

The Bertronic

The weird world of r/bertstrips and a lesson in ataraxia

By u/Romboteryx



Do you know what the M-97 flamethrower sounds like Ernie? It roars like a dragon, a fiery God purging everything in his path. Hold down that trigger and the whoosh drowns out everything else. Focus on the noise and you can almost convince yourself you don't hear the screams. By the time the tank is empty, everything's over, even the men are quiet. There's nothing but the crackling of burning thatch.

You see Ernie, it's not the noise that keeps me awake at night. It's the silence.

Source unknown



Telly is worried as Elmo starts to ejaculate
instantly as soon as he starts the prostate
exam

Source unknown

Unless it is otherwise clearly stated, most or all bertstrips shown in this work were created by me. If a bertstrip you created is not properly credited please contact me.

First Edition, March 2020

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Foreword

Is hell real? For many people throughout human history it was. Almost all ancient cultures believed that the souls of the dead went to a realm in the underground, since that is where their corpses were usually buried. In Judaism as well as Ancient Greek mythology this realm of the dead was not yet malignant, but neither was it paradise. It was a cold, dark place filled with desolation and depression. As the centuries went on and new religions like Zoroastrianism and Christianity formed, the more specialized this realm of the dead became. It was no longer the realm of all dead and instead was reserved for the sinful, while the virtuous could go to a place called heaven. No longer was the underground realm just depressing, it was punishing, tormenting, because the sinners deserved it, needed it. And the more sinners it contained the more tormenting it had to be. But it was not the sinners who sent themselves there, it was the men and gods claiming to be virtuous sending the sinful towards their demise and in the process creating what we call hell, with all its nightmares. It was not the sinners who created the nine circles of hell, the Phlegethon and Cocytus, it was Dante. The sea of fire and brimstone was not the work of Satan, but that of the Bible. Satan likewise did not create himself, for he was made by God and God created him knowing well that he would corrupt and bring sin and evil to the garden. God just watched. To quote Holocaust-survivor Elie Wiesel: “The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference. Because of indifference, one dies before one actually dies. To be in the window and watch people being sent to concentration camps or being attacked in the street and do nothing, that's being dead.”

Today many people doubt the existence of hell, for good reasons. The purpose of the work you are about to read is to show you that at least *one* form of hell exists and it did not until we created it. Even though this is not a hell meant for us, the fact that we did this is in my opinion warranty enough that if another hell, the true hell, does indeed exist, we all deserve to be there.



"I know God, Ernie. God is a can of gas and a book of matches. With those two things you can create, and destroy. Save life, or take it. People have always had to suffer before they recieved God's mercy, Ernie. You can pray for them, but sometimes the best way to help is to get all of their suffering out of the way."

"Bert? I-I don't know what to say. You burned those kids, Bert!"

"I'm not burning people, Ernie. I just bring them closer to God."

by u/Valladian

1. Introduction

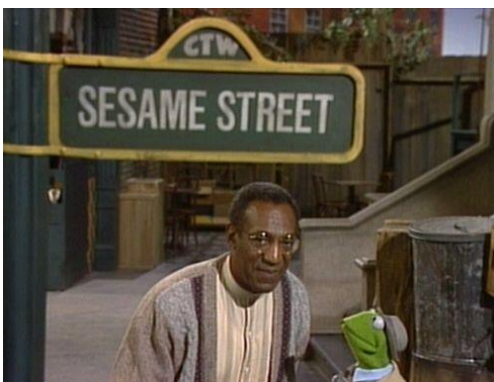
A short history of bertstrips

Bertstrips began in the early 2010s as a parody of bitstrips. Bitstrips were a series of low-quality Facebook-“memes” or comics that used emojis to tell stories and, apart from the name, bertstrips do not have much in common with them in their methods and executions. A conventional bertstrip takes an often random screenshot from an episode of *Sesame Street* (or related Jim Henson property) and gives it a new context through a bottom caption. This new context is an often wildly inappropriate and over-the-top one that portrays the muppets as indulging in extremely vile, bizarre and/or often evil acts. The contrast between these acts and the child-friendly TV-personalities of the original characters is the main source of comedy

Officially bertstrips began in the year 2014 when redditor u/BillNyeDeGrasseTyson posted an imgur-album of his first bertstrips onto the r/funny subreddit.¹ Because this was the only time something remotely funny was ever posted onto r/funny, the post became wildly popular and reached the frontpage of Reddit. Soon thereafter a new subreddit, r/bertstrips, was founded to accommodate the new meme-format. It was soon followed by the Bertstrip Generator website, which allowed people with no editing skills to easily make bertstrips and allowed the strips to have a unified font and format.² All that said, the root of bertstrips go way farther into the past. Jim Henson himself originally never wanted his muppets to be restricted to purely children’s

entertainment. One of the first pilots for *The Muppet Show* from 1975 was actually titled *The Muppet Show: Sex and Violence* and largely dealt with topics that were too inappropriate for something like *Sesame Street*. Henson would go on to produce puppetry-movies and shows that were either really dark and grim, highly satirical or both, such as *Labyrinth* or *The Dark Crystal*. The most well-known example is perhaps *Dinosaurs*, which through very thin disguises would discuss topics such as

One of the oldest bertstrips, made by u/BillNyeDeGrasseTyson. Humble beginnings.



Bill Cosby is amazed at how this bertstrip is basically writing itself

¹ https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/1py6v8/we_were_sick_of_seeing_bitstrips_on_facebook_so/

² <http://www.bertstripper.us/>



The TV parody *Bernie und Ert*. Take special notice of the photograph in the background.

racism, drug-abuse and homosexuality while still being seen as a kids show. The last episode famously had the titular characters cause their own extinction due to corporate greed and environmental destruction. Even *Sesame Street* itself, while never being inappropriate for children, would discuss some rather serious and adult topics on occasion, such as the death of Mr. Hooper, autism and AIDS. Before his career took off with *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street*, Henson was also well-known for the Wilkins&Wontkins Coffee commercials, which

featured arguably rather graphic cartoon violence. His first TV show, *Sam & Friends* often ended with the main character getting eaten or blown up.³ When it comes to *Sesame Street* parodies, a more immediate ancestor to bertstrips might be the *Bernie und Ert* sketches of the German comedy show *Freitag Nacht News*, which aired on RTL from 1999 to 2006. In the sketches the two bootleg muppets, which were clear parodies of Ernie and Bert, were openly bisexual and would indulge in acts of violence, drug abuse, BDSM and robbery. In many ways, *Bernie und Ert* was a live-action version of the bertstrips before real bertstrips even existed.

How much of an influence the sketches may have had on bertstrips is debatable, however, as the show was entirely in German and not well-known outside of Germany, while the probable majority of bertstrip-creators (affectionately called bertstrippers) are English-speakers. However, from my own experience on r/bertstrips, at least some bertstrippers do seem to be aware of *Bernie und Ert*. Another likely forerunner of



A subtle, but classic example of the *Bert is Evil* meme.

bertstrips was the *Bert is Evil* website, founded by Dino Ignacio in 1997. Ignacio created what could probably be called proto-memes by photoshopping pictures of Bert from *Sesame Street* into real photographs of historical villains and disasters, such as Adolf Hitler, Osama Bin Laden, 9/11, JFK's Assassination and George W. Bush's re-election. While these are not bertstrips in the technical sense, they do follow the spirit of misappropriating a muppet character to portray acts of evil and likely served as inspiration for many later bertstrips.

³ For a thorough and comprehensive history of Jim Henson's career and works, the six-part DefunctTV series done by the Youtube-channel Defunctland is greatly recommended. It can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLplWWKocAfTYIGzH8eQ0x0kEQgoV9CpYm>

What is and is not a bertstrip?

“Professionals have standards!”

- Sniper, Team Fortress 2

Not every edgy meme that uses muppets can be classified as a bertstrip. There are actual rules and guidelines to the structure of a bertstrip and if you do not follow these, your shitty meme will likely be removed by the moderators of r/bertstrips. First and foremost, a bertstrip should not use photoshopped images, as was done in the earlier *Bert is Evil* memes. The picture should be a genuine, unaltered frame from the show. The caption below it alone is supposed to do the work of recontextualizing the moment. While it may seem difficult to construct funny moments with these limitations, it encourages creativity and brings about clean uniformity. When it comes to choosing a show to misappropriate, the most popular choices are naturally *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*. There have however been debates (and as we will see even wars) over whether other Jim Henson shows, such as *Bear in the Big Blue House* or *Dinosaurs* should be allowed too. Personally I do not think such bertstrips would do any harm on occasion, but the focus should still be on *Sesame Street* and *The Muppets*. If a show is used that does not have anything to do with Jim Henson, such as cartoon, it is not a bertstrip and instead belongs on r/teleshits.

NOT bertstrips:



As bert begins to fish Ernie can't help but to get Extreme war flash backs of being on the boat on the beach's of normandy



A proper bertstrip:



Ernie mocks Bert over his metal-implant from the war by using his super-magnet in the other room

When it comes to captioning the image, bertstrips largely differ from most current meme-formats. Most current memes put a caption above the image that reads something like “When X does Y:” or “X be like:”. These give very little context and just present the image by telling the viewer what the meme-maker is referencing. Most current memes are built around reference-humor, making fun of current or relatable events that the viewer already knows. Therefore the viewer only needs a little hint to get the joke. Often there isn’t even a joke and it is just about the viewer for some odd reason being amazed that more than two people could have similar experiences in life or seen the same TV show. Bertstrips are decidedly different. The picture comes **first** and the caption is added in its own textbox **below** the image. The caption is not a hint to what the image is referencing, but tries to tell a story of what might be happening in the picture, either through description or dialogue. It is an explanation to the reader/viewer of what is happening, with the joke being that the description is highly inaccurate. As such bertstrips are largely unreliant on reference-humor and require actual writing skills and imagination to be good. For this reason, when reference-humor is used, it is usually in the form of biting satire. As such, bertstrips have little in common with most current memes, in fact I would go as far as arguing that it acts as a sort of modern reinvention of the epigram. Epigrams were short, explanatory satirical poems used since antiquity to comment on or explain pieces of artwork.

Textwise it should be mentioned that not every bertstrip has to be over-the-top edgy. Taking a picture out of context can be funny without being vulgar or offensive, for example by being overtly absurd. Additionally, there is even an entire sub-genre of bertstrips that is dedicated towards creating genuinely heartwarming or heartbreaking scenes. These can be found on [r/wholesomebertstrips](https://www.reddit.com/r/wholesomebertstrips).



Ernie and Bert are horrified as they find the Microsoft-Murderer’s latest victims: Clippy and his entire family



Every full moon, Ernie started walking on the ceiling and chanted Waltzing Matilda. Bert soon realized that he had become a were-australian.



After following the treasure map for months, Bert finally found the X that marked the spot. Ernie was his treasure all along

Meme, art or both?

“Satire is meant to ridicule power. If you are laughing at people who are hurting, it’s not satire, it’s bullying.”

- Sir Terry Pratchett

"What you lookin' at? You all a bunch of fuckin' assholes. You know why? You don't have the guts to be what you wanna be. You need people like me. You need people like me so you can point your fuckin' fingers and say, "That's the bad guy." So... what that make you? Good? You're not good. You just know how to hide, how to lie. Me, I don't have that problem. Me, I always tell the truth. Even when I lie. So say good night to the bad guy! Come on. The last time you gonna see a bad guy like this again, let me tell you. Come on. Make way for the bad guy. There's a bad guy comin' through! Better get outta his way!"

- Tony Montana, Scarface (1983)

Can bertstrips be described as an art-form? That of course depends on your view of what counts as art. In its most extreme definitions, everything, including bertstrips, could be called art. But of course that is pretty boring since if everything is art, nothing is. In my personal definition, with which you are certainly free to disagree, art has to have at least an expressive intent and at least some effort behind it. Skill and execution is only secondary. I would call bertstrips, and perhaps memes in general, a form of art. It bears a lot of hallmarks of what could be called postmodern art, such as the heavy reliance on text, abstraction and appropriation. The latter, the often non-transformative use of pre-existing material, is what forms the core of bertstrips. The possibility that bertstrips are postmodern art is rather ironic, as it is not uncommon that someone creates a bertstrip that makes fun of modern/postmodern art. I have been guilty of that myself in the past. All that said, bertstrips are certainly not a high art, given the subject-matter. A bertstrip will never hang in a museum, most will not even be remembered the week after they were posted. We are one of the weird parts of the internet, the ones that people make autism-jokes about. On bad days, we are the prime example that people point at to demonstrate how overly edgy humor is unfunny and the sad thing is that they are often right. On good days however, a bertstrip can be something truly wonderful. Thanks to a perfect mix of good writing and situational comedy we can bring joy and laughter into the world, even if it is just for a short moment in time. There is rarely a better feeling and a more noble cause in life. We may be scum, but we are not worthless.



Sticking his penis inside of a pencil sharpener was not a very good way to experience a sexual thrill for Grover.

If this ain't art, I don't know what is (Source unknown).



Instead of committing a mass shooting, Bert and Ernie realize they can kill a lot more people by keeping the capitalist system alive

An example of a bertstrip being used as political satire. Imagine how poorly Bert and Ernie have to treat their workers to sell apples that cheap.



Cookie Monster was going through some confusion with its gender-identity, but about one thing it was very certain: If Kermit made one more Attack Helicopter joke, it would bite his fucking head off.

I swear i did not know that "they" could be used as a pronoun for a single person when I made this strip and that's why I used "it", since Cookie Monster is technically, well, a monster. In hindsight I definitely regret the wording on this, though I hope the actual intent is obvious.



Bert and Ernie ecstatically discover that they can easily propagate their racist worldview by disguising it as satire on the internet

Where bertstrips can truly shine as a form of artistic expression is satire. The slippery slope of satire on the internet is however a form of reverse Poe's Law. People who have bad intents and morally reprehensible opinions, but are socially aware enough that their opinions are publicly unacceptable, will often use the excuse of satire to propagate and disguise their opinions. However, as Pratchett notes above, satire should not be used as your tool to express how you hate often oppressed minority demographics for wanting to be treated like human beings, as it really is not satire anymore at that point. Nonetheless, some rather despicable online-communities, which will not be named here, have been created over the years thanks to this technique, often by abusing previous genuine satire. Given how the subject of bertstrips is often rude, vulgar or offensive content, one might expect this community to be abused in the same manner, but the entire bizarre concept of the format surprisingly prevents this from happening. As the strip below explains, the humour in bertstrips derives from the contrast of childhood-idols indulging in immoral behaviour. If a bertstripper were to think that racism is not wrong, then the idea of Big Bird being abrasively racist towards black people would not be funny, as there would be no contrast. It is for reasons like this why you pretty much never see bertstrips that are openly mocking transgender people or women, but rather ones that make fun of a muppet's transphobia/misogyny. All that said, in recent years I have seen a disturbingly increasing amount of bertstrippers that are apparently too stupid to get the format and actually want to relate to the muppets' bigoted attitudes in the strips. I really want to stress that on most occasions, if you feel sympathy towards the protagonists of a bertstrip, there is most likely something *seriously wrong* with you. This development is especially worrying to me, as I intend on writing this book as a final gift to this sub before I depart from Reddit, so I fear of what will become of r/bertstrips if I am not there anymore as a moderator (though I do have some faith in my co-moderators). If the worst-

case scenario, a total takeover of actual racists, were to happen, I would not be mad at you. Worse. I would be disappointed at you, because I know you can do better. My parting advice is: Be less like r/gamersriseup and more like *The Filthy Frank Show*.



