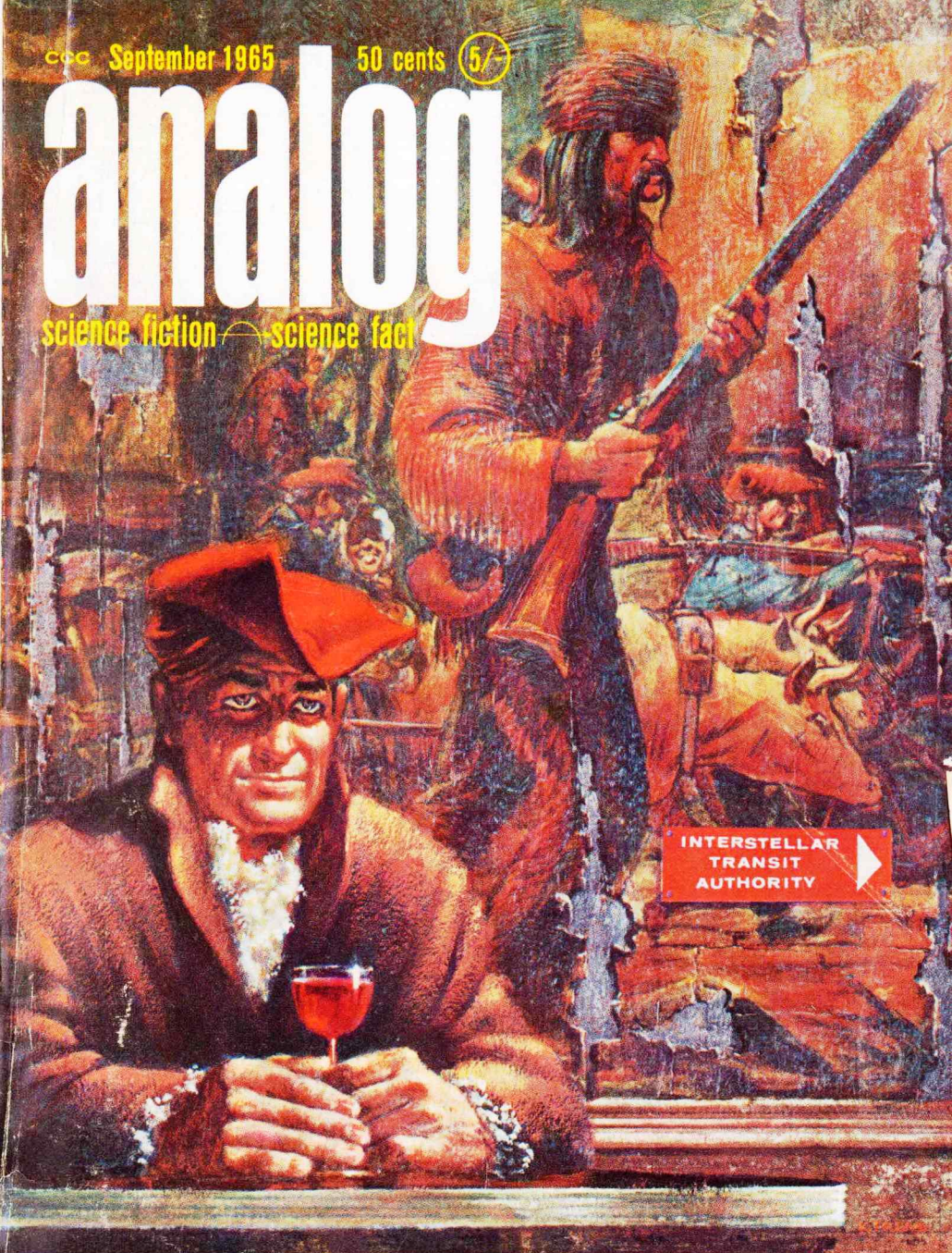


COC September 1965

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INTERSTELLAR
TRANSIT
AUTHORITY

SPACE PIONEER BY **MACK REYNOLDS**

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EDITORIAL AND
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HOW LITTLE WE KNOW

It's been pointed out that about ninety per cent of all the scientists who ever lived are alive today. Science, as what we mean today by the term, is only about three centuries old. And, now that science has barely gotten started, we're smothering in an information explosion.

