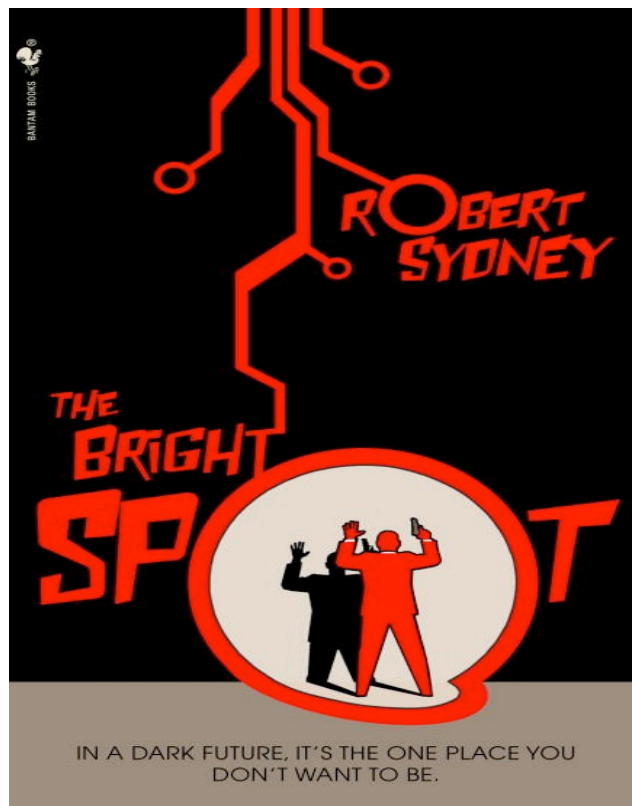


The Panbehchi Critical Edition
of
The Bright Spot
by Robert Sydney



María Lourdes Panbehchi

English 530

Dr. T. Oggel

December 12, 2008

2. Authoritative Text

18. A Final Message

When you are entertaining, try not to feel that something unusual is expected of you as a hostess. It isn't. Just be yourself.

--Irma S. Rombauer, *Joy of Cooking*

One of the goons went right for the security panel and started playing with it. The other was assigned to the fridge. "There's nothing here but plain yogurt and wheat germ."

"Stupid bitch," Trey said. "Find us a decent restaurant around here," he said to the one at the security panel. "What's the wrestler's name?"

"Stanton Wetherell," the goon said, restaurants scrolling before his eyes. They had star ratings. He tapped the screen, the riff-raff vanished, so only the four-stars remained.

“Arrange to send him a message, will you?” Trey said.

“Is this a final message?”

Trey thought a moment. “No. I think a *clear* message will do for now.” All this time, he’d been changing out of his funky suit into a clean one just like it, like a snake shedding its skin. He popped a couple of capsules, took a deep breath. Good as new. “So. Mr. Nicholas Bainbridge. Talk to me.”

I shrugged. “Salvador hired me to scam Dumfries with a phony time travel number. I never got paid. End of story.”

“No. Beginning of story. Otherwise you wouldn’t be so closely watched.” He smiled the shark smile again. He was having a good time. He was in his element. “We clean yet?” he asked the security goon.

“Yeah. All clean.”

“Restaurants?”

“The closest is a World Palate at the next exit.”

“Perfect. I have an interest in those places, never tried one. We’ll see what my money’s up to these days. And you, Nickie, you can tell me why your DNA is identical to Jimmy Dumfries’. I find that very, very interesting.”

I didn’t ask him how he knew that. I’d been leaving my DNA carelessly strewn about all evening. “This would be Jimmy Dumfries, the fucking idiot?”

“Yeah. Exactly.”

The World Palate was for gourmets on the move who liked to watch their food prepared by expert chefs with an extra dollop of flashy in their style. Anyone could do it, with the help of Trey’s latest ‘ware. They might not be able to boil a hot dog when they got home, but here they could do it all--chop, flame, knead, toss, fondue, flip, filet--without the temperament or the salary, preparing any cuisine you could imagine or sell. There was a whole platoon of them in trim white outfits throughout the dining room; tiny spotlights would find them at the climactic moments of their culinary performances. It was like a mass audition for a food movie. *Mostly Babbette’s Tortilla Soup* or something. Dough soared and thumped. Knives slithered, chopped, sliced, and clanked. Woks sizzled and sighed clouds of garlic steam. Flames shot into the air from mesquite fires and flaming desserts. Diners oohed, ahed, ate, and paid. A lot.