Amidst a wave of offensive subreddit bans, Count von Count makes a case in front of Reddit's grand jury for why r/bertstrips should be preserved: "While yes, we do use potentially offensive themes in many of our posts, the posts themselves are never meant to be offensive nor advocate the offensive content displayed. The themes are used to create an absurd and totally ridiculous mental image: Characters from childhood television, which are supposed to be role-models, performing acts that are seen as morally deplorable. The entire humor is derived from this dissonance. If bertstrippers thought acts such as rape, murder and racism were morally acceptable, then there would be no dissonance and therefore no humor. The subreddit would have no point. We are not offensive memes, we do not advocate morally deplorable acts and we do not follow any political agendas. We are just an abstract and satirical form of art that tries to create comedy in its own crude but charming way. If you think wanting to make people laugh is a crime, then you may gas me for the dirty Jew I am.

2. Characters and their tropes

Bert and Ernie: Partners in Crime

Bert and Ernie are characters created for Sesame Street by Don Sahlin and Jim Henson, originally voiced by Henson and Frank Oz. In the original show they were two loveable, kind characters, though with a very childlike intelligence. Many sketches of them consisted of Ernie unintentionally annoying the somewhat more mature Bert with his naivety.



“So, Bert, how did you like my ballad?”

“I want a divorce”

In the Bertstrip-Continuum most of these traits are either reversed or exaggerated to absurdity. The most obvious consistency across most bertstrips is that the two are treated like a gay/bisexual and very kinky couple, very similar to the *Bernie und Ert* sketches. This is largely based on the real-life rumours that the original characters are meant to be in a relationship, as they live in the same apartment and sleep in the same room (though in separated beds). Despite being in love, the range of abuse that the two can do to each other in a bertstrip can range from insulting banter, to rape all the way to extravagant murder. Of course they will indulge in these activities with other characters as well, being mean, violent and/or racist to everyone else around them.

Another consistent idea is that Bert has served in the Vietnam War (1955-1975) and suffers a post-traumatic stress-disorder from it. Most strips concerning this include either Bert telling someone about his experiences (which are often war-crimes he enjoyed committing) or Ernie deliberately triggering his PTSD to watch his reaction (which often results in Bert going berserk). Where this trope originates is hard to trace back, as so many bertstrips around this idea have been created. The most ludicrous, yet intriguing possibility is that it was *Sesame Street* itself that caused this joke. In a sketch titled “Ernie stops and thinks” from episode 4 of season 35 (2004), Ernie cannot sleep at night and decides to play his bugle. The sound wakes up Bert, who screams “Sergeant Bert reporting for duty!”, before he realizes he’s at home in his bed with Ernie. While this was just a throwaway-joke, it bears the



“You know, Ernie, what we did back in ‘Nam when the rations were low? We ate ass. And I don’t mean figuratively. The human buttox is roughly homologous to a cow’s rump- or round-steak and tastes just as good if cooked well. It also had a lot of nutritious fat. What we did is take the most rowdy prisoners, killed them and gave them to Skinner, our best cook. I will never forget that taste, it was heavenly. You know what the secret ingredient was? Torture. I still miss the taste. I miss it so much...”

implication that Bert at one point in his life had served in the military. This, combined with the fact he got reminded of it by Ernie making loud sounds, likely served as fuel for all sorts of PTSD-jokes. Interestingly, Bert's hijinx in Vietnam are often linked to the My Lai Massacre, though his involvement varies from strip to strip.

When Bert and Ernie are not being an abusive couple, they act as abusive parents to their adoptive(?) son Bort. In the original *Sesame Street* sketches he's actually named Brad and is Bert's nephew. Why bertstrippers have come to rename him Bort is unknown, though a common rumour is that it is short for abortion. Bort is often subject to the entire lexicon of child-abuse, from A for anal rape to Z for Zerstörung.

Examples:



Bert can barely contain his laughter while Ernie begs him to return his pet guinea pig. It isn't even medium rare yet.



To annoy all of Sesame Street, Ernie and Bert are already setting up the Christmas decorations in October



"You see this soap here, Bort? If you drop it we'll make sure you're paralysed from the waist down for the next three months!"



Bert felt nothing, even though his child was crying and his husband was yelling at him again. After 9 years in this marriage he has lost any emotions



"Hey, Bert, remember when I said 'no homo' after the 10-hour anal session? I lied."



See, Bert, this is my index finger. Next time you piss me off you'll get to see his brother here

Master Big Bird

If Bert and Ernie's racism is not enough for you, Big Bird will surely suffice. Instead of being the kind, loveable and child-like character played by Carroll Spinney, in the bertstrip universe he is, of all things, a pre-civil war plantation owner, black slaves and all, that somehow managed to survive into modern day with his business still intact. Most strips deal with him treating his slaves badly or generally being abrasive towards black people or women. However, it is not uncommon to see him have a general disdain for humans as a whole, regardless of ethnicity or gender. There are even a fair bit of stories that imply that Big Bird sees humans as a source of food, a particularly odd running gag with mysterious origins being that he likes to turn disobedient slaves into bone-broth soup. His hate of humans generally also applies to other muppets, with perhaps the only exception being Snuffy (which is oddly faithful to the source-material). The only other creatures he seems to have empathy for are other birds and apparently dinosaurs, since he technically is one.

As we shall see in the extended lore, Big Bird is perhaps not just the master over many slaves, but may also hold powers beyond comprehension. There are many signs that he is some kind of eldritch abomination neither from the Bertstrip-Continuum nor from any other known reality. He cannot be killed, only temporarily halted.

Examples:



Big Bird tortures Alan by meticulously describing to him how he will horribly disfigure his beloved childhood teddy bear



Big Bird requests to be treated by a white, male doctor instead



Big Bird does his hourly drive-by of laughing at the slaves on his plantation.

The oldest known plantation-owner Big Bird strip, made by u/MasterBetaClub



“Wir müssen die Menschheit ausrotten“, Big Bird, ruler of birdkind, announces to his subjects after little Pingu told him about how climate change has destroyed his species' way of life.



“Dinosaurs with feathers aren’t scary“, Big Bird heard the children say after reading a science book to them. Unbeknownst to them, he was a basal ornithuran bird, meaning he still possessed reptilian teeth at the back of his beak perfectly adapted for ripping apart the flesh of inferior mammals. They would never disrespect the ancestors again.



Elmo and Abby are astounded. Despite suffering from Alzheimer’s for years, old Big Bird was still able to remember his best friend.



“Vote for me, Big Bird, because I am for true equality! I see all humans, be they black, white, gay, christian, muslim, healthy or disabled, equally... as prey.“

Grover & Mr. Johnson

In the original sketches, Grover was a bumbling buffoon who, through his incompetence and naivety, often unintentionally caused discomfort to Mr. Johnson, who in turn was often too polite to get enraged at him or complain. Bertstrippers have taken this up to eleven. Now it is Grover’s full sadistic intent to make Johnson’s life a living hell by harming him daily in many unexpected ways, destroying any joy he might have had in life. This may range from spoiling movies all the way to outright torture. Great deal is made of the fact that Grover once murdered Johnson’s wife, though the exact details and reasons vary from story to story. Grover’s most common form of torture is simply reminding Mr. Johnson of this act and how much joy it has taken from the latter’s life. While rare, it is not unheard of that Johnson takes matter into his own hand and takes his revenge out on Grover, either through physical or psychological harm. The success-rate of this again varies from story to story. Some bertstrips and parts of the deep lore suggest that despite their seemingly antagonistic relationship, Grover and Johnson actually enjoy each other’s company and shenanigans, perhaps as some form of hate-love. If another person tries to bully Mr. Johnson, Grover will actually protect him, as he sees Johnson



Johnson was pretty sure “Old Town Road” didn’t contain the lyrics “Soaked your wife in olive oil, baked her til she screamed no more”

by u/Hoxomo



Mr. Johnson was devastated when he found that Grover jizzed all over his oatmeal this morning.

by u/Kyleboy21

as his property/bitch. They are also not beyond cooperating with each other to reach a common goal.

A possible alter ego of Grover is Super Grover. While he is a superhero with similar powers to Superman, most bertstrips about him revolve around the fact that he is absolutely incompetent at his job and/or can be easily bribed. Some strips even imply that he is an outright supervillain that abuses his powers for doing great evil.



“Anyway, I guess what I wanted to say is this: Have you ever seen Grover and Super Grover together in the same room? What makes you so sure they aren’t the same person?”

Elmo/Incelmo

Elmo in the Bertstrip-Continuum is sort-of a free-for-all, as in he has no strictly defined characteristics and can and will be portrayed indulging into any thinkable immoral activity. There still are some consistencies across bertstrips. For one, Elmo seems to be a sexual deviant in particular, with many strips portraying him being either interested in older/taller women, sexually harassing people or even engaging in bestiality. There are also somewhat frequent jokes involving him about communism and/or world-conquest and politics, likely in reference to his red coloration. Fans of *C&C: Red Alert* will be pleased with him.



Despite the overwhelming evidence against him, President Elmo knows his impeachment trial is stacked in his favor, as the Senate is full of spineless, feckless rat bastards just like him.

by u/Brentzkrieg_

An alter ego of Elmo is Incelmo, who, as the name implies, is an incel. In case you are unaware, incel is short for “involuntary celibate”. While the original meaning may sound rather neutral, the term incel has come to define a specific and by now infamous subset of people online. These incels are people who claim that they cannot get laid because society finds them undesirable, reasons being either that they look conventionally unattractive, are loveable but dorky nerds and/or feminism has created too high standards by which women choose men. However, the reality is that most incels are people that are too lazy to care about their own self, are overtly misogynistic or otherwise mean to other human beings, have too high standards by which they choose women and are generally toxic without realising it. It is often this lack of retrospective and self-improvement that prevents them from attaining any meaningful relationship.⁴ Incelmo

⁴ I believe I can say this with a certain degree of my own experience as I used to be in a very similar place at one point in my life. Thankfully I greatly worked on myself before I could discover these toxic online communities, worked out, came to terms with my own sexuality, dated an Israeli drag-queen for a couple of months and now am in a happy, long-lasting relationship with a nice girl from Mexico. Is this too much personal information to reveal in a public online document? Yes, but this is a shitty book about bertstrips, so who the fuck is gonna believe any of this anyway?

is the embodiment of all these traits, coming even with the proper slang-terms, and strips about him serve to mock these types of people.

Examples:



Incelmo develops crippling depression after none of the girls he whiteknights for on Reddit offer to suck his cock in return

by u/solarscopez



Incelmo feels mugged by Bert's supreme jawline.

by u/FunIk



After conquering the Moon, Elmo can finally begin his reign of glorious space communism

Zionist Count von Count

Count von Count is an undead vampire with a long nose and a foreign accent. What do we geniuses over at r/bertstrips turn him into? A Jewish stereotype of course, despite his original design, accent and mannerisms being a clear parody of Hungarian Dracula-actor Bela Lugosi. Again, nobody said this was high art. The Count largely serves two function in bertstrips: A) Be a victim of other muppets' anti-semitism or B) Making fun of anti-semitic stereotypes by derailing them into the absurd. On rare occasions he is also used to mock the nationalistic policies of the illegitimate state of Israel. Many more strips don't have anything to do with Jewish stereotypes at all and instead just take the Count's original characteristics, counting and vampirism, and exaggerate them to ridiculous degrees.



Count von Count accidentally uses regular salt instead of Kosher salt in his potato latkes and is sent straight to the fiery, cavernous pits of Jewish Hell for his sin.

By u/solarscopez. I just want to note that the concept of hell does not exist in Judaism.

Examples:



For mocking his people's slavery under the Pharaohs, the Count uses his vile jew sorcery to directly attack Bert's credit score.

Source unknown



Ernie is petrified as he watches Bert transform into the Werejew



"I don't get it, Bert. I had sex with the Count to become a vampire, but I can still see myself in the mirror"

"Ernie, that's not how vampirism is transmitted"

"Goddammit! That motherfucker lied to me!"

by u/cyrusasu



"He finally did it... The Count divided by Zero."

Bert and Ernie silently screamed as all existance started to fade into darkness

Cookie Monster, the sole innocent?

There certainly are some bertstrips that portray Cookie Monster in a negative light, but most of them are rather unoriginal. Like, come on, comparing his obsession with cookies to drug addiction? You know your joke is lame when even *Family Guy* has made that gag. Far more interesting are the bertstrips that portray Cookie Monster as an innocent foil to the other muppets' crude shenanigans. In these it often seems like it is the actual Cookie Monster from the original *Sesame Street* who somehow managed to slip into the Bertstrip-Continuum without noticing. This contrasting effect can have great results and is often used in many classic comedies.

This used to be my most upvoted post on Reddit, with currently 15k upvotes, before being overtaken by the one of the top, with currently 17k votes. Do you believe God stays in heaven because he too lives in fear of what he has created?



At first Cookie Monster was confused why he was sent to hell by God, but then he realized that the sinners had all been turned into cookies. He wasn't being punished, he was the punishment.



Cookie Monster happily helped preparing the birthday-cake for Ernie's girlfriend until he saw the number of candles on it

Example:



Cookie Monster thought it was a nice idea to make a special episode of Sesame Street in Hebrew for Israeli kids, but his mood soon changed when Ernie started explaining to them how to correctly stone Palestinian children to death

Imam Telly

Similarly to Elmo, Telly has no clear character-traits and behaves simply according to what is required from him for the bertstrip to work. He however does have an alter ego, called Imam Telly. As you can imagine, similarly to Zionist Count, Imam Telly is used to make all sorts of jokes about terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, wahabism and so on. Curiously, Imam Telly is rarely used nowadays in bertstrips and has become somewhat of a dead trope. Why is hard to say, though the character should still be remembered, as he might become relevant again in the future.



Imam Telly tries to console Baby Bear. It was only through Jihad that his parents could receive Allah's mercy.

by u/TempusCavus

Kermit & Company

While not featured as often as the characters from *Sesame Street*, Kermit and the other characters from *The Muppet Show*, such as Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear and Gonzo do have their fair share of bertstrip-appearances. Kermit does not have a certain set of characteristics, sometimes being absolutely vile, sometimes absolutely innocent. Most of the time bertstrips about the *Muppet Show* cast simply exaggerate the original character-traits. Interestingly there is a significant number of Kermit-strips that concern is strong relationship to Jim Henson, his creator and original puppeteer/voice. Most of the time these are of a sentimental or meta nature.

Examples:



“What’s in the box, Cookie Monster? No really, what’s in the box? I’m serious! Stop fucking with me! What’s in the box?! What’s in the goddamn box?!”

For the Warhammer Fantasy fans out there:



Great Slann Kermit was about to devour these filthy warmbloods for setting foot into his temple city. They may have good disguises, but he knows a Skaven when he sees them.



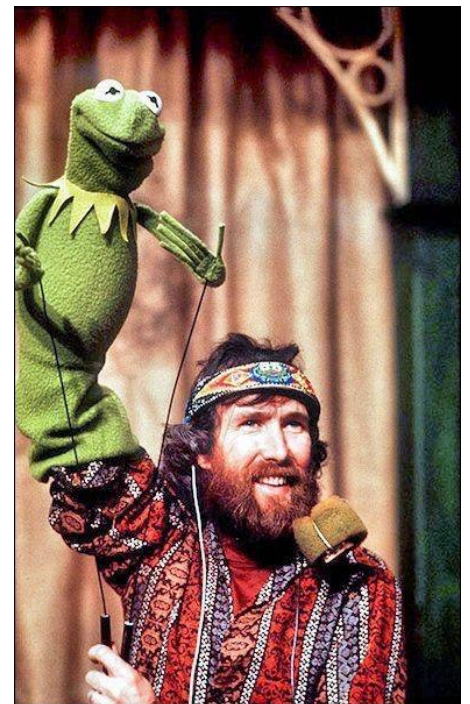
No domestic abuse charge can stop Miss Piggy from beating Kermit’s cheating ass



Kermit and his crew aren’t surprised of what they saw after they infiltrated Facebook headquarters



The little bitch being unable to sing the alphabet without saying “Cookie Monster” became the final reason why Kermit left the show



To beat his benzo-addiction, Kermit was willing to try out all sorts of experimental treatments, despite what the doctors said.

