

The Riverboat Fabulist

Farmer's *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* and "Escape from Loki" Considered Harmful

By

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Considered "Harmful"

The phrase "considered harmful" is a "term of art" for something used because it's convenient but the usage of which creates more problems than it solves that originates in computer programming. It refers specifically to techniques and methodology that are beneficial in the short run but pose critical problems in the long run and are thus risky and unsafe.

Its use in this context originated with a letter by Dutch computer scientist Edsger Wybe Dijkstra (11 May 1930–06 Aug 2002) published as *Communications of the ACM* (Association for Computing Machinery), Vol. XI, No. 3 "GOTO Statement Considered Harmful" (Mar 1968), in which Dijkstra criticized the excessive use of the GOTO statement in programming languages of the day and advocated structured programming instead.

Code that uses GOTO statements is harder to understand than alternative constructions. GOTO remains in use in certain common usage patterns, but alternatives are generally used if available. Debates over its (more limited) uses continue in academia and software industry circles, but the consensus is that it creates more problems than it solves and invites software mismanagement.

My premise here is that Farmer's "Wold Newton Family" (WNF) concept, and the lengths to which Farmer went to develop and promote it, has done to Doc Savage what Frank Miller (27 Jan 1957—) did to Batman in the four-part "prestige" miniseries *Batman: The Dark Knight* (Jun–Sep 1986), collected as the graphic novel *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (Dec 1986).

By its very nature, his WNF Tree takes an iconoclastic if not contrarian view to any "poplit" that it touches, literally rewriting its DNA recombinantly. In this article, I document the myriad ways that his WNF Tree has, at best, sidetracked and, at worst, replaced Doc Savage with the Farmer Variation.

Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life (17 Aug 1973, misreported as "Mar 1973" due to the date code "O24" on page 226 being misconstrued) is thus equal parts theses and feces. Many of Farmer's hypotheses are antithetical to the premises that made Doc Savage who and what he truly is: a paragon of human self-development by virtue of his own considerable personal effort, as exemplified in his aspirational *Code of Doc Savage*.

In his ruthless retroactive rationalization of Doc Savage as a three-dimensional, fully human being, prey to all the heartache and the thousand natural shocks to which Flesh is heir, Farmer made the mighty "Man of Bronze" a Pagod thing of sabre sway, with fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

In so doing, he added amalgams that corrupted Doc's hitherto incorruptible alloy absolutely.

What makes both WNF, *DS: HAL* and "Escape from Loki" harmful isn't so much what they purport to be as for the absolute and unquestioning adherence by fans and their accordance to its various premises as being both authoritative and definitive, despite evidence to the contrary. Rather than being the

authoritative analysis it's been made out to be, it's a more a Nietzschean deconstruction. The harm increases with each layer of abstraction from premise to conclusions made based upon each premise in chain of "deduction" (inference) that adds another layer of abstraction.

The "Thinking Man's" Trickster from Terre Haute

Philip José Farmer (26 Jan 1918–25 Feb 2009) was a "fabulist" in every sense and proud of it.

Every word he wrote was committed to paper with a sly nod and wink. Some of it was deadly serious, but none of it was intended to be taken seriously. His work was always iconoclastic, a challenge to any traditional or established viewpoint he considered hidebound, designing to turn everything on its head or inside out if not both and force the reader to reconsider that everything that we think we know may be wrong. The through line of all his works is "You think so? Well, think again!"

Farmer always identified with the "Trickster Spirit" and both word and deed.

From *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* (30 Jan 1997) by William J. Hynes and William G. Doty:

Every trickster has several of the following six traits:

- 1. Fundamentally ambiguous and anomalous.*
- 2. Deceiver and trick-player.*
- 3. Shapeshifter or master of disguise.*
- 4. Situation-inverter.*
- 5. Messenger and imitator of the gods.*
- 6. Sacred and lewd bricoleur ["tinkerer"].*

One needn't go far into Farmer's bibliography to see that he gleefully checks all six boxes.

And who or what are Trickster Spirits? There's at least one in every mythology you care to name. The most familiar are *Anansi* (Africa), *Br'er Rabbit* (African American version of same), *Coyote* or *Kickaha* (Native American), *Hermes* or *Mercury* (Greco-Roman), *Kitsune* (Japan), *Loki* (Norse), *Māui* (Hawai'i), *Puck* or *Robin Goodfellow* (British), *Raven* (Pacific Northwest), *Sun Wukong* ["Monkey King"] (China), and *Till Eulenspiegel* [literally "Owl Hand-mirror" but in fact a veiled pun on a Low German phrase translating to "ass-wipe"] (Teutonic).

Farmer identified himself with Kickaha throughout his *World of Tiers* (Jan 1965–Sep 1993) series and named the German POW camp where Doc Savage and the five men who would become his comrades-in-arms for Loki.

Born during the final year of World War I, Farmer began writing poetry and fictional prose in the final year of World War II at the age of twenty-seven. A voracious reader who resolved to become a writer in the fourth grade, he became an agnostic at age fourteen and married in 1941 at the age of twenty-three just in time for Pearl Harbor to disrupt the lives of every American.

After washing out of flight training in the U.S. Army Air Force, he went to work in a local steel mill and continued his education, earning a bachelor's degree in English from Bradley University in 1950, and made a living principally as a technical writer.

His first published work was a mainstream war story in *Adventure*, Vol. 114, No. 5, "O'Brien and Obrenov" (Mar 1946), a retelling of "The Judgement of Solomon" (1 Kings 3:16–28) set in the opening days of the Cold War. American forces led by Colonel O'Brien and Russian forces led by Colonel Obrenov capture the German town of Mautz, splitting it evenly in half east and west just like Berlin. Then the desperately wanted SS "colonel-general" (*SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer*) Schutzmilller is captured by both the Russians and the Americans exactly on the chalk-line dividing the city. It's a puckish "comedy of errors" as O'Brien and Obrenov try to come to a politically expedient resolution to their dilemma.

His next two published works were the poems "Imagination" and "Good but Not Good Enough" printed in 1949 while he a student at Bradley. Only the former was published nationally in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, "Imagination" (Summer 1954) and then only because he'd won the 1953 Hugo Award for "Most Promising New Author" for his fourth published work and first science fiction short story in *Startling Stories*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 "The Lovers" (Aug 1952), illustrated by Virgil Finlay, which turned science fiction on its ear by tackling the most taboo subject of the time a year before the December 1953 debut of *Playboy Magazine*.

His fifth published work in *Startling Stories*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 "Sail On! Sail On!" (Dec 1952) was the 1492 voyage of Christopher Columbus set in an "alternate universe" where the Earth is indeed a flat disc governed by Aristotelian rather than Newtonian physics and two-way radio telegraph powered by spiritual, not technological, allows contact with Spain until the ships sail off edge into Earth orbit.

In short, Farmer broke every "rule" and tackled every SF trope with obvious relish and a lot of salt.

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Vol, VII, No. 6 (Issue 43) "Totem and Taboo" (Dec 1954) was the first of Farmer's "Polytropical Paramyths" using *Totem und Tabu: Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker* [*Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotic*] (Jan 1913), an application of psychoanalysis to the fields of archaeology, anthropology, and the study of religion regarding the origins of totemism and exogamy in ancient preliterate societies, by Sigismund Schlomo "Sigmund" Freud (06 May 1856–23 Sep 1939), as a springboard into comedic if not satirical *reductio absurdum*.

Both totems and taboos feature prominently in all Farmer's works, as does questioning if not challenging personal and societal assumptions and presumptions about "How Things Are Supposed to Be" and proposing often radical alternatives.

Farmer initially defined *Polytropical Paramyth* as "a sort of literary Rorschach test, in which different people may see different things" in his introduction to his contribution to the SF anthology *Orbit 3* "Please Don't Wash the Carats" (Jun 1968).

*It came like a hot flash while reading a passage in Henry Miller's **Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch**. Damon Knight, who bought it for **Orbit 3**, wasn't sure what it meant, and neither did, or [sic] do, I. ...*

“There are diamonds born during the night in violent storms.” See what it means to you; then try it on your friends.

He published four more Polytropical Paramyths over two decades: *Quark/2* “The Voice of the Sonar in My Vermiform Appendix” (Feb 1971), *Quark/4* “Brass and Gold, or Horse and Zeppelin in Beverly Hills” (Aug 1971), *TMOF&SF*, Vol, XLI, No. 5 (Issue 246) “Only Who Can Make a Tree?” (Nov 1971), and *Nova 2* “The Sumerian Oath (A Polytropical Paramyth)” (Jul 1972), with all six collected in *The Book of Philip José Farmer, or The Wares of Simple Simon’s Custard Pie and Space Man* (Jul 1973).

“Brass and Gold” is part of the “Beverly Hills Trilogy” along with *Dangerous Visions* “Riders of the Purple Wage, Or the Great Gavage” (Oct 1967) and *If*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (Issue 136) “Down in the Black Gang” (Mar 1969), which apparently *don’t* qualify as Polytropical Paramyths, perhaps *only* because their novelette and novella length.

He further defines Polytropical Paramyths as “Many-valued almost-myths (the literal translation from the ancient Greek)” and characterizes them as “short stories which are closer to the films of the Marx Brothers and The Three Stooges than anything else I can think of.”

They exemplify the “Trickster from Terre Haute” in full bloom, playing literary mind games and gleefully inviting full audience participation of those with the wit to perceive and appreciate the jokes.

Farmer spent most of 1971 creating the *Riverworld* epic, reincarnating every human who has ever lived as contemporaries on an artificial world created expressly for that purpose by godlike unknown Powers That Be for purposes known unto them. What’s remarkable is that he was able to do this in just a year, although it would take twenty years to fully complete and become a “shared world” open to all.

In the anthology *New Dimensions 1: Fourteen Original Science Fiction Stories* “The Sliced-Crosswise Only-on-Tuesday World” (Aug 1971), he introduced the concept that would become another signature series: *Dayworld* (Feb 1985), *Dayworld Rebel* (Jun 1987), and *Dayworld Breakup* (Jun 1990).

Farmer also pseudonymously inserted *himself* into his stories, generally using names with the same initials as his own: “Peter Jairus Frigate” introduced in *To Your Scattered Go* (June 1971), the first volume of the *Riverworld* series, and “Paul Janus Finnegan” (“Kickaha the Trickster”) introduced in *The Maker of Universes* (10 Dec 1965). In *The Lavalite World* (Dec 1977), Farmer strongly implies that Finnegan is the great grandson of Phileas (J.)? Fogg, the hero of Jules Verne’s *Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-vingts Jours* [*Around the World in 80 Days*] (30 Jan 1873), thus making his pseudonymous *alter ego* part of the WNF.

He continued to take on taboo sex along with organized religion, the folly of the Cold War, the Generation Gap, corporatization, computerization, consumerism, cradle-to-grave welfare state, and every other hot-button issue of the day that took his fancy with all the satiric wit of Jonathan Swift coupled with the earthy ribaldry of Geoffrey Chaucer.

There was no sacred cow he was unwilling or unable to gore like another man’s ox. He was one of three persons to whom Robert Anson Heinlein (07 Jul 1907–08 May 1988) dedicated his own radical novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Jun 1961), the other two being Frederic William Brown (29 Oct 1906–11 Mar 1972), a science fiction writer known for his use of humor and a postmodern outlook with ingenious plotting devices and surprise endings, and Robert Alden Cornog (07 Jul 1912–17 Jul 1998), a literal “rocket scientist” and personal friend who’d worked on both nuclear fission and fusion.

Iconoclasts all, as were Farmer's contemporary literary soulmates Theodore Sturgeon (born Edward Hamilton Waldo, 26 Feb 1918–08 May 1985), Piers Anthony Dillingham Jacob (06 Aug 1934—), and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (11 Nov 1922–11 Apr 2007), whose work Farmer admired, emulated, and, to some extent, incorporated into his own. Toward the ends of the respective careers, both Farmer and Heinlein sought to unify their entire body of work within an overarching narrative.

For Heinlein, that meant bracketing all his "Future History" timeline within the lifetime of "Lazarus Long" (born Woodrow Wilson Smith, 1912—), eldest member of the "Howard Families" who achieved extraordinary longevity through selective breeding, introduced in *Astounding Science Fiction*, Vol XXVII, No 5 "Methuselah's Children" (Jul 1941, novelized 1958) and combining that with his "World as Myth" concept that posits that all fictional universes are equally real, created by the act of Authorship, and some Authors are Characters in another Author's story and *vice versa*, introduced in *The Number of the Beast* (Jun 1980).

For Farmer, that meant relating everyone who ever lived, died, and ultimately reincarnated on the Riverworld in a Grand Unified Family Tree that begin with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, whoever they truly were and wherever that might truly have been.

For both, it was an exercise in sophistry in furtherance of their own respective literary legacies.

By the time *Stranger in a Strange Land* was published, Farmer had already upset dozens more apple carts as he continue to push the envelope of what was possible to get past even the most hidebound editor or librarian: *The Green Odyssey* (Jun 1957); *TMOF&SF*, Vol. XVI, No. 6 (Issue 97) "The Alley Man" (Jun 1959); *A Woman a Day* (Jan 1960); *Flesh* (Apr 1960); *If Science Fiction*, Vol, X, No. 2 "Heel" (May 1960); *TMOF&SF*, Vol, XVIII, No. 5 (Issue 108) "Open to Me, My Sister" (May 1960, retitled "My Sister's Brother" later that year in the anthology *Strange Relations*); *TMOF&SF*, Vol, XX, No. 3 (Issue 118) "Prometheus" (Mar 1961); and the novel-length expansion of his 1952 breakthrough short story, *The Lovers* (Jun 1961).

Farmer caught the bug of the Sherlockian "Great Game" with the publication of *Baker Street Journal*, New Series X, i, "A Case of Identity, or The Adventures of the Seven Claytons" (Jan 1960) by Herbert Wilmarth Starr (06 Apr 1916–23 Nov 1976), then became obsessed with it first by *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street: A Life of the World's First Consulting Detective* (Jan 1962) and its follow-up *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-fifth Street: The Life and Times of America's Largest Private Detective* (28 Jan 1969) by William Stuart Baring-Gould (1913–10 Aug 1967).

And therein lies the rub, as the Great Game became the template for the WNF Tree.

The next three years were more of the same, ever bigger, bolder, and brighter, outdoing Heinlein in pushing into the frontiers of the possible, blazing paths few others dared to tread. Then, on Friday, 18 September 1964, Bantam Books' *The Fantastic Adventures of Doc Savage* No. 1 "The Man of Bronze" (Oct 1964), No. 2 "The Thousand-headed Man" (Oct 1964), and No. 3 "Meteor Menace" (Oct 1964) all hit the stands, even as *Jonny Quest*, Season 1, Episode 1, "The Mystery of the Lizard Men" (18 Sep 1964) hit the air, and suddenly forty-six-year-old Philip José Farmer felt fifteen again.

He got a new lease on life, began to think bigger than ever before, creating the kind of "Sense of Wonder" fiction that informed his childhood, but for grown-ups like himself who refused to grow up.

Inspired by those thrilling days of yesteryear, he got wholeheartedly into the Mythic Hero business!

Myth-ing in Action

Philip José Farmer didn't particularly care for how Bantam had reimagined to the look of Doc Savage for the Sixties—he famously wrote that Leone's "futuristic" visualization of Doc looked to him "like a fifty-five-year-old ex-Mr. Universe down on his luck"—but was delighted to see Doc back in print.

But he took his inspiration not from pulp fiction *per se* but rather from the soaring imaginative works of Jules Gabriel Verne (08 Feb 1828–24 Mar 1905), Lyman Frank Baum (15 May 1856–06 May 1919), and Edgar Rice Burroughs (12 Sep 1875–19 Mar 1950) that had shaped and informed his youth in the Roaring Twenties long before the advent of the "Hero Pulp" characters whose lives he would inextricably intertwine in his WNF Tree.

Everything was grist for the mill: penny dreadfuls, dime novels, pulp magazines, syndicated comic strips and their offshoot comic books, radio, film—all the popular culture of his early days with the accent on the Amazing, Astounding, Fantastic, Spicy, Startling, Thrilling, Uncanny, Unknown, and Weird.

It wasn't enough to create a Mythic Hero. He had to create a Universe in which that hero would stride like a god, Worlds that forged Heroes and were reshaped in turn by their world-shattering deeds. He wouldn't just write stories, but epic sagas that would span all of Creation: *Supersagas!*

He began with the aptly named *The Maker of Universes* (Jan 1965), the first volume of what would become known as the *World of Tiers* series: *The Gates of Creation* (Jan 1966), *A Private Cosmos* (Jan 1968), *Behind the Walls of Terra* (Aug 1970), *The Lavalite World* (Dec 1977), and *More Than Fire* (Sep 1993). [*Red Orc's Rage* (Sep 1991) is conceptually connected, but not part of the series.]

WOT: TMOU posits a small number (nine?) of long-lived if not immortal *Thoan* "Lords" who, rather than risk destroying their shared world in this universe, compete with one another to rule the various "pocket" universes which they individually created and rule as gods. These universes are literally made to order to their creators' personal taste. The "World of Tiers" introduced in *WOT: TMOU* and for which the series is named is essentially the classical Cosmos: a flat circular Earth on which all living things live, around which the Sun, Moon, and planets revolve, presumably in concentric crystal spheres, operating on mystical principles that make its existence not only possible but inevitable.

Rather being a gigantic plate or bowl, *WOT* is an Earth-sized circular ziggurat built like a wedding cake, the upper surfaces of each of its five layers a separate ecosystem offering often vastly different environments in which to live, analogous to different continents between which travel is perilous and difficult but not impossible, generally by scaling the sides of the four circular monoliths that form the Tiers, but also traversable by highly motivated and determined individuals or groups, some using unpowered airships, parachutes, and gliders built expressly for that purpose.

The base layer is *Okeanos*, a watery Garden of Eden populated by ancient Greeks. From this rises the monolith *Thayaphaeawoed*, surmounted by *Amerind*, replicating pre-Columbian Americas. Atop the monolith *Abharhploonta* lies *Dracheland*, an Arthurian feudal kingdom populated by medieval Teutons. The monolith *Doozvilnavava* gives rise to *Atlantis* or, rather, the ruins of same overrun by jungle. At the top of the monolith *Idaquizzoorhruz* stands the *Palace of Lord Jadawin*, godly master of all he surveys.

The “Thoan” appear to be derived from the “Four Zoas”—*Tharmas, Urizen, Luvah* (or *Orc*), and *Urthona* (or *Los*)—in *Albion*, the poetic mythopoeia of William Blake (28 Nov 1757–12 Aug 1827). Jadawin is the son of *Urizen*. The female counterparts of Four Zoas are *Enion, Ahania, Vala*, and *Enitharmon*. Jadawin’s father is *Urizen*, his sister Anana the Bright may be named for *Ahania*, Red Orc is *Luvah/Orc*, etc. Like the feuding Gods of Olympus, they share all the human foibles of their worshippers.

The novels are at least in part a vehicle to represent mythological character archetypes, but its central trope of a family of feuding dimension hopping immortal lords with godlike powers have drawn unfair comparison to *Nine Princes in Amber* (Jun 1970) by Roger Joseph Zelazny (13 May 1937–14 Jun 1995), even though Farmer’s *WOT: TMOU* predates Zelazny’s *NPIA* by half a decade.

At the same time, he began what is arguably the greatest supersaga of them all with *Worlds of Tomorrow*, Vol. II, No. 5 (Issue 11) “Day of the Great Shout” (Jan 1965), painstakingly pieced together into *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* (Jan 1971), *The Fabulous Riverboat* (Nov 1971), *The Dark Design* (Oct 1977), *The Magic Labyrinth* (Apr 1980), and *Gods of Riverworld* (Aug 1983). [*River of Eternity* (Nov 1983) is an expansion of Farmer’s “(I) Owe for the Flesh” winning entry for the 1952 Shasta Science Fiction Prize Novel Contest that formed the basis for *Worlds of Tomorrow*, Vol. III, No. 5 (Issue 17) “Riverworld” (Jan 1966) published fourteen years later.]

He revisited the idea of cross-dimensional travel to alternate realities in *The Gate of Time* (Oct 1966), specifically to primitive parallel Earth where the “futuristic” technical knowledge of time-displaced WW2 aviator Roger Two Hawks makes him a target of warring factions eager to possess it, later revised and expanded as *Two Hawks from Earth* (May 1979). Among the revisions was the bowdlerization of a graphic public castration scene, the local punishment for rapists.

It wasn’t until Farmer decided to write stories that were way too hot to handle for any mainstream publisher—*Image of the Beast: An Exorcism, Ritual One* (19 Nov 1968) and *Blown, or Sketches Among the Ruins of My Mind* (06 Oct 1969), so sexually explicit that he had to turn to pornographer Essex House to get them into print—that he first turned to his hand to his two favorite literary heroes—Tarzan and Doc Savage in the guise of “Lord Grandrith” and “Doc Caliban”—in the then-infamous and now merely notorious *A Feast Unknown: Vol. IX of the Memoirs of Lord Gandrith*, (17 Apr 1969).

From the “Foreword by Lord Grandrith” in *AFU: TMOLG*:

*I am immortal in the sense that I will be **thirty-two years of age in body** for a very, very, long time. However, accident, murder, and suicide can reduce me to the rotting corpse which others usually become **before their hundredth birthday**. I omitted disease from the fatal list. The same elixir that gives me a potentiality of thirty thousand years or more also preserves me from disease.*

It’s here that Farmer begins making his Mythic Hero literally “ageless” if not truly immortal. All the “Candidates” vying for *true* immortality were born at or before the turn of the Twentieth Century. Chief among these is Doc Caliban, the only Candidate who can give a sex-crazed Tarzan worthy competition.

Not only achieving “Peak Condition” but holding it for at least a century is a theme going forward.

Tarzan alone is the focus of *Lord Tyger* (Dec 1969) “dedicated to Edgar Rice Burroughs, without whom my childhood and youth would have been inestimably deprived and colorless” but no less adult than *AFU*, albeit able (barely) to pass muster with Doubleday and Signet.

Farmer then gave the world his tamed-down versions of Grandrith and Caliban in Ace Double 51375: *Lord of the Trees / The Mad Goblin* (01 Sep 1970), with *The Mad Goblin* published separately as *Keepers of the Secrets* (Dec 1983) and then both together again as *The Empire of the Nine* (Dec 1988).

The trilogy (soon to be a tetralogy) of *AFU*, *LOTT*, and *TMG* is now styled *Secrets of the Nine*.

Farmer continued to flesh out his epic tale of Tarzan as an Immortal Hero for the Ages in *Time’s Last Gift* (Jan 1972), the cornerstone for the foundation of the WNF Tree that is *Tarzan Alive: A Definitive Biography of Lord Greystoke* (28 Apr 1972) that melded Farmer’s “Memoirs of Lord Grandrith” Tarzan and Doc Savage pastiches to the Great Game, introducing the “Nine Unknown” to link WNF with *SOTN*. The game was now truly afoot!

And it really *was* just a Great Game, one that Farmer pursued seriously by never took seriously, nor did he intend for anyone to take seriously. He certainly didn’t take himself or his work seriously.