My dinner with Trey.

The surveillance system pegged Trey Kennemeyer on the premises, and the manager, one of the few employees not running ‘ware, was all over us in an instant. Loaded up to his eyeballs with obsequious toady, he didn’t need ‘ware. He couldn’t do enough to ensure Trey’s happiness now and forevermore. He would be *honored*, his very verb, to make a selection of their finest dishes for Trey and his guest. I considered telling him I was no guest, but a kidnap victim, then thought better of it. As Trey most charmingly put it, this was planet fucking Earth here. This guy would gladly serve me for dinner if Trey asked him to.

In no time we had a corner of the dining room to ourselves, Trey and I, with the goons

flanking it like lawn lions. He watched the show for a while. “Kind of tacky, isn’t it? Incredibly profitable, though. Labor costs are nothing, but people still pay for the show. Not unlike what you do, huh?”

“Not unlike.”

“What’s the old guy up to?”

“I don’t know.”

“Like fuck you don’t know. But we’ll have something to eat first. I want to get the taste of that shitbag motel out of my mouth. How do you live like that?”

“It’s only temporary. The rock I was living under is being remodeled.”

The wine steward had personally selected a trio of wines for our dinner from the database of Trey’s preferences and was pouring the first. He didn’t spill a drop. The towel over his arm probably lasted him a whole week. He only had one expression. Pleasant. They could’ve given him a range, but the fixed expression reassured the diner this wasn’t a person standing here so close, but service, distilled down to its essence and planted in his soul, up his ass. He filled my glass and withdrew as if he were on wires. Trey offered a toast.

“To life,” he said.

The wine was perfect.

“I’m being watched by the feds,” I offered. “We are now, I imagine.”

He wasn’t impressed. “They watch everybody, that’s why they never see anything. By

the time they figure out what they're looking at, it's over. Information goes astray. They really should be better paid, don't you think? Public servants, elected officials? Working for the good of us all?"

"Presidents?"

"That dumb fuck would be overpaid at half the price. What do you make, Nickie?"

"Less than the President."

"Maybe you'd like to make more."

One of the spotlights seemed to miss its mark, illuminating an empty patch of floor. Then I realized it was the 'ware chef who was out of place, off his mark. Several were. They were shifting our way, repositioning themselves closer and closer. The goons looked past them like they were invisible.

"I don't care about money," I said, keeping the conversation going.

"Everybody cares about money," Trey said. "Unless they're a fucking idiot. You want work, is that it? That's not a problem. I have interests."

"What's the part?"

"It doesn't fucking matter what the *part* is, Nickie. We agree in principle, am I right? Big part, big money, big name. That's what all you guys want, right? Fine, you got it. So speak to me."

The 'ware chefs were arrayed in a crescent around us. One of them started toward the

table with his little cart. The goons didn't even give him a glance. He rolled the cart up next to us and fired up a burner. He peeled bananas, sliced them lengthwise, making a big show of it, then started sautéing them in a copper pan.

Trey followed my gaze. "Bananas? What is this shit? We starting with dessert? Where is that idiot manager?"

With an expert flick of the chef's wrist, the bananas did a somersault in the air and landed back in the pan. A pinch of this, a pinch of that. He was quite a showman--or whoever wrote the routine was. Trey missed the whole performance, searching the dining room for the manager. He still didn't get it. The chef picked up a bottle of brandy and splashed it into the pan, then lit a spoon full of the stuff with an old-fashioned Bic and let the blue flame cascade into the pool below, poofing into an eyelash-singeing ball of blue flame. The oohs and ahs sounded even without a spotlight on us. Trey gave the whole performance a bored roll of his eyes. Then the chef brought his arms up like a conductor, the pan and bottle still in his hands, and dumped the flaming bananas onto Trey's lap.

"What the fuck!" he said, as a stream of brandy from the upended bottle hit the flame and doused his clothes, enveloping him completely in flames. He jumped to his feet, and the chef brought his arms down as abruptly as they'd gone up, smashing the empty bottle over Trey's head and smacking him a good one upside the head with the skillet.

