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RICHARD POLT 4745 WINTON RD
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DEAR POLT

HAVE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO CUT MANUSCRIPT
AS PER YOUR REQUEST BUT ARTISTIC DEMANDS OF
STORY REQUIRE SPACE TO PLAY OUT STOP TRUST
ME I AM PROFESSIONAL WRITER STOP THANKS IN
ADVANCE FOR KEEPING IN ONE PIECE STOP=

KEELER

The Mind With the Alternate Skull Mystery

by
Ken Keeler
(no relation)

1 Introducing Patient [???

Patient [???]—as it is necessary to refer to him—lying in his tight-cornered hospital bed, bolted to the floor and enclosed as it was on all four sides by Macallander-Whisby Instant-Pull Elastic Curtains, a square of sunlight falling just to the left of his unconscious form from the lone window visible high above him in the wall of the rambling, cathedral-like room, woke from drug-induced slumber with a start and sat bolt upright—in said bed!

And instantly his mind filled with stark terror. Which concerned me greatly.

For Patient [???] was—myself!

And while I recognized the cavernous hall as the recovery room of the famous Wiederhyphen

Neurosurgical Institute—that curious private Chicago clinic run and staffed solely by one, G.B. Wiederhyphen, M.D., Ph.D., the world-famous yet reclusive experimental cranio-psychiatrist—I had no recollection whatsoever of who I was or how I had gotten there.

But the dull ache in my head, prompting an exploratory touch to my brow, told me at least what had happened to me in that ill-rumored clinic. For the bandage neatly wrapped around my skull confirmed my worst suspicions: Wiederhyphen, that obsessive Teuton, had operated on me!

Without—or so I suspected—my consent!

At least, I thought, this explained my total amnesia with respect to my own history, coupled with my all-too-clear recollections of everything not having to do with me personally. For, if Wiederhyphen had indeed been inside my skull, he must surely first have administered the Hex-

ogene gas commonly used in such procedures. Which gas invariably causes temporary—for no more than 10 hours!—suppression of those centers of the brain that generate one’s perception of self. And, that being the case, I could not expect to remember who I was before midnight, now—if my estimate of the sun’s angle on my bedclothes were accurate—some ten hours away.

From somewhere just outside my curtained repository came a wail of what could only be called sheer desperation, and I yanked the pull on the Macallander-Whisbys to reveal two more down-bolted beds with two more patients, each in his own enclosure though with the intervening curtain pulled back. Each of the two men—one plainly American, the other as plainly Chinese—had a gauze bandage swathing his head, passing just above the eyes and ears, indicating that each had recently undergone a full circumferential craniectomy. And the Chinese—for it was evidently he who had wailed—pointed at me and spoke.

“Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!”

As we exchanged stares, through my bandaged mind coursed Wiederhyphen’s sordid, all-too-public history—the golden reputation as a gifted healer of psychopathology *via* brain-tissue replacement, forever tarnished by certain unsavory experiments violating that most basic of neurosurgery’s unwritten rules: “one brain at a time.”

Indeed, whispered rumors in the Chicago papers had for weeks been hinting at Wiederhyphen’s imminent arrest.

And now I had no doubt, given that brilliant but blemished reputation, of what had happened to myself and my new acquaintances. Wiederhyphen—the first and still the only man to perform a successful brain-swap—must, with justice closing in, have thrown caution to the wind and attempted to break the famous triple brain-exchange barrier. On what—I was now sure!—were non-consenting patients.

Which meant that my own brain belonged in the body of one or the other of the two men before me. And that the brain in one of those bodies belonged in the body my brain currently inhabited. Which body I now decided to inspect for the first time. And received yet another shock.

For, from the grinning reflection in the five-inch-by-five-inch mirror above my bed and the unusual length of my unusually hairy limbs rel-

ative to my unusually compact torso, I realized that my brain—wherever it had originated—was now in the body of—a chimpanzee!

2

The Cranium Shuffle

A chimp! Then Wiederhyphen had not only broken the three-brain barrier but the interspecific mind-transference barrier as well!

My first thought was that the three of us must immediately find Wiederhyphen and force him to reverse his unnatural ternary operation. I began to clear my throat, intending to instigate a conversation with my fellow switchbrains (as victims of involuntary brain-transplantation were known in the Chicago papers). When I began to reconsider.