In 1972, Farmer visited with Norma Gerling Dent (13 Jul 1901–23 Aug 1995), the widow of author Lester Bernard Dent (12 Oct 1904–11 Mar 1959), while researching his “biography” of Doc Savage, during which he presented her with his business card.

PHILIP JOSE FARMER
UNREAL ESTATE AGENT & STOCK BAROQUER [sic]
Choice Lots: Ruritania, Poictesme, Ilium, Barstow
Middle Earth, Hallamshire, and Oz
High-Premium Shares: Hidalgo Trading Co.
Address: C/O Lord Greystoke
Nairobi, Kenya

Later cards would advertise Choice Lots in “Ruritania, Troy, Kokovoko [sic], Poictesme, Kôr, Barsoom, Raintree County, Carcosa, No. 7 Eccles Street, Bundelcund [sic], Middle Earth, Hallamshire, Oz & Peoria” with High-Premium Shares in “Cosmodemonic Telegraph Co., Universal Baseball Association, Hidalgo Trading Co., B. Jonas, and the White Company” and the Address “C/O Lord Greystoke, Estate of Africa.” I think the card he gave Norma was custom made for her to highlight the Doc Savage in-joke.

Farmer shamelessly promoted *Tarzan Alive* in *Esquire* (The Magazine for Men), Vol. LXXVII, No. 4 (Issue 461) “Tarzan Lives: An Exclusive Interview with the Eighth Duke Greystoke” (Apr 1972 with an “Editor’s Note” that was part of the story not an essay, a portrait of a sophisticated brandy-drinking “John Clayton, aka. Lord Greystoke, aka. Tarzan” seated in repose in black-tie formalwear with a leopard-print pocket handkerchief by Jean-Paul Goude (8 Dec 1940—), and a “Tarzan’s Family Tree, 1795-1901” genealogical chart.

The next foray into the WNF saga wasn't Doc Savage's "biography" but *The Other Log of Phileas Fogg* (Mar 1973) with a foreword and introduction by Farmer, and an article by H.W. Starr, "a Sherlogician [sic] who makes *Voyages Extraordinaires* of the mind" to whom it was dedicated.

The DAW Books cover text reads:

*The interstellar drama behind Jules Verne's
AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS is revealed
at last in this startling new novel by the
Hugo-winning author of TARZAN ALIVE.*

DS: HAL was written and published with little or no fanfare and a knowing nod-and-wink to its readers. The full title of the book sets the stage and opens with a fanfare.

From the title page of *DS: HAL*:

*DOC SAVAGE
His Apocalyptic Life
As the Archangel of Technopolis and Exotica
As the Golden-eyed Hero of 181 Supersagas
As the Bronze Knight of the Running Board
Including His Final Battle Against the Forces
of Hell Itself*

DS: HAL was never intended as an end in itself, just the next step in the growth of the WNF Tree.

The WNF concept was, is, and always will be the intended *end*, "a consummation devoutly to be wished" of a grand ambition begun after Farmer joined the Great Game and conceived the notion of relating every character from popular literature that he'd ever fancied into One Big Unhappy Family.

Using the time traveling Tarzan as a springboard and with the blessing of ERB heir Hulbert Burroughs (12 Aug 1909–08 Aug 1991), Farmer created the "Chronology of Khokarsa" and launched the *Ancient Opar* series. Only two were written and published, *Hadon of Ancient Opar* (Apr 1974) and *Flight to Opar* (Jun 1976), but he'd planned to write at least three more and as many as nine to twelve (sources vary), but low advances, poor sales, and a souring relationship with Hulbert Burroughs precluded more.

Flight to Opar had been announced as *Kill Hadon of Opar*, which suggests that Farmer was having second thoughts about the third, announced as *Kwasin of Opar* in 1979 but never finished. The outline was found in Farmer's archives in 2005, by Christopher Paul Carey, editor of *Farmerphile: The Magazine of Philip José Farmer* (Jul 2005–Jul 2009), who finished and published it as *The Song of Kwasin* (Dec 2015). A fragment of an alternative outline was fleshed out into *The Worlds of Philip José Farmer 2: Of Dust and Soul* "Kwasin and the Bear God" (Sep 2011) ahead of the main event.

At one point, Farmer famously joked that his contract specified that the name “Opar” had to appear in the title of any book in the series and, as a result, he was considering one titled *Nowhere Near Opar*. This stricture clearly didn’t apply to Carey and other authors who picked up Farmer’s fallen torch.

“After King Kong Fell” was published in the science fiction anthology *Omega* (HC 1973, SC Aug 1974) and reprinted in *Best SF: 74* (Jun 1975) and *Nebula Award Stories Ten* (Dec 1975) set the stage for gratuitous WNF character crossovers, allowing the branches of the literary Yggdrasil to interweave in mainstream media for the first time since *The Lord of Trees / The Mad Goblin*.

Following on its heels came the next crossover of WNF members: *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer* (Nov 1974), in which Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson encounter Lord Greystoke and travel in a dirigible piloted by a “madman” who may or may not have been the inspiration for the pulp heroes G-8, The Shadow, and The Spider per Farmer’s WNF. Due to copyright issues, it was rewritten with Mowgli from *The Jungle Book* (Jun 1894) replacing Tarzan of the Apes (Oct 1912) and published in the anthology in *The Grand Adventure “The Adventure of the Three Madmen”* (Nov 1984) and restored as *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes “The Peerless Peer”* (26 Aug 2011).

And that’s the whole point of the WNF: to justify and rationalize such literary character crossovers.

In 1974, theoretical physicists proposed a “Grand Unified Theory” (GUT) model in particle physics in which, at high energies, the three “gauge” interactions of the Standard Model (the electromagnetic, weak, and strong forces) are merged into a single force not yet directly observed.

Farmer sought nothing less than a Grand Unified Family Tree that linked together all the characters of popular fiction he’d ever enjoyed and, thanks to the Internet, largely succeeded within his lifetime.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Farmer

There’d been buzz about a Doc Savage movie since Bantam began reprinting the pulp novels in mass-market paperback. The runaway success of the ABC-TV series *Batman* (12 Jan 1966–15 Mar 1968) had unleashed a wave of “camp” nostalgia for the simple, square, and straightforward straightshooters of Yesteryear. The popularity of the Bantam reprint attracted the attention of its competitors.

Belmont had officially beaten Bantam to the punch with *The Shadow* No. 1 “Return of the Shadow” (Sep 1963) to No. 9 “Destination: Moon!” (Mar 1967), recasting The Shadow as the mastermind of a Cold War international spy agency. It failed, but Pyramid picked up the option and reprinted original pulp novels with period-evocative covers by James F. “Jim” Steranko (05 Nov 1938—) beginning with *The Shadow: Master of Darkness* No. 1 “The Living Shadow” (Oct 1974).

Berkley Medallion followed Bantam’s lead and reprinted original pulps without drawing attention to their Thirties origins, jumping in with The Shadow’s closest competitor with *The Spider: Master of Men* No. 1 “The Spider Strikes!” (Jan 1969) to No. 4 “City of Flaming Shadows” (Jan 1970). They, too, failed to find a following. Pocket reprinted them as *Spider* No. 1 “Death Reign of the Vampire King” (Jan 1975) to No. 4 “Death in the Spider” (Feb 1975) with modernized pulp cover artwork by Robert A. Maguire (03 Aug 1921–26 Feb 2005) portraying him as a non-costumed, heavily armed muscular blond-haired hero in a white turtleneck over which were strapped double shoulder holsters evoking 007. Again, no joy.

Berkley tried again with *G-8 and His Battle Aces* No. 1 “The Bat Staffel” (Dec 1969) to No. 8 “The Invisible Staffel!” (Aug 1971), the first three graced with Steranko covers as evocative as those he’d later do for *The Shadow*, then reprinting the original lurid pulp covers. Nothing worked.

In 1966 Corinth Press (an imprint of soft porn publisher Regency) published *Operator 5* No. 1 “Master of Broken Men” to No. 8 “Invasion of the Yellow Warlords” and *Secret Agent “X”* No. 1 “The Torture Trust” to No. 7 “The Sinister Scourge” in paperback, again evoking OO7. Their low distribution made them collector’s items almost from the very first and didn’t generate sales to anyone beyond compulsive collectors.

Soon, everyone was getting in on the act. “Batmania” (a play on the “Beatlemania” still ongoing across America, as was the OO7 “superspy” craze that gave us *Mission: Impossible* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*) swept the nation and begat ABC-TV’s *The Green Hornet* (09 Sep 1966–17 Mar 1967) and NBC-TV’s *Tarzan* (08 Sep 1966–05 Apr 1968).

All were set in the Sixties but harkened back to Thirties and Forties, when men were men and settling with their fists for righteousness’ sake, embracing a Higher Justice than the Law.

Gameshow producer Goodson–Todman bought the movie rights to Doc Savage with an eye toward adapting five of the Bantam reprints into feature films: No. 2 “The Thousand-headed Man” (Oct 1964), No. 7 “The Lost Oasis” (Apr 1965), No. 10 “The Phantom City” (Mar 1966), No. 29 “Quest of Qui” (Jul 1966), and the not-yet-reprinted No. 33 “Murder Melody” (Jan 1967), whose copyright Condé Nast had renewed on Tuesday, 06 November 1962, casting Kevin Joseph Aloysius “Chuck” Connors (10 Apr 1921–10 Nov 1992) as Doc Savage based on his popularity as rugged Lucas McCain on *The Rifleman* (30 Sep 1958–08 Apr 1963) and physical similarity to model Steve Holland (08 Jan 1925–10 May 1997) as painted by James Elliott Bama (28 April 1926—) for the Bantam covers.

Gold Key Comics’ *Doc Savage* No. 1 “The Thousand-headed Man” (Nov 1966) sporting the Bama cover for Bantam No. 2 and was also set in Sixties with a OO7 vibe. It appears to have been a tie-in for what Goodson–Todman and Condé Nast thought to be a done deal.

Alas, such was not the case. Condé Nast didn’t have the film rights to Doc Savage that it had presumed that it’d gotten along with the print rights. Lester Dent had been granted those rights on Wednesday, 10 July 1935 in lieu of a pay raise, having already wangled the radio broadcast on Thursday, 22 June 1933, and the newspaper comic strip rights on Monday, 25 June 1934. That’s why the Don Lee Broadcasting System (DLBS) Golden West Network radio series “Doc Savage” (10 Feb 1934– 04 Aug 1934) is credited to “Lester Dent” not “Kenneth Robeson”.

It wasn’t until film producer George Pal (born György Pál Marczincsak, 01 Feb 1908–02 May 1980) brokered a profit-sharing agreement between Condé Nast and Norma Dent on Tuesday, 20 July 1971 that production of a Doc Savage movie could finally lawfully begin. Pal had to option all 181 novels to secure the film rights, but he had ambitions to film them all, first as a trilogy of feature films, then as TV series with which he hoped to replicate of *Batman*.

Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze (27 Jun 1975, scripted 16 Nov 1973) was, of course, based on “The Man of Bronze” (Mar 1933/Oct 1964). The *Doc Savage: The Arch Enemy of Evil* (20 Apr 1974) script is similarly based on “Death in Silver” (Oct 1934/Jul 1968) and at the end teases *Doc Savage in Klantic*

Kountry, based on “The Mental Wizard” (Mar 1937/Oct 1970). The TV series pilot would be *Doc Savage “Secret in the Sky”* (15 Dec 1975), based on the eponymous novel (May 1935/Nov 1967).

Farmer had just published *DS: HAL*, not yet published “After King Kong Fell” and *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer* and was in the good graces of Norma Dent at the time, but the 1975 paperback edition may already have been in the works, along with the “movie edition” of Bantam No. 1 “The Man of Bronze” to be published concurrent with film’s release.

George Pal was clearly cognizant of both the Bantam reprints and the Marvel Comics adaptation. A 1974 publicity still of George Pal and *Doc Savage* actor Ronald Pierce “Ron” Ely (21 Jun 1938—) standing next to a wall of storyboards that also shows the Steranko artwork from *Comixscene* No. 1 “All *Doc Savage* Issue!” (Nov/Dec 1972) that inspired and informs *Doc*’s movie wardrobe.

From *Castle of Frankenstein*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Issue 23) “George Pal’s *Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze—Brains, Brawn, and Bronze!*” (Jan 1974) by Edward Felipe (AKA “Doc Hermes”):

Dent died while treasure hunting in Florida in 1959, but Doc Savage lives on, resurrected by George Pal, Bantam Books, James Bama, and Marvel Comics. Stuck in the sordid mid-Seventies as everyone is, Doc is surely needed these days to sort things out.

Although the seven-page article is less about the movie and more about the character that inspired its production, including as many photos of *Doc Savage Magazine* covers and interior art as publicity stills from forthcoming movie and Steranko’s Marvel Comics covers, “The Geneological [sic] Chart of the Immortal *Doc Savage*” fills the top half of the penultimate page without annotation or explanation.

It’s *not* a reproduction of the charts on the end papers of 1973 hardcover edition of *DS: HAL* or the revised version in the 1975 Bantam softcover edition, but something whipped up by the *Castle of Frankenstein* art director. It features a publicity still of Ron Ely as *Doc Savage* with a decidedly deciduous leafless opposite branching tree behind him peppered seemingly randomly with names lifted directly from the WNF Tree, again with neither annotation nor explanation.

From top to bottom and left to right: Patricia Savage, James Bond, Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, Travis McGee, (Capt. Nemo), Mr. Moto, Phileas Fogg, Roxanne Fogg, Prof. Moriarty, Wolf Larsen, Fu Manchu, Sir P.C.W, 6th Duke, Sir Wm. Clayton, M.d.P, The Scarlet Pimpernel, 4th Duke, Brig. Gerard, Sir J.C.W., 3rd Duke, Jonathan Wild, Capt. Blood, Micah Clarke, 1st Duke of Greystoke, Solomon Kane, and Sir Nigel Loring. *Castle of Frankenstein* readers must’ve been expected to immediately recognize and comprehend it, which speaks to the impact the hardcover edition had already made on *Doc Savage* fandom a year after its initial publication and a year before the softcover edition and movie release.

For his part, Farmer had clearly familiarized himself with the 1973 final draft of the *DS: TMOB* script, which teases the title of *Doc Savage: The Arch Enemy [sic] of Evil* at the end, before turning his hand to *Doc Savage: Archenemy [sic] of Evil*, his own screen treatment for same. This is documented in an interview at “Minicon 10” in Minneapolis MN on Saturday, 19 April 1975, conducted by the editors of the SF fanzine *Tangent* in which the subject came up.

From the Farmer interview in *Tangent* No. 2 (May 1975):

*We heard you were working on the script for the second **Doc Savage** film.*

***Philip José Farmer:** Not the script. I wrote the movie treatment, which is a prose outline of the story itself. That was for the second **Doc Savage** movie, **Doc Savage, Arch Enemy of Evil**. The first one will be coming out in May locally and then generally about August. George Pal and I conferred on that. I wrote it out in Burbank in the Warner Bros. studio. That's going to be a real **Doc Savage** movie.*

Will it follow the book exactly?

***Philip José Farmer:** Well, no. In the first place, this is my first experience with movie writing and it's impossible to follow a book literally when you're transmuting the verbal form to the visual form. I recommended **Murder Mirage** as the basis, and then of course we used a lot of elements from other books in it. Shifted the whole thing around and I made up a lot of stuff myself. If the first movie goes well, then the script for the second will be written, and I'll have a pretty good chance to write that. Because actually I'm the only guy that knows anything about **Doc Savage** out there.*

DS: TMOB in fact hit the screen in June, a month later than expected, but the copyright date for the film is listed as Friday, 02 May 1975, so it was indeed scheduled for release in May. This interview was posthumously posted online at SFSite.com on Friday, 27 March 2009, a month after Farmer's passing.

Doc Savage: The Arch Enemy of Evil Gets the "Farmer Treatment"

Farmer's 1974 *screen treatment* (not script) *Doc Savage: Archenemy* [sic] *of Evil* springboards off the same midnight Christmas Eve teaser at end of the *DS: TMOB* but adapts "Murder Mirage" (Jan 1936/Nov 1972) with the clear intent of officially linking the WNF to the incipient Pal film and TV franchise, if not the ongoing Bantam reprint series itself.

"Win, Win!" Or, as it turned out, "Lose, Lose!"

There's even some uncharacteristic *frisson* of sex amid the violence, which Farmer highlights wherever he can, as well as evoking classic Thirties and Forties film characters and imagery.

From pages 1 and 2 of DS: AOE:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Fabulous Five—Doc's aides. These are: ...

Patricia "Pat" Savage—Doc's beautiful cousin. **His lady auxiliary and a bronze knockout.** ...

Lady Cynthia Clayton—A young blonde English explorer. An early victim of the Horrible Humpback.

Ranyon Cartheris—Lady Cynthia's brother.

The All-Wise One (The Horrible Humpback)—a hideous creature, leader of the **Cult of the Blue God.**

Hadith the Hateful—A giant Arab who looks like a very dark, shaven-headed, earless **Sidney Greenstreet.** The All-Wise One's right-hand man. ...

Musa the Toad—Hadith's brother. Looks like a very dark **Peter Lore,** has the same voice and sneaky ways. Addicted to eating popcorn. ...

Captain Griffepuie—French police chief in the **North African state of Maghreb.** Looks like **Claude Rains.** ...

The first use of the phrase "The Fabulous Five"—a play on the "Fab Four" nickname for The Beatles following the American debut on the *Ed Sullivan Show* (09 Feb 1964)—was to describe Doc's five aides on the splash page of Marvel Comics' *Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze* No. 1 "Death Eighty Stories High!" (Oct 1972), scripted by Steve Englehart (22 Apr 1947—).

*Whether you are one of the teeming **millions** who've thrilled to the exploits of **Doc Savage** and his **Fabulous Five** in paperback form—or whether you're about to meet 'em all for the **first** time—this one was served up just for **you**...*

The second is on pages 10 and 11 of the 1974 DS: TAEOE script:

NARRATOR

*These men—the **Fabulous Five**—are led by one of the world's most extraordinary human beings—possessor not only of an immense personal fortune but of Herculean strength and a scientific mind even more brilliant than those of his brilliant companions. Bereft of fear, at all times prepared to risk his life in the cause of justice, he is—*

DOC SAVAGE

The Arch Enemy of Evil

Farmer must have at least skimmed, if not fully familiarized himself with, the 1974 script, too.

Bantam called them “Doc’s Amazing Crew”. The 1973 *DS: TMOB* script calls them “The Amazing Five”. There’s no collective name for Doc’s men in the 1975 *DSTV* pilot script. Only Marvel Comics and the 1974 *DS: TAEOE* script were using “Fabulous Five” at that time.

I can’t imagine Farmer having read Marvel *Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze* No. 1 “Man of Bronze!” (Oct 1972), which was set in “modern day” as was the second issue—the series wasn’t moved to the “era that spawned him ... the tumultuous 30s” until the third issue, *Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze* No. 3 “Death in Silver!” (Feb 1973)—but the 1973 *DS: TMOB* script lifts the gimmick of Doc using his wristwatch to radio control the hand of a wall clock (current time 11:24, back to 8:52, forward to 12:00, then back to 11:24) to open the wall safe behind it directly from the first issue of the Marvel comic book, so the scriptwriter had read them and the 1974 for *DS: TAEOE* script is adapted from Bantam No. 26 “Death in Silver” (Jul 1968), or perhaps from the Marvel adaptation of same in third and fourth issues.

For what it may be worth, *DS: TMOB* also copied Ham’s “switchblade” cane and Clark Savage, Sr.’s Edwardian mustache for the comics, published a year before any scripts were written.

Either way, there’s simply nowhere else that Farmer could’ve picked “Fabulous Five” up in 1974.

“Patricia Savage, Lady Auxiliary and Bronze Knockout” is the sixteenth chapter of *DS: HAL*.

The characters in “Murder Mirage” are Lady *Sathyra Fotheran*, the sister of *Denton Cartheris*, not Lady *Cynthia Clayton*, sister of *Ranyon Cartheris*.

“Clayton” is, of course, the family name of the Greystoke peers for at least ten generations. “Ranyon” may be from the Haiti Creole *ranyon* [“shabby”], while “Denton” is an English surname derived from locations in Yorkshire, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. (For whatever it may be worth, “Baron Denton” is also a subsidiary title of Earl Kitchener of Khartoum in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, which underpins so much of the WNF.)

The Index to *Myths for a Modern Age: Philip José Farmer’s Wold Newton Universe* (Oct 2005) by Win Scott Eckert (30 Nov 1966—) lists a John (Fifth Duke), John Cecil, John William (Third Duke), Penelope, and General Sir William Clayton (Baronet) but no Cynthia. Perhaps there *would* be, had *DS: TMOB* been the smash hit that Pal hoped it would be and he’d produced Farmer’s *DS: AOE* treatment instead of the *DS: TAEOE* scripta already at hand.

In 1974 *DS: AOE* treatment was eventually published in the massive compendium *Pearls from Peoria* “Doc Savage and the Cult of the Blue God” (Sep 2006) and the fanzine *Subterranean* No. 5 “Doc Savage and the Cult of the Blue God” (Nov 2006), but was excised from the Kindle edition of *Pearls from Peoria* (29 Jan 2016) after the license to print it from Condé Nast expired on 31 December 2017.

There’s no “Blue God” much less a cult for same in “Murder Mirage”, just an anonymous “mystic sect” centered on the hidden city of “Tasunan” in the “Valley of Tasus” in the Syrian desert. The central mystery involves the “shadow death” caused by a blinding blue flash of light. There’s a “Hadith the Nubian” but no younger brother named Musa, who replaces the character of popcorn-munching American gangster Whitey Jano in the novel.

Sidney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, and Claude Rains all appear in *Casablanca* (26 Nov 1942) as “Signor Ferrari”, “Ugarte”, and “Captain Louise Renault”, respectively.

Griffepluie is a portmanteau of the French *griffe* [“clawed”] and *pluie* [“rains”]: *Claude Rains*.

“Mahgreb” is an Anglicization of the Arabic *al-Maghrib* [“the west”], denoting the Barbary Coast of Northwest Africa in general and specifically Morocco.

It’s not exactly “camp” but it *is* typical Farmer multilingual wordplay.

And all that’s in just the first two pages, before the story even begins!

The only police mentioned by name in “Murder Mirage” are Manhattan patrolman Patrick Brennan, who dies “heroically in the discharge of duty” in Chapter I. “Midsummer Snow” and Detective Inspector Carnahan in Chapter II. “‘Corpus Delicti’ in Glass”. The Bermuda police are mentioned in Chapter XIII. “Death Rides the Sky” but anonymous “native police” only appear in Chapter XIV. “Cross-Eyed Beggar” who guard his dirigible in obvious awe of it.

Farmer’s “Captain Griffepluie” is introduced on page 33 (of 65) as the French police chief of “Abyad”—likely a reference to the Arabic *Tell Abyad* [“white hill”] in northern Syria that abuts Akçakale in southern Turkey on opposite sides of by the Balikh River—playing on the French *Casablanca* [“white house”] that it’s intended to represent.