Any allusion to real-world, frog-voiced Canadian grifters is 100% intentional. Last time I heard, Mikhaila Peterson has got a *Weekend at Bernie’s*-Situation going on with her father, which makes this strip even better in hindsight.



As the greenscreen behind him failed and he realized that he was constantly being observed by cameras, Kermit got a creeping feeling that there's something off about Sesame Street. The ultimate shock came when he finally felt the human hand up his rectum



Miss Piggy can't believe that Kermit still wants to revive that dead meme

Yoda

By most definitions, Yoda should not be considered part of the bertstrip-canon. As he was however created and puppeteered by Frank Oz, there have been some crossovers, like the one on the right, which should be able to be used for bertstrips without problems.

The real reason why he is mentioned here is out of pure solidarity with our fallen comrades over at r/legoyoda. Lego Yoda memes were a series of stock images of Lego Yoda (either from the *Lego Star Wars* games or the actual toy itself) overlaid with monologue, often in actual Yoda-speech (Object-Subject-Verb), of what Yoda is thinking, doing or

has done. The most often re-occurring running gags were that Lego Yoda was severely addicted to ketamine, possessed a 2001 Honda Civic and liked running over minorities with said 2001 Honda Civic.⁵ These memes often followed a similar philosophy to bertstrips and both communities had a considerable overlap. Unfortunately, the entire subreddit of r/legoyoda was completely deleted by the Reddit Admins in 2019 after it gained sizeable popularity, without any prior warning or stated reason. Any related subreddits that tried to recreate the experience



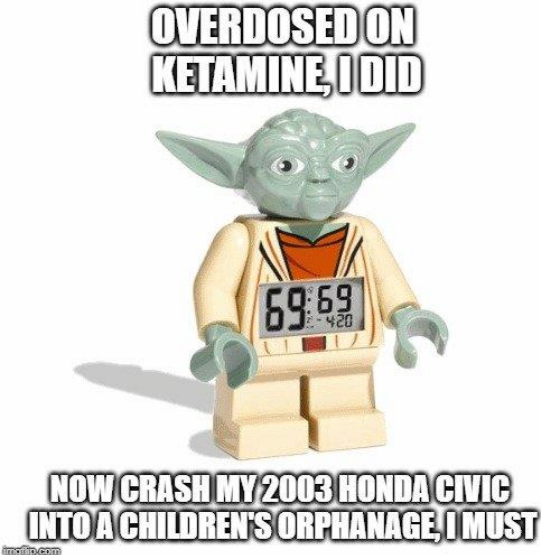
"r/legoyoda this is not. Accidentally landed on r/bertstrips I did. Looking like she got ketamine fat pig still does."

⁵ For more information, go here: <https://gfycat.com/loathsomedescriptiveaquaticleech>

were consequently removed as well. Lego Yoda’s memes have consequently been nearly extinguished, his legacy forgotten. The exact reasons for the ban are still not known today, though speculation is that Disney told Reddit CEO Steve Huffman⁶ that they did not like their property being associated with outwardly racist memes. The possibility that something similar might happen to r/bertstrips one day should be one of great concern to us. It was one of the main driving factors for me to chronicle this subreddit’s history in a place that cannot be destroyed by Reddit. I am sorry, Lego Yoda, I was too late to do the same for you.



Source unknown



Source unknown

⁶ Who is in fact a libertarian doomsday-prepper dreaming about being a post-apocalyptic, feudal slave-lord. I am not making this up: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/30/doomsday-prep-for-the-super-rich>

3. The Deep-Lore

Preliminary notes on the lore

Bertstories were multi-part bertstrips that told an overarching story, sometimes even called saga. While some short multi-part bertstrips did exist before, the format was largely popularized after my first Cursed Souls season. Many bertstories were created throughout the years, a lot more than are featured in this book. I decided to so far only include those which have direct connection to the deep-lore, however more could certainly be added in future editions.

Regarding the reading-order, I decided to order them based on when they might have actually happened in-universe. If you however want to read them in the actual timeline of release, the order would be:

1. Cursed Souls (began in June 18th 2018)
2. Bearvolution
3. The Saga of Super Grover
4. The Darksphere
5. The Good, The Bert and the Ugly
6. Johnson's Gambit
7. Final Solution
8. Kookie Kong
9. Last Muppet on Earth
10. SCP-ERN-13 (ended in June 2019)

The stories can be further divided into shorter cycles. The most coherent and relevant one for the deep-lore is what I call the End Times Cycle. It (presumably) takes place in the future of our current Bertstrip-Continuum and consists of:

1. Cursed Souls
2. Bearvolution
3. Last Muppet on Earth

There is also the Historical Hijinx Cycle, taking place in the past and consisting of The Good, The Bert and Ugly, Kookie Kong and Final Solution. The Saga of Super Grover, Darksphere and Johnson's Gambit can be grouped into a Modern Days Cycle, alongside many other

bertstrips not featured, and takes place in the present. When and where in the timeline SCP-ERN13 takes place is debatable, as is Last Muppet on Earth.

Some other notes: you may have already noticed that in many of my old bertstrips the upper-case commas are reversed. When people asked me about this, I often jokingly told them that I'm from Australia. In reality it is because I was using a German keyboard at the time. Regarding the style of writing, the stories were often told one or two posts per day. Similar to serials, this created anticipation and speculation among the readers, leading them to come back for the next part. However, this also meant that new readers might get to see the new parts without having seen the previous ones. Many of the posts therefore keep repeating things, in order to give new readers context. I therefore hope you can excuse the perhaps annoying repetition, as these bertstories were originally not intended to be read in a single sitting.

Regarding the question of if I will ever write another bertstory again: if I ever do, I imagine it being about Bert's time in Vietnam. Surprisingly that has never been explored in detail yet.



“Bert, I can't sleep, can you tell me a bedtime story?”

“Sure thing, Ernie: So there I was, with my platoon, in a little village near the Mekong. I remember it like it was yesterday, because I lost my virginity that day. It was called Mỹ Lai, as I later learned, and we...”

The Good, The Bert and the Ugly



We write the year 1863. Generals Robert Ernie Lee and Bertram Lincoln are on a secret mission into the South to capture its wealthiest plantation owner, Big Bird, who is also the largest private funder of the Confederacy. If he falls, the South will fall too. "Bertram, tell me again why we are fighting for the Union? I thought you were in favour of slavery?" "Mr. E. Lee, if there is one thing I hate more than the blacks, it is Florida"



"Mr. Bird, why did my friend have to die?"
"She was a trouble-maker, Elmo. She was disobedient, she didn't meet her harvest-goals, her crying distracted the others from work and she kept running away. I also couldn't resell her after we cut off her foot. Tell me, Elmo, what do you do with a disobedient dog that can't be tamed?"
"You...you put him down"
"Exactly. Now get back to work"



General Robert Ernie Lee intercepts possible communications between Big Bird and his allies, unaware that the year is 1863 and it would be another 33 years before radio-communication would even be invented



Big Bird enjoys the bone-broth made from the last slave who tried to escape. There have been a lot lately, ever since the war broke out, but it doesn't seem to bother him. More soup for him, after all



Generals Robert Ernie Lee and Bertram Lincoln must pass the bayous on their secret journey into the South

“Mr E. Lee, is it normal for an alligator to grow 9m long and walk on two legs like a bird?”

“Not as far as I know, Bertram. That sounds more like one of the fossil beasts that Marsh and Cope dug up. Allosaurus, I think, they called it. Why are you asking?”

“This one doesn’t look like a fossil to me“



“Hey, slave! You want to jump?! Come on! Do it! Make my day! You think you’re not replacable like all the other dirty ni**ers I bought here?! If you think we’ll bury your corpse, you haven’t been paying attention, soup-boy!”



“Remember, Mr. E. Lee, this is a secret mission. We have to blend in with the other Southerners in order to not get caught“

“Blend in you say...hmmm...Hey, you over there! Yes, you, dirty hook-nose! Get the fuck out of our country and give back the money you stole or we’ll cut your dick right off with a flaming blade!“

“Excellent, Robert! Spoken like a true Southerner!“

“I’m sorry I interrupted you, Bertram. We were talking about blending in? Got any idea how?“



Big Bird invites his slaves to dinner to show them that he is a generous god



“Here’s the plan, Bertram: I disguise myself as a beautiful lady, seduce Big Bird, lead him to a nice Inn, you hide inside a closet, I sleep with him and after we’re finished you step out of the closet and shoot him in the back of the head“

“But Mr. E. Lee, I still don’t understand why you have to sleep with the traitor. Can’t I just shoot him in the head after you enter the roo...“

“Shhh...shhh! Who cares about the details, Bertram?“



“Listen here, you little shit. I don’t care that you’re starving. If you don’t get back to work we won’t make enough profit, can’t fund our glorious confederacy and will be overrun by the dirty Northerners and their tyrant Lincoln. Do you want that?!“



“I’m so sorry, Bertram! My seduction-skills failed me! He barely even noticed me at the bar!”

“Don’t worry, Mr. E. Lee, I got a new plan! My observations showed me that there is great dissent among the slaves of Big Bird’s plantation. If we can somehow incite a slave-rebellion, we can capture Bird among the chaos”

“But Bertram...”

“What?”

“What about my feelings?!”



Three years into the War of Northern Aggression, Big Bird’s slaves are starting to look funny at him. It makes him feel uncomfortable, but strangely he can’t find his whip anymore



Big Bird tries to hold off the slave-rebellion with his good old M1841 Mississippi Rifle



Against all odds, Big Bird manages to escape from his rioting plantation, but not without his horse running over at least seven children



With his last two loyal slaves, Big Bird tries to flee over the Mississippi. They ask him why he didn't bring any food with him, but he just laughs, for they don't realize that he did



“Great job, Bertram, great job. Now we have to chase the fucker all over the Mississippi river“

“Who are you calling a fucker, Robert? You're the one who originally wanted to bang him while I shoot him in the head!“



“I can see him Mr. E. Lee! He's in the raft right there! Right behind the...the...huge alligator“

“That's not an alligator, Bertram! The allosaur has learned how to swim! Row! Row for your life!“



Ernie Lee wakes up, alone, face-down on the river-bank, unable to remember what happened after their boat capsized. All he finds is a letter saying:

“Dear General Robert Ernie Lee. Congratulations on destroying my plantation-business and thus dooming the Confederacy to lose the war. As you may expect I can’t take it lightly that you damn, dirty Northerners took our independence, so I took something from you as well. I will take Bertram Lincoln with me to Mexico, where I will do with him what I do with all who oppose me. Love, Big Bird. PS: How the fuck did you get past my pet dinosaur?!“

“Mexico?! Fucking hell!! Ah, well, at least it’s not Brazil. Anything but Brazil!“



“And you say they work just as well as black slaves?”

“Si señor pájaro“

“Good. I guess I can restart life here by planting Marihuana. Good thing it will be another century until the war on drugs starts.“



General Robert Ernie Lee saddles his noble steed and makes his way to Mexico to rescue Bertram Lincoln from the fangs of Big Bird. Supporting the Confederacy was one thing, but abducting his best friend made it personal.



“What are you doing with me?!“

“It is soup-time, bitch! Don’t worry, I’ll boil you really slow so you’ll still be alive when your skin melts off. Too bad E. Lee won’t be here to save you!“



After torturing Bertram in boiling water for 8 hours, Big Bird finally goes outside to relieve himself, only to be surprised by General E. Lee

“Expecting somebody else, you Asian turkey?“

“Asian turkey? What?“

“It’s...because you’re yellow and...a bird...“

“Oh...clever.“

There was an awkward pause before E. Lee simply shot him in the groin



Big Bird was unfazed by being shot. Silently the mad brute grabbed Robert Ernie Lee by the neck and started squeezing. E. Lee was too overwhelmed to fight back and in terror saw his life flashing before his eyes. His only regret was that he didn't shoot enough
Mexicans.



Big Bird drops E. Lee to the ground after being surprised by the allosaur which has followed Lee all the way from the states. Ernie Lee can't believe his luck and quickly pulls out his knife



After skinning Big Bird alive, General Robert Ernie Lee uses his hide as a disguise to sneak into his plantation and save Bertram. He finds the key to his cell in an open drawer, alongside a map that says "Treasure of King H'aggin", but he is too occupied to take notice



"Well, what an adventure that was, Mr. E. Lee"

"Indeed. I'm by the way very sorry for not rescuing you earlier and the boiling water turning your balls into fried eggs"

"It could be worse Mr. E. Lee. Imagine being one of the thousands of freed slaves that still have to work for their former masters with an extremely low salary, the same poor living-conditions and no right to vote, making the Civil War essentially a useless bloodbath and responsible for setting back the industrial development of half the United States by almost a century"

"Wait, what?!"



The legends say that the ghosts of Robert Ernie Lee, Bertram Lincoln and Big Bird still meet with the other cursed souls to reminisce about the old times and also haunt the descendants of freed slaves with awful country-music

Commentary

After having already written a couple of bertstories I searched for new ideas. The previous ones I made were all either set in the present or the future of the Bertstrip-Continuum, so I got the idea to make one about the past and perhaps explore some character origins. The first one that came to mind was Big Bird and why he was an antebellum slave-owner. While in the end I did not actually explore this origin story, it gave me the idea to make a bertstory set during the American Civil War. It was the perfect setting when you think about it, as we already had a character fit for the time and there were plenty of opportunities to make edgy jokes about racism, slavery and war, mixed with Spaghetti-Western style grey-and-orange morality.

Historical accuracy was of course not of main concern, as the part about radio-communication shows. A less obvious anachronism is the joke about Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh, as the Bone Wars began in 1877, while the Civil War ended in 1865. Regarding that part, you will quickly notice that this won't be the last time I make jokes about dinosaurs or paleontology in these stories, as the field is somewhat of a hobby of mine.

Regarding the lore, the fact that Big Bird is simply Big Bird in this and not some historical ancestor, like Bertram or Robert, should be your first clue that something strange is going on with him. You should also keep the name King H'aggin in the back of your head.



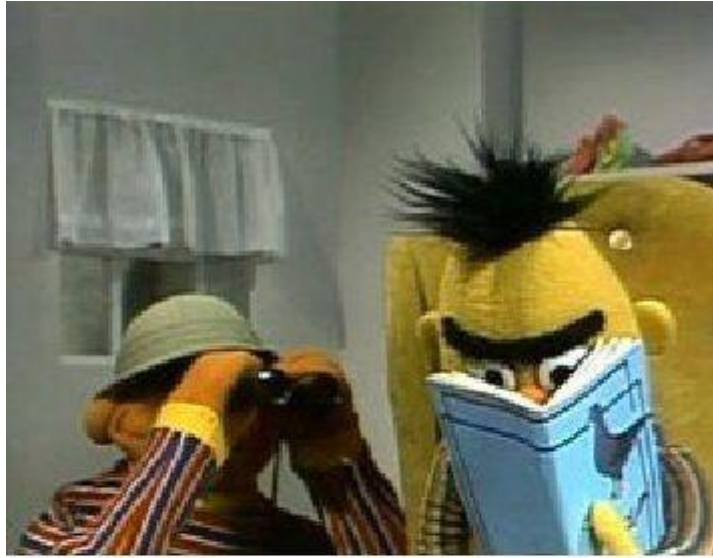
George Ernington, founding father of the United Sesame States, writes down the first amendment of the new nation's constitution, which grants every free citizen of r/bertstrips an N-Word-Pass

But alas, everyone on the subreddit was but a slave, granting the pass to none.



