



Hey, Hey We're

The Drink Tank

411

Cover by DeepDream

**Page 3—Editorial by
Alissa McKersie**

**Page 5— Hey Hey We're the
Marxes by Steven H Silver**

**Page 8 Art for Monkees'
Sake by Chris**

**Page 12—I'm a Believer
By Jacq Monahan**

**Page 19—Considering “Your
Auntie Grizelda”
by Chuck Serface**

**Page 22—“Hey, Hey, We're
the (Flying) Monkees!”
Steven H Silver**

**Editors
Alissa McKersie
Chris Garcia**



Editorial by Alicia

I guess you never forget your first Fandom. The Monkees was my first. My parents will attest to the fact that I was pretty obsessed. Back in the day before the Internet was a big thing, we had the post. We made friends through the mail. We had little booklets that we made, wrote in, and passed on to the next person. I made my own Monkees Stationary and wrote letters on it! I wrote to my Monkees pals all the time! I had every episode recorded on VHS! I was a very big fan! Then, Davy came out with a book, They Made a Monkee Out of Me...

We lived in Central Illinois, and it's only about 2.5 hours to get to Chicago. Eventually, everything comes to Chicago. As it happens, The Monkees were coming to play a show, and better yet (as he was my favorite), because of his new book, Davy was doing a book signing before the show! Oh. My. God. My poor little obsessed heart was overwhelmed! And, bless my parents' hearts for taking me for this experience (is it because of this that I now love cons?). We stood in line forever! It was SO worth it! I was kissed (on the cheek) by Davy Jones <3 What more could an 11-year-old girl ask for?! I still have that book, and Mickey even signed it in 2017 when I met him.

Something else that I remember about this fandom...we didn't have conventions, at least, not when I was 10, 11, 12. We wrote letters, like I said. However, I remember spending one weekend at someone's house with a bunch of Monkee fan girls. I think there were six of us. We had a great Monkee weekend...and it was at this lady, Sharon's house, also a Monkee fan. She was very sweet, and she sewed. She would embroider shirts, make Mike wool hats, and the eight button shirts that you always see the boys wear. I remember the highlight of the weekend was talking on the phone to Alan Green, the co-author of Davy's book. He told me I had a lovely name.

When Davy died in 2012, I had friends from my childhood send me condolences. My dad called to make sure I was okay. And, he posted about it, too...saying, "Davy Jones was my daughter's first musician she really, really liked who died sooner than preferred." He passed away on February 29 that year of a heart attack.

Almost exactly seven years later, my dad texted me, "Awwwwwww – now there are 2!" And, I had not heard the news when he texted, so I was confused. He went on to tell me the news, which hit hard. On February 21, 2019, Peter Tork left us. He had been battling cancer. He was a good dude, from what I have read. I am bummed that I didn't have the chance to meet him.

Mike mentioned just recently over social media that after this tour with Mickey, he will not be touring anymore. If you get a chance to see them play, please do. This is the one band I have seen in concert more than any other, and I am grateful that I've had the opportunities that I have had.

Letters? Comments? Drop them to
garcia@computerhistory.org



About the Art
By Chris

I got a hold of DeepDream, an AI-based image manipulation system that I decided would be a good toy to make some images for this issue. I think they're neat images!

Hey Hey We're the Marxes!

by Steven H Silver

May 19, 1937, Allen Boretz and John Murray's play *Room Service* opened at the Cort Theatre in New York. Starring Sam Levene as Gordon Miller, the play told the story of Miller's attempts to keep a cast together and remain in a hotel room in New York long enough to receive payment from a backer so he could afford to pay his hotel bill, his cast, and mount the production. Miller had only been able to stay at the hotel as long as he had because his brother-in-law, Joseph Gribble (Clifford Dunstan), was cooking the hotel's books for him. Unfortunately, an audit has revealed Miller's debt and hotel manager Gregory Wagner (Donald MacBride) has decided it was time to evict the freeloader. The show ran for 500 performances until it closed on July 16, 1938.

On September 21, 1938, a film adaptation of the play was released by RKO Pictures. Although several of the play's cast reprised their roles for the film (Alexander Asro, Dunstan, MacBride, and Philip Wood), the play was significantly revised for the screen because it was purchased as an experiment.

By 1937, the Marx Brothers had made eight films, all of them written expressly for their style of humor. RKO bought the rights and decided to see if they could successfully cast the Marx Brothers in a production that was not written specifically for them. In addition to the hold-over cast, Chico, Harpo, and Groucho, RKO also cast Frank Albertson, Lucille Ball, and Ann Miller in supporting roles. The screenplay was written using the Boretz/Murray script as a basis by Marx Brothers stalwart Morrie Ryskind, who had previously worked on *The Cocoanuts*, *Animal Crackers*, and *A Night at the Opera*. Although the film has its moments, on the whole it doesn't work. Much of the Marx Brothers style of humor seems forced into Boretz and Murray's plot and some of the scenes are laughably inept.

Not to let a property alone, RKO remade *Room Service* in 1944 as a musical called *Step Lively*. The role played by Groucho in the first film went to George Murphy, MacBride was replaced by Adolphe Menjou, and Dunstan's role went to Walter Slezak. Frank Sinatra took on the role played by Eddie Albert and Frank Albertson, and received poor reviews in the process.

