

# Chuck Carlson / ASTRAL SONAC

*Him & his pedantic liberal whitewash.*

## ASTRAL SONAC

It's time. Time again. I shall begin. Yes..how..with a photograph. This photogr Here! Right here



It is titled *C. W. Xerox & Monsieur Satchel Gashade at Gaston's Cafe on the Rue Radfux. 1912* & during the Serbian Carnival Trade Fair, During such a time. The photograph itself was taken by a saxophonist with Alexander Bacall's Dance Band, from the bandstand. He

used a 1904 Kodak boxcamera looks like, undoubtedly the type your grandmother (I have quite forgotten which generation, which epoch I address, I speak from) used in innumerable crumbling *Canadiana* photo albums. See him grinning? See? That's him, my friend, M. Gashade. He's wearing one of those huge fur coats, looking alike a mangy old blackbear, of the type of that period. He looks a ringer for the late George III. And why is he grinning like that? you have asked. How can I begin? I could begin by telling you how it was I first met him or .. but I am trapped! I cannot begin! I shall escape

“he shall begin he cannot escape”

“Monsieur Gashade residing in an old tumbledown Blackheath countryhouse in the Old Country on the day that this all came about. That very second he happend sitting in his kitchen nibbling toast that'd been grilled in the old hearth...from the sitting room the stereo phonograph was blaring *Alexander Bacall At Albert Hall*, and at top volume. The fork he's holding began vibrating sonically with the cacophony.

MMMMMMmmmMMMMmMMMMm

it went. ‘Interesting’, thought Satchel. He faced westward & just caught the last firey red vestiges of the sun dropping below the tall evergreens on the mountainsides, glinting the high snowfields in a blood-rouge tint. ‘The crows, the crows. Come spring and they’ll be back’ he realized. The fork humming in a full pitch. In the Great Outdoors far across an adjacent rolling field of white & yellow, of daisies, dandelions, buttercups w/ the additional mauves of fireweed, farover along at the edge of the meadow & banks of the tumbling spilling stream a raven screeched. The great sun gave a last dying flare, much alike a candle as it reaches the end of its wick-tether, heaved, and sank forever. The stream had alls put him in mind of a Carling Beer advert, a frothing dark torrential mountain stream of rootbeer or ale...like that. He

tapped his foot still listening to the deafening tenor banjo, clarinet, snare drum rimshot sounds of the danceband. He began a dance. While nibbling toast. Hopped! Jived all cross the floor. "WOW!! GO!!", he yelped in glee, and "WAIL WOP!!", out onto the patio just in 'time. He was taken aback to spy a figure advancing thru the fields of dandelions buttercups fireweed. It was none other than "THE KING'S ENGLISH!!", he shouted elated to see his old friend. — in their now wasted youth they'd attended private school together & when one'd been expelled they'd joined the aircorp in time for The Great War. Soldiers of their time. Somewhat musical, The King's English was singing as he advanced;

"Is he long on the tooth?

Is he slow on the draw?

Is he screwing himself silly?

Is his member all raw?"

"You are not a poet!", said Satchel. "Am I not?", said The King's English, a portent of calamity in store, "Is there coffee on?" "Yes. & have you by chance happend across Mad Alice in your wandrings?", (asked) (Satchel) of him. "Um...wellllll. no!" A faroff rumbling from over the hills, like artillery, like thunder reaching for their ears. It was something previous unheard. "It's like 88s, like smog dispersing!", Satchel had said but the raucous music drowned out his voice. "WHAT!?", yelled The King's English. "I SAID IT'S LIKE...O HELL, WAIT JUST A MINUTE 'TIL I TURN THE SOUND DOWN!", all of which 'as unintelligable to English. "THERE THAT..that's better!", he exclaimed.

Facing his visitor it dawned on Gashade, more slowly at first, that The King's English undoubtedly had some ulterior reason for coming. A foxy look overcame his countenance. "OK, s'pose, Eng., you were out for a

stroll..a mere 1000 miles off course..only pretty strange...and yor appearance here?" "There's something in the air", gloomed The King's English, unable to look him in the eye. "Well", said Satchel, "It is spring", and bidding his visitor to follow, went back to the books. "I'm behind in them already", he hastened to explain.

In due time the dusk deepened. Satchel worked on. On the mantle the old clock'd long ago jerked to an abrupt halt, seizing all ticking with a finality that proved deafening. English, waiting for him to be done with his task, found an old cigar butt discarded by the Elder Gashade some months ago. Altho very dry, by pretending to puff away on it, it afforded him some amusement. By and by Cause & happened thru the sitting room. "Where is the loo?", she-it casually inquired. "Aw, thru there to yr left. down hall. the third door", Gashade replied gesticulating with his arms and nary a look up from the ledgers. "Thank you", said Cause& and exit'd Stage Right. The King's English was aghast. "DID YOU SEE WHO, WHAT THAT WAS?!", he rasped. "And just what should you expect for your money?", quered Satchel, "Judge Crater? The Khan?" After a haphazard rationalizing The English settled back in the sofa, a huge down-filled cushion behind his head. A spent copy of *The Police Gazette* magazine lay crumped at his feet, sensation all wrung out of it. Time dragged. He dozed. Discarded concrete instances lay askew thruout the room&estate.