His first line of dialogue is:

Of course, Doc, I will cooperate fully. But the All-Wise One and his gang fled into the Casbah before I was even aware that they were here.”

This evokes the Casbah of Algiers and, sure enough, on page 34, we get this:

A late afternoon sun rides over a street in the CASBAH. Through the crowd passes a giant figure, Doc in native clothes. Under a sash around his waist is a ticking radiation counter. As he nears five-story building, higher than its neighbors, a MAN crosses the street in front of Doc. He looks remarkably like Charles Boyer as PEPE LE MOKO.

Pépé le Moko (28 Jan 1937) is a nickname that translates to “Man from Toulon” for a French gangster on the run in Algiers, who believes he is safe from arrest in the Casbah. It was remade in English as *Algiers* (05 Aug 1938) with Charles Boyer and Hedy Lamarr, which immortalized the phrase “Come with me to the Casbah!” and is credited with having inspired *The Third Man* (01 Sep 1949).

This is exactly the sort of “crossover” for which the WNF Tree is justly famous, and it becomes explicit on page 36:

Monk and Ham enter an Abyad NIGHT CLUB with their dates, two French peaches. The club looks exactly like that in the movie, CASABLANCA. In the B.G., by a piano played by a black man (SamO stands a Humphry-Bogart-like character. He is listening to AS TIME GOES By.

Throughout the treatment, Farmer name-checks several “household word” names: “Minsky’s” (page 14); “Professor Lovecraft” (presumably of Miskatonic University) and “the man who taught [Doc] the art of criminal detection” (page 17); “Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson” (allegedly born circa 1854 and thus over eighty years old) in retirement in a villa on the English Sussex Coast receive a telegram from Doc requesting information about “the fabled Saharan city of Tanusan” (despite Tanusan being in Syria, not the Sahara) and confirming that Doc was indeed Holmes’ “most brilliant pupil” (pages 29 and 30); the Sufi saint Ibrahim bin Adham fictionalized in the 1838 poem “Abou Ben Adhem” by James Henry Leigh Hunt (19 Oct 1784–28 Aug 1859) given here as “Abu [sic] Ben Adhem” for a Touareg [sic] Chief (page 45);

The All-Wise One, the Horrible Humpback is introduced on page 4:

The curtains part, and a hideous FACE stares out. Below its shapeless blue hat, long greasy locks stream out. The face is a travesty of the Wicked Witch of THE WIZARD OF OZ.

Doc Savage is introduced on page 6:

*Cut to an exterior of Doc’s fabulous 86th-floor penthouse. This is followed by **the final scenes from the first movie DOC SAVAGE, MAN OF BRONZE. Scenes 464 through 468A** show the penthouse interior (the library), the elevator stopping at the 86th floor, Doc leaving it, Doc entering the library, Doc listening to the voice on his robot Record-O-Phone.*

Doc’s five aides (not called “Fabulous Five” in this instance are introduced on pages 7 and 8, each with a superimposed title:

RENNY. IF HE CAN’T BUILD IT, NO ONE CAN. ...

JOHNNY. HE DIGS UP DINOSAUR BONES AND BURIED CITIES. ...

LONG TOM. HE MAKES ELECTRONS SAY UNCLE. ...

HAM. A LEGAL EAGLE

Oddly, MONK and BABY PIG, HABEAS CORPUS are introduced without superimpositions.

Bits of scenes spread over several pages in the 1974 script are condensed on page 9 (of 132):

MONTAGE of all five aides racing in their cars toward the Warfield Drug Store. Monk and Ham in Monk's garish car, "like a combination sunset and earthquake."

In the 1974 script, Ham drives a MERCEDES (presumably the iconic 1936 Mercedes-Benz 540k Special roadster) and Monk a panel van labeled "ICE" that contains Doc's mobile lab and arsenal, saving a lot on production costs and screen time in the Farmer variation.

Much of the mystery of "Murder Mirage" is casually dispensed with in passing on page 12:

[Lady Cynthia]: "It is no myth. Ranyon and I, and my secretary, Marian Le Dene, did locate the ruins of Tanusan. We discovered that the legends are true. There is a strange mineral under the ruins. It's like no other radioactive substance ever discovered. It's a terrible thing, and it's being used by a strange sect of natives. They're not Moslems [sic]. They call themselves the Sons of the Blue God."

Pat is introduced on page 13:

*PATRICIA SAVAGE is asleep in bed. She is a beautiful bronze-haired woman, **about thirty**, with features resembling Doc's. Monk knocks on the door. Pat sits up, wide-awake, and pulls out a drawer in a bedside table. She removes a huge old-fashioned six-shooter, a family heritage. With it in her hand, she approaches the living room door.*

Superimposed: PAT SAVAGE, DOC'S COUSIN LADY AUXILIARY AND BRONZE KNOCKOUT.

Pat Savage was initially introduced as being "about eighteen" in "Brand of the Werewolf" (Jan 1934, submitted 15 Sep 1933 as "Crew of Skeletons"). In "Murder Mirage" (Jan 1936, submitted 28 Jun 1935), she should rightly be about twenty-one, not about thirty. Doc, by Farmer's own chronology in *DS: HAL*, was born on Tuesday, 12 November 1901, and would himself be thirty-one when this adventure was submitted for publication.

This would make Doc and Pat the same age, not a decade apart in age as established in the novels.

Farmer makes Pat's wardrobe, or lack of it, a selling point for the story on page 14:

She is clad only in a low-cut filmy nightgown. (This is the only thing she wears, aside from a pair high-heeled shoes, throughout the picture.)

This is Exhibit "A" for Farmer's *modus operandi* of taking something from the text of the novels out of context and amplifying, distorting, or exaggerating into something from his own imagination in service of his larger agenda of crafting a superseding narrative of his own making that underpins the WNF and causes me to consider *DS: HAL* "harmful" to fans and scholars alike.

From Chapter X. "Black Magic" in "Murder Mirage":

"Well, I'll be superamalgamated!" snorted Johnny. "In that nightgown?"

Pat tossed her head defiantly. She was clad in a lacy negligee, in which she had been carried from Lady Fotheran's hotel. Doc had suspected an attack on Lacy Fotheran, and had Pat make up to look like the titled English woman and substitute for her at her hotel.

From Chapter XII. "The Black Yacht Sinks" in "Murder Mirage":

The negligee she had been wearing had suffered in the brush. Her face was gouged by thorns and was still somewhat dirty.

Pat had robed herself in one of Johnny's coats. Johnny was thin as a skeleton and tall. The garment fell to Pat's small feet. She was lacking one shoe. ...

Pat shrugged inside Johnny's long coat.

From Chapter XIV. "Cross-Eyed Beggar" in "Murder Mirage":

Aside from its ancient interest, Amman was one of the few small paradises of the Syrian desert. It had green trees and streams and fountains for the refreshment of caravans after long, hot journeys. ...

The busy capital of Transjordan, the city was under British supervision. From a modern Oriental palace floated the green flag of Islam on Amman's highest hill. ...

In the meantime, Patricia Savage had accompanied Lady Fotheran and Carson Dernall on a walking tour of the beautiful, ancient city. Their adventure might be intriguing to the vivacious, beautiful Pat. But she was a woman and quaint shops were filled with lovely silks and various Oriental oddities. Pat was not overlooking the chance to return with some of these for her Park Avenue beauty shop.

So much for Farmer's selling point (personal fantasy?) of Pat flaunting herself in a lacy negligee and high heels throughout the adventure or anyone traipsing about in an Algerian or Moroccan Casbah.

But a good storyteller never lets the facts get in the way of telling a good story.

And, yes, I've been giving the "Farmer Treatment" to the Farmer treatment DS: AOE.

"Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave...!"

Farmer then set about introducing Doc Savage's iconic firearms, which had been conspicuous by their absence from both the 1973 and 1974 movie scripts:

*Renny and Long Tom are standing guard by [Doc's Cord]. They carry **superpistols** [sic], Doc's invention, rapid-firing guns shooting mercy bullets. The magazines are shaped like ram's horns.*

In the original pulp novels, Doc's "compact machine gun" was first called a "rapid-firer", becoming a "supermachine gun" in the eleventh issue "Brand of the Werewolf" (Jan 1934), then a "supermachine pistol" in the twelfth issue "The Man Who Shook the Earth" (Feb 1934), and finally a "superfirer" in the fourteenth issue "The Monsters" (Apr 1934). The terms "supermachine pistol" and "superfirer" are used interchangeably thereafter. "Superpistols" is Farmer's own idiosyncratic descriptor for it.

The first and evidently only draft of the 1975 *Doc Savage* "The Secret in the Sky" script doesn't use any terminology, describing them only as "small, powerful pistols" drawn by Doc and Monk on page 15 (of 49), creating a contradiction flagged by Pal when Doc states categorically "That's very kind of you but I never employ firearms either in my own defense or to aid others." on page 40.

The pneumatic sound effect when Doc fires the bronzed .22-caliber Colt "Woodsmen" 1933 Sport Model (misidentified by the Internet Movie Firearms Database [IMFDB] as an anachronistic 1949 Ruger Mk. I) in pursuit of the Mayan sniper Molo in *DS: TMOB* suggests that it's an air gun firing tranquilizer darts and thus technically not a firearm.

Farmer drops more WNF "lore" on pages 15 and 16:

*Pat sits sleeping on a chair in the living room of her apartment. The six-shooter, **handed down from Grandpa Savage**, is in her lap. A wall-clock indicates 2:10 a.m. B.G., a half-opened door reveals part a bedroom. [Lady Cynthia] is in the bedroom. The door to the hallway opens quietly. A pair of bolt cutters snip the door chains. Pat starts, sits up. The door slams open, and Hadith and Musa enter, running. Pat is knocked down, her pistol sent flying. She gets to her feet and struggles with Hadith the Hateful. Tearing into him, she snatches off his blue headdress. She freezes in horror, staring at his EARLESS HEAD. Musa, holding a .45 automatic, goes toward the bedroom.*

*The **fabulous five** [sic] and Doc are in the vast 86th-floor LABORATORY. ... **In the center is a gigantic circular fish tank**, five feet high, twenty feet across. At its base is a sign: **WARNING! PIRANHA AND POISON FISH!** flank by skulls and crossbones.*

"Grandpa Savage" is Farmer's invention, implying that Doc and Pat share the same paternal grandfather as set forth in the WNF. The fish tank in Doc's lab is, of course, documented by Farmer in

Chapter 6: “The Eighty-sixth Floor” of *DS: HAL* as being a permanent fixture, even though it’s only featured in two novels, “Spook Hole” (Aug 1935/Sep 1972), where the sign warns “THESE FISH ARE POISONOUS SPECIES. KEEP AWAY!” and “The Men Who Smiled No More” (Apr 1936/Feb 1970), where it simply warns of “POISON FISH.” “PIRANHA” is a *fillip* (ahem) all his own.

Pat doesn’t even use her signature six-shooter in this novel, which was one of nine written by Laurence Louis Donovan (born O’Donovan, Jul 1885–11 Mar 1948) rather than Lester Dent, although no one knew that yet and wouldn’t until the publication of *Duende* No. 2 “The Secret Kenneth Robesons” (Winter 1976–77) two years later.

The fact that Dent *didn’t* write “Murder Mirage” is significant because Donovan is the most outré and flamboyant writer who Dent contracted to help him meet the expected workload when Street & Smith begin planning to publish Doc Savage Magazine twice-a-month like The Shadow Magazine. It never happened, but Dent’s output was still effectively doubled overnight, so he hedged his bets to ensure that he’d be able to meet it.

Donovan wrote only nine of the 181 (5%) of the Doc Savage novels, but they are arguably the weirdest and most science fictional of the lot: “Murder Melody” (Nov 1935), “Murder Mirage” (Jan 1936), “The Men Who Smiled No More” (Apr 1936), “The Haunted Ocean” (Jun 1936), “The Black Spot” (Jul 1936), “Cold Death” (Sep 1936), “Land of Long Juju” (Jan 1937), “Mad Eyes” (May 1937), and “He Could Stop the World” (Jul 1937).

Donovan’s quirky style is closer to Farmer’s own, which may account for Farmer choosing “Murder Mirage” as the basis for his *DS: AOE* screen treatment. Doc’s eighty-sixth floor office is invaded by two armed Bedouins in Chapter VIII. “Fussein the Bedouin” who simply walk in using the elevator operator as both hostage and shield, but Farmer can’t resist turning this incident into an epic Battle Royale running from pages 18 through 26:

*The noise of an **AUTOGYRO** motor and thrash of vanes comes from the ceiling of the **laboratory**. Renny leaves the lab, goes down a **short corridor**, and enters the library. He sees an autogyro about to land on the **glass roof** of the library.*

*The autogyro, holding six armed Arabs, crashes through the **glass roof**. ... In the laboratory, a section of wall explodes. Smoke pours in as Doc and his four aides lie stunned on the floor. ... The door to the **reception room** has also been blown open. ... It’s a three-pronged attack by the All-Wise One and his gang! ...*

The Arabs level their tommies, [sic] rifles, and pistols, waiting for the smoke to clear. But, as Doc throws the switch, the metal weapons are torn out of the Arabs’ hands, fly through the air, and cling to the wall. These have been seized by the giant magnets concealed in the walls. ...

*The Arabs are deprived of their firearms. But they outnumber **Doc and his pals** four to one. Now they seize anything that can be used as weapons. ... And then they advance.*

*The **GREAT, 86TH FLOOR BATTLE OF THE CENTURY** HAD [sic] BEGUN!*

The layout of the eighty-sixth floor conforms to what Farmer wrote in Chapter 6. "The Eighty-Sixth Floor" in *DS: HAL*, but the skylight windows ("glass roof") of Doc's office and library are from the 1973 *DS: TMOB* script. Farmer couldn't bite the hand that would be feeding him if he wanted the treatment produced into a full script, much less another movie.

On page 21, Framer describes interior sets and props depicted in both the 1973 script and on film.

*Renny picks up one of the men to slug him but is hit with a leather sap over his head. Reeling, he makes for a **REVOLVING BOOKCASE**, two men behind him. He jumps onto the bookcase's side, clings, shoves it around with a foot. ...*

Renny, holding to the side with one hand, slugs a villain with the other.

Which brings us back to Pat's sexy dishabile and what basis Farmer had for that scenario.

From Chapter VI. "Analyzing the Stone" in "Murder Mirage":

*A young woman awoke and yawned. This was in a luxurious apartment in the vicinity of Park Avenue. **One beautifully fashioned arm stretched from her night garments of lacy silk.** She picked up the phone beside her bed. ...*

*"They all begin that way," said the young woman. "I shall prepare, of course, to be shot, burned at the stake, kidnapped or thrown into some deep, dark river. What is it? **I'm practically dressed already.**" ...*

*The man of bronze was speaking rapidly into the phone. **The beautiful Pat was performing a remarkable sleight-of-hand trick. Holding the phone, she was employing one hand to don stockings and shoes.** Before Doc has finished speaking, she had made good her word. **She was practically dressed.** ...*

*Pat Savage replaced the phone. She was an amazing young woman. **Within five minutes she was gowned and cloaked. A small but exceedingly efficient automatic pistol reposed in her purse.***

Mindful of what'd already been established in *DS: TMOB*, however much it conflicted with everything he'd written in Chapter 8. "The Crime College" in *DS: HAL*, he writes on page 26:

*Some men in bronze uniforms (bearing the label: **DOC SAVAGE'S REHABILITATION CENTER**) are carrying Arabs out on stretchers. ...*

*Doc: "Yes. When I have the time, I'll be up to the **Rehabilitation Center**. But it may be a month before I can perform the operation that will **turn them into honest men.**"*

So much for anything published in *DS: HAL* being the definitive word on All Things Doc Savage. Farmer was ready, willing, and able to compromise any part of his own “true quill” if that’s what it took to get it past the editor, publisher, and producer to get it to market.

He was certainly no stranger to writing to specification or toward meeting editorial preferences or prejudices. He therefore necessarily worked within the constraints set by the existing film continuity.

From the 1973 *DS: TMOB* script:

457. FULL SHOT—BRONZE GATE.

Behind it beautiful blossoming, green lawns, a fountain—a nurse, wearing, bronze decorated uniform, pushes an invalid on the pebbled path—another patient sits in front of a canvas painting the glorious scenery. Yet another one, a critic, watches him. ZOOM ON the arch above the entrance with the legend:

DOC SAVAGE REHABILITATION CENTER

Westchester, New York

So that and Doc’s “special kind of acupuncture surgery on your brain, which will rid you of you of your evil nature” combined with instruction in “good citizenship” (presumably informed by the “Code of Doc Savage”) and “an honest trade” that will make them “completely well” to “become a respectable member of society.”

Alas, it also makes the College concept not only public but also negates a key aspect of Doc’s brain operation, which erases all memory of the subject’s criminal past, essentially a death sentence to their former self but allowing them to be reborn as an entirely new people, unburdened by their criminal pasts.

The midnight phone call in the teaser for *Doc Savage: The Arch Enemy of Evil* at the end of *DS: TMOB* is revealed in the 1974 *DS: TAEOE* script to be from Elmo Finnegan, “a trigger man for a gang of bootleggers” mixed up in “that Halloween Night Massacre” back in “the Prohibition days” who “went through the acupuncture treatment” six years earlier, who heard about his former boss planning “something terrible” and called Doc to warn him of it, unaware that said boss was getting his former band back together and thus had been keeping an eye on all of them.

The unproduced 1974 script also introduces a “modern, fully equipped LABORATORY” visible through an archway on the opposite side of the room not shown in the teaser. But none of this precluded Farmer from “officially” introducing sites not yet seen in his 1974 *DS: AOE* treatment, which, if accepted, would replace the existing script as the basis for the sequel. What *chutzpah!*

Having already preemptively added his own version of Doc's "vast LABORATORY" on page 26, Farmer went on to establish both the PNEUMATIC TUBE ROOM and his own version of the HIDALGO TRADING COMPANY on page 28:

*This houses the 86th-floor terminus of a **giant pneumatic tube**. The great pipe goes straight down through the skyscraper into the Manhattan bedrock, curves, becomes horizontal, and curves up again to end in the **Hidalgo Trading Company**. ...*

*A huge warehouse building on the Hudson River near **35th Street**. It also houses Doc's dirigible, amphibian planes, a yacht, and his submarine.*

Thirty-fifth Street? Farmer knew better than that. He'd already placed it on Thirty-fourth!

From Chapter 5. "The Skyscraper":

*According to **The South Pole Terror**, Doc's huge warehouse-hangar-dock—the Hidalgo Trading Company—is at or near the Hudson River end of **Thirty-fourth Street**.*

Occam's Razor suggests that Farmer simply typed "5" instead of "4" while writing the treatment, but Pal and his screenwriters had already established that Doc's eighty-sixth floor "penthouse" was *not* in the Empire State Building, kept a proto-helicopter called the "Whizzer" in the ornamental eagle gargoyle inspired by the Chrysler Building without being there either, and combined Doc's office and library into areas of the same space equipped with revolving bookcases concealing gadgetry and world maps, with sliding (presumably bulletproof) glass doors and a spiral staircase to access the alcove in the eagle's eye.

The ESB was the only building in Manhattan (and, in fact, in the world) that had an eighty-sixth floor. It's located on Fifth Avenue between Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets, so Thirty-fourth Street makes perfect sense, especially given that it was, then as now, one of only six two-way crosstown streets in Manhattan. (The others are Fourteenth, Twenty-third, 34th Street, Forty-Second Street, Fifty-seventh Street and One Hundred Twenty-fifth Streets.)

While Doc's penthouse is clearly not atop the ESB, but there was no reason why the Hidalgo Trading Company couldn't still be at the end of Thirty-fourth Street on the Manhattan side, but it was better to hedge things a bit—something that Farmer liked to do anyway—and move it over a block to Thirty-fifth, leaving the precise location of Doc's building purposefully vague but somewhere between the ESB at Fifth Avenue and West Thirty-fourth Street and the Chrysler Building at Lexington Avenue and East Forty-second Street.

He wouldn't or couldn't contradict established film continuity, any more than James Bama could paint the Doc in any way other than that dictated by Bantam's art director, but he could steer both the narrative and the action going forward closer to his own vision of How Things are Supposed to Be.

Doc's office and library were already established, but not the laboratory and Hidalgo Trading Company, although the 1974 *DS: TAE* script also gives Doc a mobile laboratory and rolling arsenal,

akin to and perhaps inspired by the “War Wagon” introduced in *Executioner* No. 20 “New Orleans Knockout” (Jan 1974), disguised as an anonymous “ice truck” panel van.

It was also too late for Doc’s crime-curing “College” in “upstate New York” to be where it should. Farmer had a specific locale in mind for his pastiches that accorded with the text of the novels but didn’t pinpoint it precisely.

From the unbroken narrative in *SOTN* No. 3 “The Mad Goblin” (01 Sep 1970):

*Mr. Sargent was a tall, thin, heavily moustached, middle-aged man. He had once been one of the best safecrackers in the world, operating in the States and England. Doc had caught him one night when he was trying to open a safe in Doc’s laboratory in the Empire State Building. Doc had taken him to **the Lake George sanatorium** after finding out who had hired him.*

Lake George is in the southeastern Adirondack State Park and is part of the St. Lawrence watershed. The lake was originally named the *Andia-ta-roc-te* by local Native Americans. In his narrative *Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (1826), James Fenimore Cooper (15 Sep 1789–14 Sep 1851) called it the *Horican*, after a tribe which may have lived there, because he felt the original name was too hard to pronounce. Characters from Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales* pentalogy populate lower branches of the WNF, so it was only natural that Farmer would think to place it there.

That said, Dent probably modeled the College on the Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium at Saranac Lake in “upstate NY” established in February 1885 by Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau (05 Oct 1848–15 Nov 1915) to treat those stricken with then-incurable tuberculosis with fresh air and rest far from the urban squalor presumed to cause to it.

Secluded in the “wilderness” and easy to enclose with fencing posted with dire warnings to stay clear of the disease within, supplied by aircraft that use the lake as a landing strip, and manned by highly respected doctors and scientists dedicated to both treating and finding a cure, it was hidden in plain sight and unlikely to be investigated by the Powers That Be who might *not* deem it worthy of their support.

The Hidalgo Trading Company didn’t yet exist yet in *DS: TMOB* or the novel on which it was based. Doc and his aides take off from an anonymous airport, presumably the North Beach Airport (now LaGuardia) cited in the novel. That gave Farmer opportunity to preemptively establish it.

The 1974 *DS: TAEOE* script introduces the HTC on page 94, but there’s a hitch:

EXT. WAREHOUSE
*On the **New Jersey side** of the Hudson River. In bright sunshine, we see Doc’s bronze Cord drive up to it. A sign reads:*

HIDALGO TRADING COMPANY

There’s no provision to getting to New Jersey from Thirty-fifth Street by pneumatic tube unless said tube runs all the way under the Hudson River like the 1.5-mile-long (2.4 km) Midtown Hudson (now

Lincoln) Tunnel connecting Eleventh Avenue between Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Streets in Midtown Manhattan (four blocks *north* of Thirty-fourth Street) to Weehawken NJ, or the 1.6-mile (2.6 m) Holland Tunnel connecting Broome Street between Twelfth and Fourteenth Streets in Lower Manhattan (*twenty* blocks *south*) to Jersey City NJ.

