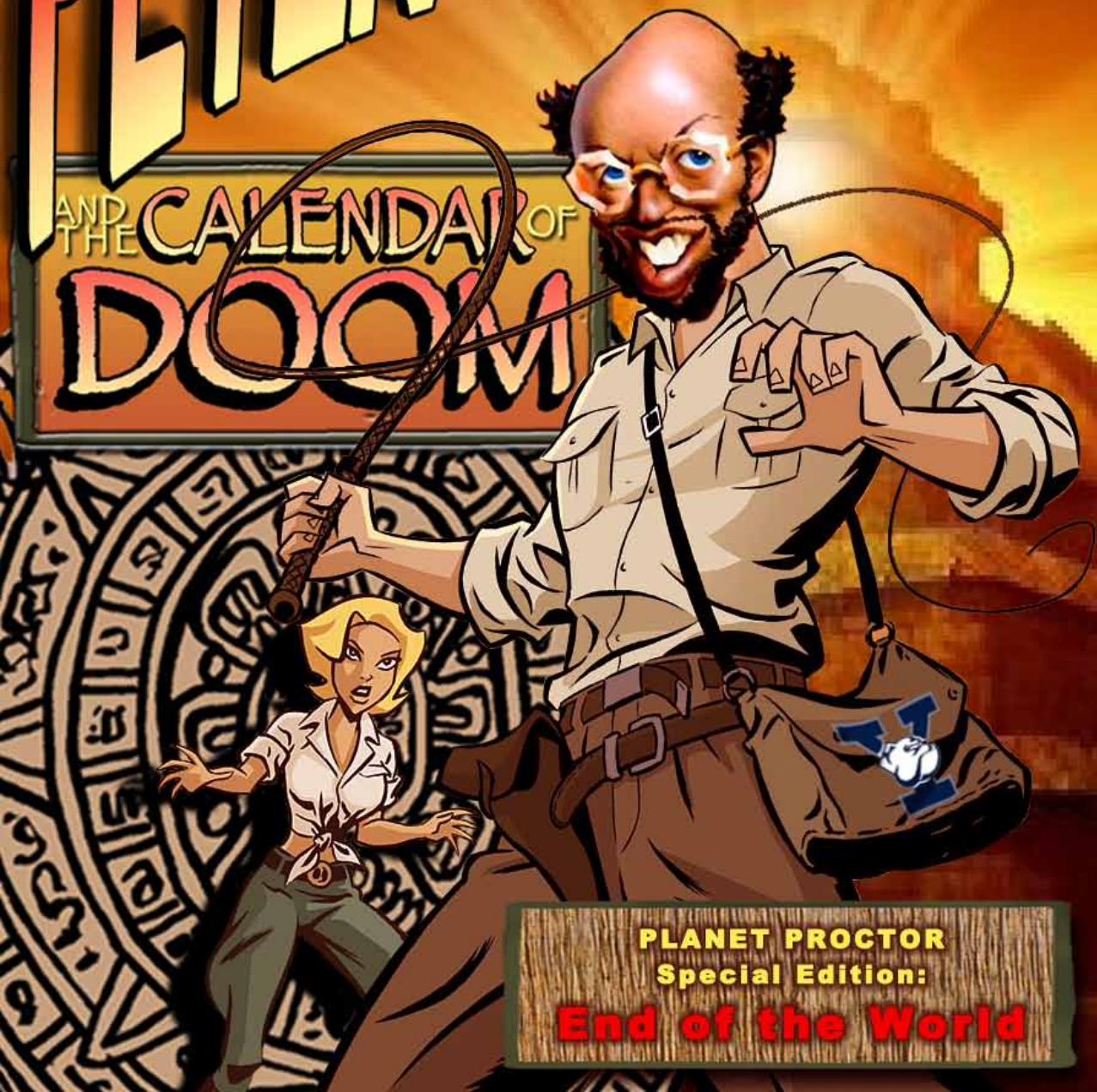


# PETER BERGMAN

AND THE CALENDAR OF  
DOOM



**PLANET PROCTOR**

**Special Edition:**

**End of the World**

**s you all know**, I lost my dear friend and beloved Firesign Theatre partner to complications of leukemia on March 9, 2012, after a career that spanned 45 years and included 3 Grammy Nominations and an induction into the Library of Congress for ***Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers*** as an historical recording. But before all that, I had met **Peter Bergman** at the Yale Dramat in 1958 where he wrote the lyrics for several musicals penned by **Austin Pendleton**, in which I was featured.

Peter graduated a year ahead of me and we lost touch for a while, so I never knew that he spent a summer in the Yucatan and had actually stumbled upon – and I mean that literally – the ancient Mayan long-form calendar that predicts the end of the world as we know it, this coming Friday. But when a career on L.A. alternate FM radio took Pete on the Firesign path, he put the notes and photos along with the diary he kept about his post-graduate adventure in storage; so it was only when his daughter, **Lily**, started going through his belongings that she shared with me the contents of a beat-up cardboard box containing his fantastic, almost unbelievable South American adventure.

