

Q FILM FANTASY! TV TERROR! VIDEO VIOLENCE! A QUALITY MAGAZINE

HORROR

HALLS OF

MAD MAX
THE DAY AFTER...

ISSUE 29 70p • \$2.00
BI-MONTHLY

**STATESIDE
SHOCKERS**

THE POETRY OF EVIL
VINCENT PRICE

MUTANT!

HAMMER '68

**"THE NIGHT
HOLDS TERROR"**

--told in pictures





Editors of magazines in general and fantasy film magazines in particular aim to have one feature or editorial direction that sets them apart from the others on the newsstands. Some succeed: among them **Fangoria** for gore film coverage, **Famous Monsters** (did) for longevity, **Cinefantastique** for in-depth location reports and **Cinefix** for detailed special effects reporting.

I think we can now, in all modesty, add **Halls of Horror** to that select list. Not only did editor turned publisher Dez Skinn originate the idea of comic strip adaptations of films and thus turned yet another 'monster mag' into an award-winning success but, in our second run, we were lucky or perceptive enough to come up with the idea of a fantasy video listing. The response from you has been (to put it mildly) astonishing!

Letters have poured into our office praising the idea, offering help or enclosing mammoth lists of data. This is obviously a timely project and, in response to your enthusiasm, we have scheduled our companion magazine, **Video Fantasy**, for quarterly publication beginning this autumn after its premier issue last month. We hope that you will continue to support the idea of video listings and video related articles now that we have separated them from **HoH**.

And, returning for a moment to that amount of work you sent us for the listing, may we take this chance to thank publicly the following: Bill Walker, Neil Roberts, Maurice Pinkey, Stefan Jaworzyn, John Folkard, Gary Reynolds, Ian Adams, Glen Davies, J. Bramble, P. Morris, J. Huntsecker, Paul Higson, Nigel Bayliss, Colin Bayliss, K. Jones, David Medick, N. Comer, Nigel Burton, K. James, Graham Tindall, Darrell Buxton, Marcus Shepherd, Gary Dawson, James Dearie, Alan Simpson, Stephen Lewis, P. Sutherland, David Merrick, Bill Walker, Stephen Kirkham, Dave Carson and "The Gore Hound". Heroes all!

As I was saying, our first great strength was the comic strip adaptation and your letters have certainly voted in favour of its continuation. Sadly, that is just not possible in its present form. Other publishers have moved into the same field and, with greater resources at their disposal, have changed the rules of the game. Marvel Comics and DC Comics can always outbid us for material and, more to the point, carry the financial burden when they choose a film like **Annie** or **Rock and Rule**!

So, in our typically, imaginative way, we have come up with a plan that should appeal to all the comic fans and (more to the point) Hammer fans who make up such a large portion of our audience. Next issue we will be presenting a **Shandor** strip by long-time **HoH** adaptor and **Warrior** scripter Steve Moore and artist John Stokes, who did our recent **Brides of Dracula** strip. This is the first of whole series in which we will attempt to solve the various continuity problems that exist between Hammer films but will also, if you are not a Hammer fan, stand in their own right as well-produced stories.

All of which leaves me precious little room to talk about this issue. Which is a pity since two of our features cover what are probably the worst horrors facing the world today: nuclear armageddon and chemical poisoning of the atmosphere. Read them, enjoy the films they discuss but please, for the sake of the world, think about the issues that such films raise. They leave worries about the Bright Bill looking rather

Dave Reed

29

Vol 3 No 5

Publisher:
DEZ SKINN

Editor:
DAVE REEDER

Design:
RICHARD FISHER

Writers in this issue:
RAMSEY CAMPBELL
TONY CRAWLEY
STEVE JONES
KIM NEWMAN
RANDY PALMER
DAVE REEDER
BOB SHERIDAN
TISE VAHIMAGI

Artists in this issue:
BRIAN LEWIS
UNA FRICKER

Cover artwork:
GARY WARD (Front)
BRIAN LEWIS (Back)

All stills and advertising materials used are the copyright property of their respective film companies and are used with our thanks.

Distributed in the UK by Moore Harness Ltd., Melton Road, Thurmaston, Leicester (Tel: 0533 693542).

Exclusive North American suppliers: Titan Distributors Ltd., PO Box 250, London, E3 4RT.

Halls of Horror is published bi-monthly by Quality Communications Ltd, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 (Tel: 01 691 7327). The entire contents are copyright and may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form (except for the purposes of review) without the written permission of the copyright holder. Printed in Finland.

MEDIA MACABRE

4

Festival based special correspondent Tony Crawley sends in the first of two reports from this year's Cannes Film Festival; Anthony Tate finds time before his recent wedding (congratulations, Tony and Maria!) to visit the American Film Market and to supply the first in a regular series on the 'B' actors with a look at Rondo Hatton; and editor Dave Reeder looks at the latest in the fantasy film book world from the exotic location of his desk in London SE14.