While the Holland Tunnel in Lower Manhattan opened on Sunday, 13 November 1927, the Midtown Hudson Tunnel in Midtown Manhattan didn't open until Wednesday, 22 December 1937, a full year after both scripts, which famously end and begin, respectively, around midnight on Thursday, Christmas Eve or Friday, Christmas Day 1936.

But *construction* of the central tube of the Midtown Hudson Tunnel began on Friday, 18 March 1934 and it spanned the river by August 1935, four months ahead of schedule. It was the retrofitting the tunnel for vehicular use, so it could be in operation by the time the 1939 New York World's Fair started, that was ongoing and wouldn't be completed until October 1937. The tunnel was renamed in honor of sixteenth President in April 1937 because the Port Authority believed that the tunnel was "parallel to the importance of the George Washington Bridge" named in honor of the first President.

There nothing to preclude Doc's pneumatic tube being built in the same place and time. If "35th" was indeed a typo, it could just as easily been for *Thirty-eighth* Street as *Thirty-fourth*!

Things become even worse in the first draft of the proposed *DSTV* script, where the Hidalgo Trading Company warehouse is on the *East River*, not the *Hudson*!

From page 5 of *Doc Savage "The Secret in the Sky"* (15 Dec 1975):

EXT. WAREHOUSE BY EAST RIVER—LONG SHOT—DAY

FROM ACROSS the river. Behind the warehouse rise the skyscrapers of New York. Across the front of the warehouse is lettered, "Hidalgo Trading Co." As the CAMERA DOLLIES TOWARD the warehouse, its huge sliding doors open, and a sleek bronze colored, three-engine aircraft with water skis slides down a ramp into the water.

But Farmer couldn't have known about this, as the 1975 *DSTV* script was known only by Pal and the screenwriter and wouldn't come to light until Pal's papers were donated to UCLA in 1986.

Farmer introduces something else conspicuous by its absence in *DS: TMOB* on page 28:

Directly above the go-devil is Doc's fabulous futuristic-looking AIRSHIP: the DSD-1. Its bronze skin shines in the bright floodlights. It's about four hundred feet long, porpoise-shaped, streamlined. The control room is inside the nose. Its Diesel motors are mounted in two tunnels on each side, creating a jet effect during flight.

Farmer then introduces an entirely unusual and somewhat questionable gimmick on pages 39 to 41:

Doc is the STERN OBSERVATORY ROOM, exercising. As a radio plays Arabic music, he ripples his muscles in tune with the weird ululations ... his magnificent body figure, clothed only in bathing trunks. ...

Doc puts on his shirt and pants. As he is tying his shoelaces, an ARAB enters. Doc straightens up, his back to the Arab. The Arab crashes the butt of his .45 automatic on top of Doc's head. Doc reels under a blow that should have fractured his skull. But he remains half-conscious.

Doc leans against the window, shaking his head. The Arab, grinning evilly, rushes him and forces him halfway out the window. Doc catches hold of the window ledge with one hand. With the other, he grabs his own hair. And he pulls from his head a wig, a thin hard METAL WIG! It is this that softened the blow of the gun!

Using its edge, he slams the Arab in the neck. The man falls unconscious.

Farmer would have us believe that this was standard part of Doc's wardrobe. He himself did.

From Chapter 4. "The Bronze Hero of Technopolis and Exotica":

*He wears bulletproof metal-alloy underwear and **a skullcap which simulates his own hair.***

He believed this to be true because Doc did indeed wear such a skullcap in eleven of the 181 (6%) novels. It's also consistent with the description of Doc's hair from the outset. It was based on this that James Bama began painting Doc's hair as an undifferentiated solid, seamless mass with Bantam No. 7. "The Monsters" (Jun 1965). It was quicker, easier, and looked better than detailing every strand.

From Chapter I. "The Sinister One" in "The Man of Bronze" (Mar 1934):

*The bronze of the hair was a little darker than the bronze of the features. The hair was straight and lay down tightly as a **metal skullcap**. A genius at sculpture might have made it.*

But Doc's hair only *looked* like a skullcap. Dent was quite consistent in his character descriptions and the similarity of Doc's bronze hair to a metal skullcap was repeated throughout the series These "boilerplate" descriptions were all *figurative*, not *literal*, and all evoke the same imagery.

Here's a representative sample of this boilerplate description:

*Doc wore no hat, and the rain seemed to strike him without wetting. His **bronze hair, smooth and straight as a carefully sculptured skullcap**, had the aspect of being impervious to moisture....*

*The bronze of his hair was a little darker than the bronze of his features. The hair was straight and fitted so close as to give the **appearance of a metal skullcap**. ...*

*And there was also his hair, the hue a slightly darker bronze than his skin and straight, rather **remarkably like a metallic skullcap**. ...*

*His hair, of a bronze hue only slightly darker than his skin, was straight and smooth **as a metal skullcap**.*

Dent was always introducing “throwaway” gadgets, gags, gimmicks, and gizmos that only appeared once and never again. He only had Doc wear a bulletproof skullcap *once* in a single novel. There are exactly two occurrences of the word “skullcap” in that novel. The first echoes Dent’s boilerplate. The second reveals that it *is* a metal skullcap worn over his natural hair but hidden under “artificial hair” indistinguishable from his own.

Chapter IV. “The Peril Puzzle” in “The Roar Devil” (Jun 1935):

*Several things were noteworthy about his visage. His skin was fine-textured and of a somewhat unique bronze hue. His hair, **straight and fitting like a metal skullcap**, was of a bronze slightly darker than his skin.*

From Chapter XI. “His Honor” in “The Roar Devil”:

Doc Savage stood up and walked to the door. He was not exactly taking a chance. He wore a bulletproof coat under his clothing, and a pair of chain-mail shorts.

*Some one [sic] might shoot him in the head, but they would have to do it accurately, because the bronze hair in view was not his own, but **artificial hair on a thin but immensely strong metal skullcap**. And he was keeping his eyes open.*

This makes the bulletproof metal skullcap *canonical*, but “standard equipment” implied in *DS: HAL*.

Donovan wrote “Murder Mirage” and had previously read the most recently published Dent novels to get a feel for the character and Dent’s writing style. The June 1935 “The Roar Devil” would’ve been among them. He seems to have taken the idea of the bulletproof metal skullcap simulating Doc’s own

hair like a wig and run with it, just as Farmer would do forty years later based it and the nine subsequent much more memorable Donovan novels.

From Chapter VI: "The Girl on the Ice" in "Murder Melody" (Nov 1935):

*Doc slipped a leather headgear over his **sleek bronze hair**. It much resembled a headguard worn by a football player. But what appeared to be clumsily constructed binoculars were attached. Before he pulled these over his eyes, Doc moved a switch in a half arc on the instrument board.*

This switched on a searchlight set in the streamlined mounting of the plane. The human eye, unaided, would have seen nothing. The canyon darkness would have remained as opaque as ever. But now Doc was able to watch far ahead.

No bulletproof skullcap here, but a different gimmick also designed to protect the head.

From Chapter XIV. "Cross-Eyed Beggar" in "Murder Mirage" (Jan 1936):

*An astonishing thing happened. **Doc seemed to lift off all of his hair**. One hand rubbed a bruised spot on his head. Then he replaced what appeared to be **a tight bronze wig**. It was much more valuable than a wig.*

*The device had been perfected by Doc, after having been wounded by a bullet. It was a **head-fitting skullcap of the toughest metal alloy**. Bullets could but only glance off it. The blows he had received had been jarring, but they had been insufficient to stun him.*

From Chapter XXII. "Fleet of Death":

*Doc was treading water. His hands went to his head. **It seemed he had removed his bronze scalp**. This was the **bulletproof skullcap he often wore**.*

From Chapter I. "Tony Quits Laughing" in "The Men Who Smiled No More" (Apr 1936):

*The bronze man's hair was only slightly darker than his skin. It lay upon his head like a **smooth, metallic mask**.*

From Chapter XVIII: "Doc's Mistake?":

*He pulled at his black hair. The nervous rubbing of his hand had displaced it slightly. And **under the edge of the wig** had appeared **an expanse of slick golden bronze**, the hair owned by only one man in the world. ...*

But before Doc could turn, it felt as if some of his ribs had been rammed loose.

*The instrument with which this was accomplished was the muzzle of one of the machine guns. Held thus close to his body, the weapon could kill **even though he was wearing bulletproof garments**.*

*The **black wig** was torn from his head. Then a solid blow descended upon the **base of his skull**.*

From Chapter XIX. "Doc's Frozen Brain":

*Expert hands stripped away his clothing. Every conceivable pocket was explored. His shoes and hosiery were taken off. There was a mocking laugh as **the bronze scalp seemed to be lifted**.*

*This strange denuding of Doc's head was merely removal of the **metal bulletproof cap of bronze** he sometimes wore. The knock-out blow he had received when captured, was **below this cap**. From inside **this cap** were taken nearly flat metallic objects. These were powerful chemical explosives.*

From Chapter IX. "Doc Is Trapped" in "Haunted Ocean" (Jun 1936):

*All of his devices had been stripped from his body. Knowledge of his many secrets was indicated. Even his **bullet-proof skullcap of metal** had been removed. His feet were bare. False toenails were missing. Hollow shells worn over some of his teeth had been taken out.*

From Chapter XV. "Hoodoo of the Sea":

*The bronze hair in view was on the outside of a **skullcap of thin, but impenetrable metal alloy**. The leaden bullets and fine shot flattened on this surface.*

From Chapter XV. "Doc Is Trapped" in "The Black Spot" (Jul 1936):

*Doc had no time to employ strategy. He was **not wearing the bulletproof skullcap**. Any one of the whining slugs might strike his head. He had been lucky to escape this in the first fusillade.*

From Chapter XIX. "Mr. Mathers Dies":

*Doc now was wearing the **smooth, bulletproof skullcap of metal**. It was **covered with slick, bronze hair**. This was of the finest texture and looked like a waterproof mask.*

*An automatic slug ripped into the **skullcap**. It failed to penetrate the **metallic headgear**. But it struck the **edge of the metal** a terrific blow. It was a stunning smash directly over important nerves.*

From Chapter XV: "The Magnetic Wall" in "Cold Death" (Sep 1936):

Without any warning, one of the guns was whipped from his side.

*The weapon **crashed on his skull with stunning effect**. Fighting back a **swimming black cloud**, Doc felt his arms gripped to his sides. A hoodlike affair was pulled swiftly over his head.*

Under ordinary conditions, the bronze man had defeated the purpose of assailants who sought to administer an anæsthetic. His ability to hold his breath was that of the longest-winded pearl diver of the South Seas. Some of these divers had been known to remain under water for periods of three to four minutes.

*Only half conscious, suffocated by the sack over his head as well as by the **etherizing vapor** clouding his throat and nostrils, Doc lost all knowledge of what was transpiring.*

From Chapter XVIII: "Ham Gets Poison":

*The **bronze man** was standing there. His wet hair and skin were **smooth and sleek**.*

No bulletproof skullcap in evidence, although it may have kept Doc from being rendered unconscious outright instead of being stunned to the point of almost blacking out.

From Chapter IX. “Two Doc Savages” in “Mad Eyes” (May 1937):

*The whole situation was baffling. It was even more so because of the thoroughness with which the bronze man had been disarmed. Even his **bullet-proof skullcap with its bronze hair** had been removed.*

From Chapter II: “White Man’s Voice” in “Land of Long Juju” (Jan 1937):

*The skin of his face and of his hands and bared forearms was of the smoothest golden bronze. **His hair fitted closely to his skull.** Its color seemed almost a continuation of his skin.*

From Chapter VIII: “When the Box Opened”:

*Doc seemed to lift off the whole top of his head. This was **a close-fitting, bulletproof metallic cap.** Over it was **hair** exactly the **same color** as the bronze underneath.*

From Chapter I: “Rain of Death” in “He Could Stop the World” (Jul 1937):

*The skin of his face and hands was of the smoothest bronze. This was the deep coloring of years of tropical sun and Arctic wind. **The hair, also, was bronze, of a little lighter shade, and fitted smoothly like a mask.***

No bulletproof skullcap in evidence. Oddly, his hair is a lighter, not darker, shade of bronze than his skin. This is also one of two references to Doc being “bronze” due to “tropical sun” and “Arctic wind”. The other is “Fantastic Island” (Dec 1935) by Walter Ryerson Johnson (19 Oct 1901–24 May 1995). Dent never used it, although it echoes a description by Dent’s editor, John Leonid Nanovic (07 Oct 1906–09 Feb 2001). Dent includes it in his notes but never uses it himself.

From the unbroken narrative of “Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer” (12 Nov 1932):

*The skin was of a bronze color, bespeaking of long years spent beneath **tropic suns and northern skies**, of an active, exhilarated life of action and adventure. His hair, as if to match that perfectly colored skin, was of a deeper bronze, and lay back smoothly.*

*Most striking of his features were the eyes. ...Their color, too, was bronze—a deep bronze color with light playing upon it playing upon it so that **sometimes the bronze was like a heap of gold flakes** glistening in the sun. Then their gaze revealed an almost hypnotic power quality that would cause the most rash [sic] individual to hesitate.*

From Lester Dent's "Doc Savage" notes (10 Dec 1932):

***SKIN**—Fine and firm and perfect as skin ever was. ... It, too, is bronze, made so by the elements of innumerable climes.*

Donovan's nine stories were more memorable if only for the over-the-top weirdness that Farmer admired, so it's no wonder that he picked up on the gimmick after reading it in seven Doc Savage novels within the same two-year timespan, one of about one-hundred-seventy-five by Dent and six of the nine by Donovan.

But Donovan wasn't the only Doc Savage author to use the bulletproof skullcap idea. Harold Arvine Davis (16 Jan 1903–08 Jan 1955) once used it, but for an entirely *different* character.

From Chapter XIII. "An Intercepted Message" in "The Munitions Master" (Aug 1938):

For a moment John Marsh stood weaving, shaking his head. He should have been dead, but there were a few things not even Mary Standish knew about him.

*One was that he was bald. And to hide that baldness, **he wore a toupee.** Because of the dangers in the business he was in, that toupee was **fitted over a steel skullcap.** The steel had absorbed most of the shock of the blackjack blow.*

Although Dent never used it again, Donovan's repeated use of it passed review by both Dent and the various Street & Smith editors standing between manuscript and published magazine. Not knowing the authorship of the novels and presuming them to be entirely Dent's work is both understandable and forgivable. But it highlights the fact, however "authoritative" it claimed to be, *DS: HAL* was at best educated guesswork and at worst deliberate distortion in furtherance of his Grand Unified Family Tree.

Farmer also wasn't above introducing anachronisms—like the 1973 "Ski-Doo" T'NT (Track'N Trail) FA 400 snowmobile, mocked up to resemble Doc's 1936 Cord 810 convertible, and the "Whizzer" stripped-down Bell 47G-3B helicopter, first flown on Saturday, 08 December 1945 and popularized by the CBS-TV series *Whirlybirds* (04 Feb 1957–18 Jan 1960) famously used in *DS: TMOB*—on pages 47 and 48:

From the 1977 *DS: AOE* treatment:

He presses a button on the long CASE borne by the horses beside him. The top of the case flies opens, and a long flat BUNDLE files out. Doc grabs it, twists a DIAL on its side, and leaps into the air, clutching it.

*The Arabs yell with surprise, then watch Doc falling. After a descent of fifty feet, the bundle spreads out. It's become a **HANG GLIDER!** Doc climbs into the strap beneath it, tilts it, and he's gliding along the canyon wall. ...*

He brings the hand glider up, stalls, losing much speed, ad drops into the water. The narrow stream carries him swiftly away. He clings to the glider, turns a dial on its shaping-mechanism. It refolds itself into a CANOE. Doc gets aboard, detaches a portion for a PADDLE, and paddles away.

His men cheer. But a bullet strikes the shaping-mechanism. The canoe folds up, forming a TENT around Doc, and it sinks, trapping him.

Farmer also uses the 1975 film catchphrase: “Never [sic] fear! Doc Savage is here!” on page 50. On page 54, he identifies the water-activated explosive hidden in a false tooth as “quinmolite” that detonates five seconds after it’s wettened.

One page 64, he gives Johnny a new sesquipedalian exclamatory: “I’ll be *superflabgastimated!*”

Farmer went so far as to end his *DS: AOE* treatment with a teaser for the *next* installment of the movie trilogy (tetralogy?) that *would’ve* been the teased *DS: TAEOE* sequel.

*Watch for Doc Savage’s
Next Thrilling Adventure!
DOC SAVAGE
in the
Supersaga of
Death in Silver!*

In doing so, he also introduced the term “supersaga” he’d coined in *DS: HAL*.

“...When First We Practice to Deceive!”

Farmer demonstrably could and did deliberately shade the truth and mislead for effect in *DS: HAL*.

Farmer would sometimes take a single reference in single novel and blow it up into an entire thesis.

We only think of Doc as following his father’s footsteps as a renowned surgeon because Farmer said so in *DS: HAL*, and he only did that in furtherance of his theories put forth in his WNF Tree that Doc’s father was the illegitimate son of the sixth “Duke of Holderness” (an alias for the Duke of Greystoke), the mutual paternal grandfather of both Tarzan and Doc Savage.

Doc's eighty-sixth floor suite of offices had been his father's, and the library was his "great *technical* library". There is no mention in "The Man of Bronze" or in any other adventure that this is a *medical* library. The only suggestion in *any* adventure that Doc's father was a doctor himself occurs in that first adventure. He's never referred as "a doctor" or given any other professional title anywhere in the series.

From Chapter 3. "Son of Storm and Child of Destiny":

[The duke's] son had discovered treasure, though in the West Indies, not in Australia. He was now entered in premedical school at Johns Hopkins University.

*This was that guilt had worked a moral screw loose in the head of Doc's father. He would pay society back a thousandfold for his crimes. In a sort of Magnificent Obsession state, **he would himself become a medical doctor and surgeon** and heal sick people. He would, also, and this was by far the strongest impulsion, fight evil. His overreaction, we may be sure, was caused by his own criminal impulses. The duke had said that his son had a taste for low company. **The duke's son dedicated his own son "to go here and there, from one end of the world to the other, looking for excitement and adventure, striving to help those who needed help, punishing those who deserved it."** But his son, if he were to get an education in all the professions he needed for his work, would have to have millions. **Though Doc's father was famous enough as a surgeon to become wealthy**, he still would not have nearly enough. So out he went with Hubert Robertson and others to search for the pot of gold at the end of the jungle rainbow. And he found it.*

But all that is Farmer's own invention, and the foundational texts simply don't support it.

From "Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer":

*A surgeon by profession, Doc had ministered to the shattered boys on the other side and repaired, in almost miraculous manner, the effects of shot and shell. Not one of his five companions but owed his very life to the expert skill of Doc. ... **Like his father, he too sought to serve mankind rather than himself**, and thousands of people owed all they had to the aid which he had given them in their moment of need. ...*

*"All my life I knew that my future was laid out for me; I was to **follow in the footsteps of my father**. The work he began, I was to carry forward to completion.*

*He never took me as an understudy, or as a junior partner. That was **not the training I required**. I had to go out on my own and prove myself.*

Doc was indeed following “in the footsteps” of his father, but not what his father did for a living or how he’d amassed it before the War, and that he’d discovered a new source of wealth that he hadn’t yet exploited, holding it in a secret trust a bequest to his son when he proved himself worthy of it. Far from penniless, he was still living high and mighty with his “great technical library” and laboratory high atop the tallest building in the greatest city in the world up until his life was unexpectedly cut short.

It’s worth noting here that Farmer wasn’t yet privy to the information in “Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer” because it wouldn’t be discovered by William Patrick “Will” Murray (28 Apr 1953—) and published as a “chapbook” by Odyssey Publications until Saturday, 19 Apr 1980, whose distribution was limited to a few hundred until it was reprinted by Sanctum Books as a bonus in *Doc Savage* No. 15 “The Red Spider”, “Terror Wears No Shoes”, and “Return from Cormorant” (Mar 2008).

From Lester Dent’s “Doc Savage” notes (10 Dec 1932):

*On the eighty-sixth floor of a skyscraper. This **office-laboratory-living quarters** was **Doc’s father’s** and Doc inherited it. It is **sumptuously fitted up**. ... The establishment is **complete**, dear to Doc’s heart because it holds many remembrances of Doc’s father.*

From Chapter I. “The Sinister One” in “The Man of Bronze”:

*“Moved by mutual admiration for my father,” Doc continued, “we decided to **take up his work of good wherever he was forced to leave off**. We at once began training ourselves for that purpose. It is the cause for which I had been reared from the cradle, but you fellows, because of a love of excitement and adventure, wish to join me.”*

*Doc Savage paused. He looked over his companions, one by one, in the soft light of the **well-furnished office**, one of the few remaining evidences [sic] of the **wealth that once belonged** to his father.*

*“Tonight,” he went on soberly, “we begin carrying out **the ideals of my father**—to go here and there, from one end of the world to the other, looking for excitement and adventure, striving to help those who need help, and punishing those who deserve it.”*

From Chapter II. “Message from the Dead” in “The Man of Bronze”:

*There was another office adjoining, larger, which contained a **library of technical books** that was priceless because of its completeness.*

*Adjoining that was **the vast laboratory room**, replete with apparatus for chemical and electrical experiments.*

*This was about **all the worldly goods** the elder Savage had left behind.*

The rent is presumably paid up such that there's no danger of losing it before Doc finds new funding.

From Chapter X. "Trouble Trail" in "The Man of Bronze":

Carlos Avispa came forward with a warmly outstretched hand. He was a powerful man, a few inches shorter than Doc. His upstanding shock of white hair lent him a distinguished aspect. His face was lined with care, but intelligent and pleasant. He was near fifty.

"It is a great honor indeed to meet the son of the great Señor Clark Savage," he said with genuine heartiness.

That surprised Doc. He was not aware his father had known Carlos Avispa. But Doc's father had many friends of whom Doc was not aware.

"You knew my father?" Doc inquired.

Carlos Avispa bowed. There was genuine esteem in his voice as he replied: "Your father saved my life with his wonderful medical skill. That was twenty years ago, when I was but an unimportant revolutionist hiding out in the mountains. You, I believe, are also a great doctor and surgeon?"

Here was a break, Doc reflected. He nodded that he was a doctor and surgeon. For that was the thing he knew more about than all others.

From these few lines in this one single chapter of this single novel, Farmer puts Clark Savage Senior and Junior on equal footing as "great" doctors and surgeons.

From the 1973 DS: TMOB script:

25. FIREPLACE.

Up on the wall is the PORTRAIT of a handsome, noble-looking man in his early sixties—a silver-templed, furrow-faced replica of Doc Savage. On the bronze plate of the frame is engrave:

"PROFESOR CLARK SAVAGE, SR."

