

PEACE EZ Timeline

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 26 Oct 2000

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Roy C. Lackey — 26 Oct 2000, 15:10

Speaking of timelines for PEACE, here is my version. It is what mantis calls the "EZ" timeline, because it is based on accepting at face value the date of 1938 for the coldhouse prank, and that Den was two years out of college, as claimed. Den should be 24 then (not 23), because his birthday was in May and the prank occurred in summer. I have included a few historical dates, just for background. Page numbers are for the Berkley paperback.

The timeline is not as concise, in places, as I would like it to be because, well, you know why; Wolfe doesn't make things easy! Few dates are given, time periods tend to be expressed in round numbers, and you seldom know what year you're counting from. It's easier to pick apart someone else's timeline--to point out that "this fact" makes "that date" wrong--than to defend your own, but I can make my case for any given date, if anyone is interested. The two five-year wimp-out spans are the result of ambiguous, (seemingly) conflicting details. It does not cover all of the convolutions resulting from Den's imaginary visit(s) to Dr. Van Ness, nor mantis's "Liberty" magazine clue.

1895 Den's mother born. (based on p.17 "My mother would have been twenty-five, I six. It was the year after Bobby Black was hurt.")

1914 May, Den born. W.W.I begins in Europe.

1918 End of W.W.I.

1919 May, Den, age 5, pushed Bobby Black down the stairs; fake deerskin treaty painted.

1920 Begin Prohibition. December, Den received scout knife.

1923 Bobby Black dies.

Den's parents go to Europe, Den goes to live with Aunt Olivia.

July, Chinese-egg affair. Vi claims to be 26 (p.97), but may be fudging; I agree with mantis that she is closer to 30.

August 3, Macafee's 41st birthday party (p.171), when Vi meets Julius Smart and they all tell stories. Den says that Smart was, at that time, "at least five years younger than my aunt" (p.149). Smart's adventure with Mr. Tilly took place the summer after he graduated college, so he was about 24 then. Charlie Turner's mother, Jan, (in one of the few references to larger world events in the text) who was herself not "much more than twenty" (p.138), mentioned that one of her brothers had been killed in France, obviously in the Great War (p.143). Den was nine at the time of this party. He said he started to tell Smart's story to Bill Batton "thirty-five or forty years" later (p.135). Forty years later would have been when he was 49 and president of the company, about 1963.

1924 or 1925 Vi marries J. Smart, Den's parents still overseas.

1928 L. Gold leaves Breslau. (p.197)

1929 circa, L. Gold meets Sally. (p.214) [1]

1929 October, Stock Market crash, begin Depression.

1929-1934 circa, Olivia dies. [1]

1933 End Prohibition.

1938(summer) Coldhouse prank , Den age 24. (p.230)

1939-1945 W.W.II.

1950-1953 Korean War.

1954-1959 Time frame for the Lois/Gold affair. Den age 40-45. Sherry Gold is 16. Lois is close to 35.

1963 circa, Den becomes president of the company at about 49. Crazy Pete on island.

1974-1975 Den's death; PEACE published.

[1] There is a problem here. Two events are linked in that they both occurred 25 years before the time of the Lois/Gold affair--Vi's death and Gold meeting Sally--yet other factors seem to separate these two events by several years.

Roy

Michael Andre-Driussi — 26 Oct 2000, 15:52 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Yay, the timeline!!

1895 Den's mother born. (based on p.17 "My mother would have been twenty-five, I six. It was the year after Bobby Black was hurt.")

1914 May, Den born. W.W.I begins in Europe.

1918 End of W.W.I.

1918 after May, Den, age 4 visits Dr. Black ("Liberty" magazine = anachronism)

1919 May, Den, age 5, pushed Bobby Black down the stairs; fake deerskin treaty painted.

1920 Begin Prohibition. December, Den received scout knife.

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There is a bear of a problem, which might be wiggled through (but it sure ain't EZ), in the following cluster:

Astral visit to Dr. V as corpulant president (in first year of presidency); which is same year as Crazy Pete on his island (circa 1964); and seeing 16 year old Sherry in Dr. V's waiting room (where Sherry is supposed to be 16 about ten years earlier).