ANSWER DESK

15

The *Shandor* continuity explained at last, a *Batman* checklist and more in our replies to your queries.

POST MORTEM

16

Censorship, video listings and gore-based comic strip adaptations are all discussed in this issue's letter column.

AFTER THE END

18

Following the success of *Mad Max* and the seemingly-endless stream of Italian post-apocalypse action movies, Kim Newman provides an overview of the sub-genre of After Disaster films.

STATESIDE SHOCKER NO. 1

28

The start of a new regular series by American film historian Randy Palmer on the lesser known areas of American fantasy cinema; beginning with the career of his friend Paul Blaisdel, monster designer supreme.

MUTANT

30

A report on the making of this new anti-pollution film, perhaps the strongest indictment yet of the way we are destroying our planet, by Tony Crawley.

THE POETRY OF EVIL

34

Steve Jones picks up the threads of his Vincent Price history from last issue and weaves a spell-binding tale of Price's best-remembered decade - the 1960s.

HISTORY OF HAMMER

41

The continuation of Bob Sheridan's regular feature which carries the story forward from *The Lost Continent* to *Scars of Dracula*, as well as a diversion towards Hammer's flirtation with Science Fiction in the 1960s. Moon Zero Two.

CAMPBELL'S COLUMN

45

As always Ramsey Campbell rounds off the issue's features with an expert's analysis of Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* and a first look at new British horror discovery Clive Barker.

TERROR TALES

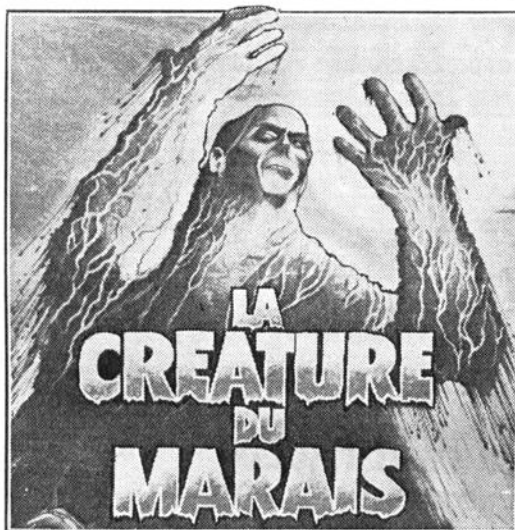
46

As a change of pace between our regular film adaptations and our new exciting strip series (see Editorial for full details), we are proud to present 'The Night Holds Terror', originally scheduled for *HoH* 24 (First Series). Script: Tise Vahimagi. Art: Brian Lewis.

MEDIA MACABRE

by TONY CRAWLEY

HALLOWEEN II



DEAD-LY BATTLE

Spring is sprung, the birds have ris' – and if you wonder where I am the answer is ... where else but the Cannes film festival. It's early days here under the Mediterranean sun, so not all the column comes out of Cannes. Most of it; and more to come next issue.

First off, the bad news. George Romero has surprisingly lost the battle with rip-off producer Tom Fox. You may recall the story. If not, New Readers Start Here (and where the hell you been anyway?). Tom Fox announced a movie here at Cannes this time last year in conjunction with Britain's Hemdale outfit – **Return of the Living Dead**, written by John Russo, co-author of Romero's 1968 classic, **Night of the Living Dead**, and to be directed by Tobe Hooper in 3-D. Romero, or Richard Rubinstein his partner, the president of George's Laurel combine, hit the fan and yelled foul.

The matter has since been to arbitration at the Motion Picture Association of America – and Fox/Hemdale won their fight. The title is their's, which seems very odd indeed. Romero, perhaps, doesn't mind too much as the film, no longer in 3-D (like so many films!) is now re-written (and to be directed by) Dan O'Bannon. Russo is out of the deal.

Of course, Romero doesn't even use 'living dead' in his titles anymore; he doesn't have to. His name is draw enough at the box-office. But the point at issue was that the public recognise 'living dead' as a Romero trademark almost and shouldn't be confused and ripped-off in this fashion (no more than Romero, himself, should).

George is due to begin shooting the finale of his trilogy, **Day of the Dead**, after the summer. You can be sure that Richard Rubinstein is watching Hemdale and their ongoing hype like a hawk and if they overdo the living dead stuff and try, for example, to make it appear that O'Bannon's film is the finale, this time he'll go to court. I think they should anyway. George and Richard have been Mr. Nice Guys about the whole mess for far too long. Just as Tom Fox knew they would be ...

ROMERO TV

Better news from the Romero front here at Cannes: His tele-series, **Tales From The Dark-side**, has found its backer and gets into production shortly. (Wake up Aunty Beeb and buy it!) The pilot film for the proposed series did so well in the ratings last Halloween it was inevitable some outfit would come up with the right deal and Lexington Broadcast Service did just that. The series is not geared to the big networks with all their stipulations about what can or can't be seen/said/implied, etc, but sold to local stations.

