

Title: Hubbard's "Mission Earth" - the rest of the story by Robert Vaughn Young

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[Battlefield Earth Movie Page is HERE](#) {120 TERRIBLE reviews - Very funny to read though}

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L. RON HUBBARD'S MISSION EARTH: the rest of the story

by Robert Vaughn Young**

A representative of Scientology's Dept. 20 has claimed on ARS that I had nothing to do with Hubbard's last work, "Mission Earth." I tend to ignore their blathering of these sock puppets but I really took personal umbrage at this one! I was Hubbard's editor and sometimes-ghost writer and I earned THAT battle ribbon!

I was working at Author Services, Inc. (ASI) which served as Hubbard's "literary agency" as well as his personal representative. (For example, ASI handled all of his personal income and bank accounts. ASI was also his secret command line into the Church of Scientology, which is another subject.)

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING, DUDE

When Hubbard's manuscript of "Mission Earth" (or "ME" as we called it) came in to Author Services, Inc. (ASI), it arrived as one volume, typed on legal-sized paper and on a manual. It came in a banker's box with each chapter in a separate file folder. And not ordinary file folders. I don't know where they got them but they were heavy, thick and dark red. It was pure Hubbard all the way. Image at every turn, no matter how ridiculous you look. (Look at some of his self-portraits for photos of a man full of himself.)

The manuscript came with instructions. Hubbard said it should be cut up into three or maybe ten sections and for us to decide and suggest. Well,

ten volumes make more money than three do so naturally we said ten. Great, he said, and more instructions followed.

"THE GUY IN SUN GLASSES? HE'S DOING RESEARCH."

I should interject here how we communicated with Hubbard. Until 1981, he had been operating secretly from La Quinta (code name "Rifle") and Gilman Hot Springs, both in the Southern California desert. At the time, he had staff around him and ways to get messages into various Scientology organizations. But in 1981, he was on the run and hiding. (We later called it "off doing research into the human spirit.") His wife Mary Sue and 10 other executives from Dept. 20 had stipulated to a variety of felonies including burglaries of federal offices and were sent to jail. Hubbard had been named a co-conspirator. And to make matters worse, he was being named in a series of lawsuits and attempts were being made to find and serve him. So Hubbard did the only thing a "real OT" would do. He ran and hid.

When two staff fled Gilman and their story appeared in a Riverside paper saying Hubbard had been hiding there, the cover on the base was completely blown. (I was called in to deal with that situation. How I handled it, converting it to Golden Era Studios, which it is today, was told in "Quill," the journal of the Society of Professional Journalists.) That also meant that Hubbard no longer had his command lines into the Church of Scientology. That's why ASI was formed.

CAN YOU SAY, 'PLAUSIBLE DENIAL'?

It must be remembered that Hubbard had been denying for years that he had anything to do with the operation of the Church of Scientology. He had almost been indicted for the illegalities. All the government and the IRS needed was to prove was that he was basically the "managing agent" of the Church of Scientology. Fearing this, all of his existing command lines (by which he had been running the organization) had to be dropped and completely new ones secretly established. That's where ASI came in. We were his "literary agent" but more importantly, we were his new secret conduit into the Church of Scientology.

But he couldn't afford to just reconnect with his staff. He was in hiding

with two aides that he had fled with, Pat and Annie Broeker. Annie took care of the "household" matters and Pat was his personal representative back into Scientology. (There was subsequently two other staff who worked on the ranch where he subsequently died but they had nothing to do with the operation of the church or ASI. They handled ranch matters.)

Even with ASI, Hubbard kept his location strictly secret. Broeker was the go-between. He carried dispatches from Hubbard at the ranch near San Luis Obispo to the base at Gilman and back. He would call in, say he was coming and then show up at the gate in a dark van. Sometimes he just showed up.

LEMME SEE...AT A PENNY A WORD...

That's how the manuscript came in. It was taken to Gilman and then brought to ASI by Miscavige, along with other "traffic," as we called it.

We were quite excited about the arrival of the book. Hubbard had been telling us about it for awhile and a new book from Hubbard was a major event.

I was stunned at its size. I forget what the word count estimate was but he said it was something like 1.2 million words and there was no reason to doubt him.

