

TOD BOLD: A STAND UP LIFE

By Melanie Studd-Walls



Tod Bold: A Life In Stand Up

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Introduction.

I never saw Tod Bold perform live, but some dyke friends of mine (Nancy Morales and Judith Sludge) who used to hang out at Kent State University, did. They were not officially enrolled but just sitting in on occasional lectures, if they fancied the lecturer. They said when Tod was not stoned, he was very funny, but when he was stoned, he took comedy into an entirely new dimension, unfortunately not always one recognized by anyone watching him.

I decided to write this biography after watching, at a lesbian sleepover, a pirate tape of his very last performance at Caesar's Palace where he supported Ralph and Malcolm Berlinski ('Two magicians, two dolphins and a whole lot of water'). Despite being in the very last throes of brain lung, skin, and prostate cancer, and suffering from the trauma of having his big toe amputated due to gangrene, after wandering into a bear-trap whilst shovelling snow from his neighbour's driveway, and spending three days immobilized, and undiscovered (it was holiday season), Tod nevertheless put in a ten minute set with consummate professionalism, managing to tell two whole jokes (although some observers hold it is only one joke and an aside), whilst only lapsing into incoherent gibberish five or six times. This won him three standing ovations, two sitting ovations, and one lying down ovation, because the audience were growing quite weary by this time.

Researching this book, necessitated several trips to the library, which fortunately cost me nothing since I had a Pensioner's Bus Pass, which I had stolen from a Pensioner, where I met my current partner, Marilyn Meades (thanks for proof-reading and organizing my notes, Marilyn, as well as for the back-rub, and direct clitoral stimulation).

It also brought me into contact with many helpful people (but not you, Sylvester Clout of the Oregon Comic Book Store, who wanted to charge me \$3,000 for a copy of Tod's only published work, the epic poem, "Bury My Heart Where the Snows of the High Sierra Meet the Creeping Waste from the Nuclear Re-processing Plant"). I would like to express my thanks to the others, who include Denver Trout, Missy Julie Podger (thanks for keeping that collection of Tod's used cum rags and, furthermore, allowing me access to them), Aideen Normal, Tina Bobble, Beryl Milf of the Asperger's Syndrome Helpline, for their useful advice about my Cousin Vinnie, David Letterman, Bob Lipsync, Lloyd Kitchen (manager of Kitchen's Wholesale Grout Supplies, who once repointed Tod's bathroom), Dexter Alien, Wilf Watters, Gabriel Dreck, Joshua Stanchion, Doc Severenson, Luigi Capaldi, Basil Herb, Arkhan Ghoklan, and Nick Lera (for his remarkable film, 'Steam Across Shap', which has nothing to do with Tod Bold but is nevertheless remarkable).

Along the way I have accumulated a lot of Tod Bold archive material (including poems and recipes from his abandoned collection, 'Nazi Nachos' (see Addenda) which may in fact have been an attempt to find a googlehack (but in fact came up with 5,140 hits, and neither word was officially recognized anyway), but did nevertheless contain recipes which might be of interest to Nazis who like Nachos,

and indeed other Mexican food. I particularly like his Third Reich Tamales, and his Jamaican Jerk Chicken Fajitas, a cross-cultural recipe if ever there was one.) All of this stuff may be accessed on the website. Meanwhile I would like to exhort anyone who lives in Hebden Bridge to quit their homes immediately and run for the hills, which are fortunately quite close by, because the long-sealed box of Joanna Southcott has finally been opened, and it's bad news for you. Don't blame me. I told them not to open it, but this looney claiming to be from the local council turned up with a chainsaw, and a letter from the Lord Mayor. It turned out he'd forged the letter but it's too late to worry about details like that now, isn't it? This is exactly the way manifestations of untold evil gets released upon an unsuspecting world.

By the way if you live in nearby Todmorden it's already too late.