On April 10, 1967, the thirtieth episode of *The Monkees*, called "Monkees Manhattan Style" aired on NBC. It is immediately recognizable as a rip-off of homage to the Marx Brothers' film.

While *Room Service* is essentially told from the point of view of the producer, Gordon Miller, in "Monkees Manhattan Style," the Monkees have been made promises by the penniless producer, McKinley Baker, but they immediately ally with him to help him put one over on the hotel.

In the Marx Brothers film, Gordon Miller and his associates are ensconced in the hotel when the

play's writer, Leo Davis shows up. Davis had to sell his typewriter to get the money to take a bus to New York to meet with Miller. In this episode, the Monkees have spent all their money to take a bus to New York to star in Baker's play. Just as Leo Davis winds up bunking down with Gordon Miller, the Monkees wind up bunking down in Baker's room. Or at least trying to.

Just as in *Room Service*, where the hotel manager tells the Marx Brothers and Davis that they need to leave the room and gives them a deadline, the manager in "Monkees Manhattan Style" does the same thing. In *Room Service*, Gordon Miller can't leave the room because he's expecting a wealthy backer to bring him money to allow him to produce the play. In "Manhattan Monkees Style," Baker is also expecting a backer, although he leaves to get the check from him, leaving the Monkees alone in the room to deal with the hotel staff.



One of the big differences between the two productions is the manager's reason for wanting to get rid of the heroes. In *Room Service*, hotel auditors are going to find the lack of payment. In "Manhattan Monkees Style," the manager is on the take from an increasingly inebriated rabbit breeder who is paying him off in order to get the room.

Faced with imminent removal from the hotel, the Monkees come up with the same solution the Marx Brothers do in the film. Peter Tork, taking the Harpo role, crawls into bed, his face covered in spots (made from iodine in the film, brightly colored on television). He is being tended by "Doctor" Mickey Dolenz, taking a task that was assigned to Lucille Ball in the film. When the manager comes to evict them, he's told of the horrible disease and summons the house doctor.

In fact, there are reasons hotels can evict guests, one of which, non-payment of bills, is one of them. Another is if the guest is contagious, so the ploy used by both Marx and Monkee would emphatically not work in real life.

The "sick" Peter mirrors Harpo, down to opening his mouth to say "ah" for the hotel doctor and having no sound come out and eating the thermometer placed in his mouth.

Unable to evict the deadbeats, both managers come to the same solution. They'll starve them out by stopping all room service to the room. Again, both groups come up with the same solution (more or less). Michael Nesmith calls for room service and has it delivered across the hall. When the waiter shows up, the Monkees offer him a role in their play...if he'll bring them food. In *Room Service*, Groucho does the same with the waiter, Sasha, although when he finishes eating and reveals to Leo Davis that he has no real plans to

cast Sasha, Davis is horrified that Groucho would use the man like that.

Once the Monkees have their food, there is a break for a musical interlude and chase scene (“The Girl I Knew Somewhere”). When the show returns to the plot, the plot diverges from the Marx Brothers movie. Interestingly, the second half of the episode is also lighter and less memorable than the first half.

Baker’s backer backed out (okay, that’s similar to the Marx Brothers’ backer backing out, although the reasons are different). Baker decides to throw in the towel and starts packing to leave, while the Monkees unpack his suitcase as quickly as he packs. This is reminiscent of a scene, not from *Room Service*, but from a later Marx Brothers movie, *A Night in Casablanca*. Baker convinces the Monkees that nobody will give him a shot, but Peter comes up with an idea.

The Monkees are next seen across the street, fast-talking their way into a Millionaire’s Club that happens to be there. They hit up the various millionaires for money for the play, although none of them are particularly impressed by the idea so, another musical interlude (“Look Out (Here Comes Tomorrow)”), at the end of which all the millionaires are...asleep.



It turns out they’ve been drugged by the club’s butler, who has some money put away and has decided to back the play and doesn’t want the members of the club to horn in on his action. Unfortunately for the Monkees, the butler also wants to recast the play with women instead of them. And so, we go out on a song (“Words”).

In the film, Gordon Miller and company realize that their backer has given them a check and as long as they can open the play before he cancels it, they should be in good shape (there are, of course, some ethical and scheduling questions here). The play opens with the waiter, Sasha, in the lead role and is a triumphant success.



"Art for Monkees' Sake"

It seems like every sitcom of the 1960s had an Art episode. Batman did, and I wrote about it in Journey Planet (), but none are nearly as silly as the Monkees' episode "Art for Monkees' Sake" and few have as big a single laugh as I got out of it.

The basic premise is really silly. Peter Tork is an excellent painter of copies. He starts by painting an

exact replica of part of the Monkee's apartment. Mickey keeps walking into it thinking it's the real thing. It's a silly gimmick, but what else was the show known for? Mike recommends that Peter should go to the Art Museum, appropriately and clearly named 'Art Museum', to go and be inspired by the great masters. When he goes there, he meets two guards, both of whom are playing stereotypical mobsters turned security guards. One is played by Vic Tayback, better known as Mel from *Alice*, and the other is wonderfully terrible character actor Monte Landis. Seriously, he's so bad, but he's funny. He was much better in *Linda Lovelace for President*, and especially on *Mathnet* where he played an artist! The two of them trick Peter into painting a copy of an Old Master, Franz Hals' *The Laughing Cavalier*, which they switch out for the original.