The pilot film, **Trick or Treat**, was made by Bob Balaban, the actor who was Truffaut's interpreter in **Close Encounters**. Once he's free of his role in the 2001 sequel, 2010, Bob hopes to direct more of the series – the idea being to give the films to newcomers with flair. Several scriptwriters are offering scenarios for the show with the added hope they'll get a directing shot.

HAPPY HOOPER

Tobe Hooper quickly removed himself from **Return of the Living** once the title row erupted. Tobe is no fan of trouble. He's happier at Elstree studios, in London, finishing off **Space Vampires** – first announced by Cannon Films about six years ago. Well, it's finally in production, or indeed, in the can, all but the tricky effects stuff being carried out by John Dykstra plus a group of Euro-aces, including the first SFX hot-shot out of France. Hooper has put together a good cast on all sides of the camera. He has Alan Hume on camera and John Graysmark is the art director.

Ironically, the script of Colin Wilson's novel is by Hooper's success on That Other Film, Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby. Steve Railsback, once the screen's Charlie Manson, heads the space jocks with the mystery up yonder. He's backed up by Peter Firth, Frank Finlay and French nude Mathilda May. I should be seeing some of the movie while at the festival and you can be sure my comments will be on this page next time around ...

RAMBALDI LAND

Carlo Rambaldi's company is setting up a Disneyland-style park in America – the location of which, thus far, remains a top secret. The place will be known as Millenium. All the rides are science fiction and apart from the real folk paying to get in, and the staff tending them, all other creatures wandering about the place will be Westworld-style mechanicals designed by Carlo. He may not be allowed to have E.T. in there, but I gather Dino De Laurentiis says he can have new versions of **King Kong**, **The White Buffalo** ... and maybe the gigantic earth worm thinges from **Dune**. Sounds just the joint to dump your mother-in-law.

HOME OF HAMMER!

The old home of Hammer Films, I mean the real Hammer Films, the ones with Chris and Pete and dear old Michael Ripper turning up all over the place, has been sold. Bray Studios was picked up for £700,000 by Samuelsons, the company which supplies cameras and the like to most every movie made in Britain ... and Europe too. They don't make films. They just help others to make films. Even more so now they have their own studio to rent ... Don't ring us, ring them.

OLD FILMS AS NEW

Once again I'm afraid to have to say that the news from the fright-film front is far from healthy. And no, I'm not referring to the hypocritical moves of the video nasty brigade.

In the marketplace at the Cannes festival in May, the story was much the same as at the big Los Angeles mart in March. Genre production (our genre, that is) is down, way down, and too many, far too many far from golden oldies are being whisked off shelves to fill the void.

Except you cannot fill voids with voids. You can't fill voids with just 'droids, either. It takes more, a whole lot more. What's required is more decency, one might say professionally made, planned, thought-out, designed horror films – ones actually directed and written, not scribbled out during a hangover's stupor. Not more and still more sad 'n' sorry tat from the shelves marked Flop.

Who cares, say most of the penny-ante cinema companies, just so long as we can pick 'em up dirt cheap, fill out our video-cassette portfolios and get money back that way. Fast.

So, look out, people. Be warned. A ton or two of early 80's rubbish is about to be upended upon us, bringing with bustling hype designed to convince us they're all good film – hot, snappy, not scrappy. Just in case the true genre buffs among us can recognise yesteryear's failures being bounced out as bright new product, most of the original titles have been changed (and more than once) on the ads, and on the main-titles of the films – but, often enough, never on the end titles. (That might cost an extra five dollars, you see).

All of which is just more proof – if more were required – of how the money-grabbing companies think of us, the filmgoers, the ticket-buyers; the punters or suckers in their lingo. They don't care much of a damn, unless there's a dollar in it. And then not always ...

For instance, around Cannes I noticed that Sam Arkoff's first film since selling up his legen-

dary A.I.P. company was out and about. Again. The fact that Sam made it (and with all his own money) and that Ronald Shusett, one of the **Alien** team, wrote it, means that it is slightly above the norm in cheapskate horror. It just never worked is all. In 1981 Sam called it **Three Blind Mice**. By 1983, he'd found some other title which escapes me for the moment. Not important. What is, is that Manley Productions have now taken the film over from Sam. Manley call it **The Final Terror** and shove it down everyone's collective throat because they've discovered that the two top babes in this oldish flick are the currently hot ladies, Rachel Ward and Daryl Hannah – the **Splash** mermaid.

You will, then, not be overly surprised to learn that Manley pin their ad art upon this fact. Only trouble is they don't know their blonde from their brunette. In the ads, Manley put Rachel's picture under Daryl's name and vice-versa. What's more, they spell Daryl as Darryll.