Yet on this foundation, Science says with resounding certainty that no one can ever exceed the speed of light—and, until very recently, that the noble gases are totally incapable of chemical reaction, and that Mercury has no atmosphere and always faces with one side toward the Sun.

Radiotelescope work with the huge 1,000-foot dish in Puerto Rico has revealed that Mercury does turn on its axis with respect to the Sun. And it's also known that Mercury has an atmosphere.

Science had proven that Mercury couldn't possibly have an atmosphere—except, perhaps (and very appropriately!) an atmosphere of mercury vapor. Since it was “known” that one side always faced the Sun, and that side had a tem-

perature near the melting point of zinc, and Mercury was a small planet with only about a fifth of Earth's ability to hold gases against diffusion into space—obviously Mercury couldn't hold a gaseous atmosphere. Except, of course, for some high-boiling, very heavy atoms such as metallic mercury. And the “cold side” of Mercury, we were assured, was the coldest spot in the Solar System—even colder than Neptune's surface, because Neptune did expose all its surface to the weak sunlight.

Of course, it was easy to prove mathematically that Mercury long since stopped rotating with respect to the Sun, because of the immense tidal force of the nearby (36,000,000 miles) Sun. If it ever had rotated, those tidal drags had long, long since clutched it, and stopped it, as our Moon has been stopped by the tidal grip of Earth.

Unfortunately, these proofs turn out—now they tell us!—to be somewhat like the mathematically valid proof that a bumblebee can't fly. The proof is perfectly valid mathematically; it is a correct logi-