Before demanding restoration of the *status mentalis quo ante*, I could see, it was necessary to be *absolutely sure* which body my brain had come from. If my brain were an American brain, well and good. But suppose my brain had come from the Chinese body? I knew—although I did not know whether I had ever been its victim—that anti-Chinese discrimination still existed here in Chicago, even in this year of 2008. Perhaps, in that case, the less fuss made about whose brain belonged in whose body, the better.

The situation called for clear-headed logic. Which reminded me of another, compensatory property of Hexogene gas: its temporary—for ten—or 10!—hours only—stimulation of the inducto-deductive faculties.

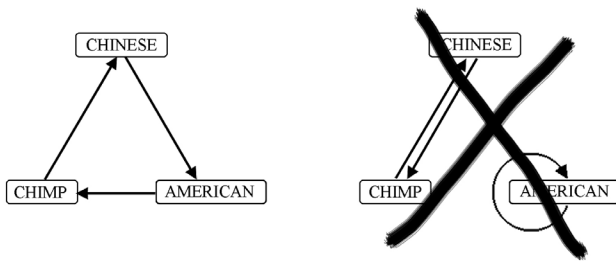
I immediately set about the task of identifying myself by pure logic. Which, as I applied it like some Aristotelian bricklayer, revealed a third alternative: what if my brain were that of the chimp to begin with?

Which thought I promptly banished. For another mind-trowelful of logic told me that Wiederhyphen would hardly have bothered to open the cranium of the chimpanzee I was inside, had he not intended to exchange its brain for another. Which argument, extended, meant that each of our bodies—American, Chinese, and chimp—*must contain a brain not originally its own*.

A fact! And one which I noted mentally as

*PROPOSITION 1:
No body has its own brain.*

I saw immediately, moreover, that this fact—!—was of further use. All I had to do, I realized, was to identify the body that now held the chimp brain. For if the chimp brain were in the Chinese body, my brain must be American, since, were it Chinese, that would leave the American's brain in the American's body, violating the no-fixed-brains axiom. I drew a mental diagram, using oblongs to illustrate bodies and arrows to show hypothetical brain-migration patterns and crossing out the impossible case:



A converse argument showed that if the chimp's brain were in the American body, then my brain must be Chinese. Though I did not, this time, bother with a mental diagram.

As I pondered the situation, I thought it more likely than not that the Chinese body, from which had come that inarticulate howl of desperation and that curious "Eeeeeeeeeeee!", contained the chimp brain. Which would leave me with an A-plus, one-hundred-per-cent American brain! But I could not be sure. Did that inchoate howl indicate the mind of an animal, or just of an upset American?

And this raised further questions.

1. Could a chimp's brain formulate speech?
2. If so, could it speak through a human's vocal tract?
3. And could I, with a demonstrably human brain, speak through a chimp's vocal tract?

Interesting questions all!

But before I could open my mouth to discuss them with my wardmates, a more interesting thought struck me. Of the two human bodies before me, at least one had to contain a human brain. That could be counted upon eventually to speak through its human vocal tract. Thereby establishing that the brain installed therein was

non-chimp, and—from Proposition 1—not the body's original occupant. Which would establish the speaker's brain's identity by the process of elimination. And since my brain must also be human, it would, by further elimination, necessarily be that found originally within the speaker.

I decided, then, to wait for one of my fellow-patients to speak, and resolved not to say a word.

Assuming that, with my chimpanzee vocal tract, I could!

3

Not For Long!

I had just started to pick a flea out of my right armpit when I noticed a tag around my left wrist, attached by a metal-bead chain of the sort commonly used to make circularly-fed curtain-pulls. The tag read

"CHIMPO"
BORN IN WEST LONDON.
RAISED IN CHICAGO ZOO.

So—the chimp I was inside was familiar with both West London *and* the London-of-the-West! Which meant—

But my thoughts were interrupted as the Macallander-Whisby Instant-Pull Elastic Curtain behind me, on the side opposite my companions, was pulled aside by its circularly-fed, bead-chained pull in a motion that, taking no less than five seconds, earned its puller a free clock-radio under the terms of the Macallander-Whisby "No Questions Asked" Total Satisfaction Guarantee. I whirled around—to see, in a fourth bed, a large grizzly bear. With a circumferentially-banded head. Which bear promptly threw my retaining wall of logical bricks into a cocked hat as it spoke in a genial, masculine, Cockney voice:

"Cor blimey, gents! Anyone got a nice banana?"