ONE

Tod's paternal greatgrandfather was born Elijah Hupp Stoke Todney Bold in Spoke, Missouri, which at that time was little more than rail hub, where the local hard-drinking plainsmen brought their pork to market. It had a horse trough, a livery stable and of course a brothel called Aunt Peg's which was pretty much mandatory at that time.

This was of course a long way from Longville, Illinois, where Colonel Saunders opened his first franchise, in this case for Fried Bats, which in fact neither Elijah or any of his descendents ever visited, although they could but dream.

Tod's paternal greatgrandmother was also born Elijah Hupp Stoke Todney Bold, but in a totally different part of the country (Mekon, in Langford County, Arkansas), which for a long time, tended to confuse family historians, as well as those attempting to serve notices for parking violations, as well as armed robbery.

They both featured in the 1850 Guinness Book of Records as the most unlikely conjunction of similarly named individuals ever to be born within 1,000 miles of each other.

In 1864 Elijah Etc. (well, one of them) patented rope, despite the fact that it had been around for centuries, and thus made his (or her) fortune. They moved to Widget, hoping for a life of retirement luxury on America's sunshine west Californian coast, but found they had moved to Widget Mississippi, by mistake, after misreading a realtor's publicity material. Stuck with a 100% mortgage on a tin shack which had cost them \$500,000 but had a collateral value of four pence, they were forced to invent things to keep their heads afloat. They came up with a series of inflatable collars for ship-wrecked sailors, but found, as usual, Mae West was one step ahead of them.

Desolated, and nearly bankrupt, they invested in a scheme to keep themselves alive after death by cryogenically freezing their bodies. Fortunately Elijah (one of them) had the foresight to donate some sperm to the East Banjo Sperm Bank, whilst the other donated eggs (you work it out). Thus, even though they both died, clinically speaking, in 1901 after a nationwide powercut, their donations were kept alive due to back up electricity generators, and Tod's father eventually came to be conceived and later born. Obviously through the kind offices of a third party surrogate.

TWO

The winter of 1923 was the worst the inhabitants of the small town of Inane, Nebraska had ever experienced; even since the year their founding fathers had chosen to give their town such a stupid name.

Millions of hectares of wheat lay under frozen slurry, due to an accidental discharge from the local Beverly Watts Slurry Plant. On the neighbouring plains 40,000 bison collapsed from hypothermia and by the following spring were nothing more than desiccated husks.

The result was widespread famine and even emergency measures limiting each individual to a daily intake of .2 calories could not prevent queues stretching back as far as the Himalayas.

Tod's father Eric Maverley Bold was born into this grim environment one year later (ie. 1924). There had been little improvement in the overriding circumstances, except that President Abel Gonzales Trubb's Regeneration Programme had already promised each surviving family a pet gerbil, so Eric at least had a pet gerbil, except, being a creature with a short life-span, it died long before he could really establish any bond with it.

Eric's surrogate family, the Renege-Wildersons was deceptively upper class in that it was in fact working class. Arthur Renege-Wilderson worked as a rat-catcher and mouse-taunter in the local Brewery ("Knob Beers – Nebraska's Finest") whilst his wife Edna's only claim to notoriety or distinction was that she had won the Largest Moustache Competition at the 1920 State Fair.

When he was nineteen Eric was caught stealing donuts and given 60 years community service, mostly shovelling frozen slurry. He absconded and pursued by state troopers crossed the state line to find refuge in Cobstock, Wyoming, and, ironically, got a job in the local Dunkin' Donuts, the manager of which was not very hot on taking up references. It was here he met Tod's Mother, Denise Blair Sandwich Project who was six years his junior, but looked older for her age, and considerably more masculine than her gender. Denise was born in Transient, Milwaukee, about 140 miles north of Cockmadoo, and raised in Benchmark, Illinois, 20 miles south of Glutteny. She was one of forty two children, all born at home. As a child, even younger than she was when she met Eric, she had trained Ferrets to tap-dance for Jasper Conran's Travelling Circus. When Tod asked her why ferrets, she explained 'Honey, we just couldn't get the weasels in those days.'