Of course, Peter had signed the copy that he made as "Peter Tork" but the Curator, played with absolute giddy ineptitude by the wonderfully awful Arthur Malet. I mean seriously, he was over-the-top even for a guy who cut his teeth in cut-rate Panto. The way the curator is played makes all us curators look bad... and it's also not too far from what happens in real life.

Of course, the rest of the Monkees go on a search for them and end up saving Peter and the painting after a search of the various rooms of the Museum. Micky runs into a painter, played by Michael Bell. If you watched cartoons at any point since 1980, you're going to recognize his voice. *Transformers*, *G.I. Joe*, *A Pup Named Scooby-Doo*, *Super Friends*, he's all over them. Here, he's playing an artist who doesn't use paint brushes because he's a finger-painter. It's an interesting riff on Abstract Expressionism, but what's really good is how he grabs Micky's shirt, getting the paint from his fingers onto Mickey's shirt, then a second later says "that'll be 1,500 dollars."

Then is the portion that had me incredibly happy. Mike is walking around the museum and ends up in a room where there's an amazingly beautiful grand piano. The room is full of people in the kind of clothes that we would associate with symphony or opera attendees. They keep shushing Mike, and then a moment later...

LIBERACE ARRIVES!!! I I I I I!!!! I!!!! I!q!!! I23erg2I2q!!!! I!

Let me start by saying that Liberace is one of my all-time favorite Americans. He was actually a fantastic musician, and a hundred times better as an entertainer. He was super-smart, and talented. I've heard him compared to Sammy Davis, Jr., as a character more than a real performer, and there's something there. Sammy was INCREDIBLY talented, in so many ways, but to fill his role in the Rat Pack, he had to play up his "otherness" while Liberace was really more of a stand-up, in a way a sort of inverse Zach Galafinakis. Here, he's so great, as he walks in, receiving a polite round of applause, and then opens up the piano and removes a golden sledgehammer. Liberace then goes on to hammer the piano to a merciless death as the well-dressed people look on.

This is AWESOME!!!!

First off, it's Liberace, and he was one of the most recognisable people on television at the time. He would have led folks to expect him to play one of his classic piece, but then there's the bait-and-switch, and he hammers the keyboard. This plays on a bunch of levels. First off, Liberace had a LOT of critics, who accused him of hammering away on the keyboard instead of actually playing it. There's also the fact that this sort of thing is exactly what folks thought performance art was. This is exactly what people thought the work

of Yoko Ono, Chris Burden, and especially John Cage, was like. The idea of this sort of avant garde work being real isn't far off, as at the time, people like LeMont Young, Cage, Pauline Oliveros, Joe Jones, and Jim McWilliams were doing work that was based around the 'music' of various interventions with objects. This was so much fun!!!

The ending, and there is no need for a spoiler alert because it's *The Monkees*, you know it works out in the end, is silly. There's one amazing gag. The three other Monkees, not having found Peter, regroup after having gone through the various rooms of the museum.

Davey – Did you check the basement?

Mike – Nobody but a fool would paint in the basement.

Micky – He's in the basement.

There is nearly 0 pause in that exchange, which hit me so dang hard.

Is this as good an episode as the *Batman* modern art ep? Maybe, but *Batman* had Cesar Romero, so that's always gonna give you a leg-up!





"The Monkees weren't about music, Marge.
They were about rebellion,
about political and social upheaval."
Dr. Zweig, The Simpsons



Just Tryin' to be Friendly by Alissa

Chris and I were chatting about guest stars on The Monkees TV Show. I had mentioned that I wanted to do a piece on Head, The Monkee Movie, and if you haven't seen that, and you're a Monkees fan, please check it out. It was written by Jack Nicholson, which may be a name one recognizes, to begin with.

Over the years, a lot of people showed up on the show. One of the most memorable guests they had for me was not another TV star, but was a musical guest, Tim Buckley. In the very last episode of The Monkees, "The Frodis Caper", Tim is introduced by Mickey and sings "Song to the Siren". This is just a beautiful song, and I have a couple of covers of it, one from my favorite band, Dead Can Dance. Another musical guest that came on for a bit of comedy was Frank Zappa. He and Mike did a dress up of one another at the end of "The Monkees Blow their Minds". Another well-known musician showed up on the show, and his performance surprised people. In "Art for Monkees' Sake", Liberace made an appearance and smashes a piano! In the background, you can see Mike Nesmith laughing at the scene.

Over time, many other TV stars showed up on the show. I was re-watching M*A*S*H recently, and I was spending time reflecting on a lot of their guest stars, as well. Then, I realized that a young Mike Farrell was on "Monkees Chow Mein" ten years prior to M*A*S*H! So young!