My heart—if chimpanzees have hearts; I am

no expert—or, should I say, the heart in the body within which I temporarily—I hoped—found myself—sank within the chest of said body as inference upon inference shot through my Hexogene-enhanced mind.

First, the addition of the bear to our club made it clear that Wiederhyphen, that acknowledged mad genius of cranial transplant, had, in a display of bravado and virtuosity unparalleled in the neuro-surgical world, skipped the three-way switch entirely to perform a *quadruple* brain-permutation.

And second, my previous logic, *vis-à-vis* the location of the chimp brain implying the nature of my own, was distinctly *non est!* Which meant that I was back to square negative-one—as far as determining my identity. Which might be American, Chinese—or bear!

Or might it?

For in the next instant the Chinese body answered the Cockney-accented bear:

“Not me, pal. But I sure would like to outlaw gay marriage.”

Incontrovertibly identifying itself, thereby, as the holder of *Brainus Americanus!*

4

More—Of The Same!

I ticked the fact off mentally:

PROPOSITION 2:

The American brain was in the Chinese body.

A proposition that I now know to have been a—fact! And one that left me with two unpalatable alternatives. Since, under Proposition 1, I could not be the chimp, Proposition 2 implied that I must be either the Chinese or the bear.

A few other observations crowded their way, one after another, through my rapidly-firing Celestial or ursine mind:

1. The bear’s ability to speak showed at least that a human brain could speak through a bear’s vocal tract. For, even if the bear had the chimp brain, the fact that said chimp-brain could speak through a bear vocal tract implied *a fortiori* that a human brain could speak through such a tract.

2. Implying, *a fortiori*-er, that if I had a hu-

man brain, I should be able to speak through the far more sophisticated chimp vocal tract.

3. The bear’s Cockney accent, however, told me exactly—nothing. For I could not be sure whether it was a function of the bear’s vocal tract—it perhaps having grown up in some urban circus within earshot of Bow Bells—or of the therein-ensconced brain. I could, perhaps, make an educated guess, but—once bitten, twice shy!—I knew better than to go out on *that* limb.

4. The speed with which the limb metaphor had leapt to mind made me favor the I-am-the-bear hypothesis, but I could hardly consider it dispositive.

5. No more informative was the bear’s request for bananas. Everybody likes bananas.

6. Even me, who, I *knew* from Proposition 1, was not a chimp.

7. One thing was for sure: I was either a bear or Chinese.

5

Six—of One!

As yet I had said nothing, a strategy that had, if not exactly paid huge dividends, at least lost me none of my capital—a reflection whose complexity argued against the I-am-the-bear hypothesis. I reapplied myself to the logical analysis of the brain permutation.

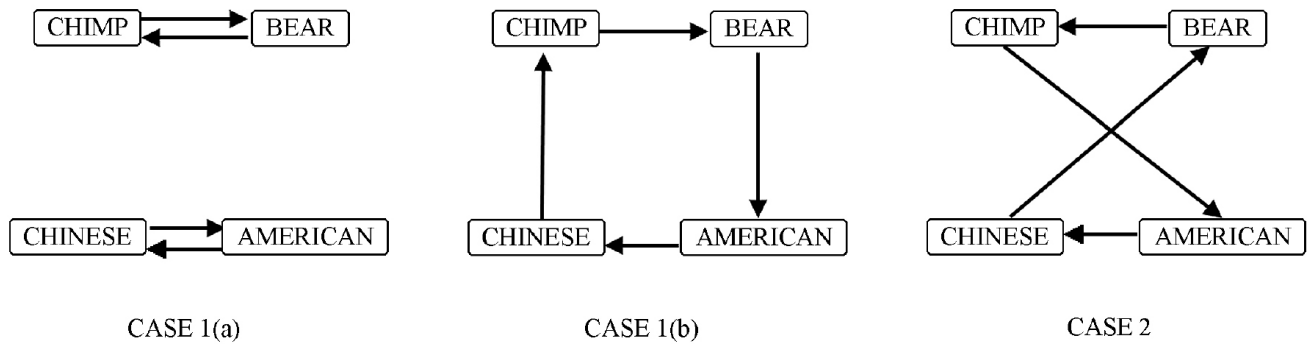
I knew the American brain was in the Chinese body, and I knew I did not have the chimp brain. Therefore the chimp brain was in (1) the bear body or (2) the American body.