Eric and Denise had already had two children, but had sold them for shares in a local truffle farm, when they welcomed Tod into the world in the early hours of 19th December 1961 at the Sandy Posey Hospital in Pasadena, where they had been attending the Fifth Annual Convention of Floridian Muleteers (Muleteering being a passing interest of theirs). Tod weighed either 8lb 4 ounces or 42 pounds 6 ounces depending on who had his finger on the scales, and apparently greeted the world with a sardonic smile instead of the usual bleating cry.

Shortly after Tod was born his parents moved to Gorange, Pennsylvania, for reason which will become obvious later.

His parents were strict Baptists, which coloured Tod's sense of history to the degree that he really did believe that Absoth begat Ruth who begat Nahob who

begat Shirley who begat Shemloth who begat Nokia who begat Nike who begat Picasso who begat Naomi Campbell who begat Shadrach (but not that Shadrach).

Tod grew up largely unaware of the turmoil that beset the American Nation during his developmental years, mostly because his parents didn't have a television or even a radio and refused to allow newspapers into the house. One day Tod saw a man on the street bearing a placard saying 'Bring our boys home from Vietnam'. When he asked his parents what it meant they explained that a coach hired by the local football team had broken down and become stranded in flash floods in Vietnam, North Texas.

For years Tod believed Martin Luther King had founded the King Chicken franchise chain and had then gone on to become a successful boxing promoter.

When the Klu Klutz Klan (a particularly moronic off-shoot of the famous organisation) advertised in his subscription copy of Young Marvelman Comic, he eagerly sent off his fee for membership, convinced they were a mythical organisation of superheroes. This would explain why he was later unable to tour in any states south of the Mason Dixon line.

In 1968, at a Bris party for his neighbour Eli Cohen, Tod made a deal with Eli's parents that in exchange for doing a tap-dance to Hava Nagila, he could make his first joke: 'Nothing rhymes with orange unless you live in Gorange, Pennsylvania.' (Ed: That's why). It was greeted with a silence with for which the term stoney would be an overstatement. Tod later told his friend Pete Weston, who ran a Mr Waffle franchise in Ballard, Minnesota, "Never make jokes about oranges in front of a Jewish audience." He had learnt his first lesson in the Hard-knock school of humour*, whatever that is.

(*Actually a franchise ran by an early incarnation of Mel Brooks in conjunction with Carl Reiner.)

Paradoxically, for someone with such entrenched liberal and pacifist ideals, Tod showed an early interest in both golf and blood sports. Saving the money from his paper round, he was able to buy his first air rifle when he was ten. He wrote in a letter to his maternal grandmother: 'Grandma, I just love killing God's small creatures. The birds are too fast, and the field mice and voles too small, but the squirrels are so trusting so I love killing them most of all. I love the way they squeal with pain, and spin through the air. I love the way they lie twisted and twitching while waiting for me to despatch them with one blow from the stock of my trusty rifle.'

His grandmother was so disturbed by this letter she took it to the police, who reassured her that killing squirrels wasn't illegal and that, in fact, quite a lot of cops liked killing squirrels to. They advised her to urge Tod to join a gun club, when he would be able to get his hands on real weapons, and move up the scale of killing to deer, elk, mouse and caribou, and perhaps even humans, but only the no-hopers who contributed nothing to the economy, or perhaps had incensed you with their bad driving.

As for golf, imagine Tod's joy when driving from the fairway in the Missouri Under-twelve Open, Tod's scored a direct hit on a gopher killing it stone dead. Although it left him with a bad lie for a draw to the green, and he ended up one under par.