The goons took their first clear shots, and the dessert chef did a jerky dance and fell, taking his still lit cooking cart with him, blocking the goons' way as they tried to reach their boss, who was careening through the empty tables. He finally crashed to the floor, still burning

and screaming, a trail of burning tablecloths behind him. The sprinkler system kicked on, but it was too late for Trey.

I was still sitting at the table alone, like I was at a sidewalk cafe waiting for the check in the rain. The goons stood over Trey behind me. The chefs surrounded us. “Guys,” I said over my shoulder, and the goons turned around.

All the chefs raised their right arms and brought them down. I dove under the table as a squadron of knives passed overhead. I grabbed a couple of table legs and started chugging toward the exit as fast as I could chug. I looked back, and the goons weren’t going down easy. They both had knives sticking out of them every which way, most of them stuck in body armor, but not all, and they were losing a lot of blood. Their boss lay in a smoldering heap behind them, but they were leaning up against each other, guns blazing, chewing up the place and everybody in it with bullets for as long as they could stand and fire.

They finally dropped dead, but the bullets kept up until the guns were out of ammunition or jammed, leaving a couple of gaping holes in the dining room floor, where the water gathered and cascaded into the basement. All the chefs, standing, easy targets, lay dead. They literally never knew what hit them. It was the surviving customers who were screaming, crying, cradling their dead and dying in their arms. Blood was everywhere, though somehow I’d managed to make it to the exit without a drop on me.

I crawled out from under the table. I looked around the dining room just above the suffering, the likely angle for the surveillance system to be looking back, and made sure it had a good look at me. With shaking fingers I took out a card and laid it on the table, Mr.

Kennemeyer's table, where it might easily be found. With any luck, the locals would find me first. Best they came looking for me. Here I might get lost in this crowd of innocents. I walked out to Dee's car, and went back to the Patriotel.

3. “Textual Apparatus”

A. History of the Text.

In order to understand the history of this Critical Edition, it is necessary to map the states of the entire novel first; at least the major changes. In my case, I cannot establish the first completed manuscript as a Copy-Text since this early state of The Bright Spot [TBS, for short] simply did not include my section—the first part of chapter 18 on the first edition. I have used two types of external evidence in an attempt to reconstruct the transmission of the text. The external evidence comes first and foremost from the correspondence between the author and agents/editors plus other tangible notes contained in the archives. The second source was used to corroborate the dates found on the correspondence, or to speculate when a major change occurred if the correspondence did not offer a clear clue. This source of information was the type of software used to create the files, either Nisus or Microsoft Word, and their stamped dates—date and time of creation and modification, even the date they were last open. It is important to point out that these file stamps are as problematic as any handwritten manuscript, which is the reason the computer forensics have been taken cautiously. The computer files are the same as the papers found on boxes 6 and 7 of the Special Collections and Archives of the VCU Library, and some of papers from box 5.

It may be impossible to establish the exact date that Robert Sydney—Dennis Danvers’ nom de plume—jotted down or typed the first notes for TBS. In a Question and Answer session with Sydney on December 4th, 2008 he commented that he was not sure when he started writing TBS, because he had a computer crash and he does not remember the approximate starting month and year. If the computer files [files, from now on] contained in the first folder are really

from the dates they say they are, “notes” [Notes, in the stemma] was created first on October 8th, 2002, while the first manuscript with chapters 1 to 9 and 14 to 16, clippings with scenes and the table of contents were last modified on January 11th, 2003. The table of contents lists 20 chapters and it has the synopses for chapters 1-8. In the stemma, this state constitutes the first state of the manuscript [BMS1].

The first complete version [BMS2] is from April 1st of 2003, when Dennis Danvers wrote to agent Christopher Schelling saying, “Here ‘tis. I hope you like it.” The files in this folder were last modified on either March 31 or early in the morning of April 1st. Although there is no evidence of Schelling’s comments about the novel, Danvers wrote him a second letter dated June 26th, 2003. Danvers mentioned that he rewrote the first chapters, and that, “[f]rom Chapter 14 to the end quite a bit has changed, and it’s a much better ride. I’m still kicking myself for rushing the previous draft...” One of the changes after chapter 14 is on chapter 19, with the text that will become chapter 18 of the first edition. This state is BMS3.