But that's distributors for you, Mandy. They know the value of names. Of certain names. They just don't know from faces. You can put this lapse down to the obvious fact of distributor life. They hardly ever see films. They only sell 'em. And it's left to Quality's new title **Video Fantasy**, to try and sort out hype from history.

BLACK ROOM BOY

Also made in 1981 and still looking for a buyer is **The Black Room**, written and directed by Norman Thaddeus Vane, scripter of **Ferdie Mayne's**. Actually Vane co-directed with Elly Kanner. Two helmets seem about right as the murky script has two distinct storylines – one about a pair of siblings, not far removed from Deneuve and Bowie in **The Hunger**; the other about a guy working his sexual fantasies out in the room of the title. As such, these tales aren't bad. Two films for the price of one and all that. It's only when the twin meet – collide is more like it – in a rather ridiculous denouement of the brother and sister being turned into zombies by the husband and wife that the everything blows up in everyone's face. The cast will remain anonymous here to protect their innocence.

007 Mk. 1

Older still under Cannes sun, I found **Night of the Claw** on offer. 'Twas **Island Claws** last I heard of it in ... um, let's see now ... yeah, 1980! It remains interesting only for the glimpse or four, of a distinct cine-curio called Barry Nelson.

He was the first ever James Bond thirty years ago ... five years ago. The eleven-year-old **Last Victim** was trotted out anew as **Forced Entry** (well, it's another psychotic killer on the loose). In similar fashion, sans errors, to **Final Terror**, this was hyped big because its once unknown stars (are now the recognisable (barely) Tanya (Sheen) Roberts, and Mrs. de Palma, Nancy Allen. The title does its utmost to cash in on both ladies' erotic image. The script (obviously) does not. In short: No nudity.

And then what about Australia's **The Hideous Sun Demon** – **The Special Edition**? No home should be without it. Hah! This proves to be director Robert Clarke's 1960 movie with some 1980 footage inserted by another director, Stephen La Rocque ('n' Roll!).

YOU WANT OLDER?

Oh, sure, the '70s are still alive and well and being re-peddled along the Croisette here. I doubt, though, if many buyers (even video firms) snapped up **Deadline** – a rather deadly film made in Canada with Stephen Young when he was ... five years ago. The eleven-year-old **Last Victim** was trotted out anew as **Forced Entry** (well, it's another psychotic killer on the loose). In similar fashion, sans errors, to **Final Terror**, this was hyped big because its once unknown stars (are now the recognisable (barely) Tanya (Sheen) Roberts, and Mrs. de Palma, Nancy Allen. The title does its utmost to cash in on both ladies' erotic image. The script (obviously) does not. In short: No nudity.

And then what about Australia's **The Hideous Sun Demon** – **The Special Edition**? No home should be without it. Hah! This proves to be director Robert Clarke's 1960 movie with some 1980 footage inserted by another director, Stephen La Rocque ('n' Roll!).



Gallic poster time. You've seen these films but here's how the French were drawn to the same movies: **Halloween II** and Wes Craven's **Swamp Thing**.

Ever get the feeling that you've not only written the book but also seen the film and poster, Mr King? No, it's not the Italian poster for **Cujo** but a grrrr-off called **Monster Dog!**

NEW FILMS AS OLD!

Tragically most of the new genre offerings come over as badly as the old stuff. Who, after all, is going to be greatly excited, much less successfully terrified, by the fact that Aldo Ray has made yet another comeback (he tried it last time in porno) with a couple of prowler movies made down Mexico way. **To Kill A Stranger** for starters, with Donald Pleasence involved; and **Vultures in Paradise** which also brought back Yvonne De Carlo, no less.

Young Canadian actor Chris Makepeace is okay in **Valley of Death**, despite the fact it was directed by one Sparky Greene. However, I feel Chris's next outing, **The Falcon and The Snowman**, will do rather more for him. His director this time is John Schlesinger.

Michael Winner has a new chiller ready called **Scream For Help**, which I'm told is far better than **The Sentinel** (which can't be hard), and if it isn't, Winner will just make his next million from **Death Wish III**. The word was also good on Tony Kramreiter's **Thrill Kill** — but quite the opposite on one I decided to leave well alone, Richard W. Haines' **Splatter University**, where in, according to the grisly hype, 'the school colours are blood red' and you can 'earn a higher degree in terror.' Ho dumb!

NEW WORLD WINNER

The company that was Corman's — New World — has hit its first triumph since the new hierarchy took over. It is, what else, but a Steve King story. **Children of the Corn** is a short story. Or, it was. Nothing but nothing, is allowed to be sparse on-screen these days, though. And so, King's story has been steamrollered out to flabby fill that annoying 93 minutes' gap between ice-cream/popcorn sales time in world cinemas. And that's too long ...

Although there are one of three good moments when it pays to have taken your girl to see it with you, the feature is short only on real style, suspense, special effects and supernaturalism feelings. But it's still raking in the dollars across the pond, so what the hell do I know — right?

