

OT: R.A. Lafferty estate sale

The Urth list — 16 messages, 8 voices, 07 Mar 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5985>

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Gwern Branwen — 07 Mar 2011, 16:27

Linked in <http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2011/03/sf-tidbits-for-3311/>

An ad (<http://locusmag.com/2011/Ads/digitallafferty.jpg>) for the Lafferty copyrights (<http://www.sfsite.com/news/2011/03/02/lafferty-estate-for-sale/>).

This does explain why Wildside Press didn't have any Lafferty when I went to buy some last year.

gwern
<http://www.gwern.net>

Marc Aramini — 07 Mar 2011, 20:38 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

wow, so you can just buy the rights to everything he wrote? Insane. It would peeve me no end if I had a wealthy acquaintance that I despised in life buying up my life's work, just a scenario I see as a possibility in cases like this. Crazy. Wonder how much it will go for? Be cool to say, I own all Lafferty's work, but it just doesn't seem just that a man's intellectual legacy is for sale ...

--- On Mon, 3/7/11, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:
From: Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com>
Subject: (urth) OT: R.A. Lafferty estate sale
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Monday, March 7, 2011, 8:27 AM
Linked in <http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2011/03/sf-tidbits-for-3311/>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 07 Mar 2011, 20:46 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Actually, what's really disgusting is that the high bid is \$70K. 23 novels, for ghod's sake.

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 12:38 PM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:
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Adam Thornton — 07 Mar 2011, 20:48 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Mar 7, 2011, at 2:46 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Actually, what's really disgusting is that the high bid is \$70K. 23 novels, for ghod's sake.

Wow.

I wish I had \$75,000.

Adam

Craig Brewer — 07 Mar 2011, 20:49 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Well, hey, let's start a collection and give him a proper home!

----- Original Message -----

From: Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Mon, March 7, 2011 2:46:35 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) OT: R.A. Lafferty estate sale

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On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 12:38 PM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:
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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Adam Thornton — 07 Mar 2011, 20:52 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On Mar 7, 2011, at 2:49 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:
Well, hey, let's start a collection and give him a proper home!

I'm in for \$100.

Adam

Gwern Branwen — 07 Mar 2011, 21:48 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 3:46 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
Actually, what's really disgusting is that the high bid is \$70K. 23 novels, for ghod's sake.

Yeah, that is very high an asking fee for novels that never sold very much. (\$70k invested over the remaining ~70 years of the Lafferty copyrights is *a lot* of money; I can't see how the Lafferty copyrights could possibly compete. Some quick figuring with the net present value approximations says that at 70k, to be a good investment, the royalties/revenue would have to average like \$4000 a year every year.)

Presumably the target audience is Lafferty fans, or those seeking status & prestige (kind of like how Encyclopedia Britannica or the New York Times stay afloat).

gwern
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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 07 Mar 2011, 21:50 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

I dunno. With the right management, Lafferty could be the next Phil Dick. A lot of his stories -- I'm talking more about the short stories than the novels, now -- would make great movies.

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 1:48 PM, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 3:46 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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Adam Thornton — 07 Mar 2011, 21:54 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Mar 7, 2011, at 3:50 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

I dunno. With the right management, Lafferty could be the next Phil Dick. A lot of his stories -- I'm talking more about the short stories than the novels, now -- would make great movies.

For \$70,000, it seems likely that you could publish 99-cent ebook editions and probably make it back over a few years, even if you sold zero of the movie rights.

I mean, there are certainly several of the books I'd pay a buck for to read on my mobile-device-of-choice. Spend a little on marketing to make sure that blogs that people read, like, say, BoingBoing, knew about it...I bet if you had buck-a-book ebooks, and got someone to announce it on BoingBoing, you'd get halfway to making your money back on the first day.

Adam

Daniel Petersen — 07 Mar 2011, 22:40 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Somebody alert Neil Gaiman! I bet he'd buy this up and do something great with it. He's a huge Lafferty fan. He's definitely Laff's highest profile popularizer right now.