THREE

Mitchum, as well as being a range of deodorants, and a craggy-jawed actor, is a small County in West Texas. Denzil is a small offshoot of Mitchum with autonomous control as far as gun laws are concerned. Just down the road from Denzil is the gay enclave of PerkyButt, which has three parking lots owned by a local developer and two owned by a local under-developer. At least that is what they will tell you when you sidle up to them in Earl's Leather Rancher Disco, down on Louis Primera Street, where they can often be found dancing together. Down a small alley to one side of Earl's Leather Rancher Disco, you can find Spunk City, which, although often mistaken for a bordello, is in fact a Texmex takeaway, and also the seat of the autonomous governing body of Cleat. *Spunk*, by the way, is apparently a brand of barbecue sauce endorsed by Tom Cruise, I'm reliably informed. Not to be confused with Tom's other branded product, *Spank*, which guarantees to remove butt-hair, especially that deep down in the crack, with only one application.

For many years Tod was haunted by the belief that he had a doppelganger, a lookalike, although appearing slightly older, whose life intersected with his own in mysterious ways. There was in fact a simple explanation for this, since in 1953 his grandparent's genetic legacy had been earlier reactivated, and an exact twin who also, coincidentally took the name Tod Bold had been born in Cleat specifically in a small lock-up garage.

1953 was a bad year for growing up in Cleat, but a good year for Chuck Yeager who broke several world aeroplane speed records by moving very quickly with rocket engines. That same year Tod² bought a copy of Scientific American which chronicled Chuck's speeding successes. He filed it in a small, immaculately labelled box-file, manufactured by Eason & Sons, next to his copy of National Geographic which chronicled the mating rituals of the feuding Upanizi tribes of West L.A., with frankly rather speculative maps purporting to identify where their various cribs were located. Years later he or his children would return to this rich archive in an attempt to give meaning to their lives. But fail miserably.

Later Tod² would become obsessed with the belief he possessed a younger brother, but we need not concern ourselves with that here.

In 1968 disaster overtook Tod's happy home life when his adopted parents broke up after an argument in a seafood restaurant about who had had the most crab-cakes. Arthur took Tod's comic collection, whilst Edna took his baseball cards. His neighbours, the Cohens took him in, and with characteristic generosity allowed him to live in their tree-house for only \$400 a month (plus \$100 extra for laundry services). It was perhaps the lowest point of Tod's life, unless you count when he was discovered masturbating into a Michigan State track-top by a chamber maid in a hotel in Detroit. "It was weird man, Tod said years later. My family's always been like strangers to me."

In between 1968 and 1970, (sorry sometimes your research resources let you down) Malt Grisby the local newsagent employed him on a paper round. Malt was short-sighted and accidentally signed a contract promising to pay Tod \$1000 a week. Tod delivered papers, mostly by throwing them onto lawns, for one day, then decided it was a waste of time. He didn't tell Malt this and continued to collect a

salary for forty years. Strangely none of Malt's customers noticed or even cared about the absence of their daily drip feed of nonsense. Neither did Malt notice this drain on his financial resources, because he had invested in a prototype computer research company run by someone called Bill Gates. So perhaps not so strangely.

This venture did however fund Tod's adventures in further Education and enabled him to sign on for a Ex Gratia Cum Lauda Personna Non Grata course at Kent State University. He arrived on the day after the famous massacre, which pissed him off no end. He would later, in his stage act, attempt to incorporate this into a joke, but was advised by both his manager and officers of the FBI that this was a Bad Idea.

In 1971 after been thrown out of college for waterbombing female co-eds from the tenth floor of the dormitory block. He decided he had to make his own way in life. Using his savings from his paper round, he bought into Mr Sharp a travelling knife-sharpening franchise. "It was during this period," he recalled, "listening to the stories of passing customers, and exchanging quips with passers by, that I honed my axe, I mean, my act. See what I did there?"

It was the bleakest moment of Tods life so far, even including when a Pot Noodle had exploded in his face when he was fourteen.