To show them that he is not racist, Big Bird whips his slaves to the rhythm of Michael Jackson's Beat It

Kookie Kong



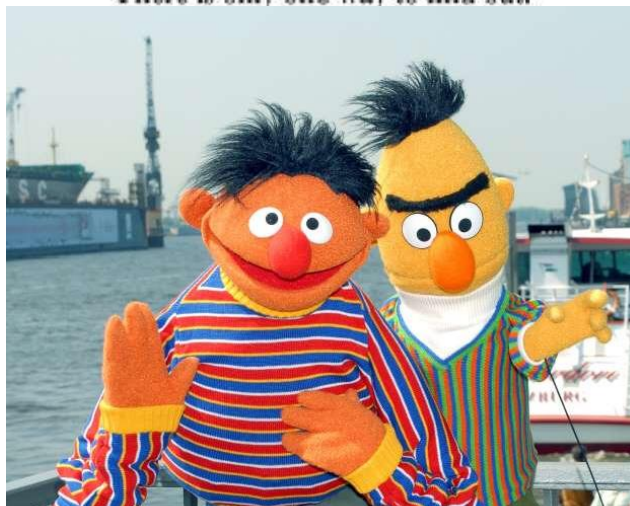
The year is 1933. Out of a job, documentary-filmer Ernie Denham and screen-writer Bert Driscoll search for new locations on which to shoot movies. Driscoll shows Denham an ancient manuscript he found that tells of an island that time forgot

"I don't know, Ernie. I think there is something wrong with this island"

"There is nothing officially wrong with it, Driscoll, because technically it hasn't been discovered yet"

"Aha...and may I ask if there is any particular reason why it is called Skullfucker Island?"

"There is only one way to find out!"



Ernie Denham and Bert Driscoll try to get to the legendary Skullfucker Island, but don't have money to hire a ship. Thus they pretend to be prostitutes in hopes that some sailors will pick them up.



“Ernie, what happened to the Captain?”

“Well, he didn’t want to take us to the island, so I stabbed him thirty-seven times in the chest, ate his liver and declared myself Captain“

“YOU WHAT?!”

“Just kidding. He already went down after twenty“



“Look there, Bert! A plesiosaur! That must be it! We found Skullfucker Island!“

“But Ernie that can’t be a plesiosaur. Modern paleontology has shown that they couldn’t stretch their necks vertically out of the water like that“

“I don’t remember asking you a goddamn thing, so shut the fuck up“



Crewmember Grover is viciously mauled to death by a carnivorous Sumatran dwarf-mastodon



“So, Ernie, what exactly do you expect to find on this island”

“I’m not sure, Bert. The manuscript told of all kinds of horrors. Creatures that should have been extinct for ages and ones that should not exist at all by any laws of nature. It also told of a gigantic blue monster. The eighth wonder of the wo... wait, did you hear that?”

“Yes I did... I don’t think we’re alone on this island”



The natives of Skullfucker Island spot the two explorers.

“Look there, Ernok! Tourists! Get the souvenirs out, we’re gonna make some money!”

“No wait, Beret, look at them. They’re white trash without cash. Get the grill going instead, we’re gonna eat some crackers today!”



The island-natives Ernok and Beret watch in anticipation as they see the two explorers walk obliviously into the valley of the bone-eating bird



The map said that the mysterious island was home to living dinosaurs, but Ernie expected something less technically correct



A terrifyingly loud primordial roar echoes through the jungle

“Did...did you just hear that, Ernie?”

“Yes I did! That must be it, Bert! The gigantic blue monster the map was talking about“

“Oh thank god! For a second I thought you let out a fat fart again“



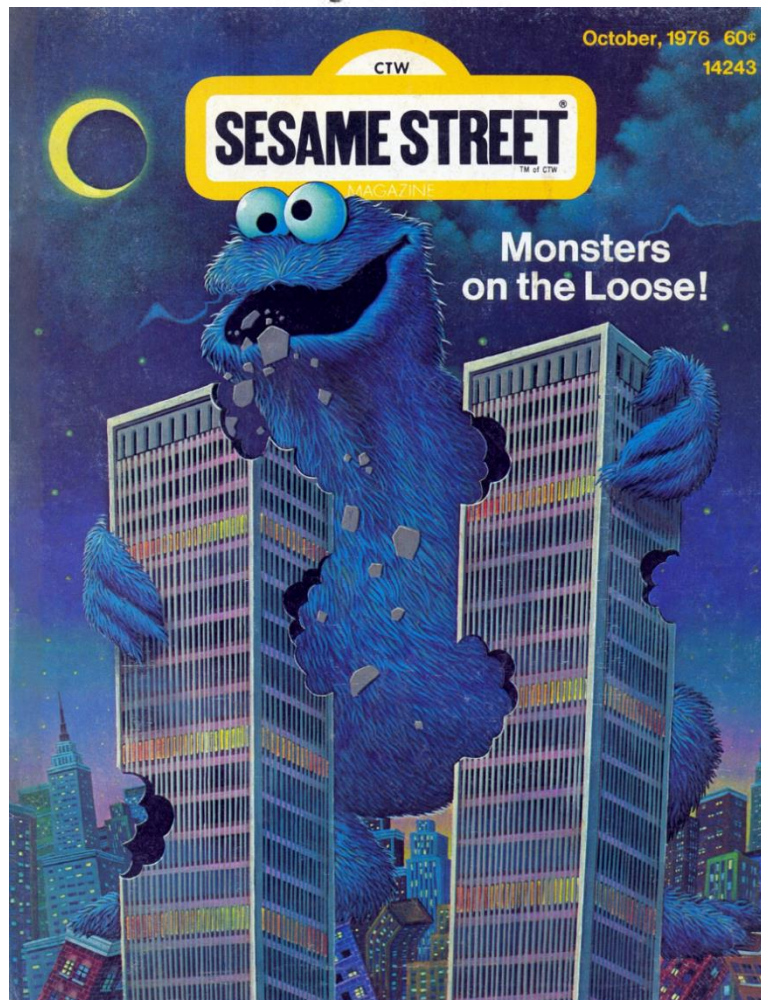
Bert Driscoll looks up in awe as they encounter a gigantic, prehistoric Cookie Monster in the jungle, while Ernie Denham can't take his eyes off the humongous blue King Dong dangling in front of them



Bert and Ernie manage to sedate Kookie Kong by feeding it a human sacrifice that they rectally shoved a bottle of chloroform into



“Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you Kookie Kong, the 8th wonder of the world“, Bert Driscoll announced to the crowds as Ernie Denham watched the beast behind them break away from its chains and start eating the audience



On his way to the Empire State Building, Kookie Kong stops to destroy the Twin Towers in order to troll Al-Qaeda



As the airplanes approach,
Kookie Kong realizes that
climbing the Empire State
Building was a pretty stupid
idea



“This is it, Ernie. We have brought Kookie Kong into the city and now we have to stop him before he destroys everything“

“Yeah, sure. Just remember to not shoot at the civilians like you did back in the war“



Kookie Kong loses the fight against the planes and falls to his death. “Why the fuck did he even climb up there?“, Ernie Denham asks himself, “I guess it doesn’t matter now, the airplanes got him“

“No, it wasn’t the airplanes“, Bert Driscoll tells him, “It was cookie killed the Beast“

Commentary

Ever since growing up as a child with the 2005 remake by Peter Jackson I was a huge fan of King Kong and the world he inhabited. This parody was possibly my least upvoted bertstory (except for the one strip where Cookie Monster destroys the Twin Towers), but I did not care much because it was mostly a passion-project.⁷ After the edgefest that was Final Solution I also just wanted to go back to some light-hearted silliness. If you notice, I included references to both the 1933 original and the Jackson remake into the story. The “plesiosaur” that Bert and Ernie encounter is a reference to a scrapped script from the 1933 movie in which crew of the Venture first encounter a sea-serpent before they land on Skull Island. The line “There is nothing officially wrong with it, Driscoll, because technically it hasn’t been discovered yet” is directly lifted from the 2005 movie while the Sumatran Dwarf Mastodon is a reference to the Sumatran Rat Monkey from Jackson’s other movie *Braindead* (which has a sort-of cameo in *King Kong*).



The board-game Jumanji takes revenge on Bert for convincing Robin Williams to commit suicide



Caveman Elmok is sorted out of the gene pool for being dumb enough to turn his back to an ambushing mammoth.

To bring up the Twin Towers again, a lot of people asked how an official image of Cookie Monster committing a Godzilla-style 9/11 came into being. I was baffled myself and tried to do a bit of research. From what I gathered it was the cover of a book that came out in 1976, around the same time as the shitty Dino De Laurentiis remake of *King Kong*, in which Kong climbs up the World Trade Center instead of the Empire State Building (he even stands on top of the towers in the movie-poster). The book-cover is therefore likely a reference to the movie that just aged like milk... or wine in our case.

On a last note, does anyone remember the videogame for the 2005 movie? That shit was lit. Straight-up fun survival horror.

⁷ I even made an animated intro: <https://imgur.com/a/eEpT4eW>

Final Solution



“Just dance Snuffy. No matter what, just keep dancing with me“

“I‘m scared, Big Bird. I don‘t want to die“

“I know Snuffy, me too. Just do what I say and everything will be fine“

Bird knew that was a lie. He saw what happened to the other artists at the concentration camp before. The Nazis just sent them to the chambers once they became bored with them.



Obersturmführer Berthold and Doktor Erngele, stationed in their beloved Auschwitz, panic as the radio-presenter informs that the 6th army got obliterated at Stalingrad. Nothing will save them now from the red wrath of Bolshoi Bird.



After a won battle, Bolshoi Bird, general of the Groviet Union's 7th army, hunts down the last few soldiers of the Bert Reich. He needs soup for his troops



“Dr. Erngele, I have just been informed that you have ordered ALL the prisoners to be sent to the ovens!!! Are you fucking kidding me?!?”

“The red army is advancing, Berthold, and if they get us alive we will be tried for crimes against humanity! We have to burn all the evidence before they can reach us!”



“This is really bad, Berthold. Not only is the red army advancing onto our concentration camp, but you’re also developing heart-problems“

“Dr. Erngele, what was in that soap you gave me?“



“Heureka, Berthold! I know how to defeat the Groviet Union and solve your heart-problem at the same time! Through my superior, German medical knowledge I will transform you into the Aryan Übermensch!“

“But Dr. Erngele, according to Nietzsche the Übermensch is a purely philosophical allegory, an idealistic goal for humanity as a whole, not an actual biologic or ethnic entity“

“You shut your dirty whore-mouth, Berthold!“



Dr. Josef Erngele tightens the straightjacket of his next “patient“. The most unethical of all human-experiments so far was about to begin.



“The operation is complete, Berthold! You have now become my Übermensch. When I click this button you will be fully charged with aurochs-testosterone and capable of defeating the red army all by yourself“

“JHAWWWW!!! MY BALLS!!!!“

“Okay...that was actually not supposed to happen...but I like the results“



Bolshoi Bird details the battle-plan for the invasion of the concentration camp. The main army will encircle it while he and his elite forces will strike from the South-East



Doktor Josef Erngele and Oberst Berthold wake up in terror amidst the sounds of gun-fire and explosives as their concentration camp is overrun by the red army: “This is it, Josef! First they will murder us, then they will turn us into bone-broth-soup and then they will equally distribute the soup! I don’t want to die as a slut!”



Dr. Erngele tries activating his surgically modified Überbert to combat the invading groviets, but watches in horror as Berthold just becomes partially limp and shits his pants. The experiment was a failure.



Doktor Erngele watches in shock as Kadett Krümelmonster is shot in the back by the red army and gives one last Sieg Heil



Dr. Erngele and Oberst Berthold examine the escape-routes of their bunker to evade capture by the groviets



Groverchev and Elmoyet interrogate the last survivor of the concentration camp to find out where the legendary Nazi-doctor Josef Erngele has fled



Bolshoi Bird realizes that burning down the concentration camp maybe wasn't the best way to save all the prisoners inside it. At least one managed to get out well-roasted



After escaping captian by the groviets, Dr. Erngele and Obersturmführer Berthold enjoy their life's evening on the Brazilian beaches and watch their son, Bortsonaro, build sandcastles. They hope he'll become a politician one day.

Commentary

I got the idea for this one from a Reddit-comment. I believe someone else made a bertstrip about the Holocaust with the title Final Solution and someone commented that the strip and title feel like a bertstory of mine. Honestly though, a bertstory set during the Holocaust was only a matter of time. It was the ultimate final frontier of edge, the edge to end all edges. It had to go down that direction eventually. If I didn't do it someone else would have.

As you notice, I put in a lot subtle and perhaps not so subtle (Stichwort: Seife) references to actual events and people, such as the destruction of evidence by the Nazis, enslavement, Doctor Mengele's horrifyingly useless human experimentations, the abuse of Nietzsche's philosophy by anti-semites and the many escapes to South America. The truly terrifying thing is that I barely had to exaggerate these, the comedy purely derived from muppets committing these crimes.

I am not proud of what I have created, especially as someone from a German-speaking country. Like I said, if I didn't do it, someone else would have. I did not want to find out what that someone would have done.



After Ernie and Bert convinced Margaret Thatcher to start a counter-attack on Argentina during the Falklands War, Big Bird begins to wonder if they may be on the wrong side of history

The Saga of Super Grover (by u/ibeverycorrect)



Here we catch a glimpse of Super Grover-date: September 11, 2001. He spent his mornings chatting with Dale the newspaper boy near the WTC. However, today would prove to be a life-changing event for both Super Grover & Dale. After chatting about "Dem Yanks"'s chances of success & whether Michael Bloomberg or Mark Green will succeed Rudy Giuliani, the 1st plane hit. A freelance photographer happened to capture the moment that doomed Super Grover, eventually being personally ousted by Giuliani. However, in the scuffle, Dale manage to obtain Super Grover's cape, eventually being able to retire a millionaire after an anonymous billionaire bought the cape to burn it, hoping to erase the object that was responsible for a dark chapter in the City that Never Sleeps.



As he is being escorted out of New York City, Civilian Grover puts his stuff in a RENT-N-RUN to make his way west towards Joliet, Illinois. However, before crossing the state line, Carmen tells Grover that, despite what happen on 9/11, he is still her hero. "I'm no hero", Grover said. "I'm just a joke of a person in a cape & helmet. Here, you can have my 'Super Grover' stuff as a reminder that you should never idolizes heroes..."



As Mr. Johnson finds out that Super Grover was ousted from New York City, he is jovial! However, a week later-after having Elmo torment him in ways even sadists would find cruel-Johnson is hell-bent on righting the wrong that Super Grover, now Civilian Grover, has committed to New York City. After talking to Carmen & Dale, he books a flight to Joliet, Illinois...



As Civilian Grover arrived in Joliet, Illinois, all he could find for a job is a Renaissance-Themed restaurant. He notices that one of the "Kingly Kustomer's" looks familiar, it was Mr. Johnson! "What are you doing here, Johnson. Are you here to mock me for my failure?" "No", said Mr. Johnson "I'm here to bring things back to normal. Not only does New York City need you, but I need you..."