**P**eter had traveled to the tiny village of Caraho-acaca near Merida, digging into the pre-Columbian civilization to prove his thesis that “The Aztecs Invented the Vacation” – mentioned in the Firesign Theatre documentary ***Everything You know is Wrong***. He lived with a local family, the Cohones, who were direct descendants of the ancient Mayans and still followed a lifestyle similar to their ancestors. Indeed, he took several pictures



**ON THE COVER**  
Australian model Dawn Unda joins Bergman, whose head is drawn by the great Robert Grossman, on his adventure.



of their home, which was an homage to the inverted lava-stone pyramid in Tulum – an archeological preserve on the Yucatan coast overlooking the nude swimming beach and miles from the nearest 7-11.

Anyway, while living in the village, he wrote of mouth-watering feasts of marinated Geeko in Patron, which they called Chicken, but tasted like lizard, Mazatlanin garden moles in molé, Cancun-style Anaconda Jerky, and Plucked Plumed Serpents in Plum Sauce, with sides of *Chicitas fritas*, candied spider legs, jellied yams and pan-fried plantains served in fanciful animal and priest-shaped pottery bowls from Ikea – washed down with the local sugarcane rum, called “*Tateech*,” which means The Boss, imbibed from disturbingly life-like skulls from Best Buy.

Desserts included sacrificial hearts of palm and palms of hands. Just writing about it makes my stomach growl like the Cohones’ pet panther, Gunther.

**P**eter explains in his diary that **Itchy-potle**, the patriarch of the family, was married to an Australian fashion model named **Dawn Unda**, whom he claimed he “captivated” when they both appeared in a **Vanity Fair** magazine shoot for a perfume ironically named *Captured*. They had 10 female children – many adopted - or “borrowed,” as they say – from neighboring tribes, though none of them was over the age of 12. And during the time Peter was there at least one of the girls disappeared – supposedly recruited by a local talent scout – or Headhunter, as they say – for a special midnight tourist show at the temple in *Chichen Itza*, which means in English: “Chicks a Go GO, or CHICKS TO GO.” I’m not sure which.

#### BANG THE GONG

Proctor and Bergman  
with Elizabeth Plumb.

**TO TIE-DIE FOR**  
**Bergman the Buffed**

Well, one steamy morning, attired in a fashionable beet-dyed loincloth and a colorful headdress assembled from the feathers of local birds and several squawking parrots rescued from the local shelter, **Itchipotle** led a sleepy Bergman on an unforgettable trip into the dense jungle in search of the fabled Mayan calendar, purportedly carved by his ancient ancestors from the side of a mountain and rolled to an unknown location, now long-hidden beneath layers of dense overgrowth and discarded tourist brochures.

**C**utting their way through the impenetrable rain forest, now relatively rain-free and penetrable, and skirting the rowdy film crews shooting the latest **Spielberg** epic, Peter and his guide, who insisted he be called "**Itchi**," trekked on for what seemed like weeks, but was actually only 14 days, subsisting on tarantulas, roots, fruits and bats, fruit bats, Evian water and protein bars – until they suddenly came upon a high curved mesa covered with oddly inappropriate **NON TRESSPASSO** signs sprayed onto the very cliffside itself.

After a mandatory "Student Union" break, they began to scale the face of this tantalizing obstacle; and after an arduous climb, they finally reached the top, just as the blazing sun, or Tanning God, as Itchi called it, sank from view behind a huge canopy of preternatural trees stretching off into the horizon. Thus they prepared to spend the night camped on this relatively safe and alien landscape, exhausted but exhilarated at the prospect of the revelations that might be – well, revealed – by the dawn's early light. And now, I'm going to quote from Peter's Diary:

*A great fatigue suddenly sapped my strength, and as I watched Itchi hack away at the heavy tendrils to create a trench into which he could burrow for the night, I myself noted a kind of natural depression sufficient for me to lay me down, and so I flopped in, my face exposed*



### BOBBLEHEADS

Phil and Peter display their likenesses, created by Robert Grossman for FST's 'Give Us a Break' album.



to a darkening sky already sprinkled with slyly winking Mayan God Stars, and was lulled swiftly into sleep, accompanied by the distant roars of feral cats and the seductive hum of insects.