FOUR

In 1972, following the example of many of his fellow-Americans, such as science fiction writers, and other creative exemplars, and even possibly Norman Spinrad and Tom Disch, Tod moved to England to avoid the draft. Strange how no stevedores, truck-drivers, or workers in meat-packing plants in Chicago made it over here isn't it? But maybe they did, and I wasn't moving in the correct social circles. Maybe Hampstead Heath was heaving with well-tanned ,muscled ,and tattooed flesh even then.

Tod, as always made a joke of it, and claimed he was willing to serve his country, but only with Chicken McNuggets.

He rented a room in Notting Hill, because that was where the taxi-driver from Heathrow airport dropped him, and waited for the world to beat a path to his doorstep. Since it was a room on the second floor, he waited a long time, before realizing the irrepressible futility of a life without doorsteps. He made a joke of this too, but only wrote it on the wall of his toilet, which was later destroyed by a developer, so none of us will ever know what that joke was.

Nevertheless his move proved fortuitous, because he fell in with a transvestite performer, who lived in the room above him and frequently threw his/her panties off the balcony so they fluttered down onto Tod's windowsill.

Fanny Burny*, for it was he/she, introduced him to the gay performance circuit, and secured a three day residence for him at the Black Cap in Camden Town. But at what a cost? Reader, you should not ask.

(*Fanny Burny was the stage name of Donald Knowles, born in Doncaster, who served as an artificer in the Army for three years, and then as a bar-tender in the Admiral Nelson for seventeen. When he died, only recently, he was buried at sea, by a lot of seamen. Oh, stop it!).

It was at The Black Cap that Tod made his first gay joke, but not really, because he simply recited a verse from 'Frigging in the Rigging'

Nevertheless it went down a storm, and immediately brought him to the attention of rigorously straight artists/comedians, such as Alan Bennett, Danny La Rue, and Peter Cook (sorry, that should be 'Cook').

Later Peter Cook would found the Establishment Club, where Tod was offered the opportunity to rub shoulders, and other parts of his anatomy, not only with the cream of British comedy performers (Like, yeah) but audience celebrities such as Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and Jeff Beck, who in fact once all met on stage for a battle of the axe giants, which resulted in Jeff breaking his G-string.

Tod spent many years rubbing shoulders to no real effect, apart from getting threadbare shoulders, but he picked up a lot of material from other performers. Fortunately, most of this could be removed with assiduous dry-cleaning. And so he eked out a living for several years by eking out a living, although he was probably only the only person who can tell us how that was done. He had several trials for British tv, and was in fact a man just out of shot to the left when Del in Only Fools & Horses, did his famous leaning on the bar and falling over routine.

One night in the Cockaleekie Disco in St James Street, however, he did meet the famous debutante Amanda Cumworthy-Smiley, a deformed woman whose legs actually did reach up to her tits, and who recognized an American with a sizeable penis when she saw one.. She moved in with him, then he moved in with her, then they both moved out and went to live in the infamous squat in Piccadilly that resulted in the Great Cultural Explosion of 1974. In the same year he was introduced to The Two Ronnies, but was confused because there was only One Ronnie at the time, and he was never sure which one it was, the funny one or the not so funny one. Nevertheless he managed to sell him the 'four cunts' joke for 5/6d, which the funny Ronnie later reworked as the 'four candles' joke. Thankfully, during this period, he never met Bob Monkhouse, or Ken Dodd or else his career would have been doomed forever.

After going through a series of BBC producers, which was fairly mandatory in those days, he vowed to give up all comedy aspirations and go to work on a Kibbutz in Cheltenham. It was while raking through the cabbages that fate cast a cruel blow, which resulted in his scrotum being pierced in several places by a garden fork. As it happened, it was the best thing that ever happened to him (hard to believe, I know, I personally, lez that I am, think being fellated by a tall bronzed Brazilian hooker might have ranked considerably higher, but there you go) for it was during his prolonged stay in the Milton Keynes General Hospital and Cat Sanctuary, where famed radical surgeon Basil Spencer Davis had set up a special clinic to deal with fork induced disfigurements, that he was introduced to the wonderful world of Hospital Radio. As is usual in these cases, his opportunity came at the cost to another: Rodney Bowels, a long-term out of work actor who has been resident dj for many years, took a wrong

turn after wandering off in search of truffles one night, and walked out of a second-storey window. His wife filed a negligence suite against the hospital but this was thrown out by the Judge who ruled that Rodney had always been a notorious attention seeker. He cited the years that Rodney had spent as hospital dj as evidence of this. Sometimes, and especially if you're named Rodney Bowels, you just can't win.