I do feel as if watching 1960s TV is like watching BBC shows now. I can find actors in all the things! From not as well known to most people know who they are...

In "Monkees Mind Their Manor", Bernard Fox plays Twiggly, the nemesis of the plot for the day. Bernard Fox is from many things (as are the others), but most likely well-known best for "Bewitched". In "Monkee Mother", Rose Marie shows up to take care of "her boys". She is most known for "The Dick Van Dyke Show", but she was in other things, such as "Remington Steele" (one of my favorites from childhood) and the 1998 "Psycho". Butch Patrick, A.K.A. Eddie Munster, was in the Monkees episode "The Christmas Show". One of my favorite songs comes from this episode: "Riu Chiu", a very nice a cappella rendition of the traditional Spanish carol. Vic Tayback was in three episodes of The Monkees: "Your Friendly Neighborhood Kidnappers", "Son of a Gypsy", and "Art for Monkees' Sake". Of course, he went on to be Mel in the show "Alice", everyone's favorite short order cook/boss. The show ran from 1976-1985 and was based on the 1974 movie, "Alice Doesn't Live here Anymore". Finally, we have two people from the same show that end up on The Monkees: Burgess Meredith and Julie Newmar. It wasn't hard to find Burgess Meredith, as he played his regular character from the show he's most recognized from, "Batman". In "Monkees Blow Their Minds", he appears as The Penguin as the Monkees are trying to sabotage the amazing Oracullo's demonstrations of his "powers". And, Julie Newmar, most known for her portrayal of Catwoman in the show "Batman", played April Conquest (haha) in "Monkees Get Out More Dirt". She is the love interest of all four of the boys in this episode.

I am sure there are more that people can pick out, but these are just a few that I found recently. If you have some time to re-watch it, please do!

I'm a Believer

By Jacq Monahan



Intro

Gray pants, double breasted burgundy - but sometimes blue - shirts, bangs and boots. The Monkees were four young band members sharing an L.A. apartment trying to hit the big time. Zany escapades and impromptu performances followed, aided and abetted by an impressive array of guest stars that included Frank Zappa, Julie Newmar, Butch Patrick (Eddie Munster, all grown up) Liberace, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Felix Silla

(Cousin Itt from The Addams Family television series), among many, many others.

One other was character actor Theo Marcuse, a distant cousin of my former husband who was all over television series of the late 50s and 60s (Batman, Wild Wild West, Twilight Zone, I Spy, Star Trek, Dragnet, The Outer Limits) among many, many others. Marcuse died in a Hollywood car crash in 1967, right in the middle of The Monkees two-season run, completing his appearance as Archduke Otto in The Royal Flush episode in 1966. That's 53 years ago. I like to think cousin Theo achieved a bit of immortality, just like our "pre-fab" four.

MADNESS!!

AUDITIONS

Folk & Roll Musicians-Singers
for acting roles in new TV series.

Running parts for 4 insane boys, age 17-21.

Want spirited Ben Frank's-types.

Have courage to work.

Must come down for interview.

CALL: HO. 6-5188

Auditions

No, I didn't make that up. The underrated quartet came together from a call for auditions that appeared in Variety magazine and The Hollywood Reporter. Well, three of them did. Peter Tork was recommended by friend (and roommate?) Stephen Stills of CSN and sometimes Y fame. Stills was slated to be cast but balked at signing over the rights to his music. So did John Sebastian of the Lovin' Spoonful. The suits wanted to cast an established musician or even an entire group, but finally had to mix n' match their way in

television history with the particle board of talent that was Michael Nesmith, Micky Dolenz, Peter Tork, and Davy Jones (listed by height from the tallest on down).

Jones was used to short jokes. His various bios list him from 5'3 – 5'5 and a running gag on the show had someone tell him to stand up, to which he always replied, "I AM standing up!" Davy was the one who always fell in love, complete with eyes that had an animated twinkle added when she saw a girl he was attracted to; she twinkled right back. Davy did all right for himself with the ladies. It was the guys that wouldn't let him forget how near he was to the ground. If you listen to the version of Daydream Believer that includes a bit of dialogue between Jones and the recording engineers, you'll hear: Davy: What take is this, Jim? Recording engineers, loudly: 7-A! Davy: Okay, don't get excited, man. It's 'cause I'm short, I know.

I remember seeing Michael Nesmith's black and white screen test, which took place on the set of the sitcom *The Farmer's Daughter*. It's star, Swedish-born actress Inger Stevens would commit suicide in 1970, which was also the year that *The Monkees* officially broke up. The screen test uncovered a sassy, almost flip-pant Nesmith, who preened in front of a large painting, and opened drawers and cabinets to see what they held. He looked impossibly young and told his show biz interrogators that he'd been into music for the last two years; before that, he was a failure. All very brash and take me or leave me. They took him.

Peter Tork's screen test shows a chatty, jovial, guitar-wielding future Monkee who proudly admits that he once made scale as a musician, the most money he'd ever earned. I don't remember Peter being so talkative in the series, but here he's almost a class clown, strumming riffs and telling the tale of the '47 Chevy that brought him west from New York, (his family home was in Connecticut) only to blow up outside of Las Vegas.

