more. I took it and took it and then I couldn't take it no more and I had to do something so I killed the bastard. That's all."

"Nevertheless," the machine enunciated (cool and even-tempered as

only a machine might be), "nevertheless, you killed, and I have judged, and I must know. I must understand. Tell me—tell me your motive. Everything you think is relevant or important."

The man wiped his lip and shook his head. "For twenty years," the man who'd run replied, "for twenty terrible years I took it. I did not fight back. There was no one to fight back against, and I was aware of the consequences. For twenty years I did nothing—and then I did something. I let the bastards have it." His cold sweaty hands were shaking.

"You let one man have it," replied the machine who judged. "You killed a living being. He was as good as you—perhaps better. He lived and labored, and died at your hands. Now he is nothing. And you live on."

"I couldn't stand it no more."

The machine was silent a long time.

"I wish I'd killed them all."

The machine said nothing.

"They was all playing some kind of game with me." The man held up supplicating hands. "They were playing with me and using me."

"Words, empty words," sighed the machine. "Playing games is all you do. You are never tired of playing games."

The man shook his head tiredly. "No, no, they was playing games. They was."

"It's all in your head," the machine said patiently. "Everything was all your own fault."

"I don't know."

"That is no defense. It's your karma. The karma always comes back," pronounced the machine, with faint invisible condescension.

"I don't know what you're talking about." He folded his arms and glared petulently into the camera. "I dunno

what you mean."

"You know what I mean," the machine remanded. "You know what I mean and do not have to be told. You have no right to demand that I explain. I am the judge, and you are not the judge, although you judged and thus I judged. Now you shall get what you have bargained for. What you see is what you get."

The machine had studied his position, and concluded that he had no position. It denied the validity of his life. The man sat and said nothing. For fools, he thought, the best speech is cold silence. But silence would not save him. He sneered into the vid-camera, thinking of twenty years in oozing jungles. But the machine was patient, the machine could wait.

Finally, it said, "You have totally abdicated responsibility."

"You a faggot," said the man, with boiling and hidden rage.

The inert machine ignored him. "I have examined and considered the available information," spoke the machine. "I have thought the matter over. You refuse to speak, so I must judge. Judging is not an easy thing to do," pontificated the slow voice of the machine, "but you have left me no choice."

The man's head jerked up as if to protest, but the machine went evenly on.

"I shall cite no precedents, for none exist. There is no precedent for a man's life. I shall restrict myself to the characteristics of the case.

"I shall cite no arguments, for there were none. One does not argue about the truth—one states it, final and confirmed, for others to accept.

"I shall abstain from opinions. Opinions are interpretations of the truth.

"I shall state only the basics of the

case." The machine continued unbrokeably. "First, you pleaded *Nolo Contendere*. Shall I play back the tape? You copped out. You offered nothing substantive in your defense. You had the chance to make your piece, and said instead a wilful nothing. When given the chance to elaborate, to confirm or deny, or modify the evidence in any way, you offered only colored pictures of the event. You told us your motivations, in the vaguest and most general terms, without offering who or how or what or where. It may be of clinical interest to know the reasons why, but 'why' is not a point of law. We are displeased. You killed and ran, man, you slayed another human being, no matter what his sins, and ran away into the twisting jungle. You took into your hands another life, and crumpled it up and threw it away. Such are the facts of this matter."

The voice of the machine went on, distant and severe. "Now I am called upon to judge. Society judges harshly those who break its most sacred trust. Yet no man is all the world. That is why I am judging you, and not a human being; no single man is responsible for another man's life. Or death. The responsibility is up to the collective Whole; herewith I represent the Whole.

"There is a causality here; for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. So it has been written. And there is a relativity here; all actions are judged in relation to all other acts. So it has been deduced. And there is an objectivity, also, an entropy, a balancing-out. All matters and events come out even in the final analysis. This is a dialectical matter; I have considered all sides and angles.

"Upon this pedestal, within this graph, all reasoning is based and all

Ultimate Publishing Co. Inc.
P.O. Box 7
Flushing, N.Y. 11364

Enter my subscription for AMAZ-
ING & FANTASTIC

I enclose \$10.00 for one year;
\$18.00 for two years; \$27.50 for
three years. (Both magazines)

Name
Address
City
State
Zip #

Add \$1.00 per year for Canada,
Mexico and other foreign countries
(Both Magazines.)



NOW YOU CAN LIVE S. F. ADVENTURE: NOT JUST READ ABOUT IT

From all sides of the galaxy mighty stellar empires are in a race to capture the resources of unexplored regions. You command these forces. 300 models representing war ships, transports, missile batteries, ground armies, and secret weapons maneuver on a giant 32 x 24 1/2 color illuminated star map. A unique system offers the unexplored regions on each game is new and exciting. You get four games in one, a simple basic game, and challenging adult advanced game, an ultra realistic and ultra complex tournament game, and an Armageddon scenario where full scale war breaks out leaving no part of the galaxy untouched. Two or three players or great fun just playing by yourself. An empire at your command for just \$4.95. Send Check or Money order to:
D. H. Cassiano, Commander
Attack Magazine Assoc.
314 Tappan Av.
Elizabeth, Pa. 19033
Pa. residents add 6% sales tax.

decisions ultimately made. This is the ultimate mathematics of human destiny, and I am its final judge, perfect and absolute. I am the jury, without peer. I consider all consequences.

"You ran, man, into the jungle and away from your act—your foul and desperate act. A man who does bad things is not a good man, no; and well enough, a man to whom bad things is done may not be a good man either; and easily may it be, the world into which these two are born that compels them to act in such an evil and desperate way may itself be ugly and a sin. But into thy hands, O sinner, these things are put in trust, and into my hands, wicked little man, your fate has been consigned. So I weighed the evidence and made my choice, and the verdict was that guilt is as plain as your swollen tearful face. The verdict has been made," droned the impassionate voice of the machine, "as is my right and duty—for I am the

source of all moral knowledge. The evidence is in, and the process if complete. So if you have any final thing to say, say it now or forever keep your peace.

And the man said nothing.

"VERY WELL, I shall say this. You have the choice of doing what you want. I'll let you decide—for it's your life and your responsibility, regardless of what went before. No man may judge another, nor tribe of men, nor nation nor world. That's how it was decided. But you have judged—and took action on your judgment. You killed another man. You have coldly and arrogantly destroyed a human life, where all men before could not decide. You took it for your prerogative. And I have judged. And you are free. But who art thou, to judge another?"

—PG WYAL