How to have Pete in the 60s and Sherry in the 50s?

To show my enthusiasm for Roy's timeline: we had long suspected that the Dr. V astral visit was a mix of at least two realtime visits (which seemed the case when the nurse comes in and tells Den he ought to be undressed--this seems like a "bad splice"); if this is true, then I found a nearly invisible seam of splicing when Den first goes in, before he sees the doctor.

1) Fat new president Den (rich man at 50) enters waiting room, sees Margaret Lorn (uh, that's Mrs. Price to you, bub <g>), Sherry Gold, Ted Singer (odd, but we have some stuff on him), and

Abel Green (huh?).

2) Margaret is reading "Life" magazine, but then she puts it down and goes in to see the doctor, never seen in a later timeframe. (This putting down of "Life" and exiting, added to the damp impressions left by her hands, make me suspect that she is terminally ill and will die before Den's next yearly physical. IF that is true, then Den will retreat from the scene to avoid the pain . . .)

3) Nurse calls for Mrs. Price, and "Sherry, who is sixteen now" tells her that Margaret already went in. SPLICE! (See, the discontinuity of the nurse's behavior is the first hint, but Sherry is sixteen =now=, [she was in her twenties, say, a sentence before] that's the smoking gun.)

4) Doctor examines underweight (i.e., poor man at 40) Den.

This, then, is a way Den can go into the doctor's office in the 60s but actually only see the doctor in the 50s!

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Liberty: the anachronistic magazine in Doctor B's office; the coin, shipwreck plunder, found by Den on that fateful picnic with Margaret . . .

Life: the magazines in Doctor V's office . . .

Just add "the pursuit of happiness" and by gum, you've got that ringing phrase from the Declaration of Independence: "Life, Liberty, and the Pusuit of Happiness"!

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Hey, remember that 71 year old potato farmer? I've secretly wondered if he is Mr. Price. You know, he lives out toward Milton, his grown sons (three or more?) don't want the farm, sounds like he's a widower . . .

=mantis=

Adam Stephanides — 27 Oct 2000, 14:04 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

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I think we'd need at least one more splice, maybe two. On the page after Weer is underweight, we have this dialogue:

"There's not a man in my plant I'd talk to the way you talk to every patient you've got."
"But I can't fire my patients, Mr. Weer."

The clear implication is that Weer is president at this point; at any rate, he's not the poor 40-year-old. Then a couple pages later we have the dialogue putting Weer's age as in the early 40s. I don't know if we can push Weer's presidency back that far; if not, another splice.

While looking this up, I noticed another sentence: "There is (as a matter of fact) a whole pile of _Lifes_ before me, and I play the old game of trying to arrange them chronologically without looking at the dates, and lose." (3) If that isn't Wolfe going nyah-nyah-nyah to his readers, I don't know what is. (And I won't even go into the implications of reincarnation in the first half of the sentence!)

--Adam

Alex David Groce — 27 Oct 2000, 14:28 · follows Adam Stephanides

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These two quotes strengthen Dan's hypothesis about the Doctors being guides in the afterlife as well. A pile of lives in the waiting room, indeed. Hmmm... Which brings in a point: perhaps there's something less solipsistic about this than we think. At various times it seems that Den's afterlife and old age are appearing as anachronisms in his memories of earlier times, in his interactions with other characters. What if, since our time-frame implies that ALL of the residents of Cassionville are long dead, these others are not simply recreations of the past, or spirits called from the vasty deep, but others experiencing the same kind of afterlife as Den? I think WEER sees them to some extent as simply memories, ghosts, or shadows, but what if that is a reflection of his isolation rather than the actual state of things? This fits nicely with the lich's implication that Den and Gold are the spirits; perhaps to Miss Birkhead, Den is simply a character in her TAT-guided "purgatory." This sharing of stories makes more sense thematically

than to have the characters simply be dredged up by Den's dead soul--even Den states openly that this is not his story. He calls Julian Smart, of all people, the central character.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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