This serious portent didn't upset Tod, who took up Rodney's mantel at the drop of a hat. He later wrote: "I wanted to take people out of the hospital, but only in their own minds, because I couldn't do it in real life, because I couldn't drive, let alone lead people in a single file. I know I could have organized coaches, but this didn't occur to me until much later when my girlfriend, Edith Dagney, said: You could have organized coaches'. I said to her: "Edith you weren't around at the time, or even at my bar mitzvah", and this led to a big argument which in turn led to her throwing my ironing board out in the snow, and my snow shoes, which meant I wasn't able to go out into the snow to reclaim my ironing board. Eventually the snows thawed and I was able to retrieve my ironing board, and also a Scrabble set, and a dead kipper, but that didn't make it any better".

Despite this setback Tod soon became a hospital favourite, and also on the radio, which saved him a fortune on cleaning bills. One of the keys to his success was his idea of theming every day's output. Monday would be Progressive Rock. Tuesday, a frankly idiosyncratic mix of Krautrock and lesbian country and western, but which nevertheless perfectly pinpointed its audience; Wednesday would feature heavy metal, with a strong preponderance of Motorhead, which paradoxically proved to be the only music which could bring certain long term coma-sufferers back into consciousness, and yet reduce others to a vegative state. Thursday was devoted to Christian music of every denomination, but especially those concerned with devil-worship. This was subsidized by a number of American families who had patients in care and who would willingly write cheques for big bucks. On Friday Tod played cool classical jazz on an endless tape which enabled him to nod off on dope for most of the day. Saturday was the big day in Tod's calendar. Knowing that most of the patients were sedated fairly early, after tiring visits from their relations, he would unleash his off-the-wall spontaneous comic gibbering in a series of monologues which could last hours at a time. Frequently the only person listening late into the night was the government appointed monitor, Claud Schlotzler, who had nothing better to do with his life, since his wife had left him.

Tod was eventually expelled from the hospital when the authorities found an unauthorized wombat in his room, and also because Claud Schlotzler needed a good night's sleep.

FIVE

Tod returned to the USA as soon as the Vietnam war was over, and signed on with the famous Hollywood agent Eugenie Twats, who at seven feet six was the biggest agent around. She got him a job writing for Carl Reiner, who unfortunately

had just retired from all aspects of show-business except the ones which paid royalties. Nevertheless Tod managed to pen several letters to Carl's insurance company, to negotiate a good deal on his new car, and to Carl's mother in law complaining that the wood proofing treatment which she had promised to undertake on Carl's porch had not yet been completed. Later Carl would remember him in his will. Yes, it's the old joke I'm afraid. Hello, Tod.

Absence of work can be demoralizing, but absence of work in Hollywood, where anyone with a super sized dong can earn thousands of dollars every five minutes, could be especially so. Especially since Tod's was only eight inches, and the industry standard at that time was ten.

Tod considered suicide but then read Emile Durkheim's seminal work on the subject, and actually slashed his wrists afterwards, but was fortuitously found by a paramedic who had studied in nipping and tying off bleeding veins and arteries, (a skill which I believe should be taught in primary schools, since you never when you might encounter someone with a severed limb or blown off limb, which seems all too likely these days, especially if you live in Iraq, or even travel on London's Underground, But, Hell, this is an authorial interjection, and possibly out of place in this context. If you feel it to be, please exercise your override facilities, unless you haven't got any, then you are truly sad.)