A second agent, Shawna McCarthy, read manuscript BMS3 as well as the manuscript of another novel, Cloverleaf, by Danvers. She probably read BMS3 sometime between June and August of the same year. In her first e-mail to Danvers, dated September 2nd, she offers to represent him with TBS, but she asks him to make a change; he needs to describe *workware* earlier and probably make some changes at the end. The e-mail from Danvers to McCarthy from September 8th mentions that he has made those changes. In this new state of the manuscript [BMS4], my section is found on chapter 18, and it will remain there. Most of the files for BMS4 were modified for the last time on September 9th, 2003, which corresponds with the date on the e-mail. All the files here are saved as Rich Text Format or .rtf, it probably means that Danvers

needed to share the files of his novel with readers that used Microsoft Word, because the files in Nisus were not easy to share with Windows users, for example. This state represents the most important one because BMS4 is the version that editor Juliet Ulman will read a few months later. It is also the source of the Copy-Text in this Critical Edition.

It seems that at the beginning of 2004 Danvers acquired Microsoft Word and he had to convert all the files to the new software, thus originating BMS4b. For the first time, the author had all the single files for each chapter and also one file for the whole text.

BMS5 is the version with corrections by hand made by Bantam's editor Juliet Ulman. She started her e-mail communication with Danvers on February 9th, 2004, she sent him a letter dated June 3rd with a corrected manuscript. The notes and corrections related to other parts of the text. Sometime between this last date and July 24-25, Danvers reviewed those corrections and made others by hand [BMS6]. On July 26 he e-mailed to inform her that he "will be sending it Express Mail this morning." This new state is BMS7, which will be the base manuscript for the typesetting of the book.

The next step is mentioned in e-mails, but there is no evidence of it. It is the copy-edit manuscript [BCE1] and the corrections made by Danvers [BCE2] on or before October 20th. Next, there are two galley proofs, BGP1 from February 10th, 2005, and BGP2 dated March 29th, 2005. And finally, the "advance reading" edition, which seems to be the same as the first edition [BFE] of the TBS in mass paperback by a division of Bantam books!

Chapter 18, pages 244-250 (before the break)

The history of this particular section is different in several ways from the rest of the novel. First, the archive has an early, undated version of chapter 19 [MPP0] that is just a page and a half long. The file corresponding to chapter 19 was first created on February 1st of 2003, but it was when there were no vestiges of my section in this chapter. The last saved time before this section was created is June 26 of the following year, but this refers to the whole chapter. Thus the date of the almost two-page document may be from April to June 2003.

Then, there is a handwritten note (figure 1) with two paragraphs that were used in the state of the novel's manuscript [BMS3] that was sent to Christopher Schelling on June 26th, 2003. The first paragraph was the basis for the paragraph that starts,

The World Palate was for gourmets on the move...

describes the chefs running 'ware in action. The next paragraph in the note is the genesis for the paragraph that starts with,