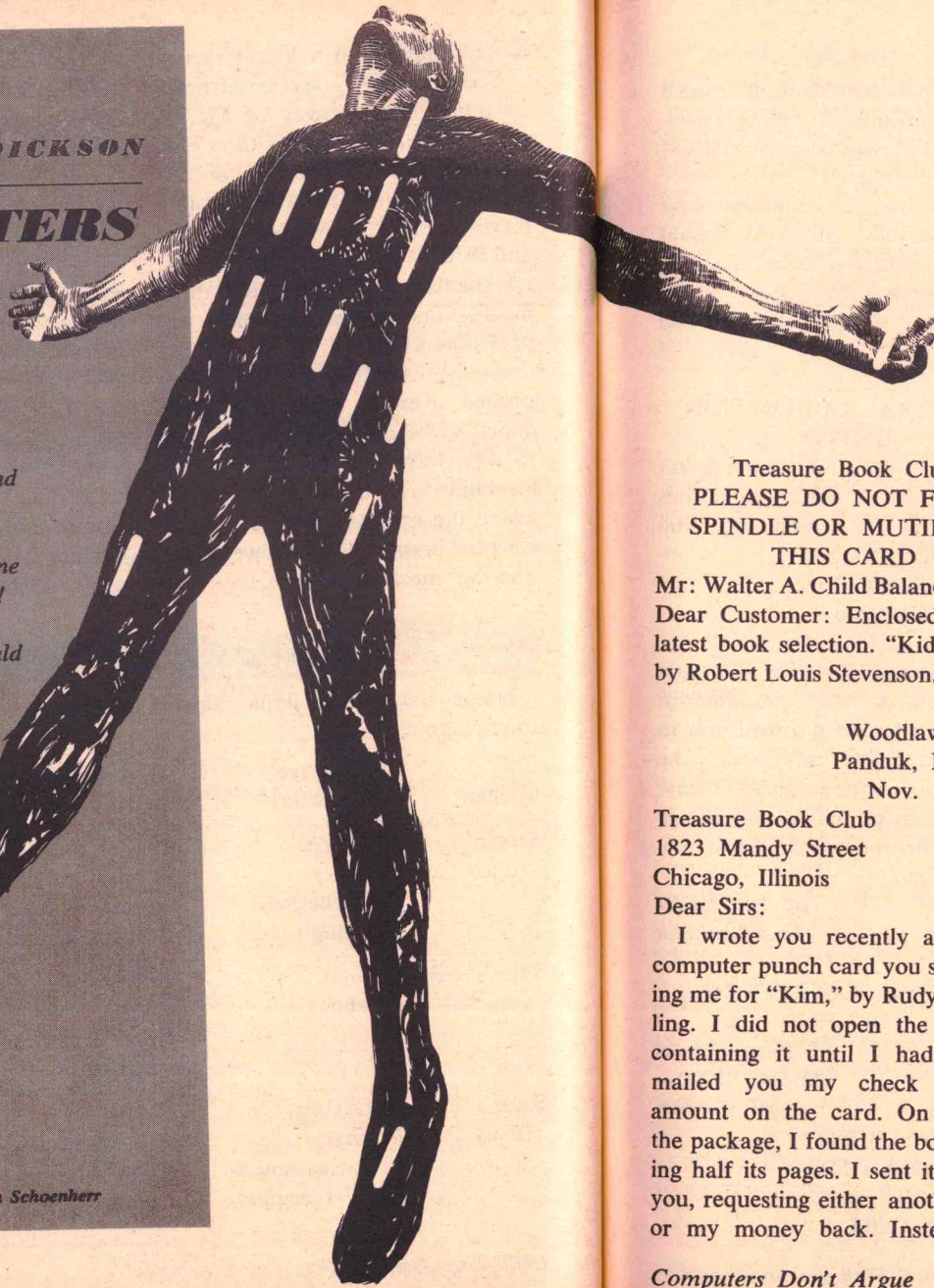
EDITORIAL BY JOHN W. CAMPBELL

GORDON R. DICKSON

COMPUTERS DON'T ARGUE

*A computer
is the Ultimate Bigot.
Since it's absolutely and
totally lacking in
imagination,
it can't possibly imagine
that it could be wrong!
Or, of course, that
another computer could
be wrong . . .*

Illustrated by John Schoenherr



Treasure Book Club
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
SPINDLE OR MUTILATE
THIS CARD

Mr: Walter A. Child Balance: \$4.98
Dear Customer: Enclosed is your
latest book selection. "Kidnapped,"
by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
Nov. 16, 1965

Treasure Book Club
1823 Mandy Street
Chicago, Illinois
Dear Sirs:

I wrote you recently about the
computer punch card you sent, bill-
ing me for "Kim," by Rudyard Kip-
ling. I did not open the package
containing it until I had already
mailed you my check for the
amount on the card. On opening
the package, I found the book miss-
ing half its pages. I sent it back to
you, requesting either another copy
or my money back. Instead, you

have sent me a copy of "Kid-
napped," by Robert Louis Steven-
son. Will you please straighten this
out?

I hereby return the copy of
"Kidnapped."

Sincerely yours,
Walter R. Child

Treasure Book Club
SECOND NOTICE
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
SPINDLE OR MUTILATE
THIS CARD

Mr: Walter A. Child Balance: \$4.98
For "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis
Stevenson
(If remittance has been made for
the above, please disregard this
notice)

437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
Jan. 21, 1966

Treasure Book Club
1823 Mandy Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sirs:

May I direct your attention to my letter of November 16, 1965? You are still continuing to dun me with computer punch cards for a book I did not order. Whereas, actually, it is your company that owes me money.

Sincerely yours,
Walter A. Child

Treasure Book Club
1823 Mandy Street
Chicago, Illinois
Feb. 1, 1966

Mr. Walter A. Child
437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

We have sent you a number of reminders concerning an amount owing to us as a result of book purchases you have made from us. This amount, which is \$4.98 is now long overdue.

This situation is disappointing to us, particularly since there was no hesitation on our part in extending you credit at the time original arrangements for these purchases were made by you. If we do not receive payment in full by return mail, we will be forced to turn the matter over to a collection agency.

Very truly yours,
Samuel P. Grimes
Collection Mgr.

437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
Feb. 5, 1966

Dear Mr. Grimes:

Will you stop sending me punch cards and form letters and make me some kind of a direct answer from a human being?

I don't owe you money. You owe me money. Maybe I should turn your company over to a collection agency.