"I thought killing myself would be a solution," Tod later wrote, "but then realized it would mean I would actually be dead. I might have exercised my free will in choosing to die, but then it occurred to me that if I was dead I wouldn't be able to exercise anything, let alone my pecs or deltoid muscles, areas of my body with which I was becoming increasingly concerned, ever since my Aunt Miniscule had sent me a subscription to Male Physique Pictorial as a birthday present. Thanks Aunt Mini. If only suicide bombers would learn from my example the world would be a better place."

It was to be was of his rare cogent moments for the next twenty years.

In 1982 Tod met Merv Shrimlock, an itinerant beggar, who regularly worked East Shylock Street, South Des Moines. After Tod had paid him several hundred dollars, Merv agreed to become his agent. "Tod was the funnies guy I ever met," said Merv, "except for Rudie Lieberman who ran a hot dog stall outside Cleveland Central Station. Boy, he was funny. He only had to ask 'Do you want extra horseradish on that?' and we'd all crack up. 'That'll be one dollar 99 cents,' he used to say, and that would reduced us to tears. Tell us another Rudi,' we'd chorus, and he'd look puzzled for a moment and then say, 'You putting me on?,' and we would just collapse in the street. I often wonder what happened to Rudi. Well, no I don't, because I know he's now got a candy floss concession down on Coney Island. Next time you're down that way, just tell him 'You expect me to pay 50 cents for that crap?' and I guarantee you'll be in stitches for months.

Merv got Tod his first paid professional gig at a local gay byker disco. Little is known of how Tod handled this gig, or what material he used, except that three weeks later, after suffering a ruptured spleen, Tod was released from the local hospital.

In 1984 Tod Bold played a benefit gig for the Passaic County Chamber of Commerce to celebrate their team placing second in the National Consumer Awareness competition.

He was driving home through Weasel Brook Park when he was rear-ended, by a Buick driven by another Tod, this one being Tod Deckstater. Deckstater accepted full responsibility for the accident, claiming he was pissed out of his mind, which was certainly something Bold could relate to.

Deckstater had dedicated his life, such as it was, to the repair and renovation of ancient valve radios. When he was six his parent bought him an old Uher tape recorder and he set out to transcribe the random heterodyning noises that swamped the airwaves when they were not correctly tuned.

Eventually his heterodyning empire grew and spread. Deckstater inherited his parents' eight-bedroom house on Columbine Avenue in Passaic, after murdering them, but getting off on ground of diminished responsibility, and thanks to strategic realting also owned the freehold to thirty-one wooden shacks scattered throughout the immediate neighbourhood, in which his growing collection of radios and recording equipment was stored.

In Weasel Brook Park both Tods seemed to immediately recognize in each other a kindred spirit, mostly a psychotic one. Deckstater invited Bold, who was willing to overlook the damage to his fender, back to his house and after talking through the night over several rum martinis they agreed to work together on a series of projects which would involve Tod reciting some of his more obscure poems, plus the occasional joke, over a soundtrack provided by Deckstater's valve radios.

The first album resulting from this collaboration 'Some Beans Sprout Some Bean Sprouts Sprout Some Beans Don't Sprout Although Their Sprouts Sprout.' (a reference to Tod's early experiences sprouting beans on a face-flannel on the kitchen window ledge in his family home) was released on Deckstater's own *Crud* label, with each disc being laboriously hand-produced on an old Muttley and Dingedoff hand-cranked master disc-cutter. Bold & Deckstater managed to dispose of all nine copies that were produced, by offering them at the State Fair, as one free with every one of Deckstater's Aunt Annie-Marie Phefferstaff's home made cottage vanilla and mosquito cheesecake pies (always a runaway bestseller).

AND SO GOODBYE

The circumstances of Tod's death have been well-chronicled, if by that one means extensively chronicled but not necessarily 'well' chronicled, in terms of the quality of their chronicling. Devotees of Tom Stoppard's play about journalists and footballer's visiting an Eastern Bloc country to report an international fixture will recognize the mind-boringly allusion to his majestic work here.