There's no "e" in this Micky's name, no matter what the Disney mouse might say. His real name is not even Micky, it's George Michael Dolenz. A child actor on the 1956-1958 television series *Circus Boy*, a blond Dolenz, credited as Micky Braddock, played Corky, an orphan whose parents were killed in a trapeze accident. The circus players become his guardians. Corky has an elephant for a companion and the perfect environment to prepare him to live in a houseful of Monkees in ten years' time. His screen test is a dramatic scene with Davy Jones about adolescent problems, not so much humorous as it is believable, a testament to their dramatic chops.

Jones also had previous acting experience, coincidentally appearing on a 1965 episode of *The Farmer's Daughter* and, previous to that, in the Broadway musical *Oliver!* (Artful Dodger). The year before, [Jones just happened to be performing on the same Ed Sullivan Show broadcast featuring The Beatles. No wonder you don't remember him pre- Monkees! All that would change in 1966.](#)

On May 31 of that year, (more than a half-century ago!) filming began on *The Monkees* TV show. As a kid, I believed it all. These guys were grownups, funnier and way cooler than your polyester parents could ever be. They lived together, broke out in song, vanquished villains, and wore groovy threads, all at a frenetic paced somehow contained in a 30-minute slice of madcap and mayhem. No school, no nagging, no squares. Who wouldn't want to live there? I sure did.

Do you believe *me*? I've gathered the following fun facts from an infinite number of sources, adding commentary between two slices of wry. Hell no, I won't cite my sources. Just believe.

The call for auditions ad included the line, “Must come down for interview.” The producers have said that was “a sly reference to getting high.” Once hired, the newly minted Monkees had to take a six-week course in improv acting before portraying the struggling group that featured early music videos before they were even called that. No, Charles Manson never auditioned; Micky started the rumor and it won’t go away, like ever, man.



The Show

While Peter and Micky appear in every single episode of the two-season run, Mike and Davy missed some tapings for childbirth, matrimonial and medical reasons. A laugh track was used for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the series, getting axed midway through season two. The guys in the band were triumphant, but ratings actually went down, so the laugh track had the last laugh indeed.

Their first five albums went platinum, but The Monkees were limited to vocals only on the first two. Studio musicians provided the music. Their third album, *Headquarters* (1967) was the effort that all four actually played on. Even Davy got to wave his tambourine to the beat. Hey, it’s an instrument. Leave him alone.

1967 was also the year that record sales for The Monkees outsold The Beatles and The Stones combined. You heard me. Go look it up. Outsold Sgt. Pepper; outsold Their Satanic Majesties Request and *Between the Buttons*. You’d think they’d be mobbed by screaming fans wherever they went and sometimes they were, although a Paris scene was faked for the series because no one knew who they were – yet.

The guys made \$450 per episode during the first season, raised to \$750 per episode during the second. Compare that to the cast of *Friends* at \$1,000,000 per episode and you have a marvelous illustration of society going to hell in a handbasket. A third season was nixed because the guys wanted to extend the sitcom to one hour and make it more of a variety show. Plans were in place to have Janis Joplin interviewed, but the chance slipped away. I guess the hell in a handbasket scenario started earlier than imagined.

There were three Monkeemobiles, modified 1966 Pontiac GTOs. There were four pairs of ruby slippers made for the Wizard of Oz, and one pair was stolen from a museum in Kansas. The point is that sometimes in the world of TV and film, multiples are made. Where are the cars today? Two are in the hands of private collectors and the third was spotted in Puerto Rico, although no one will admit to driving it there. True story. Not that it was driven there, but that no one will admit to it.

Other pre-fab bands that cropped up in the wake of The Monkees: The Partridge Family, N’Sync, Spice Girls, Backstreet Boys, NKOTB – all right, *all* boy bands. Pre-fab is fab in and of itself to a certain type of shrieking fan

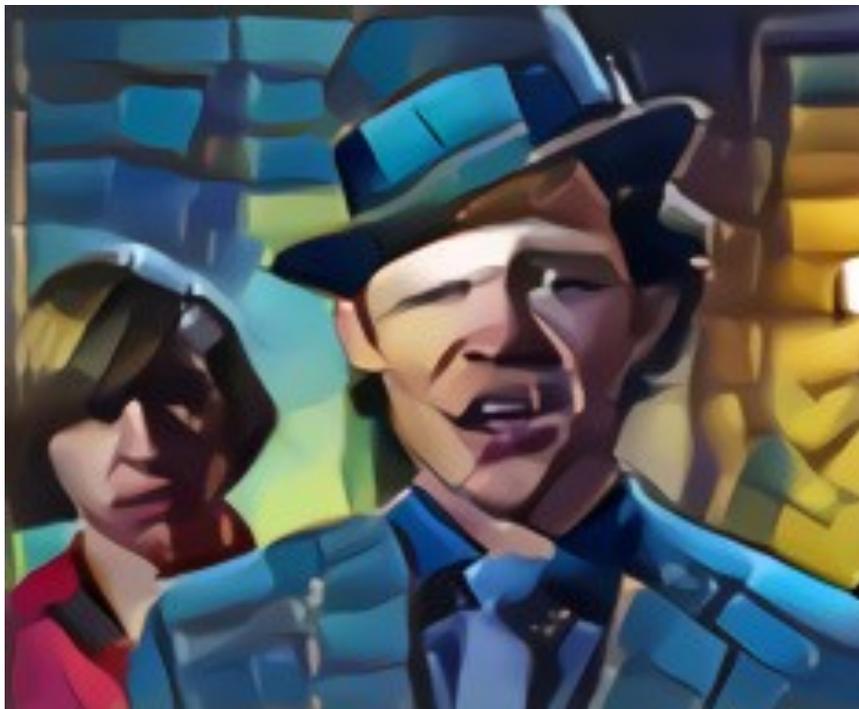
I sense that your attention is flagging with all of these details, so I won't tell you about the sneaky subversive behavior (Peter was asked in one episode what he called his game of falling dominoes to which he replied "Southeast Asia"), the hit singles written by Boyce and Hart, Neil Diamond, Carole King, Neil Sedaka, and David Gates, among many, many others. Micky and Davy sang most of the big hits, but Peter could carry an enthusiastic, slightly off-key tune. Just my opinion, but listen to his lead vocal on *Your Auntie Griselda* and then we'll talk.

