

Dear DisCon III,

I am writing in regards to Raytheon's sponsorship of the Hugo Awards ceremony, as per your tweet of 22 December 2021

(<https://twitter.com/worldcon2021/status/1473328225204019202>).

First, I want to state in the strongest possible terms that this sponsorship was offensive and highly detrimental to WorldCon, the Hugo Awards and the science fiction and fantasy community as a whole. Just a few years after we saw off an attempted hijacking of the Hugos by the alt-right, you have thrown the door open and welcomed an arms dealer to the table.

Frankly -- as a conrunner, a programmer, a Hugo voter more often than not and an aspiring author of speculative fiction -- I am having doubts about whether I want to be part of this community any longer.

Each WorldCon stands alone, of course, but your decision will affect every WorldCon and every Hugo winner for years to come -- and that's before we consider the impact on this year's winners and shortlistees, who have had to bear the brunt of social media criticism and harassment for a decision that many don't agree with, and that no one (save, one assumes, Mary Robinette Kowal as Chair) was warned of in advance.

I have a number of questions about the Raytheon sponsorship:

1. How did this arrangement come to be made? Who made the decision to approach Raytheon? How was it ratified by the concom?
2. What were the terms of the sponsorship? What was Raytheon promised and what did they offer in return?
3. To borrow a phrase from your city's history, what did the Chair know and when did she know it?
4. What steps will you take going forward to ensure this is never repeated?

I understand that the self-contained nature of each WorldCon -- which is increasingly beginning to look like a bug rather than a feature -- means that your capacity to avoid repetition is limited. But this makes it all the more important that you are fully transparent about the decision-making process and everything that led to this point, so that future WorldCons can select committee members and make decisions with full knowledge of the past.

Finally -- if you look at your memberships for 2021, you'll see I never actually joined DisCon III. The year got away from me, and I couldn't commit to Hugo reading, let alone virtually attending a con at the busiest time of year. This was the first WorldCon in five or six years I haven't joined, and I regretted it until I learned of Raytheon's involvement. Nevertheless, I am a member of this community, and I hope you will recognise that in considering your response to my feedback.