ALMOST THERE NOW

Tod Bold, and not his horse, which he had purchased a year earlier and named after himself, partly as a tax evasion scam and partly because he didn't want to die, except possibly as a horse, and then not even possibly, died on 18th November 1995. Unfortunately he had lived just long enough to experience the excesses of Halloween, Diwali and Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder plot, and was thus deaf when he died, but very appreciative of Jamie Lee Curtis' buttocks, and had skittish cats who could never again be allowed out of doors, not that Tod ever had any out of doors experiences ever in his life.. Maybe this was part of his problem.

The coroner's report would cite arteriosclerosis of the soul as the main contributing factor, but I guess it could equally have been nicotine, alcohol, nitrous oxide. Tamiflu, or that evil sparkle dust coke derivative which was outlawed just about then, but possibly not just about then in time.

His wife at the time was Cindy, a pole dancer who has now gone on to run a themed British chip shop in Puerto La Verdás (a resort I believe they are still building, somewhere in Spain or Portugal.).

As Tod would have said, with his memorable punch-line with which he always left his audience: "Keep on laughing, folks. But, remember, the joke might be on you."

Oh, how we laughed.

ADDENDA

"Tamale maker denies using human flesh in food. Copy of Tod Bold's book 'Bury My Heart Where the Snows of the High Sierra Meet the Creeping Waste from the Nuclear Re-processing Plant' found in the carnage."

-- Associated Press
Apr. 22, 2004 06:55 AM

MEXICO CITY - A tamale vendor in western Mexico was arrested after police discovered a carved-up body in his home, a spokeswoman for state prosecutors said Wednesday. The vendor denied using human flesh in his food.

The vendor, who sold tamales from a cart in the city of Morelia in Michoacan state, was arrested Tuesday after police received an anonymous tip that he had a dismembered body in his house, said Lorena Cortes, a spokeswoman for Michoacan state prosecutors.

Police entered the home, which was decked out with Nazi regalia and mementoes, and found body parts, some of which appeared to have been boiled with herbs. A daylong analysis of the tamales found in the house revealed that they were free of human flesh, Cortes said. But she said Wednesday night that police found other materials that suggested the suspect intended to make a new batch of tamales and that bits of human flesh were discovered nearby.

"It is unknown if he planned to use the human meat in new tamales," Cortes said. "More investigation is necessary." The suspect told police he killed the man, who has not yet been identified by police, in a drunken argument on Monday, but he denied using the body parts in his tamales, Cortes said.

The suspect's name was released but there were conflicting reports on how it was spelled. Cortes said he was born in Cuernavaca, a colonial city south of Mexico City and that he had worked as a butcher in the Mexican capital before arriving in Morelia seven or eight years ago. "His experience as a butcher helped him cut the body," Cortes said, adding that the suspect may also have sliced up his victim in order to feed the remains to rats as way of destroying the evidence.

He was in the custody of state prosecutors who were conducting physiological test Monday night, Cortes said. The story was front-page news in Mexico, where one tabloid headline screamed: "Nazi Tamales of Death!"

Some newspapers ran pictures of a bloody torso on the living room floor and mangled body parts next to a cooking pot. Tamales are a typical Mexican meal, often eaten at breakfast. They can contain almost any ingredients - often pork or chicken - buried inside cornmeal and wrapped in corn husks or banana leaves. "People are very dismayed because in this city, the culinary tradition of the tamale is very important," Cortes said. 'We don't like to think of them as being associated with any anti-Semitic nationalistic dictatorship.'

When asked what significance she attached to the discovery of Tod Bold's only published work 'Bury My Heart Where the Snows of the High Sierra Meet the Creeping Waste from the Nuclear Re-processing Plant' on the scene of the crime, Lorena Cortes answered, 'I don't know fuck.'