Writer that he was, he knew there had to be an editor for the work. ASI found a professional sci fi writer (I forget his name right now - not Algis) who started to read it. Meanwhile, Hubbard wanted an introduction written for the book. The book was satire, he said, and he wanted it to be known as that so he wanted an introduction on the subject of satire and I was to write it.

UP FROM Q&A TO SCHOLAR

Choosing me wasn't that unusual. I had already ghosted two interviews for him and he liked my style. The first was a written interview of him for the book "Dream Makers II" and the interview in the Rocky Mountain News. They were sent to him and he highly approved of them. In the RMN

interview, he did change one paragraph, about the writing of a novel that I had to guess at. Otherwise, he loved it. Plus I was the one who always wrote the greetings from him that was read at events. So I had his style down pretty good and he liked it.

He wanted the introduction to be "scholarly" - with a bibliography - with the idea that it would be used and cited in schools. Okay, I figured. I had several years of post-graduate work so I knew that style. It just had to be blended into his style of writing.

The research was fun. I learned a lot about satire and it was especially challenging to write a "scholarly" piece in his style, with a few of his characteristic bon mots. When it was finished, I sent it up and it came back with his hearty approval but with one suggested change. He wanted a change in the last line about enjoying this bowl of fruit, which referred back to one of the original meanings of satire that I had put in the essay.

HOW TO COMMIT SUICIDE

Meanwhile, the prospective editor finished reading the manuscript and was willing to take on the job but he made a fatal mistake. He wanted to know if there were any parts Hubbard really liked so he (the editor) would make sure they weren't cut out. Someone else naively sent the comment to Hubbard via dispatch. We had never dealt with Hubbard in these matters but we got a fast education.

Hubbard went through the roof! (Can't blame him, really. That's hardly the way to approach a writer! But approaching Hubbard that way was as deadly as it came.) How dare anyone say that, he wrote. Get rid of the bum! And then Hubbard went into this spiel about how his works hardly ever needed editing. Oh, yeah, he said, there was one time when he had to add something like (this is from memory), "'Hiss,' said the villain" at which point the editor was happy and that was about the only time he had to be edited so beware of anyone who says he needs editing. Gawd, I thought, I pity the editor with THAT sort of advice!

Meanwhile, Hubbard wasn't aware of it but I already knew quite the

contrary. I had spent considerable time reading carbon copies of his fiction stories (most to "Astounding SF") and letters between him and the editor. Hubbard had had a LOT of editing and even got some rejections. That's life in the freelance world, but not in the one Hubbard wanted people to believe. His story that his stuff was so well written that it hardly ever (except for the "hiss") needed editing was just another of his image-building tall tales.

But I said nothing, not even to Miscavige. You learn quickly to not counter Hubbard, even if you have the proof he is wrong, especially if it is in his own words.

GEE, WHIZ, ME? (BLUSH)

And then Hubbard suggested me. He said I could do the editing instead of that other flake and send it to him for approval. I was honored by being so named but I was no fiction editor. I was a writer! But Hubbard had decided to go with his personal staff. After all, we were loyal, dedicated and followed orders. He had nearly lost control of the manuscript and now he had it back. So I wasn't being asked. I was being told. I accepted the honor and gulped, remembering what had happened to the last one.

When Hubbard agreed that ME should be cut up into 10 books, he said we needed to find the best break point for each one. His only suggestion on it was to find the best "cliff hanger" and end it there. I was to then suggest titles for each volume. He gave an example. The start of the book was the planning for the invasion of Earth so it might be "Planner's Plan" or "Invader's Plan."

Oh, gawd, I thought, I'm doomed! (Eventually, I was right. - laugh) I felt like someone being asked to cut the Hope diamond while riding in a jeep across the African terrain. One slip and I was dead. And after seeing his rant about how he never needs editing and seeing the MS, I could see this was NOT going to be easy. I would have to fight and claw and argue for each word and given the size of the MS, this was a nightmare.

CLIFF HANGERS & CLIFF HANGING

I struggled through the manuscripts. I wasn't a sci-fi fan to begin with and as much as I had been excited at the arrival of the book, I was soon getting dulled by it. Coming from the man who had founded Scientology, I had thought it might offer more insights or philosophy. After all, the man had all this insight into the world, reality and the universe and had cracked OT 3, so certainly it would have these wonderful moments for us to find. But there was nothing. It was a rambling story that went on and on and on. Oh well, I thought. Maybe I'll find them when I read it again. Meanwhile, I made notes to remind myself of the various plots because I needed to suggest titles.