Peter Horton and Linda Hamilton (she's better than the guy; invariably the case where King's women characters are concerned) are the couple running across a frightening set of Nebraskan youngsters who've wasted all the adults in their region and formed a not-quite-Manson cult, worshipping the god of the corn fields. John Franklin leads the kids. He's good, too.

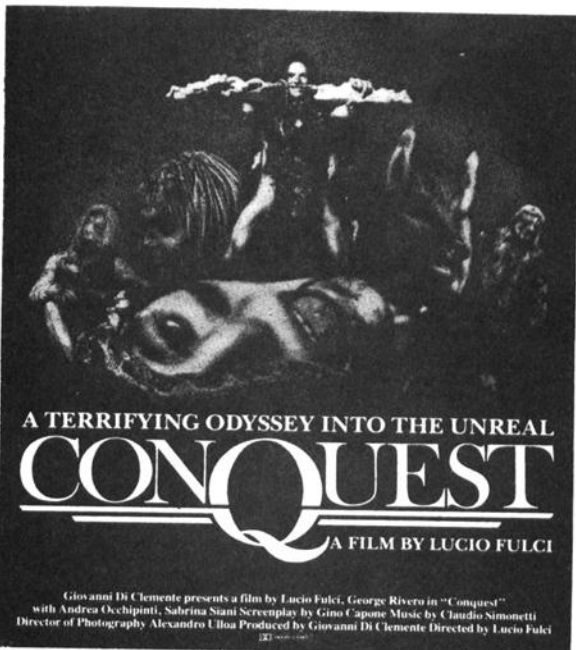
Big box office numbers or no, the result has to rate low, very low in the currently ceaseless supply of filmed King books. For me, **Christine**, **Carrie** and **Cujo** are the best; with **The Dead Zone** being among the worst (so bad it makes **The Shining** look good). However, the **Corny** director, one Fritz Kiersch, must have something going for him. Like friends or agents in high places? He's been rewarded for his Nebraska effort by being given the task of making **The Howling II**. Actually, I'm none too sure if that is a reward ...

NEW HORIZONS?

The company that is Corman's — New Horizon, he calls it — is not living up to its label. Or Corman's potential. Jolly Roger has got stuck in the sword 'n' sorcery (particularly, the sorcery) groove. It's difficult to tell his latest opusses, one from 't'other.

In the right-hand corner: **The Warrior and the Sorceress**, who proves to be David Carradine and Maria Socas in hot-pants (both). In the left corner: Richard Hill as **Deathstalker**, the 'great warrior king', with Barbi Benton as his slaymate.

And just in case you don't get the full picture



No stopping Lucio Fulci. He goes on and on, switching styles to suit each change of the genre. His latest (top) is a mix of **Conan** and **Quest For Fire**, hence the title, **Conquest**. (Below) Want to talk about taste? Well don't choose Richard W. Haines as a conversation companion.



from titles alone, Roger Corman blurs it up for us with replicant hype. Carradine's flick is set in 'an age undreamed of. An age of mystery and magic. Of swords and sorcery,' while Hill's is 'a journey to an age of awesome magic. The might of the sword. The evil of the sorcerer.' New horizons, indeed!

NEW CENTURY SAVES

The company that is Bernard Tabakin's - New Century, which is neither New World or Horizon, but if you think it is, Bernie will be, doubtless, delighted - has come to the rescue of the terror tale that was shelved a year ago not for the usual reason of not being up to scratch, but not having enough scratch to finish it with! **Invisible Strangler**, it's called. Alias ... The Mixture As Before.

Robert Foxworth is finishing the lead role now that New Century's Mr. T has come up with the necessary half-million greenbacks to provide missing scenes, editing, music and what have you. Bob Foxworth is no stranger to our genre. He was Dan Curtis' choice as **Frankenstein** in the rather good 1973 tele-flick. In the same year, Bob was concerned with **The Devil's Daughter**, another tele-item for which Jeannot Szwarc chose Shelley Winters to play Satan! And Bob also starred, alas, in John Frankenheimer's disastrous 1979 attempt at monster movies, **Prophecy**. Pity that one hadn't run out of financial juice.

NEW IMAGE

Room for one more ...? Right!

The company that is Ed Cruea's - New Image, no less - is also in the not altogether praiseworthy business of rescuing shelved movies. (It's only done to make a quick killing out of selling the video rights. And as we all know, few combines actually care about what goes out on cassette). Among Image's pick-ups from France and one collapsed Canadian company (well, it wasn't called New anything, you see), is **Silent Madness**, toplining **Creepshow's** creepy old Swede, Viveca Lindfors, up to all kinds of 3-D mayhem - and **The Dorm That Dripped Blood**, of which more anon.

Both pictures tend to signal New Image's corporate image, right enough. Ed Cruea says his new firm will shortly be making their own movies. He aims to start production with (a) two horror movies and (b) 'two classic re-makes' ... by which, I presume, he means two re-makes of classics. Otherwise, like all new and old distributors, he's already making the grave mistake of bragging before the stuff is even made!