Walter A. Child

FEDERAL COLLECTION
OUTFIT

88 Prince Street
Chicago, Illinois
Feb. 28, 1966

Mr. Walter A. Child
437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

Your account with the Treasure Book Club, of \$4.98 plus interest and charges has been turned over to our agency for collection. The amount due is now \$6.83. Please send your check for this amount or we shall be forced to take immediate action.

Jacob N. Harshe
Vice President

FEDERAL COLLECTION
OUTFIT

88 Prince Street
Chicago, Illinois
April 8, 1966

Mr. Walter A. Child
437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

You have seen fit to ignore our courteous requests to settle your long overdue account with Treasure Book Club, which is now, with accumulated interest and charges, in the amount of \$7.51.

If payment in full is not forthcoming by April 11, 1966 we will be forced to turn the matter over to our attorneys for immediate court action.

Ezekiel B. Harshe
President

MALONEY, MAHONEY,
MACNAMARA and PRUITT
Attorneys

89 Prince Street
Chicago, Illinois
April 29, 1966

Mr. Walter A. Child
437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

Your indebtedness to the Treasure Book Club has been referred to us for legal action to collect.

This indebtedness is now in the amount of \$10.01. If you will send us this amount so that we may receive it before May 5, 1966, the matter may be satisfied. However, if we do not receive satisfaction in full by that date, we will take steps to collect through the courts.

I am sure you will see the advantage of avoiding a judgment against you, which as a matter of record would do lasting harm to your credit rating.

Very truly yours,

Hagthorpe M. Pruitt Jr.
Attorney at law

437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
May 4, 1966

Mr. Hagthorpe M. Pruitt, Jr.
Maloney, Mahoney, MacNamara
and Pruitt

89 Prince Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Pruitt:

You don't know what a pleasure it is to me in this matter to get a letter from a live human being to whom I can explain the situation.

This whole matter is silly. I explained it fully in my letters to the Treasure Book Company. But I might as well have been trying to explain to the computer that puts out their punch cards, for all the good it seemed to do. Briefly, what happened was I ordered a copy of "Kim," by Rudyard Kipling, for \$4.98. When I opened the package they sent me, I found the book had only half its pages, but I'd previously mailed a check to pay them for the book.

I sent the book back to them, asking either for a whole copy or my money back. Instead, they sent me a copy of "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson—which I had not ordered; and for which they have been trying to collect from me.

Meanwhile, I am still waiting for the money back that they owe me for the copy of "Kim" that I didn't get. That's the whole story. Maybe

you can help me straighten them out.

Relievedly yours,
Walter A. Child

P.S.: I also sent them back their copy of "Kidnapped," as soon as I got it, but it hasn't seemed to help. They have never even acknowledged getting it back.

MALONEY, MAHONEY,
MACNAMARA and PRUITT
Attorneys

89 Prince Street
Chicago, Illinois
May 9, 1966

Mr. Walter A. Child
437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
Dear Mr. Child:

I am in possession of no information indicating that any item purchased by you from the Treasure Book Club has been returned.

I would hardly think that, if the case had been as you stated, the Treasure Book Club would have retained us to collect the amount owing from you.

If I do not receive your payment in full within three days, by May 12, 1966, we will be forced to take legal action.

Very truly yours,
Hagthorpe M. Pruitt Jr.

COURT OF MINOR CLAIMS
Chicago, Illinois

Mr. Walter A. Child:
437 Woodlawn Drive,
Panduk, Michigan

Be informed that a judgment was taken and entered against you in this court this day of May 26, 1966 in the amount of \$15.66 including court costs.

Payment in satisfaction of this judgment may be made to this court or to the adjudged creditor. In the case of payment being made to the creditor, a release should be obtained from the creditor and filed with this court in order to free you of legal obligation in connection with this judgment.

Under the recent Reciprocal Claims Act, if you are a citizen of a different state, a duplicate claim may be automatically entered and judged against you in your own state so that collection may be made there as well as in the State of Illinois.