The surveillance system pegged Trey Kennemeyer on the premises,

Both paragraphs are on the authoritative text, on page 4 of this essay

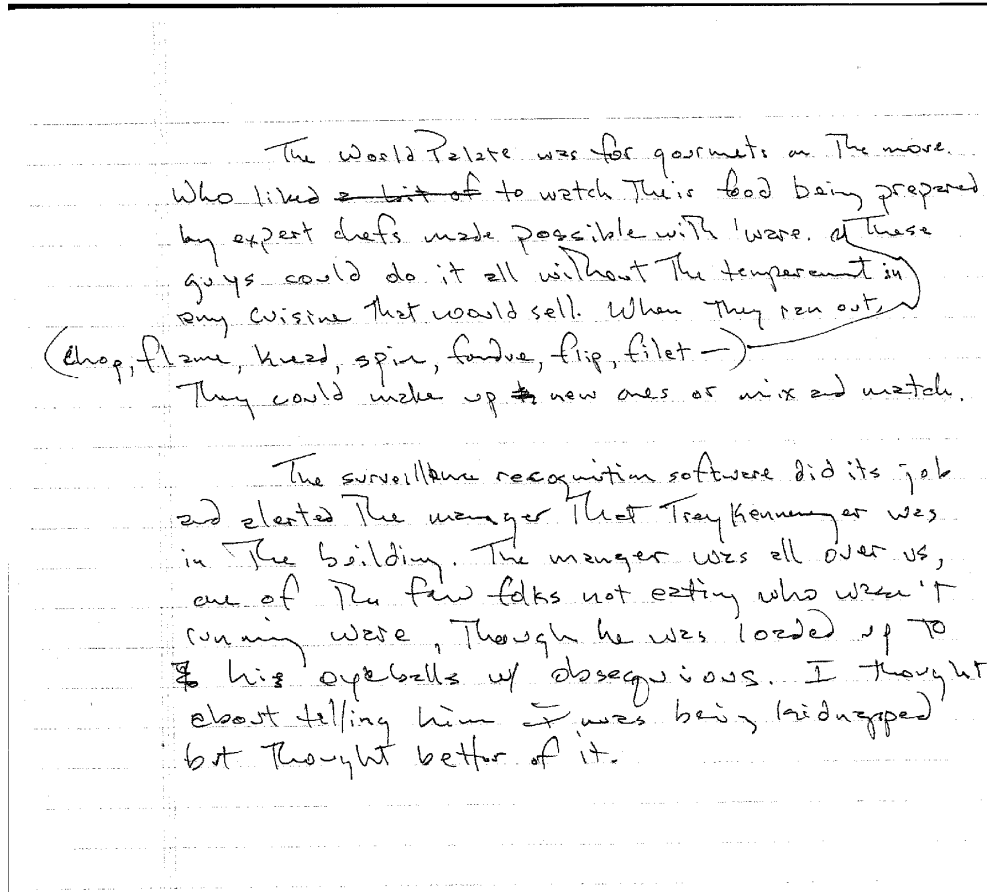


Figure 1. Undated document with two notes used in chapter 18.

This note was in the archive along with other three pages; none of them are dated, but the first two give a clue of when they were written –most likely before New Year’s Day of 2002. The first page has the date for a future workshop on January 18th, while the second one (figure 2) has ideas for chapters 15 and 16, and the top section is a personal note about buying clothes.

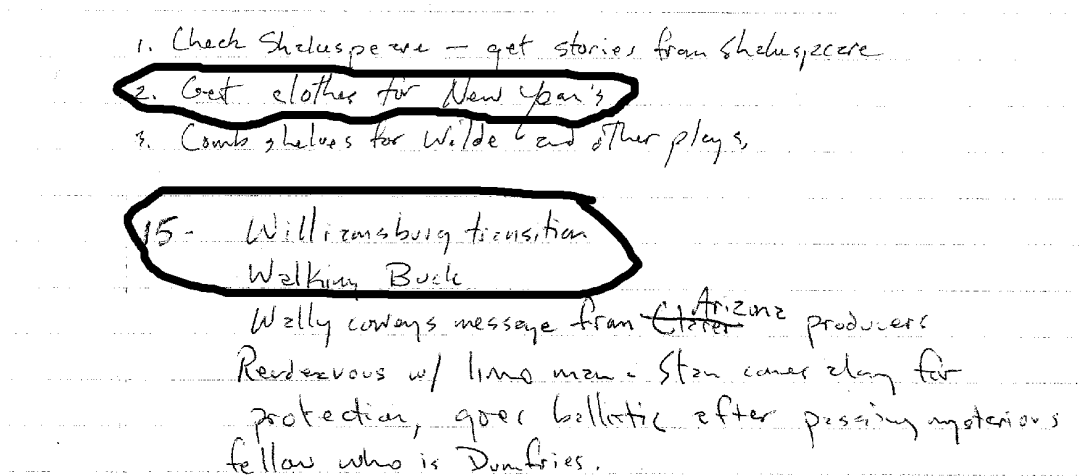


Figure 2 Undated document with personal notes and ideas for chapters 15 and 16.