1. If the chimp brain was in the bear body, that left the bear brain and the Chinese brain distributed somehow between my chimp body and the American body. Either

a. I had the bear brain and hence the American body had the Chinese brain, or

b. I had the Chinese brain and the American body had the bear brain.

2. If, on the other hand, the chimp brain was in the American body, then necessarily I had the bear brain and hence the bear had the Chinese brain. For if it were the other way around and I had the Chinese brain, the bear would necessarily have the bear brain—violating the no-fixed-brains axiom.



In two cases out of three, I was a bear. I did not like those odds.

It was then that I realized a subtle point. Case 1(a), I deduced, was impossible! For it, though it involved four brains, constituted no more than a pair of mere two-brain swaps. Which, being no more difficult *in principle* than a single such exchange, was something with which a surgical artist of Wiederhyphen's caliber would hardly bother. An inference that I filed mentally as

PROPOSITION 3:

There weren't any two-brain swaps.

Said inference reducing my bear-versus-Chinese odds to fifty-fifty—a veritable Chinaman's chance indeed!

I did not bother crossing Case 1(a) out mentally, as the effort had been too great the first time.

I saw no way of logically distinguishing between the two remaining possibilities. For now, neither ability to speak nor accent gave any information, and—despite my good fortune in the American's random declaration—I could not think of a way of provoking any further utterance that would conclusively identify any one of us as a bear, a Chinese, or a chimp.

I had just resolved yet again to attempt to speak when the four of us—who had been gazing speculatively at each other now for a full five minutes with no more than twenty-four words spoken—the others all the while surely duplicating my reasoning—were distracted by the howl of police sirens and, then, a fine Irish baritone calling over a bullhorn:

"This is the police, Wiederhyphen! You've exchanged your last brain—er—brains. Put down them micro-scalpels and come out with your hands up!"

Just then the door flew open and through it,

carrying a beehive and trailed by a swarm of its angry inhabitants, lumbered a tall, stoop-shouldered, lab-coat-clad figure of perhaps fifty-five years, three months, six days and 10 hours, with the characteristic cropped hair and impassive face of the Teuton. As he stopped and swatted at the bees, roaring in rage and pain, we saw that his head, too, was swathed in bandages.

"Dr. Godzilla Bloomin' Wiederhyphen, I presume?" said the Cockney bear.

But I was paying no attention. My mind was racing like Hexogene-greased lightning through the logical possibilities. And as the Wiederhyphen body continued to roar, in tones unmistakably bearish, the pieces fell into place.

There could be no doubt that the bear's brain now resided in the snarling, bee-swatting doctor's bandage-encircled skull. Which fact, for completeness, I mentally noted:

PROPOSITION 4:

The bear's brain was in Wiederhyphen's body.

And my prognathous jaw dropped in sheer admiration of Wiederhyphen's genius—surgical, criminal, and theatrical! For I had at last solved the problem of my identity—and unraveled Wiederhyphen's tangled brain-web.

Knowing that it was only a matter of time before the police caught up with him, he had kidnapped or otherwise rounded up the necessary victims. And performed an act of daredevil surgery—unassisted, as was his invariable rule—that neurophysicians would be talking about for decades—removing and exchanging, via circumferential craniectomy, not two, not three, not even four, but *five* brains simultaneously.

Including his own!

Yet his astonishing and brilliant scheme had

accomplished far more. It had—at the same time!—allowed him to escape forever the police whose approach he had obviously foreseen.

6 The Upshot

And so I did what I knew I must to bring Wiederhyphen to the justice he so richly deserved—and what I knew he had intended me to do all along.

Grabbing the handrail of the floor-anchored bed with one incredibly long, strong, hairy arm and the nearest Macallander-Whisby Instant-Pull Elastic Curtain with the other arm, I pulled my hands together. Bared my teeth with effort. Then, suddenly, let go of the bed frame. The M-W, snapping back to its unstretched shape, shot me up to the lone window high above like a flying chimp. In an instant I had smashed through, leaped down into a nearby elm, and was flying arm over arm over the police cordon and into the heart of that fabled London of the West.

For I had realized that my four propositions—which I will now repeat for ease of reference:

PROPOSITION 1:

No body has its own brain.

PROPOSITION 2:

The American brain was in the Chinese body.