COURT OF MINOR CLAIMS
Chicago, Illinois
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
SPINDLE OR MUTILATE
THIS CARD

Judgment was passed this day of May 27, 1966, under Statute \$15.66

Against: Child, Walter A. of 347 Woodlawn Drive, Panduk, Michigan. Pray to enter a duplicate claim for judgment

In: Picayune Court—Panduk, Michigan

For Amount: Statute 941

437 Woodlawn Drive
Panduk, Michigan
May 31, 1966

Samuel P. Grimes
Vice President, Treasure Book Club
1823 Mandy Street
Chicago, Illinois
Grimes:

This business has gone far enough. I've got to come down to Chicago on business of my own tomorrow. I'll see you then and we'll get this straightened out once and for all, about who owes what to whom, and how much!

Yours,
Walter A. Child

From the desk of the Clerk
Picayune Court

June 1, 1966

Harry:

The attached computer card from Chicago's Minor Claims Court against A. Walter has a 1500-series Statute number on it. That puts it over in Criminal with you, rather than Civil, with me. So I herewith submit it for your computer instead of mine. How's business?

Joe

CRIMINAL RECORDS
Panduk, Michigan
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
SPINDLE OR MUTILATE
THIS CARD

Convicted: (Child) A. Walter
On: May 26, 1966

Address: 437 Woodlawn Drive,
Panduk, Mich.

Crim: Statute: 1566 (Corrected)
1567

Crime: Kidnap

Date: Nov. 16, 1965

Notes: At large. To be picked up at once.

POLICE DEPARTMENT, PANDUK, MICHIGAN. TO POLICE DEPARTMENT CHICAGO ILLINOIS. CONVICTED SUBJECT A. (COMPLETE FIRST NAME UNKNOWN) WALTER, SOUGHT HERE IN CONNECTION REF. YOUR NOTIFICATION OF JUDGMENT FOR KIDNAP OF CHILD NAMED ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, ON NOV. 16, 1965. INFORMATION HERE INDICATES SUBJECT FLED HIS RESIDENCE, AT 437 WOODLAWN DRIVE, PANDUK, AND MAY BE AGAIN IN YOUR AREA.

POSSIBLE CONTACT IN YOUR AREA: THE TREASURE BOOK CLUB, 1823 MANDY STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. SUBJECT NOT KNOWN TO BE ARMED, BUT PRESUMED DANGEROUS. PICK UP AND HOLD, ADVISING US OF CAPTURE . . .

TO POLICE DEPARTMENT, PANDUK, MICHIGAN. REFERENCE YOUR REQUEST TO PICK UP AND HOLD A. (COMPLETE FIRST NAME UNKNOWN) WALTER, WANTED IN PANDUK ON STATUTE 1567, CRIME OF KIDNAPPING.

SUBJECT ARRESTED AT OFFICES OF TREASURE BOOK CLUB, OPERATING THERE UNDER ALIAS WALTER ANTHONY CHILD AND ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT \$4.98 FROM ONE SAMUEL P. GRIMES, EMPLOYEE OF THAT COMPANY.

DISPOSAL: HOLDING FOR YOUR ADVICE.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PANDUK,
MICHIGAN TO POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

REF: A. WALTER (ALIAS WALTER
ANTHONY CHILD) SUBJECT WANTED
FOR CRIME OF KIDNAP, YOUR AREA,
REF: YOUR COMPUTER PUNCH CARD
NOTIFICATION OF JUDGMENT,
DATED MAY 27, 1966. COPY OUR
CRIMINAL RECORDS PUNCH CARD
HEREWITH FORWARDED TO YOUR
COMPUTER SECTION.

CRIMINAL RECORDS
Chicago, Illinois
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
SPINDLE OR MUTILATE
THIS CARD

SUBJECT (CORRECTION—
OMITTED RECORD SUPPLIED)
APPLICABLE STATUTE NO. 1567
JUDGMENT NO. 456789
TRIAL RECORD: APPARENTLY MIS-
FILED AND UNAVAILABLE
DIRECTION: TO APPEAR FOR SEN-
TENCING BEFORE JUDGE JOHN ALEX-
ANDER MCDIVOT, COURTROOM A
JUNE 9, 1966

From the Desk of
Judge Alexander J. McDivot
June 2, 1966

Dear Tony:

I've got an adjudged criminal
coming up before me for sentencing
Thursday morning—but the trial
transcript is apparently misfiled.

