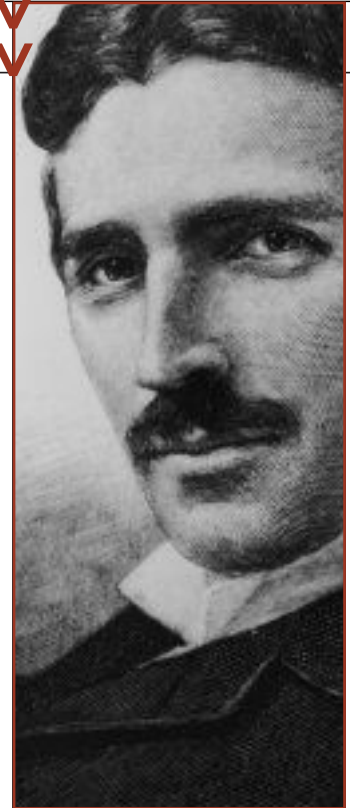


>> [Cadaver of the Month]

Nikola Tesla (1856-1943)

with
MICHEAL A. STUSSER



BELATED OBITUARY: Serbian-born Nikola Tesla was one of the greatest inventors of all-time with over 100 patents. He leaves behind the legacy of alternating current (AC), the electrical current that today is the heart of electric power for most of the world. Tesla died in 1943, impoverished and living in an apartment full of pigeons, which he considered his beloved friends. He had no family, but that's probably because he thought celibacy was the key to creativity.

MENTAL FLOSS: So, Nikola, you're best known for inventing the first practical use of electricity. Why do you think nobody has any idea who you are?

NIKOLA TESLA: *Because of Edison! When we were working together, it was always, "DC current this, DC current that."* But he knew that my AC current could transmit much further. That is why mine became the gold standard! **GOLD!** He was jealous!

MF: Sounds like a sore subject. Let's move on.

NT: You know, one time, that jerk bet me \$50,000 that I couldn't make his generation plants more efficient. After working for months, I redesigned his dynamo systems and added automatic controls, saving time and money! *Then he says to me, "Tesla, I was only kidding about this bet. You really don't understand American humor." He is lucky I did not give him electroshock sandwich!*

MF: Easy, tiger.

NT : Sorry. I get very charged with this subject. Charged! You understand? It is pun! I am also poet.

MF: I hear that back in the day you had a great party trick. Can you show us?

NT: Yah. It is something I came up with at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Most people at the time were afraid of electricity, so I wanted to show them that it is harmless. See, look.

[At this point in the interview Tesla lights a lamp without any cords by sending 200,000 volts of electricity through his body. It's a little bit like watching Mr. Electro at the Freak Show.]

MF: Amazing! You're hair's kinda on fire, there, Nik.

NT: It's OK. I can't feel it.

MF: Right. Any more tricks up your sleeve?

NT: Are you kidding? I invented an early radar, neon, X-rays, aircraft design, remote control, wireless broadcasting and a death ray. A **DEATH RAY!** I even had the idea for the Internet, predicting that, and I quote, from myself, "The household's daily newspaper will be printed 'wirelessly' in the home during the night."

MF: Wow, so much for Al Gore, huh?

NT: Who is this Al Gore?

MF: Nevermind. Tell us, how do you want to be remembered?

NT: Probably for my Tesla coil, which is still used to transmit radio and television waves.

MF: Yeah, you didn't get much credit for that when you were alive, huh?

NT: *That two-faced Italian Macaroni took all the credit!* [Tesla is referring to Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi.] *But I heard that in 1943, the Supreme Court invalidated his patents and gave them all to me, instead. Ha! Sweet revenge!*

MF: Kind of. But Marconi got rich off all that radio stuff and even snagged the Nobel Prize for it. You never got a Nobel.

NT: Do not remind me of such things!

MF: Sorry. On a brighter note, did you know that two rock bands are named after you?

NT: This is true?

MF: Yeah. AC/DC and Tesla.

[Tesla tears up.]

NT: You are trying to make me cry, no?

MF: Kind of. I was hoping for a Barbara Walters vibe.

NT: Interview is over.

MF: Thanks for your time.