*My dreams were crowded with jumbled images of ceremonies, incantations, sacrifices, flashes of knives, rivers of blood, hearts and bodies and heads tumbling to the earth to lay in ghastly piles, when, suddenly, thunderous rains washed away the blood in scarlet torrents; and then a brightening hot light exploded on the land. I watched in horror as crops shriveled before my sightless eyes, and fields of wheat and ears of golden corn erupted in flames, transforming the neat cultivated fields into a scorched terrain from Hell.*

*But as these horrific images faded, I sensed an enticing warmth subsume my body and fancied that a cool, soothing shadow was cast over me, and through half-opened eyelids, I thought I saw the silhouette of a naked, dark-hued woman wearing the headdress of a Jaguar bending over me, caressing me with soft, smooth hands that made me shiver from the soles of my feet to the crown of my head with expectations of carnal delights. Wonderful! Orgasmic!*

*And then, I awoke with a shuddering start to discover that I was instead covered with a living, seething frenzy of tiny red ants, crawling over my entire body in angry agitation. I stumbled to my feet, shrieking in terror like a helpless infant, ripping off my insect-infested clothes and slapping and beating at my body! Itchi was startled awake by my unnatural exclamations and rushed to my aid, but he abruptly stopped – backing away in astonishment...*

*“Compadre,” he gasped, “Hay una pantera en su parte posterior!”*



*“A panther? Behind me?” I cried, twisting in terror. “Donde’?”*

*“No es una pantera viva, mi amigo,” Itchi continued. “Es solo la impresión de una.”*

**P**eter had studied Latino Pronunciation at Yale, so he grasped what his guide was telling him, but it was still incomprehensible. “An impression of a panther?” What did that mean? Well, Bergman looked down at the spot where he had chosen to rest – and there, before his incredulous eyes, was an image of a panther crudely engraved in the stone! It had impressed itself upon his skin, through his sweat-drenched shirt as he slept, and was visible still.

“Gracias, Itchi,” he managed, still vigorously massaging his back. “I think we have found it!” But Itchipotle did not understand, so he continued: “El calendario perdido, Itchi! El Calendario Grande de Las Mayas!”

His partner was so shocked, he spoke in English – “Are you sayin’ mate,” he inquired, in his bizarre Spanish-Australian accent, “that we have discovered the long-lost Mayan Calendar that predicts the end of the world?”

“Fair Dinkum!” Pete exclaimed. “Let’s get to work!” And they did. For the next several days, under the blazing eye of the relentless Sun-god, they hacked away with *machetes* at a tangle of jungle vines until at long last they were able to reveal the magnitude of their discovery. There, under his flat sneakered feet, was the fabled calendar of Mayan yore predicting the end of the world, laid bare for all to see, and now it was up to Peter to document and interpret it.

Indeed, as it was described in the native oral

**PETER, PAUL, AND HARRY**

Harry Shearer, Paul Krassner, and Pete stand behind the late director Scott Kellman in the 1990s.

Read Krassner’s article on their project [HERE](#).



history of the region, the massive circular stone calendar had apparently been hand-chiseled from the face of a nearby limestone mountain by captive warrior-slaves and then rolled down to the present resting place by the same enslaved enemies – or possibly extras from the last **Mel Gibson** movie.

Bergman wrote, “Once we had fully uncovered the massive carved calendar, it was obvious that the inscribed glyphs were chiseled into the limestone in a spiraling pattern leading to the center of the object, where much to my surprise, I discovered a small black hole! In fact, some had predicted that the calendar fortold the world’s destruction by ingestion into a Black Hole, and the thought did cross my mind, so I stepped gingerly back. But then curiosity overcame my fears, and I cajoled Itchi into interpreting the symbols surrounding that depression, so he carefully translated each glyph and then announced: ‘VUELQUE LA PIEDRA PARA LA CARA DOS.’

**W**ell, after thumbing through his dog-eared Spanish-to-Bergman dictionary and then translating from Dog to English, the message was confirmed. It said, *Turn the stone over for side two*. That massive circular calendar, which ends on December 21, 2012, was, in fact the first long-playing record, or LP as it was called, which later became the accepted method of in-home entertainment long before the creation of the CD. The primitive phonograph needle was embodied by a Mayan Priest, singing each glyph aloud as he walked in an ever-decreasing spiral towards the center of the stone – leading us up to the dreadful

**IN THE NICK OF DANGER**

**Phil, Peter, Phil  
and David.**

## AFTERGLOW

David, Peter, Phil and Phil  
ready 'The Bride of Firesign.'

date of 12/21/12 where everything ends in that ominous dark hole.

And what then, we must ask, is inscribed on the underside of the stone? Because whatever it portends about the future of mankind will certainly be lost, unless future archeologists raise funds to tunnel underneath and expose the subterranean inscriptions.

**P**eter was obviously very frustrated at this point, so he decided to take as many pictures as he could of the exposed face, some of which have survived to verify his discovery. But there is one picture in particular which drew my attention. It is a single shot of the dark hole in the center of the great wheel where I believed I could decipher a few more glyphs faintly visible in the darkness of the depression. So, I enhanced the picture and took the results to **Professor Yaqui Brujo** at the University of Castenada in Chico, and here is his translation from the ancient Toltec. "These inscriptions," he began, "scratches, actually, or what we might call 'graffiti' today, actually say, in modern English – And here, I took a deep breath, waiting for his next words ... which were:

***The Best Is Yet To Come.***