I need some kind of information
(Ref: A. Walter—Judgment No.
456789, Criminal). For example,
what about the victim of the kid-

napping. Was victim harmed?
Jack McDivot

June 3, 1966

Records Search Unit
Re: Ref: Judgment No. 456789
—was victim harmed?

Tonio Malagasi
Records Division

June 3, 1966

To: United States Statistics Office
Attn.: Information Section
Subject: Robert Louis Stevenson
Query: Information concerning

Records Search Unit
Criminal Records Division
Police Department
Chicago, Ill.

June 5, 1966

To: Records Search Unit
Criminal Records Division
Police Department
Chicago, Illinois
Subject: Your query re Robert
Louis Stevenson (File no. 189623)
Action: Subject deceased. Age at
death, 44 yrs. Further information
requested?

A. K.
Information Section
U. S. Statistics Office

June 6, 1966

To: United States Statistics Office
Attn.: Information Division
Subject: Re: File no. 189623

No further information required.

Thank you.
Records Search Unit

Criminal Records Division
Police Department
Chicago, Illinois

June 7, 1966

To: Tonio Malagasi
Records Division
Re: Ref: judgment No. 456789—
victim is dead.

Records Search Unit

June 7, 1966

To: Judge Alexander J. McDivot's
Chambers
Dear Jack:

Ref: Judgment No. 456789. The
victim in this kidnap case was ap-
parently slain.

From the strange lack of back-
ground information on the killer
and his victim, as well as the vic-
tim's age, this smells to me like a
gangland killing. This for your in-
formation. Don't quote me. It
seems to me, though, that Steven-
son—the victim—has a name that
rings a faint bell with me. Possibly,
one of the East Coast Mob, since
the association comes back to me
as something about pirates—possi-
bly New York dockage hijackers—
and something about buried loot.

As I say, above is only specula-
tion for your private guidance..

Any time I can help . . .

Best,
Tony Malagasi
Records Division

MICHAEL R. REYNOLDS
Attorney-at-law

49 Water Street
Chicago, Illinois
June 8, 1966

Dear Tim:

Regrets: I can't make the fishing
trip. I've been court-appointed here
to represent a man about to be sen-
tenced tomorrow on a kidnapping
charge.

Ordinarily, I might have tried to
beg off, and McDivot, who is do-
ing the sentencing, would probably
have turned me loose. But this is
the damndest thing you ever heard
of.

The man being sentenced has ap-
parently been not only charged, but
adjudged guilty as a result of a
comedy of errors too long to go
into here. He not only isn't guilty—
he's got the best case I ever heard
of for damages against one of the
larger Book Clubs headquartered
here in Chicago. And that's a case I
wouldn't mind taking on.

It's inconceivable—but damna-
bly possible, once you stop to think
of it in this day and age of machine-
made records—that a completely
innocent man could be put in this
position.

There shouldn't be much to it.
I've asked to see McDivot tomorrow
before the time for sentencing, and
it'll just be a matter of explaining
to him. Then I can discuss the dam-
age suit with my freed client at his
leisure.

Fishing next weekend?

Yours,
Mike

MICHAEL R. REYNOLDS

Attorney-at-law

49 Water Street
Chicago, Illinois

June 10

Dear Tim:

In haste—

No fishing this coming week either. Sorry.

You won't believe it. My innocent-as-a-lamb-and-I'm-not-kidding client has just been sentenced to death for first-degree murder in connection with the death of his kidnap victim.

Yes, I explained the whole thing to McDivot. And when he explained his situation to me, I nearly fell out of my chair.

It wasn't a matter of my not convincing him. It took less than three minutes to show him that my client should never have been within the walls of the County Jail for a second. But—get this—McDivot couldn't do a thing about it.

The point is, my man had already been judged guilty according to the computerized records. In the absence of a trial record—of course there never was one (but that's something I'm not free to explain to you now)—the judge has to go by what records are available. And in the case of an adjudged prisoner, McDivot's only legal choice was whether to sentence to life imprisonment, or execution.

The death of the kidnap victim, according to the statute, made the death penalty mandatory. Under

the new laws governing length of time for appeal, which has been shortened because of the new system of computerizing records, to force an elimination of unfair delay and mental anguish to those condemned, I have five days in which to file an appeal, and ten to have it acted on.