The Monkees gained whole new generations of fans through marathon reruns on MTV and Nickelodeon in the 80s and 90s. They know the songs. They know that Davy started with long hair and ended up with short hair. They know that Micky started with (artificially) straight hair and then ran with its natural curl. They know that Peter's hair did not change throughout the series, while Mike went hatless sometimes, with a perpetual right-side part and long sideburns. What's the significance, you may ask? To quote a line from *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* (another pre-fab) "I don't know!" You just can't talk about The Monkees without mentioning their Beatle-like mop tops, their slightly misspelled name, or their *Hard Day's Night* pace.

Or the band they were based on.

Monkee Stats: m=marriages, k=kids

**Micky Dolenz (Drums) (b. March 8, 1945 in Los Angeles, California)
3m4k**



Dolenz had to take drum lessons to learn to be the band's drummer. He had no previous musical experience. He auditioned for the part of Fonzie on *Happy Days* but didn't make the cut because he was too tall. The part I'm not getting is why *The Fonz* had to be short, but at 5'6" Henry Winkler became the little big man of the series.

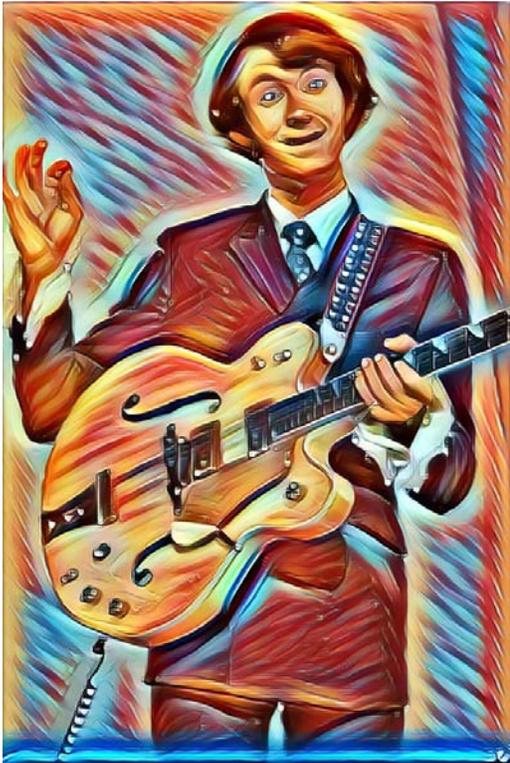
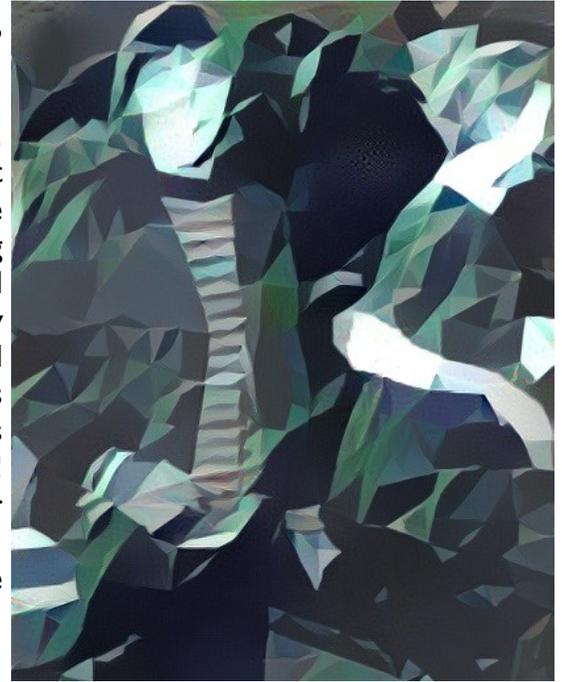
Dolenz owned one of the first Moog synthesizers on the west coast and turned John Lennon on to its ability to make flying saucer sounds. He also directed *The Monkees* episode *Mijacgeo* (aka *The Frodis Capper*) the series finale. He wrote the tune *Randy Scouse Git*, later retitled *Alternative Title* because it translated to horny Liverpudlian jerk. The song made it to number two on the British charts, and you can hear Dolenz attempt to scat.