-DOJP

(Or maybe the mighty Wolfe would do it? He's a big fan too.)

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 9:54 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 07 Mar 2011, 22:46 · in reply to Daniel Petersen

Somehow, I doubt that either Gaiman or Wolfe has \$70K to toss around. I could be wrong. But neither of them is in Stephen King/JK Rowling territory.

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 2:40 PM, Daniel Petersen <danielottojackpetersen at gmail.com> wrote:
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Daniel Petersen — 07 Mar 2011, 23:08 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I would've thought Gaiman was fairly rollin in it, but I'm not financially savvy, so...

(Although he's probably got rich friends that he could convince it was a worthwhile cause.)

DOJP

Gerry Quinn — 07 Mar 2011, 23:08 · in reply to Marc Aramini

From: "Marc Aramini" <marcaramini at yahoo.com>
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would
peeve me no end if I had a wealthy acquaintance that I despised in life
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up my life's work, just a scenario I see as a possibility in cases like
this.
Crazy. Wonder how much it will go for? Be cool to say, I own all
Lafferty's
work, but it just doesn't seem just that a man's intellectual legacy is
for sale ...

At the end of the day, if it's for sale it's because the author sold it or left it to someone who is selling it. Copyright initially belongs entirely to the author, and it's up to him to choose what to do with it.

- Gerry Quinn

Matthew Keeley — 07 Mar 2011, 23:38 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Gaiman could buy the Lafferty estate with the income derived from a few speech appearances:
<http://boingboing.net/2010/05/10/neil-gaimans-awesome.html>

I think he's in China and away from the Internet now though. Perhaps someone should alert his assistant?

-Matt

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 5:46 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
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Adam

Gwern Branwen — 10 Mar 2011, 19:54 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

On Mon, Mar 7, 2011 at 11:27 AM, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:
Linked in <http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2011/03/sf-tidbits-for-3311/>

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(<http://www.sfsite.com/news/2011/03/02/lafferty-estate-for-sale/>).

This does explain why Wildside Press didn't have any Lafferty when I went to buy some last year.

A curious update: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=R._A._Lafferty&curidH245&diffA8162212&oldidA8161910

The Lafferty Estate has proposed to sell the literary rights to Lafferty's entire body of work to the Locus Science Fiction Foundation on May 1, 2011 for \$70,000 plus a share of future profits, unless the bid is overturned by a better offer before then. Inquiries at LaffertyProbate at gmail.com.

Different address than the ad, and note that none of my links mention anything about the Locus Science Fiction Foundation being the buyer who submitted the 70k bid.

On a sidenote, the Wikipedia account goes back to 2006.

gwern
<http://www.gwern.net>

Gwern Branwen — 15 Mar 2011, 15:31 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

On Thu, Mar 10, 2011 at 2:54 PM, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:

A curious update:

http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=R._A._Lafferty&curidH245&diffA8162212&oldidA8161910

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From <http://www.mulle-kybernetik.com/RAL/messageboard/viewtopic.php?t=&p08#p308>

I wanted to let you know that on May 1 the Lafferty Estate tentatively plans to sell the rights to the entire literary output of the science fiction writer, R.A. Lafferty, to the Locus Science Fiction Foundation for \$70,000 plus 50% of any future profit from the Lafferty rights in excess of \$30,000 in any single year. The sale will proceed unless someone makes a more favorable offer.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in purchasing the Lafferty literary works, please have them contact me at LaffertyEstate at gmail.com or 919-286-9519 and I will provide additional information to help them decide whether they would like to make a better offer before May 1.

This sale will include the rights to approximately 21 published and 13 unpublished novels, approximately 297 published and 96 unpublished short works such as short stories, essays and

poems, approximately 8 published and 4 unpublished book-length collections of short works and approximately 24 published trade paperbacks or booklets. The complete description of the rights being offered for sale is contained in my "Letter to Potential Bidders", which I will provide upon request.

gvern
<http://www.gvern.net>