Needless to say, I am not going to monkey with an appeal. I'm going directly to the Governor for a pardon—after which we will get this farce reversed. McDivot has already written the Governor, also, explaining that his sentence was ridiculous, but that he had no choice. Between the two of us, we ought to have a pardon in short order.

Then, I'll make the fur fly . . .
And we'll get in some fishing.

Best,
Mike

OFFICE OF THE
GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS

June 17, 1966

Mr. Michael R. Reynolds

49 Water Street

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

In reply to your query about the request for pardon for Walter A. Child (A. Walter), may I inform you that the Governor is still on his trip with the Midwest Governors Committee, examining the Wall in Berlin. He should be back next Friday.

I will bring your request and let-

ters to his attention the minute he returns.

Very truly yours,
Clara B. Jilks
Secretary to the Governor

June 27, 1966

Michael R. Reynolds

49 Water Street

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mike:

Where is that pardon?

My execution date is only five days from now!

Walt

June 29, 1966

Walter A. Child (A. Walter)

Cell Block E

Illinois State Penitentiary

Joilet, Illinois

Dear Walt:

The Governor returned, but was called away immediately to the White House in Washington to give his views on interstate sewage.

I am camping on his doorstep and will be on him the moment he arrives here.

Meanwhile, I agree with you about the seriousness of the situation. The warden at the prison there, Mr. Allen Magruder will bring this letter to you and have a private talk with you. I urge you to listen to what he has to say; and I enclose letters from your family also urging you to listen to Warden Magruder.

Yours,
Mike

June 30, 1966

Michael R. Reynolds

49 Water Street

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mike: (This letter being smuggled out by Warden Magruder)

As I was talking to Warden Magruder in my cell, here, news was brought to him that the Governor has at last returned for a while to Illinois, and will be in his office early tomorrow morning, Friday. So you will have time to get the pardon signed by him and delivered to the prison in time to stop my execution on Saturday.

Accordingly, I have turned down the Warden's kind offer of a chance to escape; since he told me he could by no means guarantee to have all the guards out of my way when I tried it; and there was a chance of my being killed escaping.

But now everything will straighten itself out. Actually, an experience as fantastic as this had to break down sometime under its own weight.

Best,
Walt

FOR THE SOVEREIGN
STATE OF ILLINOIS

I, Hubert Daniel Willikens, Governor of the State of Illinois, and invested with the authority and powers appertaining thereto, including the power to pardon those in my judgment wrongfully convicted or otherwise deserving of executive mercy, do this day of

July 1, 1966 do announce and proclaim that Walter A. Child (A. Walter) now in custody as a consequence of erroneous conviction upon a crime of which he is entirely innocent, is fully and freely pardoned of said crime. And I do direct the necessary authorities having custody of the said Walter A. Child (A. Walter) in whatever place or places he may be held, to immediately free, release, and allow unhindered departure to him . . .

Interdepartmental Routing Service
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD,
MUTILATE, OR SPINDLE
THIS CARD

Failure to route Document properly.
To: Governor Hubert Daniel Wilkens
Re: Pardon issued to Walter A.

Child, July 1, 1966

Dear State Employee:

You have failed to attach your Routing Number.

PLEASE: Resubmit document with this card and form 876, explaining your authority for placing a TOP RUSH category on this document. Form 876 must be signed by your Departmental Superior.

RESUBMIT ON: Earliest possible date ROUTING SERVICE office is open. In this case, Tuesday, July 5, 1966

WARNING: Failure to submit form 876 WITH THE SIGNATURE OF YOUR SUPERIOR may make you liable to prosecution for misusing a Service of the State Government. A warrant may be issued for your arrest.

There are NO exceptions. YOU have been WARNED.