ENTER: OBROW FILMS

You've come across highbrow films and lowbrow, of course. Right! Now we meet the Obrow variety. Jeff Obrow productions which happen to be directed by Jeffrey Obrow - and his co-scriptor, co-editor and cameraman, Stephen Carpenter (John, he ain't). They are two Obrows headed this way ...

The first was made in 1981 as **Death Dorm**, then it became known - after **Porky's**, perhaps? - as **Pranks**. It's now shaping up, via the New Imagers, as **The Dorm That Dripped Blood**. 'Nuff said? It's a kind of indoor **Friday The 13th** with Lauri Lapinski and her campus mates clearing out a college dormitory during the vacation period. Then, along comes every recent horror film's little helper - one killer, crazed, highly repetitious, not to say downright rapacious, and forever doing his level best to make sure the scanty cast members do not squander the lowly budget by requiring overtime. They're all knocked over in rapid order. And, but of course, the patsy, the oh-so obvious suspect, isn't really the slay merchant at all. Ho hum.

INSIDE YOUR HEAD...THE SCREAMING NEVER STOPS




Silent Madness

MAG ENTERPRISES and GREGORY EARLS
present
A Simon Nuchtern Film
SILENT MADNESS
Starring Belinda Montgomery · Viveca Lindfors · Solly Marx · David Greenan
Sydney Lassick · Roderick Cook
Screenplay by Robert Zimmerman and William P. Milling Director of Photography Gerald Feil
3-D Supervision by Seven Valleys Entertainment Ltd. Unit Production Manager Robert Zimmerman
Executive Producer Gregory Earls Producer William P. Milling Produced and Directed by Simon Nuchtern
Filmed in Amivision 3-D DOLBY STEREO Color by Precision Laboratories, Inc.

3D or not 3D. Aye, that's the question. The boom now seems to be over - witness **Emmanuelle 4** which opened flat in Paris although shot in 3D. As for this one from Simon Nuchtern (top), you have to read the small print to see it's a tri-di-er. (Below) Yes, zombie fans - soon, real soon ...

GEORGE A. ROMERO'S

DAY OF THE DEAD



POWER-LESS

Much the same can be said – indeed, it has been – about the next Obrow offering, which started life as *Evil Passage* and then pinched George Pal's 1968 title, but not, naturally, its artistry, and became *The Power*.

Tricky title to live up to, that. I mean to be any good at all, something called *The Power* has to have some. Pal's movie, not exactly helped by being saddled with George who's-a-pretty-boy-then Hamilton, didn't have that power. And the Obrow has even less.

More students are on call. But this time they're high school types. And it's the little, green-eyed idol from, not the North of Katmandu, but Aztec history, causing all the not inconsiderable body count.

Both films are, well, exceedingly Obrow: very easy to mock, but I should remember what I said when people used to mock Michael Winner ten years ago or more. At least, this fella is making films and the more Obrow and Carpenter make, hopefully the better they'll be. Jeff had a good enough team around him – both films came from much the same crew. Chris Young has a good ear for genre scores and Matthew Mungle's effects show similar potential. One day, all their acts will really gell, perhaps. For the moment, well, they sort of ... congeal.

OF GREEK ORIGIN

Canada came up with a decent enough movie in *Of Unknown Origin*, the first movie from Greek director George P. Cosmatos since emigrating to the Dominion. (That's why he's now George P. and not as in the old days of stuff like *The Cassandra Crossing*, *Massacre in Rome* and *Escape To Athena*, George Pan Cosmatos.) He was, once upon a time, the assistant director for both Otto Preminger (*Exodus*) and Michael Cacoyannis (*Zorba the Greek*). "I was beginning to think I could be an assistant all my life. I worked my ass off," he says. He got his main breaks from Lord Lew Grade. His Canadian work is better.

Origin is quite a visual tour de force at times and provides what so many genre films lack – genuine terror under our hero, Pete Weller, is forced into mortal combat with ... well, not wanting to give the whole game away, let's say ... with a natural terror. The film comes from Chauncy G. Parker III's book, *The Visitor*, scripted by Brian Taggart, and features a good Canadian cast, people like the delectable Jennifer Dale and veteran Lawrence Dane and introduces a recent Playmate of one year or another, Shannon Tweed. This Tweed suits me down to the ground. Her inside leg ain't bad, either.

P. J. TIME

It used to be that Canadian films at Cannes were full of American actors, while Australian films had British stars. Now the Aussies have fallen for Hollywoodians, instead. Gregory Harrison vs. *Razorback* (see later paragraph) and the luscious P.J. Soles in the title role of *Innocent Prey*, from director Colin Eggleston – the man who made the brilliant *Long Weekend*.