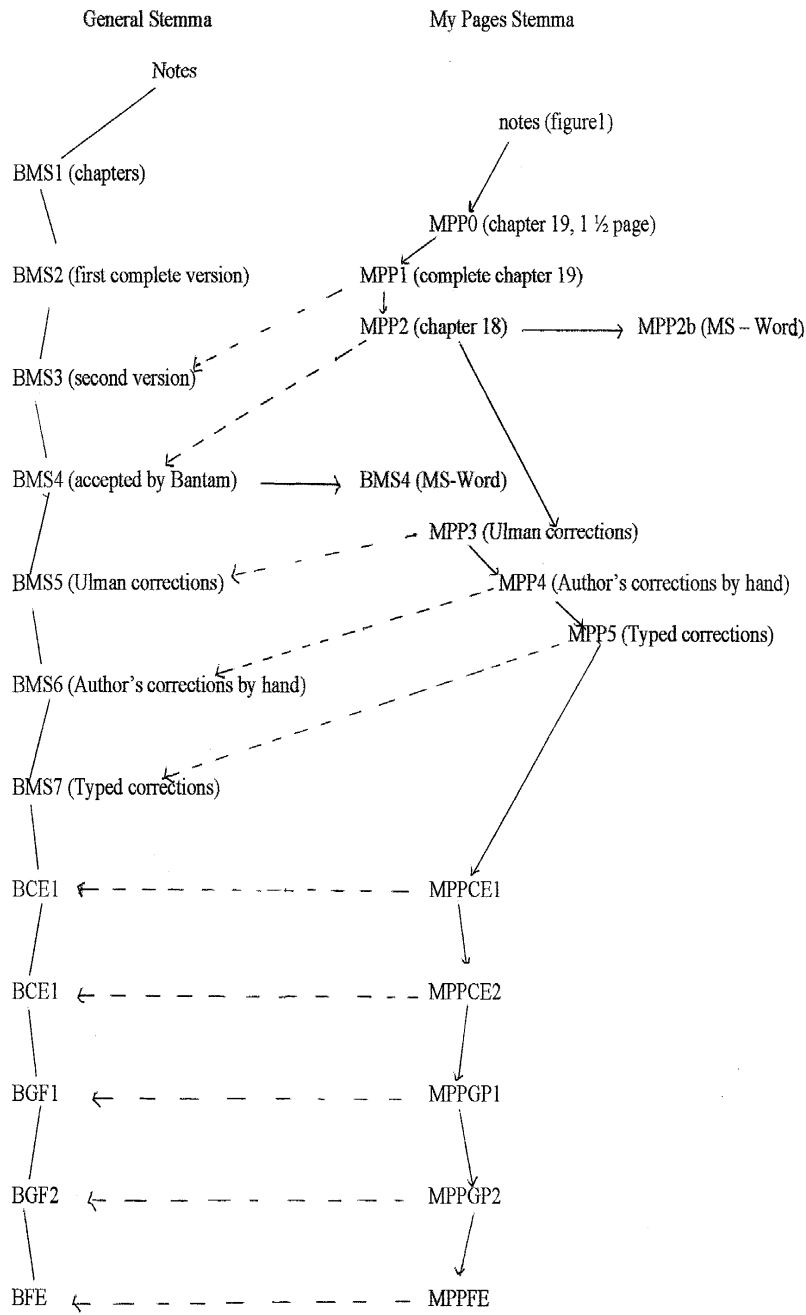
I can only speculate that the note about the restaurant and the chefs was written after April of 2003, because there is a much clearer idea here of what the 'ware does than in any of the other chapters created before that date. This also may be the result of some suggestions from Christopher Schelling and other readers –of whom we do not have documented information.

There is a parallel stemma for this section of chapter 18 to the one suggested for the complete novel. There is a straight line between the stemmas of the my pages [MPP], and there is a broken line that matches the state of MPP with that of the entire manuscript [B]. Based on the above paragraph, the stemma starts with the handwritten note [notes], and then comes the first draft of chapter 19 [MPP0] mentioned above. The next state can be dated June 26th of 2003 and it represents the whole chapter 19 [MPP1]. Even though this chapter becomes chapter 18 around September of the same year, my section does not suffer any changes [MPP2]. This state is my Copy-Text and it corresponds to BMS4 of TBS. MPP2 becomes MPP2b when is saved as a

MS-Word file on or around February 7th, 2004. As mentioned before, this last variant [MPP2] was not the one accepted for publication by Bantam.