I managed to find what I felt were good break points for the volumes. The first volume was conveniently the largest, ending when the mission left for Earth. The word/page count on the remaining nine was pretty similar, although one was going to be considerably shorter than all the others. (I think it was #4 or 5.) But I had no choice. To move the break to balance word count would have lost a good "cliff hanger" which was his main criteria for the breaks, to get people to buy the next book. (There's certainly nothing wrong with that tactic, if you think about it BEFORE you write the book.)

His only attempt to blend or connect the ten books was writing a note that we were to put in each one that said it was part of a series so buy the others ones and read them first.

PULPY FICTION

Working out the titles was a bitch. Hubbard was from the old pulp school of fiction. He liked short, terse and sometimes hack titles so there couldn't be anything esoteric. Plus Hubbard had suggested some titles. I picked "The Invader's Plan" and names for the others and the whole package went back to Hubbard for approval. Since the novel was so long, I included a little synopsis of each volume to show how the title fit.

I was nervous as hell while waiting. I remembered the fate of the last "editor" who had made a suggestion. I had visions of Hubbard going through the roof again and my being sent to the RPF or back to Dept. 20 from

whence I came.

The response came back maybe a week later. To my relief (and I think everyone's) he was delighted with the book divisions and all of the titles except for one that he renamed "Villany Victorious." I had to admit it was a better title than I had suggested. It also made me think of his "hiss" remark earlier. Hubbard had grown up in the Golden Age of Villains.

The best part was that we were under way so I started editing.

THE HUBBARD SCHOOL OF EDITING: PROVE IT!

It was decided the best way to do it was that I would edit a photocopy of the MS in standard blue pencil. On the back of each page - which would be the left facing page when it was turned and faced down - there would be an explanation of each editing change for the page on the right. These were typed out on a word processor and then cut and pasted to the immediate left of the blue pencil change. So if there was a suggested change at the top of the page, it showed in blue pencil. Then the write-up was pasted immediately to the left, explaining it. That way, Hubbard could look at the change and look to the left and see why it was suggested.

Everything was to be explained. Everything. After all, he never needed editing. So even a typographical error had a strip of paper to the left that said "Typo." If there was an inconsistency, e.g. (hypothetically), a distance was given as 10 miles on page 75 and 100 miles on page 77, I had to decide which was best and then make the suggested change with an explanation for which one I selected.

Hubbard's approval of the first volume was a great relief. It also gave us the approval of the procedure so now it was green light all the way.

THE EDITING GOES SOUTH

Book 2 was a bitch. It opens in the southern US and Hubbard was trying to imitate southern accents and so the spellings of words tried to catch the twang and drawl of a Southern accent. Not only did I not know the Southern

accent that well but also there really weren't any standard spellings. I did my best to see if anyone had written a "dictionary of Southern drawl" but there was none. About the only thing everyone agreed on was "y'all" for the Southern version of "you all." Plus Hubbard's spellings were inconsistent. Sometimes the drawl was there. Sometimes it wasn't.

One day when Miscavige asked me how it was going, I tried to explain the problem I was having with the Southern drawls. He was typically unsympathetic. In his view, Hubbard knew how to write Southern drawls, so what was my problem. When I pointed out that there were inconsistencies in the spellings, he hit the roof. I realized it was a serious mistake. No one points out Hubbard makes mistakes so I mumbled something about typos and he left while I sank into the chair, trying to figure how to work this out and survive.

Those chapters were a mess of blue pencil but there was no way to get around it. The text couldn't read "y'all" in one sentence by a character and "you all" in the next or "gonna" vs. "going to." I somehow worked out some system and submitted it. As expected, I caught hell for it. The problem was that they were taking the hard line that Hubbard knew what he was doing and my view was that I was the editor trying to help the writer appear as good as possible. The two attitudes were in conflict and I found myself trying to explain the whole business of editing. Somehow it was worked out. I survived and the volume went up. It came back approved with no changes.

THE U-KNOW-WHAT HITS THE FAN

Somewhere along the line, ASI made some "publisher's proofs" of the first few volumes to send out for pre-publication reviews. They were more like raw copies in cheap binding.