"Professor" is an academic rank at universities and other post-secondary education and research institutions in most countries. Professors are usually experts in their field and teachers of the highest rank. Outside academia, it's used for anyone holding a Ph.D. One can do medical research without holding an M.D. and holding an M.D. doesn't mean that you're qualified or licensed to practice medicine. Conversely, an M.D. is a "professional degree" and not a "research doctorate" as is a Ph.D.

"Professor Clark Savage, Sr." is dressed for safari with none of the trappings of medical man.

From the 1973 *DS: TMOB* script:

167. CLOSE SHOT

On a kindly-looking, white-haired old man, EL PRESIDENTE CARLOS AVISPA ...

EL PRESIDENTE

*Yes, I knew your father, **Professor Savage Senior**, very well. He was a good man. ...*

170. GROUP SHOT

EL PRESIDENTE (shocked)

*On the contrary! ... **Professor Savage** was respected and loved by the people of Hidalgo. He had **set up a hospital** here in the capital city, **established schools** in rural villages, even **taught first aid and sanitation** to remote tribes.*

Although Ludwig Philipp Albert Schweitzer (14 Jan 1875–04 Sep 1965) was highly regarded theologian, organist, writer, humanitarian, philosopher, and physician, his study of medicine was through a clinical course and his medical degree dissertation *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus* was more about the historical Jesus than it was psychiatry. He pursued the ideal of the “philosopher-scientist” rather than that of either a clinical practitioner or academic researcher.

This is in keeping with the portrait’s depiction of Professor Savage as more of an explorer pushing back the boundaries of the frontier to advance science and boldly go where no one has gone before and who as nevertheless ready, willing, and able to accept a measure of a treasure offered in gratitude for his good work without exploiting the people to whom it rightfully belonged.

How much medical skill would it really take to treat the wounds of a revolutionary hiding out in the mountains of a Central American country where the Ford Model T (01 Oct 1908—26 May 1927) was still a wonder? Far from any hospital or accredited doctor, even first aid and sanitization might be all the skill needed to keep someone alive who had no real expectation of surviving such a wound?

But Farmer needed Senior to be as much a doctor and surgeon as Junior to fit his own narrative.

He also inadvertently polluted the overall Doc Savage narrative in the minds of everyone who read *DS: HAL* by taking a singular event—a glaring exception to Doc’s “standard operating procedure” never explained in the novel—and made it “canonical” enough that no one questioned for twenty years, when the “modern-day Kenneth Robeson” Will Murray built Bantam No. 185 “White Eyes” (May 1992, expanded 18 Apr 2014) around it, then made central to *The All-New Wild Adventures of Doc Savage*, Book XX (No. 205) “The Valley of Eternity” (01 Mar 2018), forty-five years after Farmer canonized it.

From Chapter 7. "The Hidalgo Trading Company & Its Craft":

*We don't know who makes the regular runs from Blanco Grande, Hidalgo's capital, to the Hidalgo Trading Company. Probably the captain of the ship is one of the graduates of Doc's upstate New York "college". We do know that his cousin Patricia is employed **on at least one occasion** to bring the gold (*Poison Island*, September 1939).*

But this transshipment is, in fact, a one-time thing, the exception that proves the rule.

But that scenario of the gold being shipped by burro train from the Valley of the Vanished to the Bank of Blanco Grande in Hidalgo and subsequent shipped or flown to New York City via the Hidalgo Trading Company is pure speculation based on an extraordinary single incident in a single novel.

From the sidebar on page 78 of "The Sea Magician" (Nov 1934):

Where Does Doc Savage Get His Money?

Doc possesses a fabulous hoard of gold. The treasure trove lies in a lost valley in the remote mountain fastness of a Central American republic. Descendants of the ancient Mayan race live in this valley and mine the treasure.

When Doc Savage is in need of funds, he has merely to step into a powerful radio station at a certain hour of a certain day of each week and broadcast a few words in the Mayan language. This is picked up by a sensitive receiver in the lost valley. A few days later a burro train laden with gold will appear in the capital of the Central American republic.

These gold cargoes are always deposited to Doc's credit in a bank. It is a slim trip when one of the burro trains does not bring out a treasure of four or five million dollars.

Only Doc and his men know the location of the lost valley of the golden trove and the Mayans.

The gold never actually leaves Hidalgo but is stored in the Bank of Blanco Grande in Doc's name, upon which he draws in the same way that investors draw upon the gold repository at the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, reputed (it can't be confirmed because Swiss banks don't report their gold stores) to be the largest gold repository in the world and holds more gold than Fort Knox.

Nearly 98% of the gold at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is owned by the central banks of foreign nations. The rest is owned by the United States and transnational organizations such as the International Monetary Fund. The Federal Reserve Bank does not own the gold but serves as guardian of the precious metal, which it stores at no charge to the owners, but charging a nominal fee per bar to move the gold from one owner to another.

Any transshipment of gold would thus be transfers of bullion from the vaults of the Bank of Blanco Grande via the Hidalgo Trading Company to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York for safer safekeeping and readier access by the owner of record Clark Savage, Jr. There's no need to "smuggle" gold from Hidalgo to America, as the shipments would be federally authorized international transactions between two federal banks in two allied republics via one of Hidalgo's officially appointed carriers, duly licensed and incorporated in both countries.

This description of the burro train from the Valley of the Vanished to the Bank of Blanco Grande appears almost verbatim in "The Man of Bronze" (Mar 1933), "The Czar of Fear" (Nov 1933) and "The Man Who Shook the Earth" (Feb 1934), after which is relegated to sidebars. This boilerplate text varies as does the description of Doc's "skullcap" hair, but always concludes with the gold being deposited in the Bank of Blanco Grande. Except one time, which is also an exception that proves the rule.

From Chapter I. "The Ambush" in "The Golden Peril" (Dec 1937):

*When Doc had left the Valley of the Vanished, he had arranged with King Chaac, chief of the Mayans, to listen in on a radio on every seventh day. When his funds ran low, Doc would send a call for gold. **Mayans would take it to Blanco Grande**, the capital of Hidalgo, where the president, Carlos Avispa, would see that it was **sent on to Doc**.*

Here, it's *not* explicitly stated that the gold stays in Hidalgo but "sent on to Doc" could just mean that it's sent to the gold repository in the Bank of Blanco Grande, credited to Doc's account.

But if the need arises to physically transfer gold bullion from the Bank of Blanco Grande to America, Doc wouldn't have to do it and, in fact, under the laws prevailing that time, would be forbidden from doing so unilaterally. Any physical transfer would have to be a legally sanctioned international shipment authorized by the Bank of Blanco Grande to one of the twelve Federal Reserve Banks, the only places in the U.S. where gold bullion could be legally stored in Thirties, presumably the one at 33 Liberty Street in New York City.

From Chapter XVIII. "The Cove of Wrecks" in Doc Savage, Vol. XIV, No. 1, "Poison Island" (Sep 1939)

*The truth was that Doc Savage had a fabulous hoard of gold, a vein so rich that it was almost a mother lode, in a remote valley deep in the Central American republic of Hidalgo. The valley was watched over and guarded by descendants of the ancient Mayans, a strange people who had decided to live there forever, shut off from the savageries of the outer world. In return for a **favor** Doc Savage and his aids **had once done them**, they furnished the bronze man with gold. Doc had but to broadcast in the Mayan tongue, on a certain radio wavelength, at a certain hour on a certain day of each week, and **a shipment of gold** would be started **for the outside world**, no one knowing from whence it came, except the bronze man and those closely associated with him.*

This is the standard line about the burro-borne gold train from the Valley to Blanco Grande.

From Chapter II. "The Eye on the Mast":

*IT was not exactly a surprise to Herb March when the schooner **Patricia** sailed at midnight, since he had noticed the gear had been made fast before sundown, as if in preparation for putting to sea, and in addition, the tide started going out about midnight and a sailing boat would naturally catch a favorable tide.*

*Furthermore, **a long procession of half-naked jungle savages** had filed aboard the schooner **in the later afternoon**, and each aborigine had carried a **wooden case** which he had deposited aboard the craft. The half-naked natives had **then filed back into the jungle**, passing near Herb's tree, and infrequently speaking to each other in a dialect which Herb was sure he had never before heard. The savages had doubtless brought the schooner whatever cargo she had come for.*

This implies that the gold was transported directly from the Valley of the Vanished to Pat's schooner, bypassing the Bank of Blanco Grande in abrogation of Doc's treaty with both the Mayans and government of Hidalgo. This could in no way be the standard practice for transshipping gold between Hidalgo and the U.S.

Lester Dent was fond of one-time throwaway gimmicks, but as noted here, sometimes these notions, tossed off as a convenient offhand explanation but not intended to be used again, take on a life of their own, whether done intentionally or otherwise.

When Pat's schooner is discovered abandoned in the Bahamas, there's no indication of her ultimate destination. It's registered in New York ("N.Y." the state, not "N.Y.C." the city) with no explicit statement that she was homeward bound.

From Chapter IV. "Something to Wonder About":

They looked at the logbook, and found entries therein showing that the schooner had left a Hidalgo seaport six weeks before and had cruised peacefully northward, making a slow passage because of light winds.

The logbook was complete up to one week previously, and the entries ended without any reference to any disaster, or any intention of abandoning ship.

The very last entry read:

"Light S. E. breeze. Everything very pleasant."

From Chapter XXI. "The Nabob of Poison Island":

Doc said: "You know all about our secret source of gold in the valley in Hidalgo."

"Yes, but—"

"Pat," Doc explained, "was bringing a shipment of that gold back to New York for us on our [sic] schooner."

Pat, interrupting, elaborated: "[Spoiler] was after that gold. He must have lurked in Hidalgo for weeks, until he found out that it was coming to my boat. He told us, boasting, that he had gotten drunk with a Hidalgoan [sic] government official, and the man told him that we got gold from some mysterious place in the country, and that was the first [Spoiler] knew about the treasure."

We are never told why and where Pat was transporting Doc's gold. While it's implied that she's doing so at Doc's behest, there's no word under what authority she might be able to do. If she was acting as officially appointed carrier, then the gold should have been brought aboard the schooner from the vaults of the Bank of Blanco Grande, but such is not the case.

But the regular transfers alleged by Farmer would be needless, risky, and counterproductive when there were perfectly legal means.

There's an untold Doc Savage story here. Why would Doc sneak five tons of gold out of the Valley of the Vanished without the knowledge and consent of the governments of Hidalgo and the U.S. and where did he intend this secret shipment of gold to go?

We can only hypothesize, as Farmer did in *DS: HAL*, but *our* conjectures would just as valid as *his*.

A WNF Tree Grows in Bookplates

It wasn't until the paperback editions of *DS: HAL* published by Panther (Apr 1975), Bantam (Jul 1975), and Playboy Press (Jul 1981) hit the stands that it became the authoritative must-have go-to encyclopedic reference for All Things Doc Savage that it still is today.

To be fair, there wasn't really anything else but crude mail-order mimeo and offset fanzines to inform readers about the character except the reprinted novels, stripped of the character profiles and sidebars that accompanied the text in the original pulps. The back cover blurbs and the "Doc's Amazing Crew" list in the front matter were that all the reprints provided by way of background and continuity.

Even "Doc's Amazing Crew" was hopelessly outdated. Johnny was only the "bespectacled scientist" of the blurb only in the first dozen issues and Bantam didn't reprint them in their publication order, so Johnny carried a magnifying monocle instead of wearing glasses in *The Fantastic Adventures of Doc Savage* No. 2 and No. 3 (Oct 1964), wore glasses in No. 4 through No. 6 (Apr 1965), monocle in No. 7 (Sep 1967), glasses in No. 8 (Aug 1965), monocle in No. 9 (Nov 1965), glasses in No. 10 (Mar 1966) and

No. 11 (May 1966), monocle in No. 12 (Jul 1966) through No. 16 (Mar 1967), glasses in No. 17 (May 1967) through No. 19 (Sep 1967), and monocle from No. 20 (Nov 1967) on.

Most fans didn't even know that Doc Savage novels weren't contemporary unless they'd grown with the pulps, read the copyright page, or subscribed to the fanzines, the first of which was *Bronze Shadows* (Oct 1965–Jan 1968), which quickly became a general pulp fanzine because Bantam only reprinted six per year until going monthly with No. 22 (Mar 1968) from No. 65 (Nov 1971), when cover artist Bama retired from commercial art, forcing them back to reprinting every-other-month and then quarterly.

DS: HAL didn't really take off and have an impact until the Bantam paperback edition hit the stands just as *DS: TMOB* hit the screens in June. It arrived at a critical time when new fans who'd never seen, much less read, an original pulp magazine or any reference of any kind that could explain all the things that the reprinted novels didn't.

To this entire new generation, there were only the first eighty Bantam reprints (only "King Maker" was published that year, which Bantam spent reprinting the earlier reprints for the benefit of Those Who Came In Late), the one Gold Key *Doc Savage* No. 1 "The Thousand-headed Man" (Nov 1966), the eight color Marvel Comics (Oct 1972–Jan 1974), *Giant Sized Doc Savage* No. 1 "Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze!" and *Giant Size Spider Man* No. 3 "The Yesterday Connection!" (Jan 1975), the six issues of the Marvel/Curtis *Doc Savage Magazine*, and *Marvel Two-in-One* No 21 "Black Sun Lives!" (Nov 1976).

Most of the information available was about the movie, Steranko's short-lived "Brotherhood of Bronze" fan club and three issues of *Brotherhood of Bronze Bulletin* (Jun 1975–Jan 1977) and a few fledgling amateur fanzines: *Doc Savage Journal* (May 1969), *The Doc Savage Reader* (Jan 1973), *Doc Savage Fan Magazine* (Mar 1974), *Doc Savage & Associates* (Feb 1976) and *Doc Savage Club Reader* (Sep 1977).

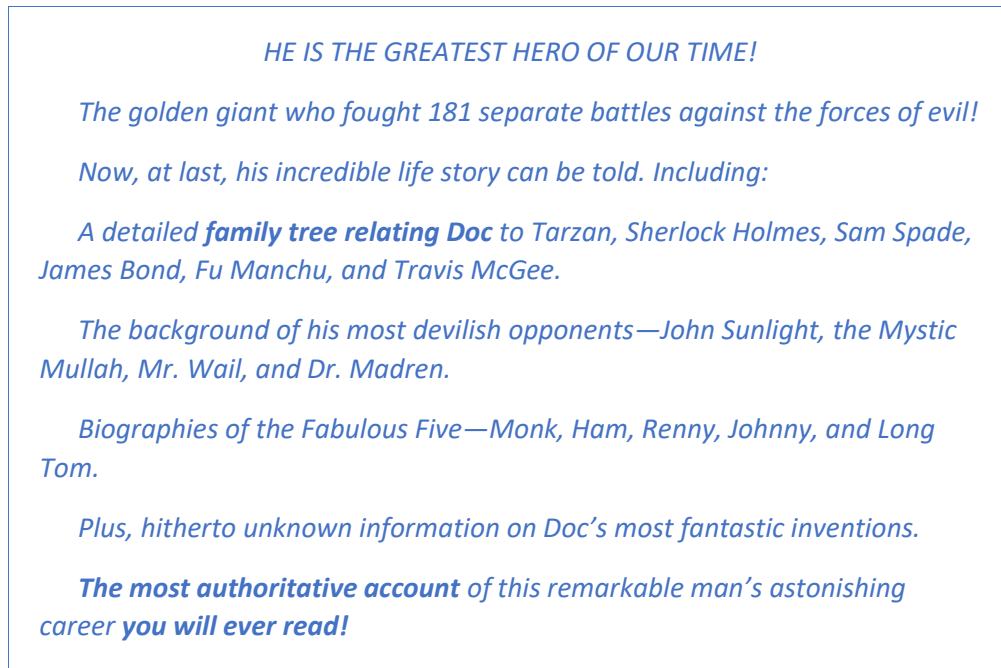
Will Murray was the lone authoritative voice, having written "Doc Savage: The Genesis of a Popular Fiction Hero" as a thesis for the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and published *Duende* No. 2 "The Doc Savage Index" (15 Jun 1978) and *Doc Savage: Reflections in Bronze* (15 Jun 1978), but his Odyssey Publication didn't really get off the ground until 1980 and, even then, they were few and far between, printing four chapbooks in six years.

They were, however, classic references worth their weight in Mayan gold: *Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer* (19 Apr 1980), *Secrets of Doc Savage* (24 Nov 1981), *The Invincible Doc Savage* (03 Jul 1983), and *The Doc Savage Files* (18 Feb 1985). By then, Bantam had still only reprinted 96 of the 181 original novels individually, with No. 100 to 126 published quarterly as fifteen Doubles. The next year, they went into Omnibus editions, printing four or five digest pulp novels at a time.

So, of course, fans frenziedly ate up *DS: HAL*, praising it as a literal godsend!



The back cover blurb is even more extravagant, promising everything any Doc Savage fan would want to know, and things they might think possible. To paraphrase the title of the 1972 bestseller still making waves worldwide at the time, *DS: HAL* was rightfully regarded as “*Everything you always wanted to know about Doc* (*BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!)*”



It was marketed as “the most authoritative account” of Doc Savage that everyone hoped it to be—it said so right there on the label—but like so much “snake oil” it was laced with unhealthy adulterations that made you feel good for a while but in the long run did more harm than good.

Ironically, we only got the 1975 Bantam *DS: HAL* paperback because it was a “Corrected and Expanded Edition” whose only corrections and expansions were to the WNF content, resolving many false starts and dead-end speculations printed in the original edition and the subsequent WNF-based works. He said all he needed to say about Doc in his “biography” and never looked back, only forward.

But most fans only skimmed the first two chapters, “The Fourfold Vision” in which Farmer lays out his case, and “Lester Dent, The Revelator from Missouri” in which he gives credit where credit is due but

subverts it by intimating that *Dent* is an “unreliable narrator” when it is *Farmer* who is misrepresenting and distorting the “facts” in furtherance of his Grand Unified Family Tree hypotheses, to dive headlong in Chapter 3. “Son of the Storm and Child of Destiny” and Farmer’s constructed Modern Mythology.

From Chapter 1. “The Fourfold Vision” in *DS HAL*:

*Whether my argument is valid or not, I am convinced that poplit, despite its massive flaws, is worth a serious study. About this time, I became aware of the body of people, many of them distinguished in their widely varied professions, who were devoted to the study of Sherlock Holmes. And I came across the biographies of so-called fictional characters. These included the lives of Sir Percy Blakeney (**The Scarlet Pimpernel**), Mister Ephraim Tutt, Nero Wolfe, Sherlock Holmes, and perhaps Count Dracula. ...*

I began writing a “biography” of Lord Greystoke, or Tarzan, based on the premise that he is a living person. While I was doing this, the first of the biographies of Harry Flashman (the chief bully in Tom Brown’s Schooldays) and The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower came out.

*After finishing **Tarzan Alive** (not my choice of title), I started on this, **Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life**.*

He wasted no time establishing both the *literary* and *literal* kinship of Tarzan and Doc Savage.

From Chapter 3. “Son the Storm and Child of Destiny”

*As I’ve shown in **Tarzan Alive**, the true name of “James Wilder/Doctor Clark Savage, Sr.,” was actually **James Clarke Wildman**. Clarke Wildman was one of the many compound family names of the English landed gentry. Most of these are hyphenated (as in Smythe-Jones), but some are not. Dent, in his fictionized versions of Doc’s exploits, was compelled by both Doc and Street and Smith Publications to use a fictional name for Doc Savage. ...*

He then posits that, since two people from the same family living on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean were both aviators in WWI, they were both *naturally bound* to encounter one another for no other reason, James Clarke Wildman, Jr. met John “Jack” Clayton III, Earl of Greystoke, better known as Tarzan’s “son” *Korak* (“The Killer”), under *his* real name.

From Chapter 3. “Son the Storm and Child of Destiny”

*In the Argonne operation of September—November of that year, Doc met another cousin, Flight Lieutenant **John Drummond Clayton**, temporarily attached to the U.S. Army Air service. They talked about **Clayton’s father, the eighth duke of Greystoke, the grandson of the brother of Doc’s grandfather.** As a result of this meeting, Doc would take some postgraduate training from Lord Greystoke. The arboreal skills learned from this visit enabled Doc, on at least four occasions, to carry a person on his back à la Tarzan through the trees and so escape the villains.*

You can’t say that he didn’t warn us up front that *DS: HAL* was a work of fiction, not fact, and that much of it was made from whole cloth fashioned into a crazy quilt of deduction, inference, speculation, and half-assed, if not wild ass, guesses in furtherance of his overarching agenda: his WNF Tree!

Critique of Impure Reason

Here’s Exhibit “B” for Farmer’s *modus operandi* of taking something from the text of the novels out of context and crafting a superseding narrative of his own in service of his WNF-infused agenda that causes me to consider *DS: HAL* “harmful” to fans and scholars alike.

From Chapter 6. “The Eighty-Sixth Floor”:

*It is also near the end of his career that Doc seems to have lost much of his money, though this again is not explained. He can’t afford to buy a yacht, a big comedown for a man who once purchased a newspaper publishing company as an item in a plot to catch a villain. **The big fleet of fabulous armed-and-armored vehicles in the subbasement garage is reduced to two. The others have been given to the government during the war.***

From Chapter X. “The Rush West” in “The Running Skeletons” (Jun 1943):

*THEY used a large sedan which would carry all of them and which had more complete equipment. **It was one of several cars and trucks which Doc Savage and his associates had maintained for some time, keeping the vehicles in a private basement garage in the building which housed headquarters.** The collection of cars, which had been extensive, was now considerably abbreviated—**they had only two cars left in fact**—because the other machines had been **removed to defense plants, where their design could be studied and good features, or features suitable to military operations, adapted to war production.***

This is classic example of Farmer distorting what Dent says, suggesting that the vehicles are gone because Doc can no longer afford them.

Farmer most tipped his hand as to what he was doing throughout *DS: HAL* when he equivocated on the exact site of Doc's headquarters after proving that it'd be the eighty-sixth, suggesting that it could have been on any upper floor from the seventieth and eighty-fifth!

From Chapter 5. "The Skyscraper":

*What building is it that is definitely in midtown Manhattan and is bounded by Fifth Avenue, Thirty-fourth Street, and Thirty-third Street? What skyscraper is the only one in Manhattan with a dirigible mooring mast? The only one that fits these specifications is the **Empire State Building**. The Empire State Building also has other qualifications. **The reception room on the eighty-sixth floor has windows on the west and north sides, which would place it on the northwest corner of the building**. From there, Broadway, Times Square, and the Hudson River can be seen. The Sixth Avenue Elevated could be seen from there (it's gone now). ...*

*One of the things that must be ascertained, however, is the **true location of Doc's HQ**. Were they actually on the eighty-sixth floor of the Empire State Building? We know that Doc would not be content with anything but the best and the highest. And the topmost residential floor of the highest residential building in the world would be Doc's if it were possible to get it. ...*

*No doubt, Doc lived on one of the highest floors of the ESB, but it **would not have been the eighty-sixth**. This is incontrovertibly the observation floor. ...*

I have been unable to determine which story Doc actually occupied. The management of the ESB has informed me that this information is unavailable.

...