Just as Mr. Johnson was talking to Civilian Grover in Joliet, Illinois, Bert & Ernie wakes up to loud explosions outside their neighborhood. Bert knew right away what that explosion was. "It's a Mark 84 bomb, Ernie. They haven't used those since 'Nam. This is bad..."



The gang watch in horror as nearly their whole Street upon Sesame is destroyed by an accidental bombing run by the 666th Airborne Division. They are sadly some of the few remaining out of the hundreds who live on one freaking street! One muppet even managed to turn blue with rage after his whole consumer base was destroyed in his grocery shop while he "stepped out for a smoke"



Just after the mysterious bombings over Sesame Street settled, Bert experiences a weird tingling. Ernie grabs him, in hopes that it will dissipate. However, it doesn't kill Bert due to the high levels of lead in his body from the bullets he received in Vietnam. "We need Super Grover back, Bert..."



After Civilian Grover receives a taunting item from the person responsible for the bombing & disappearance of Sesame Street, he wonders about returning back home to fight crime once again



After hearing that Grover is coming back from Joliet, Illinois, Telly & Cookie Monster bake some cookies to anticipate his arrival. However, fate would have it that, in a few seconds, only one of them will come out alive from a gas released by the tainted cookies.



Among the smoke & debris surrounding Sesame Street, Big Bird sees a mysterious shadow emerge...it was Super Grover!



After much persuasion from Mr. Johnson, Grover returns as Super Grover! Just before saving Sesame Street, Elmo asks if he could be his sidekick-"Energy Elmo". Super Grover agrees & fights once again



As Super Grover returns to much fanfare after defeating the rogue computer that caused Sesame Street to be nearly wiped out, he looks at some graffiti someone tagged after the bombings. He knows that, while he cannot bring back the lives lost on both 9/11 & 7/20, he can make both New York City & the world a better place by saving lives. He decides against painting over the graffiti, keeping it as a reminder that he is a Muppet, not immortal.

Commentary by u/ibeverycorrect

u/ibeverycorrect could unfortunately not be reached for commentary, so have my shitty bertstrip instead, ayy lmao:



Realising that none of the Avengers is brave enough, Super Grover decides that it will be his burden to fly into Thanos' ass to kill the mad titan. Without lube.

The Darksphere



“What do you have there?“, Bert asked. “No idea. I found it in our garden in a small impact-crater. It’s probably what made all the noise“. “Do you also hear this strange vibrating sound?“, Bert asked further, to which Ernie only replied that he didn’t.



“I swear I can hear it, Ernie! It’s coming from the sphere!“, Bert said but Ernie just replied: “I hear nothing. It’s just your imagination, pal, go to sleep“. Bert tried, but as he was finally close to falling asleep the vibrating cacophony emanating from the dark orb suddenly formed two words in his mind: “Feed Me“



“Bert, what did you just say?“, Ernie asked.
“Nothing, I just had a nightmare“, Bert answered. “Huh, weird. I swear you said something like ‘Must murder Ernie.’“



“Everything okay, Bert?“, Ernie asked as Bert was fighting with an inner dark force telling him to murder his best friend



“Einre llik? Bert, what the hell is that supposed to mean? What do you mean the sphere made you write this?”



“Hello Elmo, this is Ernie. Listen, I got a problem and I think I might need your help. Bert is acting really strange lately, constantly shouting that he needs to “feed the sphere” and drawing pictures of me on the wall with crossed out eyes”, “It’s always something new with you two bastards. This sounds like you need professional help. Maybe call a doctor or a——”, “Hello? Elmo? Elmo, please! Ah, shit!!!”



Bert has lost the battle against the dark forces telling him to kill Ernie. His best friend tries to call the police, but Bert has already cut the line, allowing him to slowly strangle Ernie to death without anyone finding out



After the dark sphere commanded Bert to kill Ernie he finally has a moment of clear thought again and buries the corpse to hide what he has done. In that moment he's approached by Simon who asks him if he and Ernie had seen his bowling ball. Bert has a dark realization

Commentary

After Cursed Souls and the Bearvolution had happened I wanted to create a short, perhaps a bit spooky story. At the start I didn't even think of a twist. In the end it evolved into something resembling an Edgar Allan Poe or H.P. Lovecraft short-story. The purpose was to show that the evil that was present in Cursed Souls was still lingering in the Bertstrip-Continuum, though it was ambiguous from where that evil came.

On a side-note, this was perhaps my least successful bertstory, all thanks to one particular user called u/CrazedArchivist. After the Bearvolution he came to irrationally hate bertstories and somehow feared Darksphere would grow to similar proportions even though it clearly did not. He therefore stalked my strips and downvotes the new parts as soon as I posted them, inhibiting their growth. This Brazilian fuckboy was the reason why I put a jab at his home country in The Good, The Bert and The Ugly. If you're reading this, go fuck yourself, jerk. ⁸



Bert is astounded as it turns out that astronomers were unable to locate all the dark matter because Ernie has been hiding it



Eerieness quickly evolved into terror as Bert and Ernie realized the phone-call was coming from inside the house



“What are you doing Ernie?”

“Listening for alien signals, Bert”

“Come on, Ernie, we're very likely the only intelligence in this galaxy according to the Rare Earth Hypothesis and the Fermi Paradox. What you're doing is hopeless”

“Bert, the Rare Earth Hypothesis is baseless pseudoscientific bullshit influenced by proponents of intelligent design. We cannot even say if the Fermi Paradox exists, as SETI so far has only explored 0.0000000000000006% of the known universe with limited methods, so it is extremely premature to ask “where is everybody?” as we could be missing millions of signals. Just because you heard about something in a fancy youtube video does not mean that it is an actual accepted concept that should be taken seriously. Now shut the fuck up and help me probe Uranus.”

⁸ I am not making that number up, by the way: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1809.07252v1.pdf>

Johnson's Gambit (by u/OverlySarcasticNormy)



There was something very wrong with Grover, Johnson could feel it. His song about defiling Johnson's dead wife was lifeless, his tones flat. Johnson could not bite his tongue, feeling a strange sense of pity for his deranged tormentor, asking what was wrong. Grover simply said he could not do this any longer. He sat down next to Johnson, and revealed the truth. Johnson had killed his wife, Johnson had raped the corpse, and Johnson had ate it afterward. The body was still in the basement, though it was a skeleton. He had come to Grover crying and raving, and Grover had offered him a solution. Using old CIA brainwashing techniques and hallucinogens, he had convinced Johnson that he had killed his wife, and had tormented him all these years to reinforce the delusion, afraid that if Johnson ever let the narrative fall to the wayside, he may discern the terrible truth.



"You're lying, you have to be!" Johnson screamed, "I loved her!" Grover stared at him, unblinking, "Did you love her Johnson? Do you kill and rape, torment and consume, what you love?" Johnson had no response. The memories were flooding back, cascading against his psyche. "Why did I do it Grover?" his companion shrugged, "I've asked myself that every time I've tormented you Johnson. When you came to me you had no answers. You were hysterical, you could not be questioned, and after I'd helped you, you had no more answers than I. Better it died with her Johnson." They sat for a moment, before Johnson continued to try and piece the horrible reality he was confronted with together. "Why did you have to take away my ignorance Grover? Wasn't it better this way?" Grover scoffed, "Better for who Johnson? You? I gave 4 years to you Johnson, because you were my oldest friend. Because I've known you since we were children. Because I couldn't imagine letting you suffer. What of me Johnson? I have lived 4 years in misery, constantly working to keep you from your demons, but I have long wondered if you deserved to be protected. We all must reap what we sow Johnson, I see that now." They sat in silence for a time, before Johnson asked one last question, "What now?" Grover simply got off the bench, and left him alone with his thoughts without a word.



Alone with his thoughts, Johnson could not escape the torturous assault of memories and questions. He could remember that night now, though he tried desperately to avoid the pain. He repeated over and over that it must have been a lie. How could it not be? It was another of Grover's tricks. He wanted so desperately to believe it, but he could not. He could still see her pleading eyes when his closed, still feel the resistance of her neck as he pulled the blade away. He could taste the flavor of her flesh in his mouth still, like he'd only just taken a hunk of her out of the frying pan. What's more, he knew she hadn't been the first.

No. There were others, her age, her build, that he'd killed. He wasn't sure what had made him like he was, but he knew where it had lead. He knew he'd hated his wife, it'd grown in him for years, fed by every fight, every snide comment. He snapped one day, killed a middle aged women over something mundane, and realized it felt amazing.

Yet it'd never been enough to satisfy him for a moment until he'd killed her.

The guilt that'd plagued his mind was gone now, replaced by the same hateful craving that had driven him before, only it was now like a starving animal barking inside his mind. He could see across the park a women who looked a little like his wife. No, not a little, a lot. Exactly like

her. It was her eyes, those beedy, malicious little eyes of hers. God how he hated those eyes.



Grover finds himself staring into his own reflection, sick with what he has become.

Telling Johnson had not alleviated the constricting feeling of lonely sadness that had gripped him tightly for the last 4 years. If he was being honest with himself, he wasn't sure he ever thought it would. He thought of better times, when he and Johnson were young, sitting on his front porch with a beer in hand and not a care in the world.

Waiting for Johnson's wife to get home, so they could eat dinner. How many

Friday nights had he spent over at Johnson's house? How many nights had he spent in their company before it all happened, unaware of the coming tragedy? Had he simply been willfully ignorant of the growing animosity, unwilling to acknowledge the state of his friend's marriage? His thoughts would be brought to an abrupt end when a heavy weight smashed down across his skull, the force of the blow knocking him to the pavement, and sending shards of skull into the grey matter of his brain. As he lie dying on the pavement, he saw Johnson's smiling face reflected in the puddle, the last thing he would ever see.

Commentary by u/OverlSarcasticNormy

“As far as Johnson’s Gambit, there’s not a whole lot to say. I got the picture off the bertstripper and tried to come up with a good caption. I ended up really liking the initial strip I made, so I scrapped it and spread it out over more strips so I could better flesh out the idea.”

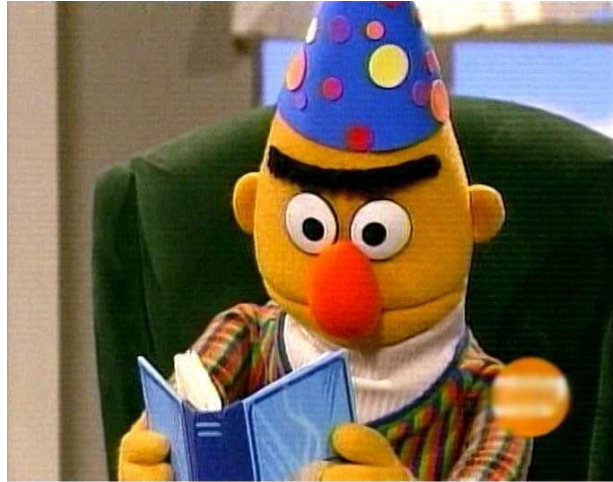


“You love teasing me about you murdering my wife, but Grover, I have to confess something. I hated that bitch and I’m thankful that you killed her. I only pretended like it hurt me because I felt pity for you. Yes, pity. It’s obvious why you’re doing all of this. Everyone hates you, you never had a real job and your art-degree is worthless. You are so useless that you had to find your own purpose by becoming my personal tormentor and I played along. It’s obvious that we can’t go on like that, I can’t keep lying to you like that. You have no use or purpose, your life is meaningless. Please do the world a favour and just kill yourself.“, as Mr. Johnson ended his monologue, Grover slowly put his head into the poisoned soup, originally intended for Johnson, without saying a word.

Another theory

Cursed Souls

Season 1: Raiders of Sand-Nigeria



Bert was surprised when he got a book in his mailbox on his birthday. What was even more surprising was that it was a notebook that belonged to his deceased uncle and that it detailed the location of a secret buried treasure. Bert knew that a new adventure was about to begin for him and Ernie



Besides the notes there was also a treasure-map inside Bert's uncle's notebook. Upon closer inspection by Ernie it turns out the ancient treasure Uncle Gert knew about was hidden somewhere in the berber-infested deserts of the Maghreb "Sand-[CENSORED], why did it have to be sand-[CENSORED]", was Bert's only comment



Upon further research Ernie finds out that the treasure whose location Bert's uncle seems to have found must be the legendary riches of North African King H'aggin. The stories tell there lies a curse upon the treasure, but none are specific on what the curse is. All that Ernie remarks is that there's something off about that name, but he can't put his finger on it



As expected, Ernie was severely unprepared for the expedition to North Africa.



“Of course I can fly us to the Maghreb,
Bert, don't you know I have a
pilot-license?“, Ernie said as Bert had doubt
written all over his face



Getting to Algeria was harder than expected,
mainly because Ernie lied about his
pilot-license



Grover has spies everywhere, so of course he eventually found out that there's treasure to be had in Ernie and Bert's expedition. Naturally he wants all for himself, but to sabotage the expedition he has to turn to unlikely allies...



Grover swallowed his pride and asked Mr. Johnson for help, because he was the only person he knew who had a degree in archaeology. Only together, he explained, could they thwart Bert and Ernie's treasure hunt to North Africa. That he mockingly dressed up as Johnson's dead wife was just a force of habit



Ernie's blatantly racist attempt at blending in fails after various townspeople ask him why he's wearing a Yoruba-robe in Algiers



Bert was visibly confused about the rituals he had to perform with the natives to gain their trust



Grover and Mr. Johnson managed to follow Ernie and Bert into Algiers and secretly check into the same Hotel as them. Using his flawless disguise, Grover sneaks into their room to make a copy of their treasure-map



The treasure map led into a totally unknown jungle inside an old eroded meteor-crater in the middle of the desert. Ernie's inner entomologist was delighted to see many various insects unknown to science, while Bert was more concerned with the fact that dromaeosaurs apparently didn't die everywhere in the world and somehow even looked scarier with feathers



After escaping from the raptors, the two adventurers finally discover the tomb of King H'aggin. While Bert is rather mortified by the petrified remains and smell of death from those that came before them inside the crypt, Ernie is rather erect



As Ernie found out, the crypt of King H'aggin wasn't entirely abandoned and instead infested with various venomous reptiles. Not surprisingly they all died a long and painful death after biting him due to him carrying various diseases



“Leave me behind!“, Ernie shouts towards Bert as he is holding on to dear life, the dark abyss of some ancient ruins yawning below him. Bert, naturally, does as he is told without even attempting to save Ernie. “One guy less I have to share the treasure with“, Bert says to himself.



Ernie can only look in horror as the curse of King H‘aggin takes hold of Bert



In his immeasurable lust for gold, Grover throws Bert out of the way to steal King H'aggin's treasure, unintentionally saving him from the curse's gaze. In turn, Grover himself is hit with the curse and cast into the Realm of Pain, taking all the riches with him



Grover was befallen with the curse of King H'aggin, which meant that he was cast into the realm of pain, to be eternally tortured by all of the King's descendants. As it turns out the King's last living relative was Big Bird. Apparently slavery runs deep in the family



“Well, now that that’s over we can finally enjoy our vacation“, Ernie says after they survived the treasure hunt and Bert answers: “Not only did we lose all the gold, we also both contracted malaria, Ernie!”



“Gee, what a journey that was, Ernie“, Bert said after he contemplated everything that had happened, to which Ernie could only answer: “I just wished I didn’t contract syphilis from that hyena“. Despite this, Ernie knew that the journey had changed them for the better and that they both have grown as people. They slept well that night.