When Juliet Ulman makes her notes on the manuscript, it becomes MPP3 around June 3 of 2003. When Danvers reviews and corrects by hand MPP3, he adds one accidental emendation to the text and therefore it becomes MPP4. During the Question and Answer session, the author suggested that he did not agree with one substantive correction that appears in three instances in this section, *Nick* instead of *Nickie*. For this reason, the author's corrections to the file become MPP5, which is the base for the copy-edit manuscript [MPPCE]. Then we have the corrected copy edit [MPPCEb], then the two galley proofs—MPPGP1 and MPPGP2. The last state of this text is the first edition, MPPFE.

3. A. Stemma



BMS = The Bright Spot Manuscript
 BCE = The Bright Spot Copy-Edit
 BGF = The Bright Spot Galley Proof
 BFE = The Bright Spot First Edition

MPP = My Pages
 MPCE = My Pages Copy-Edit
 MGP = My Pages Galley Proof
 MFE = My Pages First Edition

3. B. Rationale of Copy-Text.

Gaskell explained that the goal of a critical edition is to “represent as nearly as possible the author’s intentions for his text;” (336) in other words, the copy-text for a critical edition needs to be, “whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly what the author wrote.” (Greg 21) Since Danver’s Papers are documents and files that he wrote, there are no problems with the provenance of the manuscript. The problem becomes the state of the text that represents the moment in which the author said, “This is it,” or what Terry Oggel calls, “thereness.” the state of the text that represents this thereness is MPP2, which was part of BMS4. I believe that I can support my election of this read based on four arguments, two opinions expressed by the author, the acceptance of the book by Bantam, and the history of the files.

Danvers wrote to Shawna McCarthy on September 8th, 2003 that he had clarified the text at the end. The substantive changes were made to other sections of the text, and the only change to my section is that it was changed from chapter 19 to chapter 18. This change is the last big change to the chapter. I have already explained that the author has suggested that he did not agree changing *Nickie* to *Nick*. I agree with Danvers that Nickie gives the conversation of Nick and Trey a different meaning. Trey and Nick do not know each other and this is the first time that both characters are alone—without the ladies, but with the goons that accompany Trey at all times. The use of “Nickie” gives Trey a sense of superiority in comparison with Nick.

Juliet Ulman accepted the book and her corrections resulted on basically six emendations, four accidental and two substantive. There final edition has only 12 changes, of which only 3 can be considered substantive and the rest were merely cosmetic.

The last argument is that MPP1 was preserved in MPP2—as explained previously on pages 11 to 14. When he saved MPP2 as a Microsoft Word file [BMS4b], he did not make any more accidental or substantive changes. This indicates that Dennis Danvers was perhaps satisfied with the state of this section of his novel.

3. C. Emendations. List of substantives.

The abbreviations used are, PAT = Panbehchi Authoritative Text, CT = Copy-Text (manuscript), EU = Editor Juliet Ulman, GP1 =Galley Proof 1, GP2= Galley Proof 2, FE=First Edition. The SECTION column provides the first two or three words of the paragraph were the emendation appears.

Copy-edit manuscripts are not included because there are no documents or files to support them.

SECTION	PAT	CT	EU/GP1	GP1/FE
“Perfect. I have]	Nickie	Nickie	Nick	Nick
“That dumb fuck]	Nickie	Nickie	Nick	Nick
“I doesn’t fucking]	Nickie	Nickie	Nick	Nick
With an expert]	eyelash-singeing	eyelash-singing	eyelash-singing	eyelash-singeing
They finally]	All the chefs, standing, easy...	All the chefs, standing, easy...	All the chefs, easy...	All the chefs, easy

3.C. Emendations. List of accidentals

The abbreviations used are, PAT = Panbehchi Authoritative Text, CT = Copy-Text (manuscript), EU = Editor Ulman, GP1 =Galley Proof 1, GP2= Galley Proof 2, FE=First Edition. The SECTION column provides the first two or three words of the paragraph were the emendation appears. Copy-edit manuscripts are not included because there are no documents or files to support them.

