



Who's afraid of the big bad book?

by Brent Legault

Ignore F.D.R.'s famous words. *Fear* is truly something to be feared.

When I first glimpsed *Fear's* cover, I shuddered. Icy tendrils of dread crept over my scalp. A sick, nausea entered my bowels. I shrieked. I yelped. I convulsed all over my desk, retching and squirming in my own vomit. My faithful, loving co-workers ran to my aid. "For the love of God!" they intoned, "What is it!?"

I pointed a shakey finger to the novel on my desk. "*Fear*," I uttered, and then I blacked out.

I awoke on our humble, threadbare couch, sometime later that day. I retained a vague memory, like the smokey wisps of a dream. The memory was of four, blood-colored letters, cracked and skewed, against a backdrop of the darkest darkness. Above them floated a dark, menacing house that could never be called "home." Below the letters, lay a stairway leading into HELL, and the shadow of some tragically curious dupe descending into oblivion. But what did those words spell. My memory was unclear, unfocused. I saw an "F." An "E." "A" and "R." No! It was L. Ron Hubbard's *Fear*.

I looked around. I saw no *Fear*. I relaxed, murmuring, "Only a dream."

But a voice at my ear contradicted me; the sly, mocking voice of my editor. "*Fear*," she whispered.

She dropped the book on my chest, and there it landed like a brick of lead. I shook and whimpered and drooled, while she coldly pointed to the office door. "Read it tonight," she commanded. "I'll expect results in the morning."

I walked home slowly, *Fear* buried deep within my backpack, and in my heart. The sun plunged behind the mountains as I opened the door to my apartment. The streetlamps cast a gloomy pall over the neighborhood. A heavy, corrosive mist seemed to bleed from the pavement. Quickly, I rushed into my feeble sanctuary and deadbolted the door.

Before reading, preparations needed to be made. First, I turned on every available light source, not excluding my Snoopy night light. I even propped open the refrigerator door. Next, I brewed a pot of very strong coffee and swallowed a packet of those

"Herbal Energy" pills you see in convenience stores. Then, I did a load of laundry. I mopped the kitchen floor. I vacuumed. I washed the three weeks of dishes sitting in the sink. I scrubbed the ceiling with a moustache comb. I gave my parakeet a flea bath.

You may say, "Aw, he's stalling." You're damn right! This is *Fear* we're talking about. We're talking raw, heart penetrating, cold-sweat inducing *Fear*. Not some half-assed feeling of "unease." I was in no hurry to begin this assignment.

Eventually, as frightened as I was, duty won out over common sense. I had to read the book. After flipping past the foreword, the author's note, and the critics testimony ("Packs an undeniable wallop!" - Ellery Queen) I came upon the first page. I read the opening words. "Lurking, that spring day..."

I gulped back a scream. The juxtaposition of two contrasting images: the menace in "Lurking," and the innocence in the phrase, "that spring

day..." well, what can I say? I was scared witless.

Somehow, I ploughed through. Somehow, I read every fear-laden word. Two-hundred pages of terror, of "mind-bending" twists, and a beleaguered, overwritten prose, much like the very article you're reading.

Many nagging questions arose. Is the main character a hallucinating nut-case, or are demons and other nefarious creatures-of-the-night haunting his every move? Is the very essence of Evil after his soul, or is he suffering side effects from undercooked pork? How many cliches can L. Ron Hubbard fit onto a single page? How can he still publish novel after novel, even though he's been dead for the last seven years?

The further I read, the heavier my eyelids became. I realized the "substance of my fears" was horrible in a way I never anticipated. Each page became more tortuous than the last, until finally, I felt another kind of fear. I feared I would be unable to stay conscious. I feared a washed-out, predictable ending. My fears were realized. Before the night had ended, I KNEW FEAR.

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heart penetrating,
cold-sweat inducing
Fear.**

Fear
L. Ron Hubbard
238 Pages
Bridge Publications Inc.

Bizarre ride to the Pharcyde

by Warren Peace

Tripped out, bugged, one-too-many joints and "who's the kid that sounds like a girl?" This is the general feel as you're being seat belted through Pharcyde's *West Coast De La Soul-ish Journey*.

The ride starts out fast enough with a couple of sharp turns with "oh shit" and "for better or worse," which includes a funky psychedelic keyboard line under an obscene phone call in which the caller confesses, "ok, ok...I think we've gone a little bit overboard."

The ride then takes a steady incline with the upbeat "I'm That Type of Nigga" and "Soul Flower" which will have you mouthing the lyrics and bobbing your head before you know the words.

The ride does a series of turns and upside down loops with skits like "Quinton's on His Way" and "If I Were President." During the ride you'll notice clever production and a sampling of passengers which include Herbie Mann, Quincy Jones, Jimi Hendrix and—I got a letter from the DMV the other day and opened and read it, it said they were suckers!—Public Enemy.

The ride reaches the climatic end with "Return of the B-boy" which is almost a remake of the hip-hop classic, "The Show."

As far as rides go, get the all-day pass and bring your boys! Pharcyde is definitely worth the 9 to 15 bones. Just don't get off the ride in the middle, you'll fall and hurt yourself.



something
unheard of