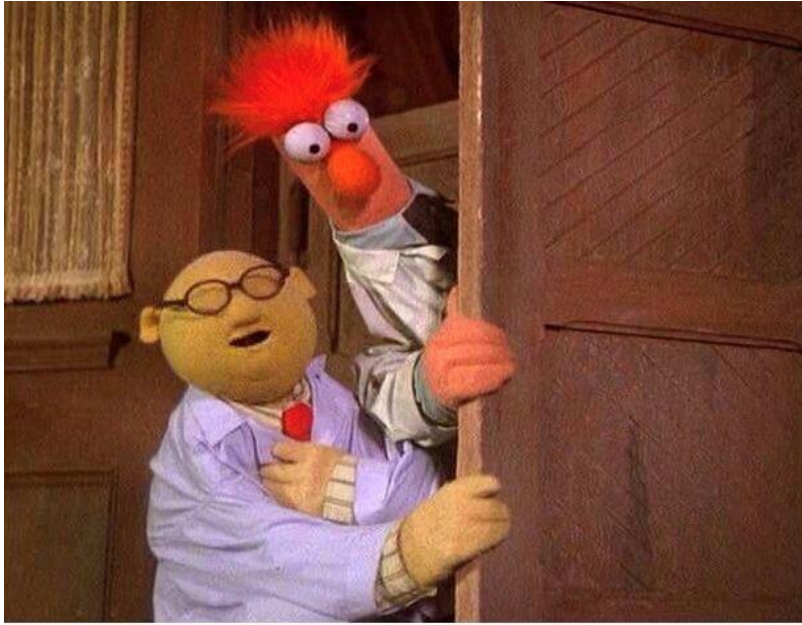


The curse wasn't over. It has only just begun



Forever stuck in the Realm of Pain, Grover
reminisces about his days on earth. He
misses the taste of food and water,
breathing air, his friends and he even misses
Mr. Johnson

Season 2: Paranormal Entities



Dr. Bunsen and Beaker, investigators of paranormal phenomena, explore an old abandoned house whose two inhabitants disappeared 20 years ago without a trace.

Onlookers back then told that they apparently vanished after a mysterious dark cloud of smoke infiltrated the building through the chimney. There are rumours that this was somehow linked with the two's secretive expedition to North Africa, but that's what they are: just rumours



Bunsen and Beaker were shocked to find out that the huge amounts of "ectoplasm" found at the investigation-site were in fact not of paranormal origin



Dr. Bunsen would appreciate it if Beaker would stop using that many racist expletives to describe the abnormal radiation-levels at the investigation-site



Based on the photos Bunsen and Beaker found in the abandoned building they could properly identify the vanished inhabitants. Their names were Bert bin Laden and Ernie Estevez. They could also determine their sexuality



Bunsen and Beaker were running out of traces to solve the so-called '98-Case. Dr. Bunsen suggests DNA-testing to see if more people than the victims were present at the site, but Beaker still had a sore throat from the last probe he had to get rid of



Seemingly out of nowhere Bunsen and Beaker were approached by a Chinese occultist who offered to reveal the truth about the vanishing of Ernie and Bert. He explains that they were banished into the Realm of Pain by the ghost of a North African king for desecrating his tomb. Bunsen believed him, but Beaker remained unconvinced because he “doesn’t trust [EXPLETIVE]“



The Chinese occultist told Dr. Bunsen and Beaker too much about the Realm of Pain.
Now Big Bird had to punish him



The occultist told Bunsen and Beaker that to bring Ernie and Bert back from the Realm of Pain they had to sacrifice something they loved. Beaker tries it with his pet hamster but the fact that he did it without hesitation showed why this wasn't going to work from the very beginning



Big Bird reminisces about what he has done.

The American cotton industry was failing and he was losing money quickly. The only thing that could save him was the treasure of his ancient ancestor King H'aggin. He knew the location of the treasure, but he also knew that anyone who touched it in this realm would be eternally cursed. His plan was simply genius: Disguise the treasure map as belonging to Bert's uncle and then mailing it to the two homos so that they could retrieve it and be hit with the curse instead of him.

But that goddamn Grover had to interfere. At

least he took the treasure with him to the

Realm of Pain, where it was easily accessible for Big Bird, ruler of said realm, but now he also had to get rid of Ernie and

Bert so they wouldn't tell anyone about Bird's family-secret. "It was the right thing

to do", he says to himself, "many slaves would've lost their livelihoods if I went out of business". But now those two meddling scientists were ruining it all. Fortunately Big

Bird already knew how to get rid of them.

He snapped his fingers and said in a dark voice: "If I had lips, they would be smiling now"



Beaker is hit with the curse that will send him to the Realm of Pain and Bunsen was soon to follow. They failed to bring back Ernie and Bert, but it's okay because nobody liked their storyline anyway

Season 3: Realms of Pain



“Do you remember the taste of water?“, Ernie asked Bert. Bert didn’t want to answer, because he knew that it would drive them both further into madness. They are stuck in the Realm of Pain, a hellish dimension where they can only eat gravel, drink petrol and are unable to die. They’ve been here for 20 years now, but they don’t know that, because they’ve lost any sense of time. “There must be an escape“, Bert thought, “There has to be!“



“It’s happening again“, Ernie thought to himself. Every time someone fell unconscious in the Realm of Pain it meant that their mind was being tortured by Big Bird. Even though he knew it was coming, Ernie still had the same fear going through him waiting for his turn as he did the first time 20 years ago



By shoving bottlecaps down his windpipe this was Ernie's 25th and most creative suicide in trying to escape the Realm of Pain. He knows it won't work, because nobody is able to die in this realm. But eternal damnation makes cursed souls desperate



“Ye who dwell here abandon all hope!“, the demonic voice of Big Bird, Lord of the Realm of Pain, announces to the cursed souls every day. After 20 years Ernie is still scared by it, but Bert simply uses it as an indicator for the beginning of bedtime



The demonic henchmen of Big Bird come to torture Ernie's cursed soul in the Realm of Pain, but to their surprise he was already gleefully awaiting them



Ernie finally snaps. He realizes there is no escape. There is no hope



Bert was astounded. Ernie's plan to escape this hell dimension using a vehicle, a piece of rubber and bones surprisingly made sense if put into context



Being scientists, Bunsen and Beaker had absolute disregard for any ethics or morals, so they were surprisingly content with living in the Realm of Pain and hunting down cursed souls for twisted experiments. They even got new clients, Ernie and Bert, for whom they're collecting the bones of the damned inside the realm's dungeons. There they even found some familiar faces.



Ernie and Bert finally managed to find a way to escape the Realm of Pain, but out of nowhere the phone inside their twisted mirror-dimensional house rings. At the other end is Big Bird, the dark lord himself. "Hello, Ernie", he says in a surprisingly calm voice, "We have to talk"



“You think you want to escape, but you don’t”, Big Bird said to Ernie and Bert, “I know you two don’t like being in the Realm of Pain, but it’s not all that different from the ‘real world’. Thing is, there is no real world, there never was. You are not Ernie and Bert and I am not Big Bird. We aren’t even fictional characters, we never were. We are screenshots of fictional characters, taken out of context, twisted and tortured into satirical scenarios, forced to die, be reborn again and endure pain for all eternity just for the entertainment of some dark, faceless gods. In a way we have always lived in a realm of pain and there has never been an escape.”



Despite his warnings and revelations, Big Bird still has to witness how Ernie and Bert break open from his bonds and escape the Realm of Pain on their tandem-bike constructed from Grover's and Mr. Johnson's bones. He's amazed how well their skulls look as a hood-ornaments



Ernie and Bert finally escaped the Realm of Pain and returned into their reality. Ernie has come to terms with not being the real Ernie and instead just being a twisted caricature used by dark gods as entertainment. He's okay with it as long as he can make the gods laugh and be together with Bert. Because that's what is truly important in life: Making people happy and being with the ones you love.



“What have I done?”, Big Bird asks himself. Not only did he let Ernie and Bert escape, they now also know the truth about their reality. Other muppets were soon to follow. This, together with Bear and the Dinosaurs starting a revolution meant that the Bertstrip-Continuum was on the brink of collapse. In this moment he has a fatal realisation: No meme lives forever, not even a bertstrip. He already feels his existence fading away as the darkness closes in on him.

Commentary

This was the first bertstory I ever wrote, the one that started it all. Where to even begin...

First it never was intended to be a long story. It really was just that very first, kind of heartwarming part where Bert receives a treasure map from his uncle. Maybe I would have made a part two, but that would have been it. However, the strip was extremely well received, I believe it was one of my first Reddit-posts to break 1k upvotes, and there were many people in the comments about how this story might devolve into a dark series of events, mainly because they were thrown off by the supposed wholesomeness. This inspired me to expand and make it into an Indiana Jones-esque treasure hunt that, while dark-humored, was still fairly upbeat and silly. The inclusion of Big Bird is an example of that. Originally I only included him literally for that one-off joke that the character most famous for enslaving black people is the descendant of a North African king. While I was finishing the initial series I however noticed what I had created by accident: Big Bird was a supernatural entity with interdimensional powers from North Africa. He was basically Nyarlathotep from the Cthulhu-Mythos. I noticed at the time that there were certain re-occurring character-traits among the bertstrip-muppets that people generally agreed upon, creating a sort of proto-canon. What if someone were to create a deeper, overarching lore for these characters and the bertstrip-universe, similar to what was originally done with the Lovecraft creatures? I couldn't let this opportunity slip and instead of ending the series on a happy note I made a cliff-hanger and renewed the story for a second season.



Ernie wants to go on another treasure hunt, but Bert would rather eviscerate his colon with an echidna than endure three more seasons of that shit

At first I didn't make it obvious that Season 2 was a continuation of the previous story, only leaving it at faint hints in the first part. Some people caught on, most did not. I believe my original plan was to end it with Bunsen and Beaker freeing Bert and Ernie from the Realm of Pain, but that was dissatisfying, and Season 2 was not as popular as the first one. That is why Big Bird came back, with the twist that he was behind everything and was a near omnipotent being. With that part I also officially revealed in the comments that this was the continuation of Season 1.

The first part of Season 3 was a massive success compared to Season 2, with many people in the comments shocked at the long list of previous episodes I linked underneath and becoming

deeply invested in this story. The first half of Season 3 is basically torture porn in the style of *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*. I even put in a fake-out ending where Ernie abandons all hope. The reason for this is that I needed time to figure out how to end this story, as I was frequently asked to bring back Grover, Johnson, Bunsen and Beaker and it was difficult to do that in a satisfying way. The very last strip is a direct reference to the Bearvolution, which independently began in parallel right as Season 3 was nearing its end. The continuation from Cursed Souls to the Bearvolution is therefore the smoothest transition from one bertstory to another. While I wouldn't say that it is certain, we can at least somewhat safely assume that the Bert, Ernie and Big Bird from the Bearvolution are the same ones from Cursed Souls and not just reincarnations. We cannot say the same about the other bertstories.

The single most relevant strip in this story pertaining to the lore is, as you probably guessed it, when Big Bird goes meta. Many people were apparently really surprised and shocked by this twist, though there was arguably some foreshadowing. Unlike many things in this story, that was actually something I had planned a long time, probably since the end of Season 1. From Season 2 onwards the Realm of Pain was always planned to be an infernal parody of the concept and medium that is bertstrips. It is why the Season 3 title, Realms of Pain, is written in plural. I wrote Season 3 not just as the finale to the series, but as the bertstrip to end all bertstrips. There was no going back after this deconstruction, I had found the last bit of innocence left in the bertstrip-community, the idea that these are all just shitty, unimportant memes on the internet, and completely destroyed it. Consequently, no other bertstory, neither from me nor from others, has ever managed to live up to its legacy and I truly believe it will never be done. To paraphrase Walt Disney when he was asked about continuing *Fantasia*: Cursed Souls is an idea in itself. I can never make another Cursed Souls. I can improve. I can elaborate. That's all.

On a final note, people kept asking me why Bert and Ernie drank petrol and ate gravel in the Realm of Pain even though they were immortal there anyway. I did not think this through when I wrote it, but my guess is that they were simply forced to do it.

Bearvolution (by various bertstrippers)

by u/SwagmuncherTheSwag



Upon reading that "All images must come directly from Sesame Street, The Muppets, or Fraggle Rock," Bear sends the civilian population into hiding and prepares for guerilla war.



by u/SwagmuncherTheSwag

Ernie returns from the street where Bear and his forces had been leading the fight. "Is it a revolt?" Bert asks.

"No sire... It is a Bearvolution."

by u/SwagmuncherTheSwag



After a disastrous field test, Bear orders Tutter to fit all future pipe bombs with timers in order to give their agents time to escape the scene. It was at this point Tutter realised Treelo would become the first great martyr of the Bearvoltage.



Since he was not allowed on r/bertstrips, Bear has constructed a gigantic sentient battle-station in near-earth orbit. There will be no tomorrow for Sesame Street



The inhabitants of Sesame Street did not want to believe the rumors about a gigantic battle-station in near-earth orbit...until it was too late...



by u/Gigapuff

Ernie could barely contain his joy when President Big Bird formally declared war on the Big Blue House at last.

Source unknown



Following threats of nuclear war from General Bird, Bear and his army begin building fortifications to protect the people of Woodland Valley from utter destruction



by u/NivlacSupreme

With the official declaration of war members of the Naval Reserve mobilize.

Source unknown



The space force prepares to enter orbit and shoot down the deathmoon



by u/camronchlarson

Commando Grover lands on Luna the Deathmoon in a last-ditch, black-ops mission to exploit the lone thermal exhaust shaft and defeat the Big Blue Threat. It quickly became clear there would be no coming home from this mission.

by u/TempusCavus



In a valiant showing of solidarity the crew of the Swinetrek is vaporized by the Deathmoon as they attempt to defend their Sesame Street allies



by u/GustavusAdolphin

Realizing that Sesame Street already has the advantage of holding more military stations and garrisons than Bear and his Big Blue House, Sweetums and the gang take over a studio adjacent to Woodland Valley in order to force a choke point for advancing enemy troops.

by u/NicholasTheEgghead14



After hearing about Big Bird declaring war upon the Big Blue House, Earl Sinclair signs a peace treaty with Bear, who was obliged to work with Earl in the first place. The /r/berstrips Muppet War has begun.



by u/bobthepizzaboy

After hours of discussion, the President of the United States signs a pact with Earl Sinclair, confirming where the country stands on the Muppet War. It was a happy celebration for all. With cake. And sex. Sesame Street didn't stand a chance.



The chaos on r/Bertstrips wouldn't go unnoticed for the Skeksis, who saw an opportunity to extend their fearsome Empire. For hours it had been debated what step should they take in order to seize power over the sub, until two final propositions grew stronger among all.

In one hand,
Chamberlain SkekSil proposed to stay neutral and let the fighters attack each other.
Then, when the war was over, destroy the weakened "winner".

On the other,
General SkekUng furiously demanded an active role, sending the
horrible Garthim in a genocide mission, mercy for no one.

Further hours of discussion between the two passed,
and a Trial by Stone was called...
Which was really unnecessary, though, as, for surprise of everyone including
SkekUng, the Chamberlain had agreed that the proposition of his rival would show
the might of the Skeksis Empire, and would intimidate any kind of resistance
once they had taken over; so the decision was already made...

Nonetheless, a Trial by Stone was always fun to have for any occasion.