Davy Jones (b. December 30, 1945 in Manchester, England, d. February 29, 2012)

3m4k

Davy Jones was almost drafted by the Army in 1967. Yes, he qualified, but starved himself to 99 pounds to fail the physical. It worked. David Bowie (born David Robert Jones) changed his name to avoid confusion with The Monkees star. Walter Koenig (Chekov on Star Trek) has said his iconic character was modeled after Davy Jones because the series needed a groovy long-hair (my words). Davy's side to side dance shuffle was later approximated by Axl Rose as his signature move. When he was 19, Davy Jones appeared on the same Ed Sullivan show that featured The Beatles (February 9, 1964). Davy was part of the Broadway cast of *Oliver!* (*Artful Dodger*) and claimed to have never heard of The Beatles or their music. Maybe I'm not so much of a believer on this one.

Davy Jones died of a heart attack on February 29, 2012. He was 66 years old.

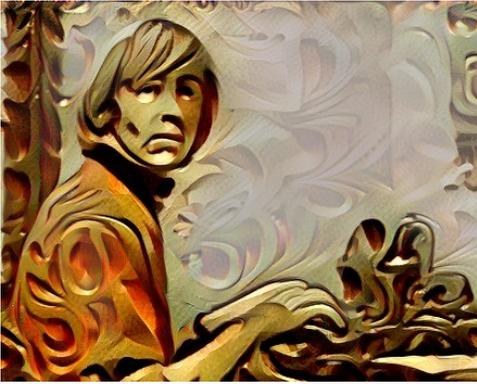


Michael Nesmith (guitar) (b. December 30, 1942 in Houston, Texas)
3m4k

Michael Nesmith attended the recording session for the Sgt. Pepper song *A Day in The Life* in February 1967. You can see all one second of him around the 2:20 mark in a striped shirt but no trademark hat. Donovan, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Marianne Faithfull shared the room. I read the news today, oh, boy...

Nesmith wrote the [Linda Ronstadt/Stone Poneys](#) hit *Different Drum* and later, his only hit as a solo artist, the very country-flavored *Joanne*. Issued by RCA Records in 1970 from the album *Magnetic South*, the first released by Nesmith and The First National Band after he left The Monkees. It went all the way to No. 1 in New Zealand. In the U.S., it peaked at No. 21 and was the most successful solo chart hit for any member of The Monkees.

Nesmith also auditioned for the part of The Fonz on *Happy Days* but was considered too tall. Can you imagine? Aaaaaay... y'all!



Peter Tork (bass) (b. February 13, 1942 in Washington, D.C., d. February 21, 2019)

4m3k

Tork, used his full name in the credits (Peter H. Thorkelson) when he directed The Monkees Mind Their Manor episode (February 1968). The Monkees were officially canceled later that year. It is said that Peter was the ultimate gentle, peace-and-love embodiment of the 60s. I'm speculating that he probably was so generous that he blew through his fortune and let folks take horrible advantage of him. It would not be unheard of for him to give away money if someone asked. By 1975, he was broke.

Tork accepted a position as a teacher at Pacific Hills School, a private secondary school in Santa Monica, California. His father, after all, was an economics professor at the University of Connecticut for many years although Tork himself was a college dropout. At Pacific Hills, Peter taught English, math, drama, history, and music, also serving as a baseball coach at several schools. His career as an educator spanned three years. I'm guessing he excelled at drama and music. Math? Not so much.

Peter Tork died of cancer on February 21, 2019. He was 77 years old.

The Corflu Connection

Footnote: it's now common knowledge that Michael Nesmith's mom invented correction fluid. Bette Nesmith Graham whipped up the first batch of Liquid Paper in her kitchen in 1951, originally calling her concoction Mistake Out. She started with white tempera paint and her kitchen blender. I'm curious as to what the other ingredients were. You don't just have titanium dioxide lying around in the same cupboard as your caraway seeds and cans of Spam. Was it glue? Vinegar? Whatever proprietary blend Bette came up with, Liquid paper had no competitor until Wite-Out hit the scene in 1966 – the same year as the Monkees. She sold her invention to the Gillette Corporation for \$47.5 million in 1979. She died in 1980. Nothing could erase *that* irony.

Epilogue

The Monkees were a constructed phenomenon. Now that half of them are gone and decades have passed, they are even more revered due to nostalgia and hindsight. Perhaps it's a covert wish to want to return to that wild, trusting time, before receding hairlines and thickening waistlines. Before Tate-LaBianca and Altamont Speedway. Before runaway inflation and institutional intolerance. The world of The Monkees seemed like an oasis from the mean streets. Their televised attempts to make it in the music industry endeared them to a whole generation who could relate to the struggle, and the good natured, teasing hijinks. We saw ourselves in their foibles and their lyrics. "You know that it's true. A little bit me, a little bit you." And a whole lot of *them*.