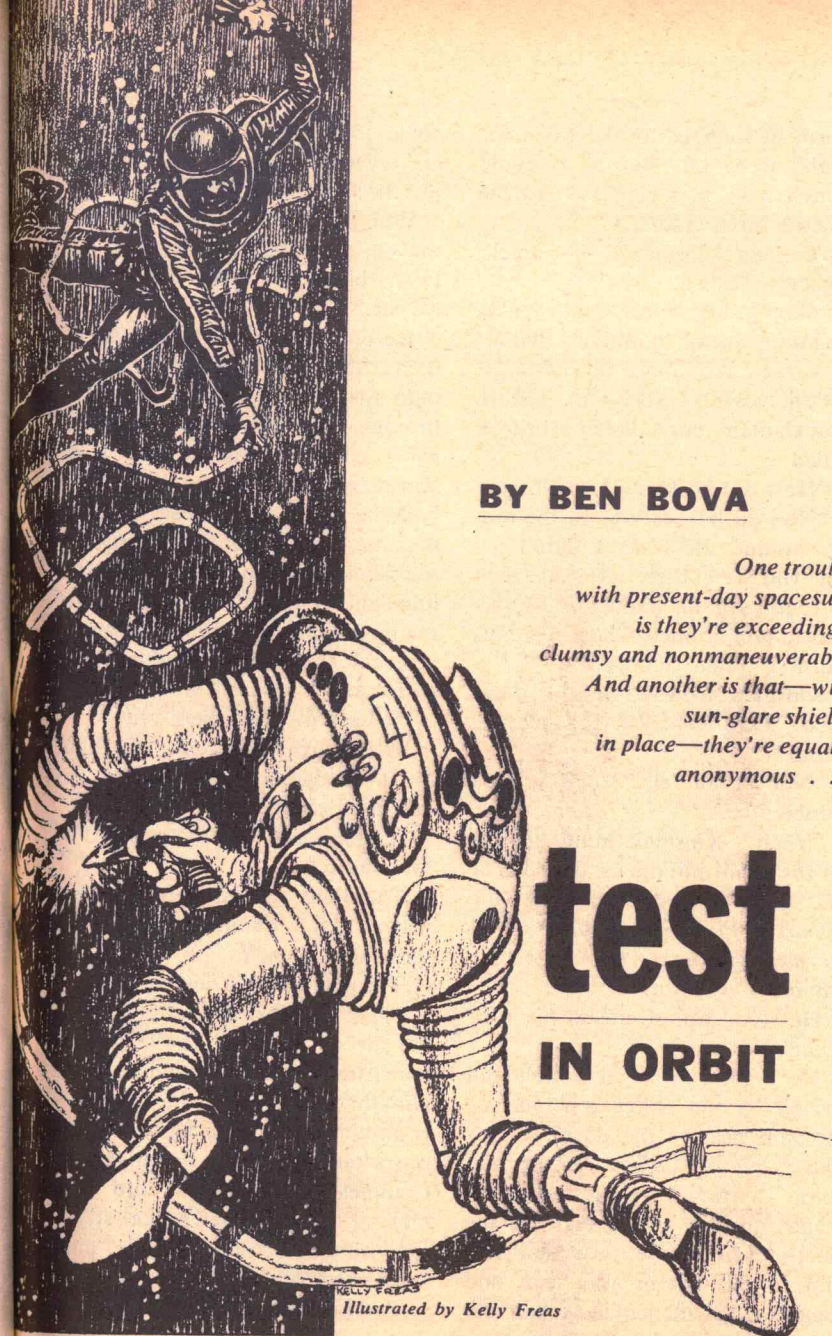
IN TIMES TO COME

Next issue features a yarn titled "Overproof," by Johnathan Blake MacKenzie.

Everybody knows what "human" means—it's just that, at any given moment, they can't quite define what it means. Here's a colony planet where there are local life forms that are primates, and a local life form that looks somewhat like an octopus riding on a cat's body, and it's easy to tell the "human" isn't it? Or . . . is it? How do you prove it to the dedicated do-gooder type that insists that a thing that looks like a man, and acts like an animal *must* be human . . .

Also coming up an article concerning a genuinely original discovery in medicine! The discoverer is a kid; so what? The discovery works!

The Editor.



BY BEN BOVA

*One trouble
with present-day spacesuits
is they're exceedingly
clumsy and nonmaneuverable.
And another is that—with
sun-glare shields
in place—they're equally
anonymous . . .*

test

IN ORBIT

Illustrated by Kelly Freas