Suddenly! the night was bathed in a giant flash and the air rent with the wholesale clanging of bells! 'Shit!', thought The King's English covring his head & ears with the cushion to drown out the din;— 'If it's directed at me I'm not to be in', he decided. Gashade, peering up from his papers, saw it to be a phantom Yonge Street cable car with a hundred people hanging thru windows cutting 'found' words out of back issues of *Life*, *Fortune* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. "Great Gatzooks!", he



exclaimed in genuine awe, "a Godamn trolley's  
 jest...jest materialized out there upon. the rainslick  
 patio", he spluttered, "it's filled with every  
 description of human flesh & Origin of Species!"  
 "Whaaa?", spat The King's English, "Origin??"  
 Throwing off the cushion he bounded up for a look-see. &  
 studying them he half agreed with his host. Indeed, they  
 were a desperate lot. He spotted a familiar face in the  
 crowd. A tall Zulu princess of the M——. He  
 recognized her. It was none other than The Princess  
 Petula. Flinging (the patio doors wide) he called out;  
 "Princess. Princess Petula! Hey, hey. Me. You  
 remember?" "Why King's English!", she cried  
 spotting him right off, "You old W. A. S. P., how you  
 doing?!" "Alright, alright, just. ah. visiting an old  
 buddy here...what's happening? Who're all these people  
 you're with?" "Oh!", (says) (the Princess) demurely,  
 "Oh! All these people're writers and such", and in an  
 almost stage whisper-aside, "*They're all friends a  
 mine!*" "You dont say?", said English,"...where're  
 you off to?" "A League of Poets conference toards the  
 east" "No guff?!" "No" Bidding her wait one second he  
 whipped back into the house to find Satchel still gawking  
 in disbelief at the apparition. "Hey man", said The  
 King's English to him, "um..I think that I am gonna  
 split....—you know?" "Split split? What's this split?",  
 cried Satchel, "You mean to say with *that* motley  
 hoard?!" Incredulously. In the face of such evil  
 portents, recovering fast, "with *that* crew?" "Yah.  
 Why?" "Aw boy, bad scene there you go messing around  
 with a delusion like that...frigging hullicination, that's  
 all. Every last one of them. Baaad Scene At The Moulin  
 Rouge!" "You! Should Talk! Gashade!", yelled English  
 getting het up hearing his friends being downgraded in  
 such-like fashion, "You of all people...lousy

caksucker!" Yes. It was an extremely cogent point his friend'd scored with. Clammed up. He decided not to press for a rebuff. No way. The King's English, carting a shopping bag heavy in anticipation, hustled by Satchel—said; "Well, give my regards to Alice if ever she does show" "Yes...I'll most certainly do that" "...and keep an eye out for purple suspenders! strange cinema!" "Like A. R.'s by chance..he saw in that caf?" "Yah, the same..and red-haired men, red-haired men who hung about in those cafes!", and with a quick nervous smile Satchel's way The King's English lept aboard the streetcar, first embracing Princess Petula like some lost lover then in turn shaking the hand of a tall silk-hatted distinguished-looking gentleman, very nattily dressed in a red velvet waistcoat & gold watchfob, whom Satchel by then'd gathered was the conductor of the Lit'ry Expedition. The machine wasted little time getting underway, what with the hissing of air brake releasings & a shouted "AW BORED!" from this silk-hatted fancy gentleman. By and by they disappeared into the gloom of the night...—leaving Satchel in a darkened empty house sucked suddenly dry of sound, of life, arid of humanity it seemed—with his ledgers, his empty medicine cabinet, "What the Hell 'm I gonna shave with?", he soliloquized to the tiled walls and, 'The Bastard', he thought. With a flash the sun abruptly rose up again—from the west, above the mountains. It hadn't gone all down yet. Brilliantly it burned, flooding the room in a golden azure light. 'Yet another delusion', Satchel thought, whimpering, "O when..when's the whole thing gonna *quit!*" He was down on one knee, stricken on the floor when there came a loud knock on the door. He got to his feet, drying his eye with the burlaped back of his hand, "Now who could that be?", he mused aloud slicking his cowlick into place, "I do hope it's not that Cause& again. She-it's all I need tonight, him & his pedantic liberal whitewash!" "

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