We were stunned by the harsh reviews that came back. A couple of people commented that it looked like someone had merely taking a larger work and cut it up into smaller books, which is exactly what we had done. If you picked up Book 2, it just picks up in the middle of the story. We hadn't thought about how the books would look or read in this regard. The only thing that Hubbard had said to include with each volume was a note that

read something like, "This volume is one of 10. Read the others!" which was more of a marketing ploy than anything else.

Of course, we didn't tell Hubbard about the bad reviews. Such things were kept from him. Meanwhile, Miscavige was in a rage so he threw the problem at me to solve. We can't publish the books this way, he said, so figure out what to do.

I was dismayed but he was right. If someone grabbed Book 7, they wouldn't have the foggiest idea what was happening. Each book started in the middle of the on-going story. But they were cut that way because we hadn't had any other instructions and we weren't professional fiction editors. (Besides, Hubbard never needed editing, except for that "hiss...")

HEY, I'VE GOT AN IDEA...

After giving it some thought, I had an idea. "ME" started with an intro by a robo-translator followed by a note from the censor and then there is an intro by the narrator who says he is in prison and he is going to tell the story (a "confession") of how it all happened in the hopes that the authorities are lenient.

Okay, I figured, what if we replicate these three points in each book. What if each one started with a new note by the robo-translator, a new denial by the censor and then a new intro by the guy in prison. Each book would appear as if the narrator had completed his confession to that point, sent it to the prison authorities and they said, okay, continue, so he did. Each time he started a new volume, he would have to bring the reader up to date as to what had happened and this would lead into the next chapter. So let's say Book ended with Chapter 25. Book 2 would start with Chapter 26, preceded by the new introduction, allowing the reader to move smoothly into Chapter 26. All that would be needed would be intros from each person, for each volume.

Sounded great to me! All we had to do was get Hubbard to write the new material.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WE," WHITE MAN?

I drew up the idea and proposed it to Miscavige what we would propose to Hubbard, He hated the idea. We're not going to tell Hubbard that ME is incomplete and ask him to write MORE! Get another idea.

I didn't like it but I suggested Plan B. I would do the writing and submit them to Hubbard for his approval, as I had done for the Rocky Mtn. News and "Dream Makers II." It means 27 new intros, 3 for each of the remaining 9 volumes, Miscavige said. Could I do different ones for the robo-translator and censor for each one, he asked. Yes, I said.

Miscavige was very edgy about the idea. Suggesting text-editing changes for someone that never needed editing was dangerous enough. Now we are into ghosting. And we all remembered the last editor. We could still smell the allegorical stench of his head on the pike. But more bad reviews would be worse.

SOUNDS GREAT--YOU TELL HIM.

So Miscavige agreed that we'd propose it to Hubbard. The trick was how we suggested this to Hubbard. It couldn't be critical. (Hubbard couldn't take any criticism.) It had to be positive. So it was put in terms of marketing and sales, a favorite Hubbard button.

The proposal that was made to Hubbard made it sound as if we had come up with a great marketing plan. Plus we had to work around his little note in the books to read the others. He had thought it would prompt people to read the books in order, as if someone would read it and go, "Oh, okay" and put the book down and buy Volume 1.

But we couldn't tell him that it really wouldn't work. That would be criticism. It would be saying, "Your buy-the-other-books idea doesn't work." You don't say that to Hubbard. You do it by stroking him, was what I learned. And if you put it in terms of making more money...

WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR NOSE?

My proposal to Hubbard took days to work out with Miscavige. (Nothing went to Hubbard without his approval of every word.). Finally he said okay.

It basically said, "Your idea of putting the note into the books is brilliant and we will definitely make sure that is done. [That was needed to let him know we knew about his other idea.] But [brown nose alert] your popularity has provoked such heavy sales that [here comes a tricky part] there is a possibility that they would be out of stock of an earlier volume. [Now quickly cover your ass.] We will make sure that everyone is stocked immediate but should your popularity run ahead of us [nice move] we have an idea how to make each book stand on its own to keep sales and income moving [hit that money button!]." It then went into the spiel about the new intros for each book.