Considering “Your Auntie Grizelda” by Chuck Serface



Every Saturday at 6 PM, WTBU 89.3 Boston, the “Beat of Boston University,” airs *Your Auntie Grizelda* with DJ Amber playing a selection of music from the 1950s to the 1980s. Most student listeners might require an explanation about the show’s title to help them understand its significance. More than a few older faculty members, however, surely appreciate the reference to that song first included on the 1967 album *More of the Monkees*. Also, I recall the song appearing in three episodes of *The Monkees* during that same year as background music to segments in which our four young heroes were running from Dr. Mendoza’s monster (played by Richard “Jaws” Kiel), or the jealous Captain Crocodile’s well-armed children’s fan club (the Crocodile Corps – grrrr!), or a group of painfully and stereotypically yellow-face Chinese spies who confusedly think the band possesses a secret formula. To this day “Your Auntie Grizelda” comes to mind each time I view any

chase scene from any film or television show -- not “Flight of the Bumblebees,” mind you, but “Your Auntie Grizelda,” regardless of soundtrack provided.

The tune itself, co-written by Diane Hildebrand and Jack Keller, features Peter Tork on lead vocals, whining in frustration about his beloved’s Auntie Grizelda, who’s “having a fit” because “she doesn’t like [him] a bit.” Auntie is “so righteous making fudge” and “so proper judging others over her tea.” Obviously, the speaker’s aunt played a large role in raising the object of his affections, and now she threatens to end the relationship by poisoning the object’s mind against him. In fact, later the song turns when the speaker fears that his love is becoming like her aunt and warns her:



Oh, no, don't look at me like Auntie Grizelda.
It takes much more to be someone of your own.
You've got to make it free from Auntie Grizelda,
Or just like her you'll have to make it alone.

The tone throughout is zany with Tork at one point spitting out nonsense sounds to banging, rapid, psychedelic-esque musical accompaniment provided by Billy Lewis on drums, Larry Taylor on bass, and Gerry Lee and Glen Campbell on guitars. The author of an article on Monkeeslivealmanac.com celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the song’s recording, quotes an interview Larry Sandoval had conducted with Peter Tork:

Jeff Barry got him to sing on this recording. ‘He had me doin’ these kind of funny vocal things in the middle there. I tried it and it worked out *kind of*. Lester [Sills of Screen Gems] came to me and said, “We’ve got a kind of protest song for you.” It certainly isn’t what you’d call a protest song. That was what they thought a protest song should be for The Monkees.

Well, the speaker *is* protesting, I guess, even if the subject of his protest isn’t war per se, but his personal war against the person, image, and attitude of Auntie Grizelda? I do flinch when I think about how the abovementioned warning comes across as a general warning to all women not to become lonely, bitter, and possessive Auntie Grizeldas and instead seize the day in the Robert Herrick sense of the term. That aspect hasn’t aged well at all. The zaniness, then, belies the lyrical meaning here.

Instrumental forms of “Your Auntie Grizelda” appear in two episodes during the fifth season of *I Dream of Jeannie*, and in the very second episode of *The Flying Nun*. Although never released as a single, “Your

“Hey, Hey, We’re the (Flying) Monkees!”

Steven H Silver

The management structure of the 2012 World Science Fiction Convention, Chicon 7, consisted of a chair, Dave McCarty, and three vice chairs, Bobbi Armbruster, Helen Montgomery, and Steven H Silver. Early in the planning process, the four of us dubbed ourselves the “Flying Monkees,” although at this point, I don’t recall the reason for the nickname.

When we asked our intrepid IT department to create a mailing list for the Flying Monkees, which would provide us with a place for private yet archived discussions, he misspelled the name of the mailing list, labeling it flyingmonkees@chicon.org.

Upon seeing this typo, I immediately proclaimed myself Peter Tork. Dave, of course, claimed Davy Jones and his alternate persona, with Helen becoming Mike Nesmith and Bobbi becoming Micky Dolenz.

Silly as it seems, that typo and the subsequent rebranding helped build a strong bond and sense of community among the highest echelon of the chairman’s staff. In more playful moments we would refer to each other by these nicknames.

Prior to the convention, without informing the other Flying Monkees, I contacted Randy Kaempen, who was in charge of registration, and asked him to do me a favor. This meant they were pleasantly surprised upon picking up their badges at the con. In addition to their official badges, each was given a badge with the name of their Monkee on it.

Throughout the con, I wore my two badges: Steven H Silver and Peter Tork. Doing so, led to a rather surprising moment during the convention.

At one point, during a rare moment of down-time, I found myself sitting in the lobby on one of the couches with my daughters. I was joined by Janis Ian, who was attending Chicon 7. I had first met Janis at the Nebulas in Chicago in 2005 and we started chatting. She noticed my Peter Tork badge and asked about it. When I told her the story of how we became the Flying Monkees, she responded by telling me about the parties she used to attend at Peter Tork’s house when she was just starting out her career.

Chicon 7 may be 7 years in the past (!), but there is still a bond between the Flying Monkees. With Dave and me in Chicago, Bobbi in LA, and Helen in Seattle, we don’t see each other as often as we like, but when we do find ourselves in the same place together, we make time for a meal and a photo of the Flying Monkees.