*I'll guess that since Doc would want to be as highly placed as possible, his HQ were on one of the floors between the **eightieth and the eighty-sixth**. On the other hand, since his visitors never transferred at the eightieth to go to a higher floor, if we can believe Dent, he may have been in a story **between the seventieth and the eightieth**. For the purposes of this book, and **in deference to those who would be outraged if any other were named, the eighty-sixth will be designated as Doc's throughout this book.***

And so, Farmer punts, never answering the question that he himself raised. I vividly remember being outraged that he *didn't* name another floor and identify the "true location of Doc's HQ" he'd teased!

He did, at least, provide sufficient clues that the reader could follow to pinpoint it within three adjacent floors, as I did for my "Doc Wildman" pastiche in *Ostara* No. 2 "The Clockwork Man" (Mar 1978) and for a floorplan that I drew in collaboration with Eric. J. Campfield, whose idea it had been.

From Chapter 5. “The Skyscraper”:

*Of the three hidden elevators, two could go all the way to the **subbasement garage**. ...*

*The **Chrysler Building** had to be the place from which the sniper shot, because it was the only one high enough for the sniper to see Doc’s figure against the lighted window. ...*

*Only two out of the sixty-four elevators went as high as the eightieth floor. **The eightieth was the extreme upper limit for any car**. None could go any higher because the weight of the cables required for this elevation was too heavy. Thus, all passengers were required to **transfer at the eightieth floor to another car**. ...*

*The requirement for exchange of elevators by the passengers at the eightieth floor throws an unbendable crowbar into the machinery of the Doc Savage stories. So many of these hinge on **direct elevator trips to and from the eighty-sixth floor**. ...*

*Yet the building laws not only **forbade any elevator to exceed the eighty-story-in-one-trip limit**, they restricted the elevator speed to twelve hundred feet a minute.*

Given the eighty-floor span limit, the eightieth floor was the highest that Doc’s father’s “office-laboratory-living quarters” could’ve been. Given routine travel between that floor and the sub-basement garage without changing elevators, the seventieth-eighth floor is the highest.

It also suggests an untold Doc Savage adventure in which his seventy-eighth-floor headquarters is the target of a *kamikaze* attack using a hijacked USAAF B-25 Mitchell bomber that famously crashed into the north side of the ESB between the seventy-eighth and eightieth floors at 9:20 a.m. Saturday, 28 July 1945.

I couldn’t bring myself to write such a story because I felt that doing so would dishonor the memories of all the real-life people who did and didn’t survive that tragic crash.

I did, however, draw a floor plan of “Doc Savage HQ 78th Floor, Empire State Building” based on a survey of the accessible portions—the elevator lobby and stairwell—and pacing off the dimensions of the area to extrapolate how it would fit into the known dimensions of the exterior walls. I even found a private elevator in a hallway around the corner from the ten-car Elevator Bank G, the only bank that served the sixty-sixth to eightieth floors.

I submitted that floor plan to Will Murray in 1979 for possibly publication in *Duende* No. 3 but that never came to be. It languished in his files for twelve years, until Millennium Comics called to ask if he had anything they could use for their *Doc Savage Special* No. 1 “Manual of Bronze” (Aug 1992).

Millennium took that, changed “78” to “86” and added all the features that Farmer had mapped out in Chapter 6. “The Eighty-Sixth Floor” in *DS: HAL*. You’ll find scans of the published floorplan online—just search for “Doc Savage HQ floorplan”—its design credited to me and the concept to Eric J. Campfield.

Farmer’s bit about the Chrysler Building being the Mayan sniper’s roost in “The Man of Bronze” is totally his own flight of fancy. It wasn’t “the only one high enough for the sniper to see Doc’s figure against the lighted window” and, in fact, its placement at Lexington Avenue and Forty-second Street, eight blocks north and three blocks east of the ESB at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street, makes it impossible to get a direct shot through any window because they’re all at an oblique if not forty-five degree angle, not perpendicular to the line of sight necessary for a direct shot.

On Saturday, 10 December 1932, when Dent began his notes, there was a seventy-story building with sixty-six numbered floors under construction between Fifth and Sixth Avenue at Forty-ninth Street, half a block west and fifteen blocks north, between Tuesday, 08 March 1932 and Monday, 01 May 1933.

“Lunch atop a Skyscraper (New York Construction Workers Lunching on a Crossbeam)” is an iconic photograph taken atop the open ironwork of the sixty-ninth floor of this building taken on Tuesday, 20 September 1932. This provides visual evidence of its feasibility as a sniper’s roost.

Because this building’s foundation sits at an elevation one hundred feet higher than that of ESB, its sixty-ninth floor is in a direct line with the seventy-eighth floor of the ESB almost due south. It would also have a clear shot at any window on the north side between the eightieth and eighty-sixth, so all the candidates are covered. South-facing photos that show the ESB in the distance confirm this sightline.

Don’t take my word for it. See for yourself. The street address of this building is 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

Farmer’s premise is debunked when Doc’s HQ is sniped from the Chrysler Building later in the series.

From the untitled Chapter VI in “Cargo Unknown” (Apr 1945):

*He crawled to the telephone. He dialed the police. “The **Mercator Automotive Building**,” he told the police. “Someone is shooting at us from there. Probably **from one of the top floors**.” ...*

*“The **Mercator Building** is the only one where the shot could have come from. And it had to be fired from somewhere **above the twenty-fifth floor** of the Mercator, because **you can’t see this window from any floor lower**. Too many high buildings in between. Come on.” ...*

*The Mercator Automotive Building was **three blocks over and a short drive north**. They were turning north when Doc heard the shots. Three shots, as nearly as he could tell.*

The “Mercator Automotive Building” is clearly intended to be the Chrysler Building, as both are located three blocks east (“over”) and eight blocks north (“a short drive”) from the ESB at the intersection of Lexington Avenue and Forty-second Street. None of the shots could be direct due to the oblique angle, which is likely why they only broke windows but scoring no hits.

Ironically, Farmer's notion that the shots fired *at* the ESB *from* the Chrysler Building sparked a fan theory that Doc's HQ was *in* the Art Deco stainless steel spire of the Chrysler Building and was fired upon *from* the ESB while it was still under construction between the time that the eightieth-floor observatory topped out on Friday, 05 September 1930 and when the eighty-sixth floor observatory topped out on Friday, 19 September 1930, or the one-hundred-second floor observatory topped out on Friday, 21 November 1930. The ESB opened on Friday, 01 May 1931—eleven months after the Chrysler Building opened on Friday, 27 May 1930—to claim the title of “world's tallest building” from it.

The fan theory? Doc's HQ was really on the sixty-eighth floor of the Chrysler, not the eighty-sixth floor of the ESB, with the respective floor numbered simply been reversed to conceal this fact.

That's no more farfetched than any of Farmer's own “deductions” now accepted by many as fact.

Having gone to great pains in *TA: ADBOLG* to establish that future Lord Greystoke “John Clayton III” was born on Thursday, 22 November 1888 (a Scorpio), Farmer did the same for “James Clark Wildman, Jr.” in *DS: HAL*. He couldn't use the conceit of having tracked down and personally interviewed Doc Savage as he'd done with Tarzan, as there were no chronological clues in the literature.

So, he faked it.

From Addendum 2 “Chronology”:

No Light to Die By (May–June 1947), contains a unique item—a memo from Doc himself. ... The **editorial page** ... also quotes from **Dent's old notebook**. “**This thing started Nov. 12, 1932**. This brusque notation, so it happens, was made the day the writing of the first Doc Savage novel began...”

*This notation would seem to be authentic. However, Dent did not have the notebook in front of him when he quoted the line to his editor. He was relying on his memory, which, while phenomenally good, was not perfect. I have seen the old notebook, and the entry reads: “This thing started December 10, 1932.” Dent was actually thinking of Doc's birth date, November 12, when he told the editor about the first day of writing **The Man of Bronze**. In a sense, though, Dent was right. As a literary figure, Doc was born on December 10, 1932.*

There's a far simpler explanation that explains the date discrepancy but has nothing to do with Doc's birthdate: the editor of this issue, William John de Grouchy (1889–29 Nov 1954), or more likely his assistant, Babette Rosmond (04 Nov 1917–23 Oct 1997), who did the grunt work of writing the monthly editorials, was making a sly tribute to the magazine's *first* editor John Nanovic, who wrote the nine-thousand-word “Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer” short story that Dent expanded into the sixty-thousand-word “The Man of Bronze” that went on to become the first *published* account.

That would make the cited date 12 November 1933 when Nanovic completed “Doc Savage, Supreme Adventurer” *not* Dent's notes begun 10 December 1932, the true “birth” of Doc Savage “as a literary character” that Farmer ascribes to Dent.

I'm not the first to question the content of *DS: HAL*, but I may be the first to deem it *harmful* and I do so because I've spent a last two decades "busting" myths and misapprehensions that accrued from fictions given as facts in *DS: HAL* in the forty-eight years since its publication.

The only section of *DS: HAL* that is routinely contested and argued is Addendum 2: "Chronology".

From "Author's Foreword to the New Edition" (Jun 2011) in *The Adventures of the Man of Bronze: a Definitive Chronology* (2012) by Jeff Deischer:

Apparently, my criticism of Philip Jose Farmer's Wold Newton work has caused some hard feelings among some of his fans. It shouldn't. I'm one of them. Farmer possessed a great intellect and creativity, and he is one of my favorite authors. ...

I did not, as some seem to think, set out to destroy the WNU. I did not, in fact, set out to do anything with it. I saw errors in Farmer's Doc Savage chronology and set out to rectify them. I set out to tell the truth about Doc Savage. Along the way, I uncovered his agenda, which was counter to information in the Doc Savage series itself. Later research into ancillary literature revealed a widespread disregard for the actual texts of stories and their authors' intents. My criticism is both simple and specific (and, I might add, not personal): Farmer distorted information to fit his own agenda and labelled it as fact. For a "scholar", this is inexcusable. ...

Specifically, Farmer had a view of Doc Savage that he wanted to promote in his biography of the Man of Bronze and he ignored or distorted information in the series to do so. His research is so meticulous that this distortion can only have been intentional. Based on his two biographies of pulp characters, Farmer was not a pulp scholar. He was an author with a point of view, or agenda, that he wanted to get across, which, at least in the case of Doc Savage, was not wholly based on evidence in the series.

Farmer was better identified as a "mythographer"—a documenter of myths—than as a scholar. He took stories of heroes and wove them together into a single tapestry. The research alone is staggering. The creativity is no less impressive. And pointing out errors in the weaving to correct flaws to make a more accurate tapestry should not be misconstrued as disrespect for the weaver.

There is nothing wrong with playing games such as Farmer's—and I have nothing against them, personally—but they should not be offered or taken as scholarly research. They belong where I and others have put them—in fiction.

Like Deischer, I make no value judgments about Philip José Farmer or the WNF except to demonstrate that his work is, has always been and always be deliberately provocative, controversial,

and transformative of whatever genre whose conventions he has chosen to address, and Doc Savage is no exception to that *modus operandi*.

I appreciate everything that Philip José Farmer did to boost Doc Savage but resent his interjection of his WNF backstory and its implicit agenda into “The First All-New Doc Savage® Adventure Since 1949” Bantam No. 183 “Escape from Loki” (Aug 1991) as much as his previous attempt to suborn the sequels to *DS: TMOB* a decade earlier.

DS: HAL only qualifies as “canon” because it has literally become the Doc Savage Gospel upon its publication in 1973 and has only become more so due to its updated reprintings in 1975, 1981 and 2013 (Fortieth Anniversary edition).

This is due the fact that it was seen as a literal godsend to fans who had only the 73 Bantam reprints available in August 1973. It didn’t help that Bama had stopped doing the covers a year earlier and fans were still mourning the loss.

Every Doc Savage fan alive (including myself) ate it up and used it as their primary if not only reference. William Patrick Murray did publish his groundbreaking *Duende* No. 2: “Doc Savage Index” (11 Jan 1977) for another year. His five esteemed Odyssey chapbooks were published in 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983 and 1985.

But we all drank from the well, the Font of Wisdom that was *DS: HAL*. The problem is that well was contaminated, consciously or unconsciously, by Farmer’s larger agenda: establishing his WNF and weaving Doc Savage into it as decisively as he had Tarzan and Holmes.

DS: HAL remains the go-to reference even now, with fans still hanging on every word as if were holy writ. But it’s not. It was the second volume of the WNF (now Universe) series and exists solely to put Doc into that pulpwood pantheon, which now includes any and every pop culture character that fans can find a way to shoehorn in.

It’s also the source of most of the misinformation and mythology about the character over the last 50 years, perpetuated and amplified by repetition and distortion like a game of “Telephone” the entire time, until it’s become accepted as fact with little or no question.

DS: HAL effectively turned Doc Savage into a pastiche of himself. The book isn’t even about Clark Savage, Jr. but rather the groundwork for the introduction of James Clarke Wildman, Jr. in a way that harks back to Doc Caliban, especially in its Freudian treatment of Doc’s sexuality and general personality.

The “Farmerization” of Doc Savage began with Doc Caliban but it started in earnest with *DS: HAL*.

Shogun’s Run

How pervasive and thus persuasive could *DH: HAL* have been when it was the only game in town?

The first “respectable” mass market paperback in the U.S. was Pearl S. Buck’s *The Good Earth* (Nov 1938), published by Pocket Books. This first, unnumbered version was apparently produced in a small test run of fewer than 3,000 copies and sold only in Macy’s in New York.

Following the success of this test, Pocket Books produced ten titles, beginning with Pocket Books No. 1 *Lost Horizon* (19 Jun 1939) by James Hilton, with *The Good Earth* (Sep 1939) re-released as Pocket Books No. 11 with a slightly different cover.

In 1939, gas cost 10¢ (\$1.95 today) a gallon. A movie ticket set you back 20¢ (\$3.90 today). John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (14 Apr 1939), the year's bestselling hardcover book, was \$2.75 (\$53.75 today). For a nation suffering 20% unemployment, hardcover books were an impossible expense. But it wasn't just the totable softcover format that was revolutionary. Pocket Books only cost 25¢ (\$4.85 today).

New York publishers didn't think the cheap, flimsy books would translate to the American market. They were wrong. It took just a week for Pocket Books to sell out its initial 100,000 copy run. Despite industry skepticism, paperbacks were about to transform America's relationship with reading forever.

Printing costs were high because volumes were low—an average hardcover print run of 10,000 might cost 40¢ (\$7.82 today) per copy. With only five hundred bookstores in the U.S., most located in major cities, low demand was baked into the equation.

Quantity was key. If Pocket Books could print 100,000 paperbacks, production costs would plummet to 10¢ cents per copy, yielding at least as much profit after the inevitable distribution costs. But to turn the profit, each book had to reach hundreds of thousands of readers.

Using magazine distributors to place Pocket Books in newsstands, subway stations, drugstores, and other outlets to reach the underserved suburban and rural populace rather than the hidebound bookstores that dealt with hardcover killed two birds with one stone, bypassing the skeptics and sell as directly as possible to the target audience: the Human in the Street who could spare 25¢.

In 1939, Penguin opened an office in the U.S. under the direction of Ian Keith Ballantine (15 Feb 1916–09 Mar 1995), who together with Bennett Alfred Cerf (25 May 1898–27 Aug 1971), founded Bantam Books in 1945, and subsequently his own Ballantine Books in 1950. Both enterprises went on to become significant factors in the U.S. and world publishing markets.

Hardcover publishers still scoffed at the idea of paperbacks for the masses, but still remained more than willing to sell Pocket Books the reprint rights to their hardcover titles. By the time Pocket Books sold its hundred-millionth copy in September 1944, its books could be found in more than 70,000 outlets across the U.S. They might lack the glamour and sophistication of hardcovers, but paperbacks were making serious money, and it wasn't long before other publishers decided to jump into the game.

By the end of the Forties, the success of Pocket Books had long since sparked an explosion of new imprints in mass-market paperbacks. Despite the success of the format, paperbacks were still regarded in the book trade as adjuncts to the hardcover business, and pretty much all paperbacks were reprints of hardcover titles. In fact, paperback publishers were often explicitly and exclusively contracted to distribute titles from traditional hardcover publishers.

In the late Forties, Fawcett Publications decided to expand in the paperback business but found itself hamstrung by a non-compete clause in its distribution contract with another publisher. But a careful examination revealed that the prohibition only applied to reprints of existing titles and someone at Fawcett came up with the bizarre idea of publishing original material in paperback form.

Thus, in 1949, was the Paperback Original or PBO born. Fawcett, under its Gold Medal imprint, released hundreds of PBO titles in the subsequent decades, as well as reprints under its other imprints, like Crest and Premiere. Other imprints in the PBO market beginning in the Fifties included Dell First Editions, Avon, Graphic, Ace, and Harlequin, and quite a few notable writers found their feet under the aegis of these pioneering houses.

Ace is also remembered for its “Ace Doubles” and Philip K. Dick’s *Solar Lottery* (Ace D-103, paired with Leigh Brackett’s *The Big Jump*, 1955) was one of a few notable books published first as a PBO and only later in hardcover. Kurt Vonnegut’s *Sirens of Titan* (Dell B-138, Jan 1959) is another, first published as a PBO before being picked up by Houghton Mifflin for hardcover.

With Pocket Books and Penguin paving the way, the paperback gold rush had begun. Other paperback houses soon followed, including Popular Library, Dell, Fawcett Publications, and Avon Pocket Size Books. In 1945, Ian Ballantine and his wife Elizabeth Jones “Betty” Ballantine (25 Sep 1919–12 Feb 2019) had pitched hardcover re-printer Grosset & Dunlap the idea of starting a new paperback business. Grosset & Dunlap was a joint venture of the day’s biggest hardcover players: Random House, Harper’s, Charles Scribner’s Sons, Book-of-the-Month Club, and Little, Brown. Each of these companies was looking for a way to dip its toes into the exploding market, and the Ballantines had come to them at the right time. Grosset & Dunlap, along with distributor Curtis, became shareholders in Ballantine’s new paperback house, Bantam Books.

Bantam’s impact was immediate—its initial printings were usually 200,000 copies or more. Crazier still, almost every title sold out. Each month, Bantam published four new books from the large backlist available via Grosset & Dunlap, and it had no shortage of quality titles, including *The Great Gatsby* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, still just 25¢ (\$3.75 today) in 1945. Fawcett silenced the skeptics by selling more than nine million copies of their paperback originals within six months. Authors did the math, and writers of genre fiction—thrillers, Westerns, and romance especially—jumped at the opportunity to write PBOs. Still, “serious” literary writers insisted on staying in the hardcover market for the prestige, and critics in turn declined to review paperback originals. Clearly, the stigma was still there.

In 1960, revenues from paperbacks of all shapes and sizes finally surpassed those from hardcover sales. The same year, Pocket Books became the first publisher to be publicly traded on a stock exchange, essentially marking paperbacks’ ascent to the mainstream. When Bantam’s *The Fantastic Adventures of Doc Savage* No. 1 to 3 hit the stands together on Friday, 18 September 1964, they sold for 45¢ (\$3.95 today) with an initial print runs of 200,000 copies.

DS: *HAL* (Bantam Q8834, Jul 1975, ISBN 978-0-553-08834-2, OCLC/WorldCat 1814613, 270 pages) sold for \$1.25 (\$6.30 today) with two print runs. The Internet Science Fiction Database (ISFDB) tersely notes “2nd printing. Almost identical to the 1st.” but that may only refer to the content, not the number of copies per run. Subsequent print runs were likely based on a formula based on the quarterly sales of the initial run. If the second print run was only half the number of the initial run, that’s still 300,000 copies total in circulation throughout that time. If it were half again, that’s half a million at a minimum. If it were double, that’s at least 600,000 copies and perhaps up to 750,000.

Not a best seller, but still a fairly significant market penetration.

By way of comparison, Bantam paperback sales of Peter Benchley's *Jaws* (Feb 1974) best seller reached three million and had started to wane when the Steven Spielberg movie premiered on Friday, 20 June 1975. By the end of October, six million more copies had been sold. It was an industry speed record at the time and it's not clear if this involved more than one additional print run.

In the five years between the publication of Bantam Q8834 and that of the Playboy Press edition (Playboy 16854, Jul 1980, ISBN 978-0-87216-854-1, OCLC/WorldCat: 7643830, [14]+269 pages) sold for \$2.50 (\$8.25 today) there were only the fanzines to gainsay it, and most didn't, eating it up as served.

Q.E.D.

Farmeresque Freelance Fabulism for Fun and Profit

After *DS: TMOB* was figuratively eaten alive at the box office by *Jaws* (20 Jun 1975) and eclipsed by the likes of *Rollerball* (25 Jun 1975) and *Race with the Devil* (27 Jun 1975), dashing any hopes of a sequel, much less Farmer's WNF-infused *DS: AOE* or the proposed *DSTV* series, both Farmer and Pal moved on without a backward glance.

Farmer, at least, had the Bantam edition of *DS: HAL* going for him, greeted with greater acclaim than ever before. Pal never recovered. *DS: TMOB* would've been Pal's comeback after his previous box-office bomb, *The Power* (21 Feb 1968) five years before. He pitched *The Time Machine II* but got no takers.

Farmer became a pioneer in the burgeoning "New Pulp" movement, but always with an eye toward going over the top if not over the line, shaking the tree, breaking the mold, pushing the boundaries.

In *TMOF&SF*, Vol. XLIII, No. 4 (Issue 257) "Skinburn" (Oct 1972), he introduced private detective Kent Lane, the illegitimate son of Kent Allard (The Shadow) and Margo Lane. "Kent Lane" was added without fanfare to the WNF Tree in the Panther and Bantam paperback editions of *DS: HAL* (Apr & Jul 1975) and a novel tentatively titled *Why Everyone Hates Me* was announced as *The Bronze Serpent* as forthcoming from Bobbs-Merrill in *Science Fiction Review* No. 14 (Aug 1975).

Weird Heroes: A New American Pulp, Vol. 1 "Greatheart Silver in Showdown at Shootout or, The Grand Finale" (Oct 1975), No. 3 "The Return of Greatheart Silver or, The Secret Life of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" (Dec 1975), and No. 6 "Greatheart Silver in the First Command or, Inglories [sic] Galore" (Apr 1977) gave us Greatheart Silver, direct descendent of Long John Silver immortalized in *Treasure Island or the Mutiny of the Hispaniola* (14 Nov 1883), "that ace of the skies, that champion of justice, that unemployed, hospitalized, cheated hero of the Zeppelin AZ-8" and kills off all the old pulp heroes and villains in the eponymous showdown at Shootout to clear the decks for a new generation of New Pulp characters.

Ironcastle (May 1976) was billed as Farmer's own translation (and retelling) of the 1922 French novel *L'Étonnante aventure de Hareton Ironcastle* by "J.H. Rosny", a penname used by the brothers Joseph Henri Honoré Boex (1856–1940) and Séraphin Justin François Boex (1859–1948).