P.J. (which stands for Pamela Jane) is hiding down-under from yet another crazed killer. Her hubby, And she knows he's no good, 'cos she's seen him do a Norman Bates on a hooker in a shower. She tells all to the sheriff (who's Martin Balsam, the *Psycho* private eye) and once hubby's incarcerated she flees to Australia. But he gets out, you see, picks up a Quantas and the rest of the blood and accents are pure Australian.

WHO'S WHO?

And there is one other new horror film out of America, at least. Roberta Findlay made *The Oracle* in New York with an inevitable bunch of

unknown (i.e. cheap) actors. Actually, some of their faces or figures may not be as unknown as all that as Roberta, like so many horrorists around today, is an ex-porno director. And they usually give an acting break to one of their ilk – like Chuck Vincent starring Paul Sutton (aka. Jerry Butler) in his *Preppies* funster. Roberta, I might add, is the lady responsible for the sex film which brought the term snuff-movie into modern parlance.

BAND CALL

Making his usual Canans splash, Charlie Band had films or promo-reels galore to show off his '84 production ranging from stop-motion ace David Allen's *Primevals* to a rapid-order rival to *Grem-lins* called *Ghoulies*. John Buechler supplied the not-quite-Rambaldi ghoulies who do their best to steal the limelight from director Luca Bercovici's cast which includes *Eraserhead* star Jack Nance and Jayne Mansfield's lookalike daughter, Mariska Hargitay.

MOVIE MONEY

Main reason for the continually diminishing number of our films being made each year is the sheer cost of film-making. Like everything else in life, it's gone up. And up. And then some. These days, the average budget for average Hollywood movies is in the area of \$11,600,000 and a film has got to make that, and more, before it's in profit. Horror films do not necessarily hit the profit-margins anymore, unless like all other winds, they're in the mega-hit category, like *Poltergeist*.

This year, the Hollywood combines expect a harvest of about 150 movies, plus the various studios' Classics Division specialty releases and, of course, some foreign imports. In all, therefore, Hollywood expects to spend on movie-making – and buying – this year a total of, wait for it, \$1,800,000,000 ... Yeah, *billions!* And to think, His Dezhsp still quibbles with my expenses.

STRIP HEROES

Among the movies awaiting production dates – not to mention fully itemised and agreed budgets – are *Batman*, *Mandrake*, *Spiderman* ... and even *St. Bilko!* But I think you can forget the *Dick Tracy* strip-to-film idea. Having lost one director after another – John Landis, Walter Hill, Richard Benjamin – the movie has been cancelled. Too expensive, you see, at \$14 million. Unless, of course, Warren Beatty changes his mind and takes the title role, after all – and the director's chair? That could happen. He's free at the moment. He can't do his mermaid comedy now that *Splash* has made such a splash. (Fancy Disney beating Beatty to the box-office – draw.) What he could do is cut in bits from his last winner and call it ... *Dick Tracy* vs. *Reds*.

CANNES CHAT

Sam Raimi shouldn't have any *Evil Dead* hassle with the nasty anti-nasties with his new movie, *Crime Wave* (ex-XYZ *Murders*) is a murder spoof. Cast includes one of The Three Stooges' gang ... John Badham taking over *American Flyer* from Peter Yates. John always inherits his movies, *Blue Thunder*, *War Games*, etc., from others ... Vera Miles, a Name again since *Psycho II*, heads up Larry Stewart's *The Initiation* ... And her screen daughter, Meg Tilly, is having a bit of an impulse with Tim Matheson for the last *Omen* director, Graham Baker ... Robert Ginty, surprisingly straight in *The Act*, is back to plasma-popping as *The Executioner* and then, *Exterminator II* ... His old directing mentor, James Glickenhaus, is switching to *Conan* country, I gather, for *Road of the Dungeon-master* ... while Dino De Laurentis re-opens his Rome studio, Dinocitta, for a female *Conan*

called *Red Sonja* ... while (and to think this skein started with Ginty) British director James Cameron turns Arnold Schwarzenegger into an alien *Terminator* ...

Grem-lins even has a song – from Peter Gabriel ... Dario Argento's *Tenebrae* finally unfurled in America as *Unsane*. Not only can't U.S. distributors spell, they have absolutely no grammar ... As his wife, Nancy Allen, was tied up with Jon Carpenter's production of *The Philadelphia Experiment*, Brian De Palma hired Tippi Hedren's daughter, Melanie Griffith, as his *Body Double*, opposite *Ghost Story*'s Craig Wasson ... Brother and sister film-makers Mark and Pam Chivinsky make a fantasy short called *Strange Tangles*. It lasts 24 minutes and has – count 'em – 128 special effects ... *Batman* Adam West and Sybil Danning among the pursuits of *Young Lady Chatterley II* with Harlee McBride again. Not that young. She made the first one in 1976 ... The late Vic Morrow's daughter, Jennifer Jason Leigh, takes a *Death Ride to Osaka* in Jonathan Kaplan's new flicker. Meantime, Vic's old *Combat* TV war series (1962-6) is back on the American box. It never came here, so how about it Channel Four? Great gung-ho stuff. Mrs. Thatcher would adore it ... Ken Russell going to work for Corman's old company, New World. He's turning away from composers for *Crimes of Passion* – often the same thing for Ken, I suppose ... (And that's just from the first few days in Cannes. More next issue.)