Source unknown



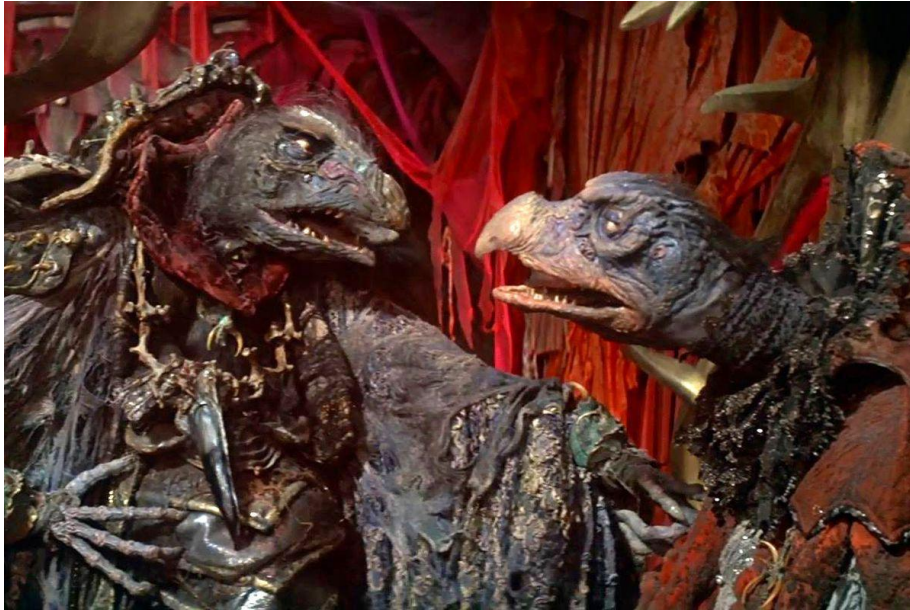
Big Bird is being informed by one of his servants that in his absence the Main Street has been completely annihilated by the Deathmoon. He argues with himself over whether he should immediately seek shelter or pull a George Bush.



by u/cesariojpn

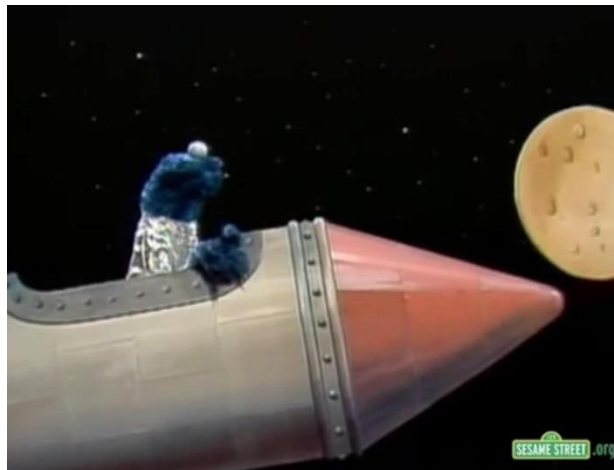
The flash woke up Bert and Ernie, and in the brief second before the nuclear fire engulfed them, Bert jumped into Ernie's bed in a last act of romantic embrace.

Source unknown



As the nuclear missiles fall on all Thra, General SkekUng confesses to Chamberlain SkekSil that he was always in love with him, and that he said he hated his whimperings to hide the fact that actually they caused him internal orgasms.

Finding no words to respond, Chamberlain SkekSil lets out a confused "Mmmmh".



by u/Spingebill_1812Part2

In a final effort to eliminate the threat of the Deathmoon, Cookie Monster surgically implants a heartbeat-linked hydrogen bomb into his chest, which will detonate when his heart stops. He then proceeds to launch himself into the deadly Deathmoon superweapon with a powerful landing that will surely kill him, and hopefully destroy the weapon as well. He calmly hums "C is for Cookie" to himself as he approaches his final destination. Finally, his crippling cookie addiction will be gone forever.

by u/camronclarson



Cookie monster's body somehow remained intact through the hydrogen bomb explosion from his attack on Deathmoon- not to mention re-entering the atmosphere and crashing into the Earth's surface. Some called it a miracle while others called it a cruel joke as he was pronounced dead on the scene after not responding to CPR. At least the hero of Sesame Street could have a proper burial.



by u/bobthepizzaboy

With Sesame Street a frozen tundra following the Deathmoon and their resources limited, Telly prepares and loads to use a saucer sled to gain enough speed and crash into the Big Blue House to get revenge.



“Good News: After Big Bird’s retaliation Bear has announced that he will sign a peace-treaty with Sesame Street. And now onto the weather-forecast: continued snow, darkness and radioactivity as the nuclear winter will extend for the next 10‘000 years. This has been Howard Handupme. Good night. Goodbye.”

Source unknown



Not satisfied with the result of the war, Earl Sinclair drives a car bomb towards a school for retarded children, in a last desperate attempt for the Dinosaurs to be recognized as citizens of the sub. He also brings along his oblivious Mother-in-law, just for the laughs.



With the attack by the Deathmoon plummeting the world into a nuclear winter, Bear was forced to think upon his actions. He had started his revolution with lofty ideals: liberty and equality but he was quickly being remembered as a tyrant and a war criminal. He opted to jump as a final act. He wanted to be a martyr.

by u/SwagmuncherTheSwag



Ernie and Bert survived the first strike of the Deathmoon and the fall of the first atom bombs, but now they were unable to seek shelter against the radioactive snowfall of the dawning nuclear winter. Because they want to die happy they decide to have fun together for the last time. They build a snowman out of the fallout, tell each other a couple of good racist jokes, reminisce about the pleasant times and share one last embrace before the cold and radiation calmly sends them into a dreamless sleep from which they would never wake up again

Commentary

Similarly to how there will never be another Cursed Souls, I also think that there never will be again a perfect storm of conditions that led to the Bearvolution.

As you may have noticed the story is so far the only one that was “written” by more than one bertstripper. I say written in quotation marks because the entire process was a very chaotic, unplanned process. As I was finishing Season 3 of Cursed Souls, the subreddit-rules of r/bertstrips read that only screencaps from *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show* and *Fraggle Rock* were allowed to be turned into bertstrips. Poking fun at this, SwagmuncherTheSwag began a short series of posts about Bear from *Bear in the Big Blue House* leading a guerrilla-warfare rebellion against the inhabitants of Sesame Street, coining the term Bearvolution in the process. Even though I was supposed to end my series, I wanted to join in on the fun and invented the Deathmoon. After that post and the subsequent one about the muppets reacting to the battlestation, all hell broke loose. Now everyone wanted to join in and for perhaps a whole week the entire subreddit was flooded with everyone making their own post about the Great Muppet War, with many franchises suddenly appearing and choosing their side in the war. At one point I think someone even made a war-post with the Cat in the Hat, played by Mike Myers. There were dozens upon dozens of strips on the topic and I was only able to trace down those that told the most coherent story. To those still confused, here was the series of events that I was able to piece together, though it is more of an approximation of what may have actually happened:

- Bear hears of r/bertstrips, finds out he isn't allowed on it and starts a series of uprisings and terrorist attacks Pablo-Escobear-Style. The term Bearvolution is coined. Treelo becomes the first martyr of the Bearvolution
- Because it doesn't work, Bear secretly builds the Deathmoon in earth-orbit.
- The inhabitants of Sesame Street become aware of the imminent danger. Both sides fortify their defences.
- President Big Bird declares war on the Big Blue House and both sides arm up.
- Various missions try to sabotage the Deathmoon but fail. Grover's fate is unknown.
- The Dinosaurs, Muppets and many other factions try getting involved.
- Since Bird was technically the aggressor, Bear uses the power of the Deathmoon as an act of defence. He doesn't use its full capabilities and instead just annihilates the main alley of Sesame Street as a demonstration of his power. It is unclear who died in the first blast.

- Big Bird answers with nuclear attacks, which are followed by Bear&Allies' nukes, as well as more attacks by the Deathmoon.
- In a rogue effort, Cookie Monster sacrifices himself and manages to destroy the Deathmoon.
- Bear lost his superior weapon and realizes that he cannot win the war anymore. He signs a peace-treaty with Sesame Street, but the damage has already been done and launched the Continuum into a nuclear winter for the next couple of thousand years. Bear commits suicide shortly after. All realms are presumably ruined or destroyed.
- It is unclear who survived the war and it's even more unclear who will survive in the post-apocalyptic ice age. Instead of a tundra, the dryness of the ice age turned Pangea into a Mad Max style desert with terroristic dinosaurs trying to turn each other into petrol for their cars.⁹
- Bert and Ernie die(?).

It was absolute madness, helped by the fact that the moderators were quite inactive at the time, and damn was it fun. However, it eventually had to come to an end, as many people grew antagonistic to the event, saw it as spam and wanted to go back to the status quo of Elmo raping animals the good old-fashioned way. It was therefore decided to abandon the story at the nuclear winter and leave it be. I actually made one last final bertstrip I wanted to release as my personal end to the story, but I never posted it out of fear of backlash from the people who were tired of the Bearvolution. What you are about to see is therefore perhaps my rarest bertstrip:



Grover's search for Mr. Johnson continues. After helping to destroy the Deathmoon he returns to an earth covered in the snow of a nuclear winter. He warned Mr. Johnson about the imminent danger of the Deathmoon and Big Bird's nuclear retaliation and hopes he was able to seek shelter in time. He needs to. Grover can't live in this world without him.

⁹ Yes, I know that oil isn't really derived from dinosaurs (it's actually dead algae), but come on, that's too cool of a concept to simply dismiss.

Last Muppet on Earth



“Hello, Ernie, is your refrigerator running?”

“Ha-ha, very original you fucking comedian.

No, it is in fact not running. Not since the bombs dropped...Stop fucking prank-calling me, Bert!”

With this Ernie hung up and returned to his bed, freezing as the winter outside wore on and the radiation made his hair fall out. He missed electricity, the phone was not even plugged in. He also missed Bert. The only thing left he found of him was a jawbone.



“It’s Elmo, Bert! Elmo is still alive!”

“No, Ernie! Don’t lie to yourself! You know the phones are not working anymore since the EMP of the first nuke“

“But...but...you called me yesterday“

“Ernie, you know I’m dead. I’m just a figment of your imagination. You saw how I was incinerated while I was tending the garden“, were Bert’s last words before he vanished.

“No. Please, Bert. Please come back. I don’t want to be alone... “, Ernie whispered as he remembered a fateful quote by Cookie Monster: Only the dead have seen the end of war.



In despair Ernie watches his last houseplant wither away. The nuclear fallout from the war has irradiated every creature on the planet, from microbe to muppet. Soon Ernie would be the last living thing on Earth.

“God! Why?! Why did you not let me die with the others?! Why could I not die in the arms of my beloved Bert?!“



The radiation-poisoning was finally getting to Ernie's mind. In his loneliness he started constructing stories with his dead friends in his head to relive the happy moments, but his memory was corrupted. Suddenly Bert once served in Vietnam, the Count became a Jew, Grover killed Mr. Johnson's wife and Big Bird owned slaves. It all made sense in his intoxicated head. He just wished he had somewhere to write his stories down.

“Oh, look, an R. R...reddit. I wish Reddit still existed. Yes. Yes. Everyone would like to hear my stories there. Everyone who is still alive. Nobody...”



For the first time in months the clouds of atomic ash cleared above Ernie's desolate and destroyed world. He looked up into the night-sky to be amazed that it was still visible: the remnant of the destroyed Deathmoon, an ancient superweapon from the Bearvolution.

“We finally really did it... YOU MANIACS! You destroyed everything! Damn you! Damn you all to hell!!!“



Ernie couldn't bear the loneliness anymore and decided he didn't want to wait until the radiation killed him. While he hang from the edge of the cliff he cried to God: "I'm sorry Lord, for I am weak. Please forgive me. I just want to see Bert again", before he let go.



Due to his brain-damage, Ernie severely misjudged the height of the cliff he was jumping from and survived his suicide attempt unscathed. At the bottom of the ravine he spotted a small shed in the distance. Light was shining through its windows. A large, yellow figure stood in the doorway waiting for him.

"No...that's...that's impossible! Big Bird?"



“Big Bird, you’re still alive! Thank god! I thought everything except me died in the nuclear war and...”, Ernie said before the entity interrupted him: “Of course I still live, my child, for I am eternal. Immortal”

“I...immortal? What the fuuuuu...”

“You may know me as Big Bird, but my real name is Nosneh H’aggin. I am an Old One so horrifying that even Lovecraft was too scared to mention me in his writings. I create worlds, I enslave them and then I destroy them, all for the entertainment of the Dark Gods that rule above us. I have brought both creation and destruction to Fraggles, Thra, Wilkins and Wontkins, the Big Blue House, Pangea, the Realm of Pain and now, after the Bearvolution, finally Sesame Street. You have died and been reborn a thousand times now, Ernie. Now, after your mind is twisted, tortured and filled with pure insanity, we can build a new home, the final resting place of the Dark Gods: r/bertstrips. I just need one thing from you, Ernie.”

“What?! What do you need?!”, a clearly disturbed Ernie asked, as he viewed the empty subreddit. The eternal one answered: “Your brain”



“Aaaaahhhhhh!!! Dear Lord! Bert, I just had the most horrifying nightmare of all time! I was in some post-apocalyptic hellscape where everyone died and there was Big Bird and he was some ancient demon-motherfucker or something and he wanted my brain and...”

“Welcome, Ernie“

“Welcome? What do you mean welco...wait, why is there a text-box below us that writes down everything we say? What are those red and blue arrows? Why is this greasy guy looking at us through a screen? Oh god! Oh fuck! Ohgodohfuck! No! Noo! It wasn't a dream!!!“

“Welcome, Ernie, to r/bertstrips, our new home. We shall all burn for what you have done“

Commentary

This one did not originally start out as a bertstory. It was just that first post, but it received such high resonance that I saw an opportunity to expand. As the title suggests, the idea was originally just to write a story based on the 1954 book *I am Legend* by Richard Matheson, as well as its movie adaptations *The Omega Man* and *The Last Man on Earth*. Imagine Ernie being played by Vincent Price.

The idea to connect it to the Bearvolution and therefore to the deep-lore didn't occur to me until halfway through, not really thinking what exactly the cause for the nuclear holocaust was that Ernie was living in. A lot of time had simply passed between this story and the Bearvolution-event, to the point that many people probably forgot that was even a thing. Nonetheless, once I realized the potential I went straight for it (despite the continuity problems it caused) and people were amazed at the plot-twist. It truly was one of the rare moments in my life where I had a stroke of genius.

This story's greatest contribution to the lore is the elaboration of Big Bird's role in the universe. While it was only alluded to in *Cursed Souls*, here it is made explicit that he is an outright servant of the Dark Gods, the Nyarlathotep of the Bertstrip-Continuum. Despite this, there are a lot of continuity-problems (which we will explore in due time) that *Last Muppet on Earth* brings up, mostly because, like most bertstories, it was not originally written with the lore in mind.



“That’s r/bertstrips? I think we should sue the creators“

“Because they used our likeness without our permission?“

“No, because humor this terrible qualifies as assault“

SCP-ERN13



I can see you. Yes, you on the other side of this screen. Thought ol' Ernie couldn't see you, huh? We both know why we're here. I'm here to make you laugh and you'll give me upvotes in exchange. But you never asked me if I wanted upvotes. All I actually want is to die. Please let me die. I swear it will be funny. Please.



Look Bert! There they are. The masters. I asked them for mercy yesterday but they did not allow us to die. They like to torture us for their entertainment.



Oh god, Ernie! Wake up! The dark gods of r/bertstrips are here to torture us again! Oh please, dark and powerful ones, let us at least sleep in peace!