From the back cover of *Ironcastle* (May 1976):

*Somewhere in the unexplored heart of Africa a part of this Earth had been taken over by an intelligence from outer space. Such was the message that reached the explorer Hareton Ironcastle, member of the **famous Baltimore Gun Club**. In that hidden and transformed valley would now be found monsters and pre-humans not to be seen anywhere else.*

*Such a challenge could not be ignored, and the account of Ironcastle's expedition of daring but inexperienced amateurs became one of the classic novels of the French writer, J.H. [sic] Rosny, who was a contemporary of **Verne, Wells, and Edgar Rice Burroughs**.*

*Now **Philip José Farmer**, Hugo winner and chronicler of the adventures of **Tarzan and Doc Savage**, has **translated and retold** Rosny's novel, making it a marvel adventure novel to stand alongside the works of **Burroughs, Haggard and Farmer himself**.*

Farmer's three original *WH: ANAP* stories were collected as Parts One, Two, and Three of the eponymous *Greatheart Silver* (May 1982). It teased an untitled Part Four that was never written.

Between 1974 and 1978, Farmer went through what he later called his "fictional author phase" in which he used several pseudonyms. These pseudonyms are in fact the names of fictional authors in stories written by other writers or by Farmer himself.

"Kilgore Trout" is a fictional author in the novels by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. who first appeared in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater or Pearls Before Swine* (Jun 1965), then *Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* (Mar 1969), *Breakfast of Champions or Goodbye Blue Monday!* (28 May 1973), *Jailbird* (Sep 1979), and *Timequake* (Sep 1997). Farmer began using the pseudonym in *TMOF&SF*, Vol. XLVII, No. 6 (Issue 283) "Venus on the Half-Shell" (Dec 1974), expanded in the novel *Venus of the Half-Shell* (Feb 1975), which introduces fictional author "Jonathan Swift Somers III".

From *Tangent* No. 2, "Farmer Revealed as Kilgore Trout" (May 1975):

It's been fun being [Kilgore] Trout, [Rod] Keen, John H. Watson, M.D., [Harry] "Bunny" Manders, Paul Chapin, Leo Queequeg Tincrowdor and [Jonathan Swift] Somers III. Not to mention Lord Greystoke, otherwise known as Tarzan, and Maxwell Grant, the author of The Shadow stories.

Other pseudonyms not cited in this interview include *Cordwainer Bird*, *Charlotte Corday–Marat*, *Dane Helstrom*, and *Tim Howler* [sic]. According to the *Philip José Farmer International Bibliography* (philipjosefarmer.com), *all* the pseudonymous characters are officially part of the WNF, as is anything written by his fictional people and, by definition, related to all other fictional people on his WNF Tree.

Farmer wrote a brief "biography" of Trout in the fanzine *Moebius Trip* No. 11 "The Obscure Life and Hard Times of Kilgore Trout: A Skirmish in Biography" (Dec 1971), collected in *The Book of Philip José*

Farmer (Jul 1973). He also did one for Somers in the fanzine *Scintillations* No. 9 “Jonathan Swift Somers III: Cosmic Traveller [sic] in a Wheelchair” (Jun 1977), reprinted in *Myths for a Modern Age* (Oct 2005) and *Pearls from Peoria* (Sep 2006) revealing that he’s the son of the fictional author “Jonathan Swift Somers” II from the *Spoon River Anthology* (Apr 1915) by Edgar Lee Masters (23 Aug 1868–05 Mar 1950), both alluding to real-world author Jonathan Swift (30 Nov 1667–19 Oct 1745) and his landmark satire *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships* (28 Oct 1726), known more simply as *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Just laying out the multiple connections and intersectionality of all the authors and their respective characters suggests several hitherto undocumented branches of the WNF Tree. *Whew!*

“Rod Keen” is a fictional author from *The Abortion: An Historical Romance 1966* (23 Mar 1971) by Richard Gary Brautigan (30 Jan 1935–16 Sep 1984), introduced in *TMOF&SF*, Vol. LV, No. 2 (Issue 327) “It’s the Queen of Darkness, Pal” (Aug 1978), reprinted with a slightly different ending in the collection *Riverworld and Other Stories* “The Phantom of the Sewers” (Nov 1979).

“John H. Watson, M.D.” is, of course, the credited author of both *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer* (1974) and its “The Adventure of the Three Madmen” (1984) pastiche that of necessity replaced it between the time the Burroughs estate withdrew its authorization for the use of their Tarzan character, and 1999, when their original *Tarzan of the Apes* (Oct 1912) copyright expired.

TMOF&SF, Vol. XLIX, No. 3 (Issue 292) “The Problem of the Sore Bridge—Among Others” (Sep 1975) by “Harry Manders”, the fictional amanuensis of gentleman thief Arthur “A. J.” Raffles, a purposeful counterpoint to Sherlock Holmes, from the four books (1899–1909) by Ernest William “E. W.” Hornung (07 Jun 1866–22 Mar 1921), brother-in-law of Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle (22 May 1859–07 July 1930). Here, Raffles and Manders stand in for Holmes and Watson investigating the eponymous subject of *The Strand Magazine*, Vol. VII, Issue 41, “Notes Regarding the Disappearance of Mr. James Phillimore” (26 May 1894), reprinted in the anthology *Sherlock Holmes Through Time and Space* (Oct 1984).

“Paul Chapin” is a fictional author from the Nero Wolfe novel *The League of Frightened Men* (14 Aug 1935) by Rex Todhunter Stout (01 Dec 1886–27 Oct 1975) introduced in *TMOF&SF*, Vol. L, No. 2 (Issue 297) “The Volcano” (Feb 1976), collected in the anthology *Riverworld and Other Stories* (Nov 1979).

“Leo Queequeg Tincrowdor” is introduced as both a co-author and character in the anthology *New Dimensions 6* “Osiris on Crutches” (May 1976). Four more Tincrowdor stories—*Continuum 1* “The Two-Edged Gift” (Apr 1976), *Continuum 2* “The Startouched” (Aug 1974), *Continuum 3* “The Evolution of Paul Eyre” (Dec 1974), and *Continuum 4* “Passing On” (Aug 1975)—were merged into the “fix-up” novel *Stations of the Nightmare* (Feb 1982). The name Leo Queequeg Tincrowdor alludes to Oz characters—“Leo” to the Lion and “Tincrowdor” combining the *Tin* Woodman, the *Scarecrow*, and *Dorothy*—and Queequeg, a South Sea Islander covered with special tattoos, from *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (18 Oct 1851) by Herman Melville (born Melvill, 01 Aug 1819–28 Sep 1891).

TMOF&SF, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3 (Issue 286) “The Scarlet Study” (Mar 1975) and Volume LI, No. 5, (Issue 306) “The Doge Whose Barque Was Worse Than His Bight” by Jonathan Swift Somers III gave the world *Ralph von Wau-Wau*, a talking dog who works as a private detective, at which he is a master of disguise, and seems to be immortal, and the fictional author “Cordwainer Bird”—a pseudonym that Harlan Jay Ellison (27 May 1934–28 Jun 2018) used to alert his public to situations in which he felt his

creative contribution to a project had been mangled beyond repair by others, typically Hollywood producers or studios, the way directors used “Alan/Allen Smithee” to dissociate themselves from a film they felt might tarnish their reputation.

Consider this scene. Von Wau-Wau, his enemy, Detective Lieutenant Strasse, myself, [sic] and the lovely Lisa Scarletin, all standing before a large painting in the room in a Hamburg police station. Von Wau-Wau studies the painting while we wonder if he’s right in his contention that it is not only a work of art but a map. Its canvas bears, among other things, the images of Sherlock Holmes in lederhosen, Sir Francis Bacon, a green house, a mirror, Christ coming from the tomb, Tarzan, a waistcoat, the Wizard of Oz in a balloon, an ancient king of Babylon with a dietary problem, and a banana tree.

But let me begin at the beginning.

More Ralph von Wau-Wau stories were announced but never written, as was the case with the fourth Greatheart Silver adventure. This is a recurring trend in Farmer’s career as his critically acclaimed “serious” works crowded out the things that he clearly wrote just for the fun of it.

“Lord Greystoke” would, of course, be the “John Clayton III” Farmer interviewed for *TA: ADBOLG*, thus a tacit admission that Farmer wrote everything ascribed to the “living Tarzan” he allegedly met. Or, perhaps, he met with “James Cloamby, Lord Grandrith,” with only the names changed to protect the both the innocent and the guilty alike.

Weird Heroes, Vol. 8 “The Grant-Robeson Papers: Savage Shadow” (Nov 1977) by “Maxwell Grant” set in an alternate reality where Jimmy Dale, the “Gray Seal” of early pulp fame hired “Maxwell Grant” and “Kenneth Robeson” to write stories about each other, in each other’s literary style.

“Savage Shadow” is Grant’s tale of Robeson meeting the men and women who provided the basis for the characters in the Doc Savage and The Avenger series. Alas, the *Weird Heroes* series ended before Farmer could write the Robeson tale (“The Bronze Serpent”?) of how Grant met the people on which The Shadow is based. Had he done so, we might have a better idea of Farmer’s “take” on Dent’s style was and how that may have influenced his view of what Dent intended Doc Savage to be.

All that may be moot given that *DS: HAL* is more about Farmer’s Doc *Wildman* than Doc *Savage*.

Popular Culture, First Preview Edition, “The Impotency of Bad Karma” (Jun 1977) by Cordwainer Bird was rewritten for the anthology *Chrysalis*, Vol. 2 “The Last Rise of Nick Adams” (Aug 1978) and parodies the science fiction world and of some of its well-known people, specifically Isaac Asimov (02 Jan 1920–06 Ap 1992), Harlan Ellison (Bird), Robert Heinlein, Barry Nathaniel Malzberg (24 Jul 1939—) and Alfred Elton “A. E.” van Vogt (26 Apr 1912–26 Jan 2000). Malzberg was not amused.

“Charlotte Corday-Marat” isn’t connected to a fictional author, but a mash-up Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d’Armont (27 Jul 1768–17 Jul 1793), the French Revolutionary guillotined for assassinating Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat (born Mara, 24 May 1743–13 Jul 1793), introduced in *Bizarre! Mystery Magazine*, Vol, I, No. 2 “The Many Dooms of Harold Hall” (Nov 1965), collected in *The Worlds of Philip José Farmer 3: Portraits of a Trickster* (Aug 2012).

Her 1980 fictional book review “The Princess of Terra” was published posthumously in *Pearls from Peoria* (Sep 2006), purporting to be from a Martian SF magazine mirroring Burroughs’ John Carter debut serialized in *The All-Story*, Vol. XXII, No. 2 “Under the Moons of Mars” (Feb 1912) by “Norman Bean” and collected as *A Princess of Mars* (Oct 1917) by ERB. “Erb of Anazrat” is “ERB of Tarzana” and “Nazrat of Sepa” is “Tarzan of [the] Apes” reversed.

From the introduction to *The Princess of Terra* book review by Charlotte Corday-Marat:

*Here we have a reprint of another book by a writer once regarded as a Master of Science Fiction, Erb of Anazrat. **The Princess of Terra** was the first of a series written about the third planet from the sun and needs no introduction for those who read the original when it appeared fifty-one years ago. But, for the third generation of readers, who may never have heard of Erb of Anazrat or may know him only through the movies based on his character Nazrat of Sepa, the story must be reviewed.*

“Dane Hellstrom” isn’t connected to a fictional author but used as a pseudonym for his contribution to the anthology *Tales of Riverworld* “A Hole in Hell” (Aug 1992).

“Tim Howler” is the eyewitness who supplies the narrative of “After King Kong Fell” (1973), but also a pseudonym that Farmer used in the rebuttal “Parables are Pablum: A Reply to Mr. Farmer, a Letter to Mr. Campbell” critiquing his own editorial essay in the same issue of the fanzine *Skyhook* No. 23, “White Whales, Raintrees, Flying Saucers....” (Winter 1954–1955), neither of which is presented as fiction.

It’s hard to argue with man who pseudonymously argues with himself in a printed public forum!

Among all the multi-volume mythopoeic supersagas, Farmer also churned out singletons: *Jesus on Mars* (Sep 1979), *Dark is the Sun* (Sep 1979), the “Father John Carmody” collection *Father to the Stars* (Jul 1981), *The Unreasoning Mask* (Sep 1981), *The Long Warpath* (Nov 1981), and the collection *The Purple Book* (Feb 1982).

At the age of sixty-six, Farmer celebrated his life’s work to date with the retrospective collections *The Classic Philip José Farmer 1952–1964* (Feb 1984) and *The Classic Philip José Farmer 1964–1973* (Nov 1984). Coincidentally or otherwise, it covered his fictional *oeuvre* up to the publication of *DS: HAL*.

He had moved on from the WNF Tree and conceivably might never have looked back on it but for the 1997 launch of the *An Expansion of Philip José Farmer’s Wold Newton Universe* website and 2005 grant of access to his personal archives to it in quest of unused material for same, including his notes for possible original Doc Savage novels set “in period” between the early Twenties and late Forties, as documented herein.

So, let’s review the timeline of Farmer’s WNF Tree, looking not at its tangled *branches* but its *roots*.

The seed was planted with *AFU* (Apr 1969), an iconoclastic and eschatological pastiche of Tarzan and Doc Savage in the thrall of an Elixir of Life that grants at least century of youthful vitality per dose, provided at an unholy cost by nine Immortals who secretly ruled the world and had done so with varying degrees of societal awareness since 12,000 BCE, who rebel in then-modern times.

Both Tarzan and Doc Savage *have* to be semi-immortal to still be at their peak condition half a century after they were born in the Victorian Era and came of age in the Edwardian Era.

Next comes the sexually sanitized bipartite sequel to *AFU, LOTT/TMG* (01 Sep 1970), all three novels in the series, now styled *Secrets of the Nine* trilogy, which becomes a tetralogy with the addition of *The Monster on Hold* (Fall 2021).

Both *Lord Tyger* and *SOTN* predate the Tarzan and Doc Savage “biographies”.

This is followed by *Lord Tyger* (Dec 1970), a pastiche of Tarzan centering on a plan by devoted Tarzan fan to create a real-life version of the fictional character by raising a human infant of superior breeding by replicating that circumstances the supposedly created him, reminiscent of the Ira Levin novel *The Boys from Brazil* (21 Oct 1976) in which the real-life Nazi SS “Angel of Death” Dr. Josef Mengele (16 Mar 1911–07 Feb 1979), still alive at the time, attempts to recreate Hitler by replicating the childhood and formative years believed to have forged him into *Der Fuehrer*.

These works all deal with misguided attempts to create living, breathing Mythic Heroes. The Nine want a worthy addition to their number but don’t know if heroes are born or made. They took half-brothers, both sons by different mothers of one of their most promising pedigreed “Candidates” and raised the one who would grow up to Lord Grandrith ferally in the wild and the one who’d become Doc Caliban scientifically under laboratory conditions, then see whether “Nature” or “Nurture” was better by pitting the two against each other in mortal combat when they reached their physical and mental peaks.

“Twins separated at birth” was apparently not feasible given the mores of the Victorian Era without contrivances of Gilbert and Sullivan comic operetta, and the tale was fantastic enough to self-parody.

Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban are deemed more than human due to their respective childhoods and upbringings, careful orchestrated by the Nine to make them so, in hopes of increasing the ranks of the Immortals with the worthiest Candidates, who vie for the promised “Prize” of potentially eternal life. Grandrith and Caliban are the leading contenders for the Prize but, in the end, there can only be One.

A decade later, this became the premise for *The Highlander* (07 Mar 1986), which is still a viable franchise on par with Farmer’s pop lit heroes Tarzan, Doc Savage, Sherlock Holmes, etc. But I digress.

The WNF Tree sprouts with *TA: ADBOLG* (Mar 1972) and goes into full bloom with *DS: HAL* (17 Aug 1973), but both “biographies” of Tarzan and Doc Savage owe more to *SOTN* than any of the writings of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Lester Dent, and their respective successors.

TA: ADBOLG couldn’t have been written without the gimmick of the life and youth extending Kavuru elixir introduced in the six-part serial *The Blue Book Magazine*, “Tarzan and the Immortal Men” (Oct–Dec 1935), collected in the novel *Tarzan’s Quest* (Jan 1936), and synthesized in the final novel published in Burroughs’ lifetime, *Tarzan and the Foreign Legion* (Aug 1947), because the “biography” required face-to-face interviews between Farmer and the still youthfully vital John Clayton, Eight Duke of Greystoke.

In *DS: HAL*, Farmer hedged his bets with Doc Savage by giving him access to *both* Tarzan’s Kavuru elixir *and* the silphium tea tonic from “Fear Cay” to give him the same longevity that Grandrith and Caliban share in *SOTN* but seems to have dropped following the decision to spinoff adventures of Doc’s daughter set in the Seventies to flesh out the outlines of the Doc Savage novels that Farmer had teased in his “Afterword” to *Doc Savage Omnibus* No 13 (Oct 1990), which we’ll get to anon.

From Chapter 3. “Son of Storm and Child of Destiny” in *DS: HAL*:

Young Savage’s training suddenly halted on 7 April 1917. The U.S.A. had declared war on Germany the day before. Savage, who wouldn’t be sixteen years old until next November, ran off to join the Army. ...

Though Doc was only fifteen years old, he was six feet one inch tall and weighed one hundred and ninety pounds. His mature appearance, plus his faked papers, got him into the Army Air service. ...

In March 1918, while on his seventh flight, he was shot down during a balloon-busting exploit. ...

On his way to a POW camp, he escaped twice, only to be recaptured. Because of these escape attempts, he was sent to a special POW prison of which only a few highly placed Germans were aware. ...

*Its code name was **Loki**, and it was located, appropriately enough, near Berchtesgaden. Loki was a series of caves inside the mountain with a small fortress built over the entrance. It was deep inside the mountain that the youth met and formed a lifelong friendship with five older men. ...*

It is too bad that Dent never got around to writing of this highly ingenious and exciting breakout. Perhaps someday Condé Nast will give its permission for an author (myself, I hope) to write this very first of the supersagas.

Farmer would indeed get his wish, but it would take sixteen years for the opportunity to arise.

A decade later, Farmer gave up on writing the “Up from Earth’s Center” sequel as a *Doc Savage* novel. He’d tentatively titled it as “Down to Earth’s Center” when it was his proposed sequel to the last original pulp novel that, along his proposed prequel to the first, would bookend the series from beginning to end.

His first approach appears to have been to give everything previously inexplicable a scientific explanation, even it meant positing superscience indistinguishable from magic. Now, it would no longer be part of WNF, but leave the realm to the scientifically explicable that Doc Savage embodied and bring Doc Caliban, no stranger to the weird, weirder, and weirdest that infuses *SOTN*, to what he called “The Unspeakable Threshold” in his next iteration of the title.

Instead, it’d be Doc Caliban meets the eldritch cosmic horrors that infest the Cthulhu Mythos.

He finally bit the bullet and announced *SOTN* No. 4 “The Monster on Hold” to his fans, publishing a tantalizing snippet of it in *The Ninth World Fantasy Convention Program*, “The Monster on Hold (A Chapter from a Projected Novel in the Lord Grandrith/Doc Caliban series)” (28–30 Oct 1983), seven years before he got the opportunity to pitch it to Bantam as it reprinted the last five original pulp novels.

His next foray into Doc Savage pastiche was when he tried turning beloved juvenile phantasmagoria into adult rational science fiction.

A Barnstormer in Oz or A Rationalization and Extrapolation of the Split-Level Continuum (Aug 1982) does for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (17 May 1900) by Lyman Frank Baum (15 May 1856–06 May 1919) what *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (16 Jun 1961) by Poul William Anderson (25 Nov 1926–31 Jul 2001) had done eighteen years earlier for magical realism: explain the inexplicable in rational, science-fiction terms. Dorothy's son, a grown man named Hank Stover, makes his way to the strange realm in his biplane "Jenny" and has a rapid series of adventures with Glinda, the Woodman, the Scarecrow, etc.

Amid all the familiar faces, Farmer introduces a new character: a violent, unpredictable outlaw who heads a band of dangerous guerrilla fighters: Sharts the Shirtless.

From *Doc Hermes LiveJournal* "Who is this 'Sharts the Shirtless' character anyway?" (23 Dec 2012) by Edward Felipe (?—):

*Sharts is several inches over six feet tall (in a world of child-sized Munchkins and Winkies), heavily muscled and quick to use violence. In fact, he attacks and beats up a talking bear (this is Oz, after all), getting the beast in a full Nelson that almost breaks its neck. (Remember **The Polar Treasure?**) His "thick wavy hair was sunset-red." His eyes were "strange and disconcerting, purplish with aquamarine flecks." He has an irritating habit of "whistling tunelessly while by himself" (Not unlike trilling, eh?) Sharts is wearing a **bronze**-colored velvet shirt, but it quickly becomes torn to shreds in his brawling and his sidekick carries an assortment of fresh garments for the outlaw ... Sharts the Shirtless! Say no more. At one time he was "the greatest scholar and doctor of medicine in Quadlingland", but he had a radical idea of curing criminals by operating on their brains (?!). This is all in the first two pages.*

The idea of introducing a pastiche of Doc Savage into Oz may have been a "tip o' the hat" to the anonymous Doc Savage and John Sunlight cameos in Roger Zelazny's *Roadmarks* (Oct 1979), which also dabbled in literary characters brought together at waystations along a metaphorical Road that links all times and all possible histories. It certainly added nothing to narrative or SF rationalization of Oz.

Farmer would not revisit, Doc Savage, Doc Caliban, or James Clarke Wildman, Jr. for the next decade, when the opportunity to write and publish *Escape from Loki* novel he'd proposed seventeen years earlier in 1973 finally arrived.

He gleefully teased in his Afterword to *Doc Savage Omnibus* No. 13 (Oct 1990).

From Philip José Farmer's "Afterword" to Doc Savage Omnibus No. 13:

In 1973, when my biography came out, I wrote therein that I'd like to write a novel about Doc when he was sixteen years old. In this, to be entitled "Escape from Loki", Doc would lie about and join the U.S. Air Service shortly after the U.S. entered World War I. ...

But at that time, Bantam still had years to go before the end of the series was in sight. The editor thought it best not to buy a brand-new Savage.

So, when the printing of the final book in the series was not so far off, I asked Bantam if I could write the new novel proposed sixteen years ago. Bantam was receptive, and the manuscript is now (April 1990) in the hands of Bantam.

When it's published, it'll bear my name, not that of Kenneth Robeson, the Bantam house name for the magazine writers of the Savage stories.

This novel is not what I would have written at the age of, say, twenty or even thirty. It's longer than any Savage novel so far printed, and it's more realistic. I'm not bound by the tabus [sic] that Dent other writers had to respect when they wrote their sagas.

Bantam No. 183 "Escape from Loki" (Aug 1991) was technically unnumbered and subtitled "The First All-New Doc Savage® Adventure Since 1949" (unofficially called *Escape from Loki: Doc Savage's First Adventure* in the 2012 Meteor House edition of *DS: HAL*) and a decade and a half behind schedule.

According to Will Murray, Farmer took inspiration from *his* Afterword to *Omnibus* No. 13 laying out his planned series of new Doc Savage novels credited to "Kenneth Robeson" based on Dent's outlines and notes" and decided to continue writing more original Doc Savage novels published under his own byline based on ideas he'd shelved over the years between *DS: HAL* and Bantam No. 183 *EFL*.