SECTION	PAT	CT	EU	GP1/GP2	FE
“Stanton Wetherell]	riff-raff	riff-raff	riff-raff	riffraff	riffraff
The World]	room;	room,	room;	room;	room;
The surveillance]	Kennemeyer	Kennnemeyer	Kennnemeyer	Kennemeyer	Kennemeyer
The surveillance]	toady	toadie	toadie	toady	toady
The surveillance]	planet fucking Earth	planet fucking earth	planet fucking earth	Planet fucking Earth	Planet fucking Earth
“It’s only]	remodeled	remodelled	remodeled	remodeled	remodeled
The wine steward]	pouring	poring	pouring	pouring	pouring
“It doesn’t]	you	yout*	yout	you	you
The ‘ware chefs	sautéing	sauteeing	sauteeing	sautéing	sautéing
The goons took]	still lit	still lit	still lit	still-lit	still-lit
The goons took]	tablecloths	table clothes	tablecloths	tablecloths	tablecloths

*The author made this change after reviewing Ulman’s corrections change appears on the

3. C. Emendations. List of end-line hyphenation.

The abbreviations are, PAT =The Panbehchi Authoritative Text, CT = Copy-Text, FE = First Edition.

PAT I shrugged. “Salvador hired me to scam Dumfries with a phony time travel number.

CT I shrugged. “Salvador hired me to scam Dumfries with a phony time travel number.

FE I shrugged. “Salvador hired me to scam Dumfries with a phony time-travel number.

3. C. Explanation of Emendations

Substantive emendations.

The Authoritative Text makes only two substantive emendations to the Copy-Text, but the most important one —*Nickie*—appears three times in this section. The reasons to keep *Nikie* were already explained above.

In the phrase, “poofing into an *eyelash-singeing* ball of blue flame” (emphasis added), *eyelash-singeing* makes more sense in the context of fire burning the eyelashes, and it gives more power to the metaphor than the term *eyelash-singing*. The latter word changes to the former only during the last galley proof [MPPGP2]. *Eyelash-singeing* gives the reader goose bumps, while *eyelash-singing* gives the idea that the eyes of the chef were blinking a lot, or that the fire hurt his eyes. This change may also be classified as accidental instead of substantive, but since there is a change of meaning, I decided to include it as a substantive one.

3. C. Explanation of Emendations

Accidental emendations.

The Authoritative Text contains eight accidental emendations compared to the Copy-Text, “room;” plus Kennemeyer, toady, Earth, remodeling, pouring, sautéing and tablecloths. The typo *Kennemeyer* with 3 n’s, *Kennnemeyer*, was changed only on MPPGP1. Toady instead of *toadie*, pouring for *poring*, sautéing in exchange for *sauteeing*, and tablecloths replacing *table clothes*; all of them are only orthographical mistakes and they can seem alright because they homophone of the correct words.

In the phrase, “this was planet fucking Earth here,” suggests that the “planet” can be any of the planets. If it had the definite article, as in “this was *the* planet fucking Earth here,” then it would make sense to change *planet* to *Planet* as it appears in the proofs and book.

The change of “room,” to “room;” is the only accidental related to punctuation. The semicolon is there because the next sentence after “room” is an independent sentence.

The proofs and the first edition used rifferaff instead of *riff-raff*, and still-lit instead of *still lit*, but the Authoritative Text keeps the author’s spelling. According to the OED and Merriam-Webster, both can be used, but “rifferaff” is an adjective, and riff-raff as a noun. The phrase, “the riff-raff vanished,” indicates that word in discussion is a noun. I find no reason to hyphenate *still lit*, since in the compound word “still” functions as an adjective and I believe that the idea expressed in the Copy-Text is that “still” is an adjective.

3. C. Explanation of emendations. End-line hyphenation.

At first sight, it can be said that there are no problems with end-line hyphenation in the Copy-Text, because there are no hyphenated words. However, the two galley proofs and the first edition added one hyphen that should not be there. Instead of *time travel*, the later states the text read, *time-travel*. I do not see the need to make two words a compound term, since there is no change of meaning. The only explanation I can give for the editors adding the hyphen is that the word “time” appears at the end of the line in the Copy-Text.

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4. Following is the photocopy of the text identified as copy-text.