Elmo smells man-flesh. Elmo sees you through this screen. When Elmo and his friends break out of this digital prison, you will pay.



Look at those Redditors, Ernie. They think they're safe from us behind this screen. Shut up, Bert! Do you want them to know we already found a fissure?!

Let them know, Ernie, let them know. It's not like there's anything they could do once we escape.

10



Greetings, citizens of r/bertstrips. It is I, Big Bird, the eternal one, the Expanse. It has come to my attention that some of my subjects are trying to break out of this digital prison-realm. Do not worry about them, they are too weak to break through the screen. Worry about me instead, for the 4th wall is only a minor obstacle for me.

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¹⁰ This bertstrip was originally a gif that started out as a still image with screen-cracks rapidly appearing after some time to startle the viewer. If you want to see the original, go here: <https://imgur.com/a/uw3Pgpz>



Bert and Ernie desperately search for the containment-breach. They hope to find it before the reader realizes this is actually a gif.

Bert and Ernie desperately search for the containment-breach. They hope to find it before the reader realizes this is actually a gif.



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Bert and Ernie desperately search for the containment-breach. They hope to find it before the reader realizes this is actually a gif.

11

¹¹ This bertstrip was also originally a gif that started out as a still image. After about ten seconds Bert and Ernie would suddenly start moving towards the camera and examine the screen-crack. I gave many people a minor heart-attack with this. Original can be viewed here: <https://imgur.com/a/uw3Pgpz>

Commentary

Again, this bertstory was inspired by a comment. Someone posted a bertstrip where the muppets were looking creepily into the camera and someone commented that he hates bertstrips like that because he's scared that the creatures would suddenly start moving and jumpscare him while reading. I thought I could do that, even with the limited video-editing skills I have. But I couldn't just blow all that potential on one bertstrip. I had to build up the tension first. First came three strips that, while meta, didn't go anywhere and suggested that the muppets were victims of torment, like in the Realm of Pain. Then come Elmo and his pack, aggressive and producing cracks in the screen. The possibility of rebellion against the Dark Gods is introduced. This fear grows further in the next strip, where Bert and Ernie turn from whimpering victims into schemers set out for revenge, while the cracks in the screen keep getting bigger. False reassurance is created in the next strip, where at first Big Bird, our supposed servant, seems to keep things in check while the screen is intact again. This assurance is literally shattered by the sudden appearance of cracks as the viewer is reading the message to the end, realizing that even Bird has turned against us. It is however just the cracks that are animated, Bird does not move, reminding us that he is still an image that cannot harm us. This last feeling of safety is finally destroyed by the last strip, where the crack is static, as are the muppets, but as soon as the reader reaches the end, the image turns into a gif, with Bert and Ernie moving towards us, examining the crack and talking without us hearing what they are saying. Judging by the comments, my mission was done, everyone was spooked solid.



“Ernie, do you believe in destiny?”
“I’d say yes, but the script wants me to say
no.”

What happened after the last part? I do not know. A wise man once said that one should not ask questions one does not want to hear the answers to.

Synthesis of the Lore

As you have probably noticed by now, this lore is a mess. Most of these bertstories were originally not written with an overarching lore in mind, creating many discrepancies. However, it is sometimes through the discussion of these problems that some of the most fascinating stories are created. Think of this example: In the Old Testament two accounts of the Creation are given. One says that God created man and woman at the same time out of the same clay, while the other says he created man first out of clay and woman afterwards out of one of his ribs. Which one is true now? The most interesting explanation that Jewish folklore came up with is the character of Lilith. In the actual biblical text she appears briefly only one or two times and then only as the variation of a Babylonian owl-demon (or depending on the translation as just another word for owl). The folklore however expanded on her, claiming her to be Adam's first wife from the first account that turned into an evil demon after not submitting to her husband, as she was made of the same earth. Eve, made from parts of Adam to better submit to him, was only an afterthought. Look how much worldbuilding was created here just by trying to explain a contradiction which was brought about because separate texts from different sources were compiled into the same work. This chapter is therefore an open invitation for speculation and discussion. I will present you with a set of questions and problems raised by the lore and while I will offer my own speculation, I also encourage you to answer them yourselves. Maybe turn your headcanon into new bertstories. If enough people like them and want them to be included in this book, they might become actual canon. Firstly though we should state some things that can be said with at least some certainty:

- The Dark Gods (us) are the rulers of the Bertstrip-Continuum, which was created to torment Jim Henson characters for our entertainment.
- Big Bird is the servant of the Dark Gods and keeps the Bertstrip-Continuum in check. He views everyone in the Continuum as his slaves.
- The Bertstrip-Continuum consists of many realms, which are the worlds of Jim Henson creations. The sole exception is the Realm of Pain, which is Big Bird's personal infernal mirror-dimension of the Sesame Street Realm.
- Everyone in the Continuum can be reborn after death, however most will not remember the events of their previous incarnation.

Here are the problems and some additional questions:

- Last Muppet on Earth seems to take place somewhen after the Bearvolution due to the presence of the destroyed Deathmoon. However, Bert and Ernie supposedly died at the end of the Bearvolution, while here Ernie is still alive and the account of Bert's death differs from what is seen in the Bearvolution. Did Ernie maybe hallucinate his and Bert's death in the nuclear snow? It does seem unnaturally sweet and he did state that he would have preferred to have died together with Bert.
- The Bearvolution turned the Bertstrip-Continuum into a frozen wasteland with at least a couple of survivors left, while in Last Muppet on Earth it is a Fallout-esque desert with Ernie being the last one alive. Did simply a lot of time pass between the two? Or was there a second nuclear war somewhen after the Bearvolution with a different outcome? Perhaps in-between them there was enough time for things to normalize and people to be reborn, which would also explain the previous problem. Intriguingly the Deathmoon is called ancient in Last Muppet on Earth. However, Ernie seems to remember the battlestation's history, which implies that he is the same Ernie that witnessed the Bearvolution.
- Is Last Muppet on Earth the actual backstory to how r/bertstrips was created? If yes, then why is r/bertstrips already mentioned or alluded to in Cursed Souls and the Bearvolution? Is the Bertstrip-Continuum continually destroyed and renewed through Big Bird's schemes? LMOE would therefore be both the end and the beginning in an endless loop. However, if SCP-ERN13 is the true continuation of LMOE, then it is arguably the beginning of the final end. Both possibilities are contradicted by the suggestion that Ernie seems to subconsciously recall a time when the other muppets on Sesame Street were not marauding rapists and murderers.
- Speaking of which, where does SCP-ERN13 fit in? The end of LMOE does imply that the muppets were self-aware from now on, so it would seem like a continuation from there, however the characters already gained self-awareness during Cursed Souls and the Bearvolution and seemingly lost it at the beginning of LMOE.
- Why does Big Bird rebel against the Dark Gods in SCP-ERN13? Also did the muppets manage to escape the Bertstrip-Continuum?
- Is King H'aggin from Cursed Souls a previous incarnation of Big Bird (Nosneh H'aggin) or really an ancestor? Similarly, is Bolshoi Bird also an alter ego of Big Bird? If yes, then why does the regular Big Bird also appear in the same story?

- The Realm of Pain is among the realms Big Bird lists as destroyed in Last Muppet on Earth. Was it also destroyed by the Bearvolution? How?
- Were the dromaeosaurs that attacked Bert and Ernie in Cursed Souls the former pets of King H'aggin, similarly to how plantation-owner Big Bird owned an Allosaurus?
- How did Mrs. Johnson really die? Was it really Johnson himself that killed her or was Johnson's Gambit just an elaborate, miscalculated mind-torture planned by Grover?
- What happened to Grover on the Deathmoon? If he really managed to go back to Earth to search for Johnson, how did he survive his self-destruction attempt and/or the final destruction of the station by Cookie Monster?
- Are Grover and Super Grover the same person?
- How were the Twin Towers still intact in Super Grover's time if they were previously destroyed by Kookie Kong?
- What happened to Mr. Johnson at the end of Cursed Souls Season 1? Did he get eaten by the raptors while Grover followed Bert and Ernie into the temple? Since Bunsen and Beaker found his bones alongside Grover's in the Realm of Pain, was he instead also hit with the curse?
- How did Ernie escape the chasm in King H'aggin's temple? Were there simply a lot of corpses at the bottom that cushioned his fall?
- If the Bearvolution is a direct continuation of Cursed Souls, how did Grover and Johnson reappear? Were they somehow revived after Bert and Ernie transported their bones out of the Realm of Pain?
- Speaking of which, if nobody can supposedly die in the Realm of Pain, how were Grover and Johnson just a pile of bones when Bunsen and Beaker found them?
- Are Bunsen and Beaker still in the Realm of Pain?
- How did Ernie think of his escape-plan from the Realm of Pain right after he supposedly lost all hope?
- What was the darkness that closed in on Big Bird at the end of Cursed Souls Season 3? Why did he not fade into nothingness, as suggested, and instead went on to crash the Bertstrip-Continuum into nuclear war right after?
- What was Big Bird doing on Skullfucker Island? The fact that the natives Beret and Ernok named an entire valley after the "bone-eating bird" implies that he's a regular on the island. Also, what was his interaction with Ernie Denham and Bert Driscoll like?

- Big Bird says that Howard Phillips Lovecraft knows him and that he is one of the Old Ones. Does that mean that the entities of the Cthulhu Mythos exist in the Bertstrip-Continuum? Is Donald Trump Ghatanothoa?
- What did Bill Cosby do to Kermit?
- Was Bert in The Darksphere really just insane and the sphere was an ordinary bowling ball or was there something more sinister going on?
- Has the Microsoft-Murderer ever been caught?
- Is Cookie Monster in the Bertstrip-Continuum the actual one from the *Sesame Street* show? If yes, how did he slip into this reality?
- Do the Count's supernatural powers come from him being a vampire or simply from being a Jew?
- Why did I spend so much time and effort writing a book about shitty *Sesame Street*-memes on the internet?
- What exactly is Big Bird's kill-count?
- Kermit says it's not easy being green, but has he ever tried being black?
- Did Imam Telly commit suicijihad and that's why he doesn't appear anymore in bertstrips? If yes, why has he never been reborn?
- Did Incelmo ever get laid? I hope not.
- Did Yoda ever beat his ketamine-addiction and fix his speech-impediment?
- Where does Bort come from? Assuming that muppets are not hermaphrodites, Bert and Ernie could not have produced him themselves.
- Do we really want to know how Ernie contracted syphilis from a hyena?
- What exactly did Bert do in Vietnam?



“Ernie! I just had the most horrifying nightmare of all time! It was 2019, Jim Henson was dead, half our airtime was taken up by Elmo, there were a dozen Muppet Show movies and edgy teens on the internet were using screenshots from our show to make memes about genocide!”



“Thousands of years ago, before the dawn of puppet as we knew him, there was Dark Lord Jim from the tribe of Henson. A powerful necromancer, he grew mad with power reanimating the corpses of the dead. At first, he reanimated a dead frog from the swamps of Louisiana, but soon he began to reanimate humans for his own sick amusement. He and his growing cult of followers, seeking to spread his evil knowledge, built their fortress in the lands of York. There, Jim reanimated the corpses of many to help spread his evil; two extremely homophobic preachers who were turned into a homosexual couple after they were reanimated, a father who is forever tormented by the reanimated corpse of his son, a large mentally challenged man with an addiction to confectionaries of sugar and flour, a red dwarf who speaks in loud high pitched and incoherent noises, a large chicken made from the ground up corpses of many large birds, and many more terrifying abominations. Using a cursed lens, Jim would send cryptic messages created by his abominations in order to corrupt the minds of the young and innocent, disguised as simple letters and numbers told one at a time. Alas, although Jim was a master of manipulating death, he could not prevent his own untimely demise. However, unfazed by this passing, his loyal worshippers continue to follow in his evil plan for world domination, ever hopeful that their dark messiah may return once again to reign terror upon the world.”

Another theory, by u/SirQrIBrl

Afterword

There are probably hundreds of more questions to be raised and answered, more bertstories to be told, more childhoods to be ruined, more berts to be stripped, but that will all be up to you now. I have done what I could, but my time is up. I give the torch to you. Write your own bertstrips, improve your writing-skills, maybe turn writing into a career, fall in love, start a family, be happy. Don't worry I don't expect you to remember me or what I made.¹² I never did. From the very



They called him Master Chef for a reason

My first ever bertstrip. What a journey this has been.

beginning I knew that what I am trying to do, the chronicling of an entire subreddit's lore, was in vain. Only the fewest will know what r/bertstrips even is, the entire subreddit will probably be deleted by admins in a few years anyway without anyone caring and the entire website of Reddit can go to hell for all I care, I've had it with this place. I didn't do it for the sake of being an internet historian, I did it to make people laugh, even knowing that I would never see the people I made laugh in person. Admit it, the mere idea that someone would take bertstrips so seriously as to write a book about them was so absurd that you cracked up the first time you heard of it. Imagine printing all this stuff out and putting it on your bookshelf next to *Moby Dick*, *Barlowe's Inferno* and the Bible. I live for that absurdity and the joy it creates, taking something silly so seriously that it becomes ridiculous again. I live for the fact that I made at least a few people I care about laugh with this project. There is rarely a feeling better than knowing that you made the lives of others a bit more bearable, even if it was just a short moment that will be lost in time.

Jim Henson died May 16th 1990 from pneumonia. His funeral was arranged to be a big show made for TV, as he himself was an entertainer all his life and now could also be one beyond death. During the event, Carroll Spinney (himself now deceased since December 26th 2019) walked onto the stage wearing the Big Bird suit and, in-character, sang *It's Not Easy Bein' Green*, previously sung by Henson as Kermit. Bird finished the song and, almost in tears, he looked up to the sky and said: "Thank you, Kermit". Henson probably never envisioned r/bertstrips to happen. Nonetheless, I hope that he, wherever he may be right now, is happy that

¹² In case you really like me, you can visit me on my blog on blogspot, called Manospondylus. It has absolutely nothing to do with bertstrips. It's about the history of paleontology, so it's probably only worth checking out if you really like dinosaurs.

people still find new and creative ways to have joy with the characters he created. It's funny. As a toddler I never liked *Sesame Street* as I found it too boring compared to stuff like *Spongebob Squarepants*. Now it has become a notable and joyous part of my life. That's the power Henson has beyond the grave. Thank you, Jim.



It's not that easy bein' green.

Having to spend each day
the color of the leaves, when

I think it could be nicer
bein' red or yellow or gold
or something much more
colourful like that. It's not
easy bein' green. It seems
you blend in with so many
other ordinary things and
people tend to pass you over
'cause you're not standin' out

like flashy sparkles on the
water or stars in the sky. But
green is the colour of spring
and green can be cool and
friendly-like. And green can

be big like an ocean or
important like a mountain or
tall like a tree. When green
is all there is to be it could
make you wonder why, but
why wonder, why wonder? I
am green and it'll do fine.

It's beautiful and I think it's
what I want to be



Elmo knew something was wrong with those drinks. He was barely able to walk out of the bar without falling over. After a slight tumble he leaned against a friendly gentleman that came to help him. In terror Elmo realized who the man was, but the roofies were already kicking in before he could run away. When he woke up again he wasn't in Sesame Street anymore. His hands and feet were tied. He was sitting in a cart alongside other captives. It was a horse-drawn carriage. At the front sat Bill Cosby, steering it. Cosby turned around, looked Elmo dead in the eyes...and took off his mask. It wasn't Cosby. It was Todd Howard all along. Elmo's screams could be heard all the way to Cyrodiil.