Apparently, it's never too late to start over!

The Wheedle and the Damage Done

Perhaps the most egregious example of Farmer directly rejecting the "reality" established in the 181 original novels and substituting his own is his authoritative and unsubstantiated statement in *DS: HAL* about what he later called "superpistols" in his 1974 *DSL AOE* screen treatment.

From Chapter 4. "The Bronze Hero of Technopolis and Exotica":

Just a listing of all his designs, developments, and inventions would fill pages of this book. They range over a hundred fields. ...

A shoulder-holstered ram's-horn-shaped submachine pistol shooting .24-caliber bullets, 786 a minute, 66 in a magazine.

Not only did Philip José Farmer make up those numbers, but he also got the numbers wrong. There's no .24-caliber. The closest caliber to that is .243 and that's just the English equivalent of 6 mm.

Given the time it was written, my guess was initially that Farmer was thinking of the NATO 5.56×45 mm (.223) that has become the caliber of choice for small-caliber lightweight automatic weapons. But then I realized that Farmer didn't really understand ballistic nomenclature and had problems converting between millimeters and inches.

Farmer used nothing but metric units in some of his books, correctly presuming that soon enough the *Système International (d'unités)* [*International System (of Units)*] (SI) would replace the British Imperial/English System, which indeed it did everywhere but here in the United States.

In *TMOF&SF*, Vol. XII, No, 6 (Issue 73) "The Night of Light" (Jun 1957), novelized as *Night of Light* (Jun 1966), reprinted in the collection *The Other in the Mirror* (31 Mar 2009), he used metric exclusively and, in so doing, he demonstrated that, like most Americans, he just couldn't make the mental shift and *think* in metric. He did what most who can only think in "Olde English" measurements: he tried to imagine use of the metric system, making the measurements fit into contemporary Olde English usage.

From *Night of Light* (Jun 1966):

*A stone statue reared toward the ceiling. It was **fully sixty meters high**, a titanic woman...*

*But the work of sawing through flesh and bone left him panting as if he'd run **several kilometers**. ...*

*The gray half-moon of the upper half of the **5.08-centimeter disk** [sic] became luminous. ...*

*Carmody rotated the movable upper part of the disc, and the face seemed to spring out of the screen, and to hang, much enlarged, **16 centimeters** in front of the disc. ...*

*... and stopped only a **few centimeters** from Carmody's.*

*His room was nearly **two hectometers** down the broad stone-walled corridor.*

"Sixty meters" is an odd choice, but it's what you get when you convert "two hundred feet" into meters. (The actual value is 60.96 meters, but thankfully he rounded *down* instead of *up*.)

Similarly, *5.08 cm* is a rather precise number, which would be better expressed in metric as *50.8 mm*. But 5.08 cm is exactly what you get converting *two inches* to centimeters.

At no point does he ever use *millimeters*, perhaps deeming them too finicky, like tenths of inches. Again, *16 cm* seems rather precise, probably a bit more than an average person might intuit, and *160 mm* would be more natural. Either way, we're talking about 1.6 "hand-widths" and about what you get converting *six inches* to centimeters. (The exact value is 15.24 cm.)

“Hectometers” is highly unusual usage but given that a *hectometer* is equal to *100 meters*, someone unaccustomed to metric usage might say “two hectometers” instead of “two hundred meters”.

Calibers are understood be measured in inches (English) or millimeters (SI). The military calibers of choice in the Twenties and Thirties were the “.45 ACP” and “.38 ACP” (English) and the “8mm French Ordnance” and “9mm Parabellum” (SI). But calibers are seldom if ever exact measurements.

The standard “.45 ACP” is a 11.48mm or .452 round. Both The standard .38 ACP and 9×19mm Parabellum are 9.02mm or .355 rounds. The standard 8mm French Ordnance is an 8.204mm or .323 round. Farmer wanted something smaller than the 9mm/.38 ACP but heavy enough for military use.

And there *was* one: The “6mm Remington” rifle cartridge, originally introduced in 1955 as the “.244 Remington” to compete with .243 Winchester, although Farmer may not have known that the time. I didn’t until I looked it up years later. The standard 6mm Remington is a 6.18mm or .243 round, while the .243 Winchester is 6.127mm or .243 round. This makes them ballistically identical, even though their caliber measurements don’t exactly match.

“6mm” converts to 0.23622 inches, which rounds up to .24-caliber, exactly the direct millimeter-to-inches conversion Farmer would’ve made.

Q.E.D.

For what it may be worth, Jim Steranko almost got it right on his 1976 *Brotherhood of Bronze* “The Savage Super-Machine [sic] Pistol” blueprint. The 5.56×45mm NATO cartridge used in the M-16/AR-15 is a .223 round. The 5.7×28mm NATO cartridge used in the *Fabrique Nationale* (FN) P90/Five-Seven is a .224 round. Steranko has the Savage Supermachine Pistol using a .225 round.

The 786-rpm cyclic rate and even the sixty-six-round magazine capacity cited by Farmer are ballistically ridiculous and mechanically ill-advised, if not physically unworkable.

He was literally “shooting from the hip” here and not even close.

So why do I think that the errors in Farmer’s specifications “deliberate”?

Because Farmer knew better at the time and chose to present his own demonstrably false specifications in lieu of the many contradictory descriptions in the text.

From Lester Dent’s notes (10 Dec 1932):

Doc’s machine guns, 60 shot mags, compact, which he himself has invented.

From Chapter XV. “The Blue Bird Battle” in “The Man of Bronze” (Mar 1933):

Doc’s friends’ [sic] whipped out automatic pistols, which they had kept under their clothing. These automatics were fed by sixty-cartridge magazines, curled in the shape of compact rams’ horns below the grips. The guns were what is known as continuously automatic in operation—they fired steadily as long as the trigger was held back. Both guns and magazines were of Doc’s invention, infinitely more compact than ordinary submachine guns.

In both Dent’s notes and in the published text the magazine capacity is sixty rounds, not sixty-six as Farmer unequivocally states.

From Chapter V. “Sea Trouble” in “The Sargasso Ogre” (Oct 1933):

*It was decided that Renny, Long Tom, and Johnny should stand guard over the two invalids. They armed themselves with **compact little machine guns** which were Doc’s own invention.*

*These weapons resembled slightly oversize automatics fitted with **curled magazines**. They were capable of a firing speed which exceeded even modern airplane machine guns. In operation, their roar was like the note of a monster bull fiddle.*

The most “modern airplane machine gun” available was the .50 (12.7 mm) Browning AN/M2, introduced in 1933 and still in service today. This “lightweight” version weighing sixty pounds (27 kg) became the standard .50-caliber aviation machine gun for American military aircraft of nearly every type. It had a cyclic rate of 600 to 800 rounds per minute (10 to 13.3 rounds per second), which averages to 700 RPM (11.67 RPS). Farmer’s 786 RPM (13.1 RPS) beat the AN/M2 only at its low and average cyclic rates, but not its top rate.

I suspect that Farmer upped the magazine capacity from sixty to sixty-six to get the cyclic rate of 786 RPM just to beat the AN/M2 average, but I honestly have no idea how or why he arrived at those oddly specific numbers.

The first mention of the supermachine pistol being capable of selective fire is in Chapter XIII. “The Hunt” in “The Sargasso Ogre”:

*“We’ll post ourselves in a circle around the place,” Renny muttered. “**Latch the guns into single fire** and shoot only at flashes from their weapons. We’ve got to conserve ammunition.”*

The first mention of mercy bullets is in Chapter VI. “The Ghostly Death” in Vol. II, No. 4 (Issue 10) “The Phantom City” (Dec 1933):

*His five aids [sic] carried an unusual type of firearm. They drew them now. The guns resembled **oversized automatics**, fitted with **curled magazines**. These were machine guns of Doc’s own invention. They fired even more rapidly than the latest type aircraft weapons, the shots coming so swiftly that the average human ear could not distinguish the interval between them.*

They used these guns more for the fear their terrific rate of fire instilled than for lethal effect. For, like their bronze chief, the five used every precaution to avoid taking life.

*In his clothing, each man carried ammo drums for the **rapid-firers**, charged with what big-game hunters term **mercy bullets**. These, striking a man, would not penetrate deeply enough to produce death.*

They caused an unconsciousness which lasted for less than an hour.

In any case, the magazine capacity is textually confirmable as being sixty rounds with cyclic rate equivalent to a range between 600 and 800 RPM (10 to 13.3 RPS), not Farmer’s sixty-six rounds @ 786 RPM (13.1 RPS), but he went out his way to formulate those specific numbers.

Q.E.D.

For what it may be worth, Farmer had an entirely different take on the supermachine pistol in “The Mad Goblin” set contemporaneously, a full generation after the events of the original 181 novels.

From the unbroken narrative in *SOTN* No. 3 “The Mad Goblin” (01 Sep 1970):

*He then took out a small hand weapon from a pocket in his jacket. This was of **.15 caliber** and shot explosive bullets with a velocity of **4,000 feet a second**. The accuracy was, of course, limited, but by holding the trigger, the entire **clip of fifty bullets would be emptied within six seconds**. The butt contained a compressed liquid which became a gas ignited by a spurt of another gas into the firing chamber.*

There is, of course, no “.15-caliber” round. The smallest firearm round ever mass produced was the 2mm Kolibri, a 2.7mm or .106 round, that was so puny that it was immediately replaced by the 3mm Kolibri, a 3.048mm or .120-caliber round, and the 4mm Kolibri, a 4.27mm or .168 round.

The standard .17 Bumblebee is a 4.368mm or .172 round, the closest firearm round to the .177 caliber (4.5mm) standard for all pneumatic weapon BB, dart, and pellet ammunition that Farmer likely had in mind. It’s technically a firearm because it ignites two gasses (most likely the same liquid hydrogen and oxygen bipropellant used in rocketry) but it’s more akin to an automatic blowgun.

Fun Fact: There was a famous fictional firearm at that time: the .15 NF300 Needle Gun introduced by artist Jim Steranko in *Strange Tales with Nick Fury Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* No. 151 "Overkill!" (Dec 1966), which holds 300 needles fired individually or in bursts with a muzzle velocity 1,000 fps. It appears to be a handheld electromagnetic "railgun" that makes no sound when fired, although the needles make a high-pitched buzz as they whizz by at supersonic speed. The box magazine is the size of a matchbox.

The .15 caliber designation suggests that they're modeled on 7-gauge (.144 [1/64] inch or 3.664mm) hypodermic needles, but in operation they resemble the controversial "flechette" (from the French *fléchette* ["little arrow" or "dart"]) antipersonnel weapons then being deployed in Vietnam. They're the size and shape of brad or finishing nails, with the head crimped into a cruciform stabilizer. Their mass, aerodynamic shape, and ability to spin in flight gave them greater range and accuracy than ball shot.

Fifty bullets in six seconds indicates a cyclic rate of 500 RPM (8.33 RPS).

The first factory loaded rifle cartridge with a muzzle velocity of over 4,000 fps (1,200 m/s) was the Winchester .220 Swift (5.56×56mmSR), a 5.7mm or .224 round introduced in 1935.

Fun Fact: The prototype for the .220 Swift was developed in 1934 by Grosvenor Wotkyns by necking down the Savage Arms .250-3000, a 6.5 mm or .257 round, to achieve higher velocities.

The .220 Swift gets name-checked twice in the 181 original pulp novels and the second citation claims that it's Doc's "favorite" rifle round.

From Chapter II. "Girl Bringing Trouble" in "The Invisible-box Murders" (Nov 1941):

SOMEONE shot at him as he was leaving the building!

*The shot came from a distance and evidently from a single-shot silenced rifle, equipped with a telescopic sight. It was probably a rifle with a small bore and fantastic velocity—on the order of a **.220 Swift**, **.219 Zipper**, or **.22 Hi-Power**—judging from the way the bullet hit. The pill of lead, not as large as a bean, was capable of stunning like a stick of dynamite.*

Doc was able to judge the type of bullet from what it did to the bulletproof glass of his car window. It practically demolished the outer coat of the glass, which should shatter, and put a big depression in the window."

From the untitled Chapter I in “Terror and the Lonely Widow” (Mar 1946):

THE rifle was a calibre [sic] .220 Swift, bolt action, with a side-mounted scope. Doc Savage kept it cradled to his cheek for some moments after he had fired, not because he expected to shoot again, but because the telescopic sight gave him a better view of the hotel room window. It was about a block distant.

...

*The rifle case was black leather, plush-lined, and had compartments for scope, cleaning tools, cartridges. He placed the rifle in the case with care. **It was his favorite rifle.***

Having previously made the case that Tarzan is both *figuratively* and *literally* immortal in *TA: ADBOLG*, Farmer wasted no time doing the same for Doc Savage in *DS: HAL*. He imagined both Tarzan and Doc Savage as being thirty-something men in the prime of their life, just like Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban. He saw them as timeless Mythic Heroes who could potentially live the Biblical 120-year maximum lifespan, perhaps simply due to clean living, healthy nutrition, and regular exercise.

From the Old Testament, *Deuteronomy*, Chapter 34, Verse 7:

And Moses was an [sic] hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Regardless of how they managed it—magic, science, good genes, or good fortune—Farmer wanted to write contemporary stories about *them*—not their *progeny*—well into the Twenty-first Century.

From Chapter 3. “Son the Storm and Child of Destiny”:

*And in 1934, Greystoke sent to his cousin some **pills he had obtained from the Kavuru tribe**. Doc was to analyze and then synthesize **this age-delaying elixir**, though he refused, for good reasons, to release them for public consumption.*

From Chapter 18. “Some of the Great Villains and Their World-Threatening Gadgets”:

*It is **silphium**, an herb which was grown by the ancient **Cyrenes** [sic] of North Africa. The tea prepared from it gave people a long life. The plant apparently perished with the Cyrenes, but Doc and pals find out that it still grows on a West Indian islet. ...*

*The silphium not only **prolongs life; it keeps its users healthy and vigorous.***

From Chapter XX. “The Fountain of Youth” in “Fear Cay” (Sep 1934):

“The Fountain of Youth could be on this cay,” Ham insisted. “Maybe, long ago, the reef was passable, and canoes came here. The Fountain of Youth might not be a fountain at all, but that funny-looking weed Santini had. Maybe that plant does bring everlasting life.” ...

*“It has, emphatically,” said the big-worded geologist. “That wrecked galley was the clue that made me think of a legend from history which explains the presence of **this weed** that **brings everlasting life—supposedly.**” ...*

*“Right,” Johnny nodded vehemently. “**Cirene [sic]** stood on a plateau, and its source of wealth was a **fabulous medicinal herb** known as **silphium**” ...*

*“Legend gives this herb great powers, claiming it **cured every ailment; wounds—even disease.**” ...*

*“You were,” Doc replied. “I saw **the weed**, and it is unquestionably **the highly medicinal species** of silphium.” ...*

From Chapter XXI. “The Crawling Terror” in “Fear Cay”:

*The store of **silphium** was intact, and Doc, searching, located growing plants on the cay. These were carefully dug up, packed, and made ready for transportation to the United States.*

Monk tried out some of the silphium tea on his wounded leg, and the results were remarkable. The puncture began to heal almost at once.

“Boy, we’ve got something,” Monk insisted. “We’ve cornered the Fountain of Youth!”

Doc did not disillusion him at that moment. ...

*That the silphium was only a **valuable medicinal herb** proved correct, for it was an **amazingly efficient antiseptic and tonic**, a disease preventative. But they did not learn that until months later, after a number of scientists and doctors had made careful experiments.*

The “Fountain of Youth” aspect is thus effectively debunked, as was the case with everything in the Doc Savage novels deemed magical or supernatural, except telepathy and other “mind over matter” hypotheses and *superscience*.

“Superscience” is, of course, almost by definition “sufficiently advanced technology” that Farmer’s contemporary Arthur Charles Clarke (16 Dec 1917–19 Mar 2008) famously noted is “indistinguishable from magic” to those who don’t understand that advanced technology and how and why it works. It

doesn't apply to herbal medicine that gives the appearance of having magical properties, whether it's Kavuru, silphium, or the elixir that underpins *SOTN*.

Donovan dabbled in science fiction, but Dent and his editors didn't until "Up from Earth's Center" left it up to the reader to decide to explain the inexplicable to such a degree that Farmer yearned to write a sequel that resolved the question to his own satisfaction, if perhaps not Dent's or anyone else's.

But, again, Farmer *never* let the facts get in the way of telling a *good story*.

Following the Pied Piper Down the Primrose Path

The problem with *DS: HAL* is that it's *not* and can never be an objective account of "Doc Savage" but rather a narrative account of the life of Farmer's hypothetical alter ego James Clarke "Doc" Wildman, Jr. underpinned by and fleshing out Yet Another Branch of his WNF Tree.

What is significant here, and which has flown under the radar for forty-eight years now, is the true nature of the saga that Farmer has told progressively over the five years leading up to *DS: HAL* and the decades thereafter, taking on a life of its own that strives to go to Infinity and beyond.

Every Doc Savage pastiche Farmer wrote has elements of self-parody if the tongue-in-check "camp" that infected almost everything revisiting the square-jawed, straight-shooting, two-fisted, he-man heroes of the Depression Era syndicated comic strip, pulp magazine, radio, and film serial mass media as it was rediscovered in the Sixties. Farmer gleefully took Tarzan and Doc Savage in the guise of Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban into a sex-laced mad romp into the *reductio ab absurdum* of *AFU: TMOLG* and its sanitized sequelae.

Then he changed tack into the fictional biography genre of the Sherlockian Great Game with *TA: ADBOLG* and *DS: HAL*. In so doing, he rejected any objective "reality" of the characters as set forth in their respective pop literature and substituted his own, giving us the WNF Tree and turning the "Clark Savage, Jr." of Doc Savage into his own Bizarro duplicate, James Clarke Wildman, Jr. (no relation to Savage, only to the fictional Claytons).

The further the readership goes into the WNF Tree, the further from Doc Savage's roots and deeper into the weeds they get. As some point, they lose their way entirely and begin writing fanfic, believing that know who and what Doc Savage is when, in fact, they couldn't be further from the truth.

Worse, because of the timing of the release of *DS: HAL*, a decade after the Bantam reprints began but a decade before substantive research supplied reference for the new generation of readers, *DS: HAL* was the *only* such reference for that entire decade.

I know, because my lifelong career in Doc Savage fandom is a case study in the truth of the famous observation by Augustian poet and satirist Alexander Pope (21 May 1688–30 May 1744) made in his *An Essay On Criticism* (1711):

*"A little learning is a dangerous thing.
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring;
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
and drinking largely sobers us again."*

I not only bit into the poisoned apple, but I also devoured it.

Not only had I *read* the trifecta of 1973 Doubleday hardcover and the 1974 Panther and 1975 paperback editions of *DS: HAL*, I'd committed them to memory and could recite their text by chapter if not verse. *DS: HAL* informed everything I wrote about Doc Savage from 1979 to 1984, now conveniently collected in *The Savage Dyaries: The Collected Doc Savage Essays*, Volume One (Aug 2017).

Unable to separate fact from fiction at that time, I was fooled into thinking that I knew enough to write my own "Doc Wildman" pastiches in 1978, updated in 1984 into "Doc Hazzard, the Bronze Titan" to connect with the revelations in *The Rocketeer Special Edition* No. 1, Chapter 5: "Rocket's Red Glare" (Oct 1984) by Dave Lee Stevens (29 Jul 1955–11 Mar 2008).

It wasn't until I briefly posted *The Adventures of Doc Hazzard, the Bronze Titan—Previously Unpublished Exploits of the World's Most Brazen Adventurer* (12 Nov 2011) online that I began to realize just how astray they went from the Doc Savage stories that I wanted them to be. It was in the process of correcting and annotating the content of *The Savage Dyaries* five years later that I came to appreciate just pervasive the misinformation in *DS: HAL*, perpetuated worldwide as it was online since 1997 on *An Expansion of Philip José Farmer's Wold Newton Universe* and its many offshoots.

I spent forty years half-blind to who and what Doc Savage truly was because of the blind spot created by viewing the character through the filter of Farmer's James Clarke Wilman, Jr. and the "Creative Mythography" that it had spawned.

Since then, I've played Myth Buster to that mythography, debunked all the "Farmerisms" that have long since become fan lore through repetition and distorted further in the retelling. But that's like shouting down a well, an ultimately futile effort on par with King Canute trying to hold back the tide through sheer force of will and personal authority.

The best and perhaps the only thing that I can do is to warn of the ongoing influence of *DS: HAL* and all its myriad mutations and allow everyone try to separate Doc Savage "fact" from Doc Wildman fiction as best they can as I still continue to struggle to do, having been steeped in it so long.

Just as the Bantam visualization of the widow's peaked skullcap, torn shirt, riding breeches, and cavalry boots still dominate Doc's popular image after half a century of endless regurgitation by artists copying artists copying Bama, so too the subsequent online presence, reprinting, and promotion of WNF, *DS: HAL*, *DS: EFL* and even *DS: AOE* in the form of "Doc Savage and the Cult of the Blue God" effectively "poisoned the well" deemed a "Fount of Wisdom" going forward.

Bantam might have precluded this had it reprinted the explanatory sidebars of the original pulps designed to give critical background without interrupting the story flow, but Bantam didn't do that.

Worse, Bantam reprinted the novels out of order, based solely on which adventures they thought would most appeal to their young Sixties audience, scrambling the continuity such that many readers were confused about who was who and what was what.

The first dozen novels are essentially one continuous narrative, with each subsequent novel taking up where the previous one ended, a fact that is lost to the contemporary reader struggling to figure out the original publication order. This is complicated by the fact that, after that first year or so of sequential continuity, the novels weren't published in the order that they were submitted because deadlines and

other publishing constraints resulted in multiple novels being submitted together, leaving it to the editors to sort things out, sometimes adding text to localize them to fit with the scheduled cover date.

Even those who walk into Doc Savage with their eyes wide open as to what they're getting into still struggle to read the stories in their original published order to see the sagas unfold as intended.

The only publisher to ever reprint the series in its original order was sued out of business by Condé Nast for copyright and trademark infringement in 2006 after only three years of operation. Only 72 of the 181 novels ever saw print and Condé Nast actively cracks down on anyone who tries to sell them.

Only in Canada, where Doc Savage is now in the public domain, is anyone even attempting to present the 181 original pulp novels in order, and that effort is primarily online using text often scanned from the Bantam reprints, not the original pulps, generally downloadable in PDF format.

This situation cannot be resolved until Doc Savage finally enters the public domain worldwide and someone can reprint the original 181 series in its entirety in publication order, preferably with all the explanatory background sidebars and original illustrations intact and, hopefully, with "The Code of Doc Savage" replacing the superfluous "Who is Doc Savage?" blurb to define Doc better than anything else, might readers finally have the "true quill" they've been denied since the series ended in 1949.

And Farmer's WNF, *DS: HAL*, *DS: AOE* (as *DS: TCOTBG*), and *DS: EFL* will still be there, distracting us.

Q.E.D

—end—