PROPOSITION 3:

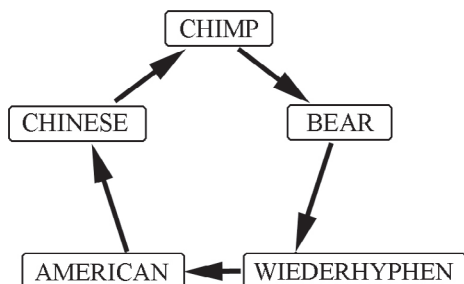
There weren't any two-brain swaps.

PROPOSITION 4:

The bear's brain was in Wiederhyphen's body.

—left precisely two possibilities as to the distribution of brains.

One was that the chimp's brain was in the bear, the bear's brain was in Wiederhyphen, Wieder-



hyphen's brain was in the American body, and the American's brain was in the Chinese body—which would make mine the Chinese brain.

But Wiederhyphen's body's bellows had been distinctly ursine—not Teutonic at all. For, as is well-known, the voice of a bear and a Teuton are as different from each other as Bohunk is from Swodock. Which fact allowed me to formulate

PROPOSITION 5:

The accent of a brain-transplant recipient is determined by the brain, not the vocal tract.

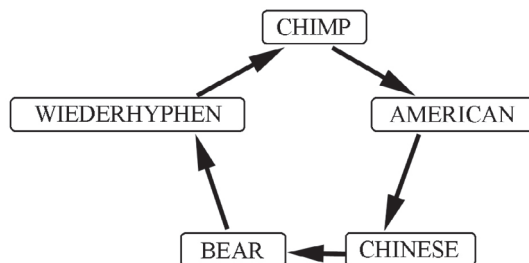
But this meant that *if* the bear had the chimp's brain, it would speak like a chimp that was—as my wrist-tag had told me—raised in the Chicago Zoo, and born in *West* London...

Never like an East-End Cockney!

Ergo—the chimp's brain was not in the bear!

Thus I had eliminated—by logic cold, hard, and Hexogenish—all but one possibility:

That the chimp's brain was in the American's body, the American's brain was in the Chinese body, the Chinese brain was in the bear's body (evidently the Chinese *was* a Cockney!), the bear's brain was in Wiederhyphen's body...



And that the genius I so admired, and whose escape I was facilitating, was—my own!

THE END

Behind Ten Eyes

by
Ken Keeler
(no relation)

1

A Chimp He Doubt Himself!

As I hurtled hand over hand through the Chicago trees, it suddenly dawned on me that even though the chimp I was inside had been born in West London, its brain might still have acquired a Cockney accent in infancy from its upwardly-mobile-Cockney *parents*—potentially a fatal flaw in my logic.

Still, it was too late now.

THE END

The Colossal Ploy of Chimpo Wiederhyphen

by
Ken Keeler
(no relation)

1

Monkey, *¡sí!*

A couple of trees further on, I realized that I had been right the first time: the chimp's brain could not be in the bear, hence I was indeed Wiederhyphen. A realization that came courtesy of the last dregs of Hexogene in my bloodstream! Which had allowed me to perceive a hitherto-unnoticed extension of the logic outlined in Items 1 and 2 of the list with which I concluded the manuscript of Chapter Four of the first volume of this trilogy*—one which I was embarrassed not to have perceived at the time. Namely: since the bear had spoken, if the chimp's brain were in the bear, the combination of chimp-brain-with-bear-vocal-tract must be capable of speech. But then a chimp brain with a *chimp* vocal tract—infinately superior to a bear's—must surely also be. And if the chimp's brain and vocal tract were both capable of speech, surely the original, pre-surgery chimp, possessing both, would have spoken long before now.

And if it had, *why had I never seen any news coverage of an amazing talking chimp?*

THE END

* The interested Reader should consult Mr. Keeler's earlier novel *The Mind With The Alternate Skull Mystery*, available from this publisher. —*Ed.*

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RICHARD POLT 4745 WINTON RD
CINTI

DEAR POLT YOU BASTARD

ARE YOU INSANE STOP NOBODY WILL READ THREE
SEPARATE NOVELS ABOUT A CHIMP WITH NO DIALOGUE
WHERE ONLY ONE THING HAPPENS STOP
ONE NOVEL YES BUT NOT THREE STOP
YOU ARE NO LONGER MY PUBLISHER STOP=

KEELER

PS ANY ROYALTY CHECKS YET?