With the proposal was the new suggested opening by the robo-translator and the censor and a new intro-summary by the narrator. My idea was that the books would be the manner in which the narrator was presenting his confession in prison so Book 2 began with the narrator thanking the authorities for accepting the first part of his confession and that he will continue to tell the truth. That then allowed him to say something like, "So if you'll remember..." and move into the summary of what had happened to that point, blending right into the next chapter by Hubbard. I thought it was brilliant. Even Miscavige liked it, but he was ready to take the opposite view if Hubbard didn't like it.

If waiting for his approval of the first edit made us all nervous, this was 10 times worse. I was proposing a major change in the presentation of the volumes as well as my ghosting 27 new intros for Hubbard.

WE LIVE ANOTHER DAY - NOW WE COVER OUR ASSES

I don't know how long it took but when Hubbard's approval came back, we were thrilled beyond belief. Miscavige was probably as happy as I was because a serious flap had been avoided. Plus we had the intros for Book 2!

Now that we had a plan, the people who gave the bad reviews were quickly

contacted by another section of ASI to tell them that it had been a horrible mistake! Egad! We just learned that somehow those other volumes had been assembled without Hubbard's intros and here's what was left out of Volume 2. Gee, sorry about that!

It was just fast damage control. Hollywood and Washington, D.C., do it all the time. Hubbard approved it so technically it was now his, even though it was ghosted. It would carry his copyright. We hoped it would work. My task was to get busy on the other volumes.

Hubbard also had a new idea. We needed to do maps for each volume to show where the action for that volume occurred.

Oh, great, I figured. Now we're into map-making. I'll have to check all the locations in the text and verify them against an atlas. Someone was found to draw the maps and it was, as expected, its own headache, especially Book 1 that occurs on another planet. I had to go through the text and work out distances and directions (sometimes based on travel time of space ships - right!) to give to the mapmaker. Somehow it all worked.

GHOSTING FOR A GHOST

I forget what volumes had been approved when Hubbard died but I wasn't much past Book 3, if even that far. It meant the rest had to be done without him but we already had the format so the rest of the intros were done without his okay. But it also allowed more liaison with Broeker. I went to the ranch the night that Hubbard died to handle any media who showed up. Then I stayed on and brought the editing up with me so I could do it there.

By the time I got to Book 6 or 7, I was running out of ideas for the robo-translator and the censor. How many ways original, new ways could the censor say Earth doesn't exist? Or the robo-translator saying how hard he worked to translate this into English, which doesn't officially exist. A few times I had to stick something in to break it up, which was fun, like talking about the speed of light and colors.

Meanwhile the push was on to get "ME" onto the best seller lists. Hubbard

expected it so ASI had to work out how to do it.

HOW TO BE A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR: RECYCLE!

Someone at ASI was given the task of organizing Scientologists to go out and buy copies. He took up residence in a room in the back of Bridge Publications where he dispensed the money for the purchases. The Scientologists would then come back with the books - usually more than one copy - and a receipt to pick up more money and go out again. The room was cluttered with plastic and paper bags from bookstores all over Southern California. There were also some from other parts of the US. Any Scientologist who traveled was to pick up copies at airports. The books were then recycled back into Bridge to be redistributed and bought again. He also set up similar programs in other cities.

The idea worked. The volumes made it onto best seller lists that we then touted to Hubbard before he died. Of course, he was never told about the recycling-buying scheme. As far as he knew, he was always a best selling author. In fact, in one of his "advices" (as we called his orders), he told this story how some company found back in 1937 or so that his name on the cover of a magazine helped to sell them, proving that he was really wanted. Willie Loman couldn't have told the story better.

About the only other amusing moment I can remember is the woman who was retyping the manuscript (for the publisher's proofs) who had to quit at around Book 4 or 5 because of the necrophilia. She found it very upsetting. I don't know what happened to her but no one was allowed to find anything Hubbard wrote to be disgusting, so there were some crude remarks about her "confront" and wondering what "hidden overts" [hidden crimes] she had committed on Hubbard to say such things.

She should have seen what was in his unpublished writings, especially the ones with his drawings of penises and vulvas.

And that, my friends, is the "rest of the story."

Robert Vaughn Young

Hubbard's widowed editor who knows
to never reflex pronouns in his own voice,
to not use sentence fragments and
what to not close this one with.

Organic participles professionally dangled.
Free estimates.
Batteries not included.

**Stacy's former husband - phrase (c) designated cult attorney, used with
permission when said snidely