THE CLIPPER COMETH

Duran Duran could be in trouble soon ... How are they gonna keep Australian Russell Mulcahy down on the video-clip farm now that he's seen feature films? Mulcahy made the clips that made the Duran group around the world – everything from *Hungry Like The Wolf* to *Union of the Snake*. He's shot vids by the ton: Kim Carnes *Bette Davis Eyes*, Spandau Ballet, the Stones, Rod Stewart, Supertramp, the best of Billy Joel (*Pressure*) and Elton John's still standing because of Russell. He is, the pre-eminent exponent of the vivid new art-form, even if he hasn't directed M. Jackson yet. And he'll still be making a few, although he's now back home and finished his first feature – a down-under *Jaws* number about a ferociously wild boar of the *Razorback* family.

Mulcahy's debut, based on Peter Brennan's book, mixes *Jaws* and the recent *Dingo Baby* case, once Bill Kerr's grandchild is taken off by the boar and the old guy is put on trial for murdering the kiddy. American journalist Judy Morris (an Australian star, in fact) goes looking for the truth of the matter – and finds it. Exit: Judy! So, hubby flies in from the States to look for her. Hubby is Gregory Harrison, star of the *Trapper John* TV series.

The rotten old (and far from Miss) piggy is a terrific mechanical monster, designed and constructed by Bob McCarron and the film – tops in action, suspense and chills! – is shot by the man behind the *Mad Max II* camera, Dean Semler. So George Miller's laurels are in trouble with Mulcahy's cinematic arrival, just as much as Duran Duran's future is ... particularly as Russell has wasted scant time in getting on with another movie, *Jangles*.

THE AMERICO-AUSSIE

Scripter of *Razorback* is Everret de Roche already familiar to us due to his fine collection of down-under genre items like *Patrick*, *The Long Weekend*, *Snapshot*, the Rasputinesque *Harlequin*, *The Survivor* and Jamie Lee Curtis' *Road Games*. Despite his long association with the Aussie industry – not in as great a shape as it was a few years back – de Roche is American. He often takes a bit role in his movies, more to have a reason to be handy on the set (for re-writes) rather than any great wish to be an actor. He much prefers the solitary art of writing. "Most of

BEFORE
YOUR FUNERAL...
BEFORE
YOU ARE BURIED...
BEFORE
YOU ARE COVERED
WITH THE LAST
SHOVELFUL OF DIRT...
BE SURE YOU ARE
REALLY DEAD!

MORTUARY

...WHERE NOBODY RESTS IN PEACE

ARISTA FILMS and HICKMAR PRODUCTIONS, INC. present A HOWARD AVEDIS film

"MORTUARY" Starring MARY McDONOUGH DAVID WALLACE BILL PAXTON

LYNDA DAY GEORGE CHRISTOPHER GEORGE Music by JOHN CACAVAS

Written and Produced by HOWARD AVEDIS and MARLENE SCHMIDT

Directed by HOWARD AVEDIS An ARISTA FILMS INC. Release



Tasteless: about time this ad went back to the drawing board. Since its release one of the stars, Christopher George, has died.

the time," he says, "a story writes itself. I can't say I have a lot of control over it.

"I don't wish to be locked into any particular style. The suspense-thriller (how's that for a genre euphemism?) just happens to be a popular type of film at present. I like putting comedy into drama. But I'm scared of doing straight comedy. I'm certainly more comfortable with black comedy. Essentially, I'm a cynic."

GUEST STAR(S)

Talking of film-makers coming out from behind the camera, I hear that Steven Spielberg is acting again in his production of Joe Dante's troubled *Gremlins*. Composer Jerry Goldsmith has a bit-role in it, too. Spielberg was last seen on-screen at the very end of John Landis' *The Blues Brothers* (1980).

The *Gremlins* trouble? Not funny enough was His Spielbergship's verdict after the first sneak previews in America. He's having the film re-cut, putting back in much of the comedy Dante originally sliced out.

RUMOURS, RUMOURS!

Spielberg - as usual - is tipped as the director of the next *Star Wars* chapter, supposedly due before the cameras by the autumn for an opening next summer. I tend to doubt this story. I can just about believe that Lord Lucas is planning a fourth galactic venture, *not* that Spielberg will direct. He's busy enough with his own plans including *E.T. II*, of course (to follow the upcoming *E.T.* re-issue) and Michael Jackson is beginning to get impatient about their *Peter Pan* project. Mike's not getting any younger, it's so tiring counting all that money!

STEVEN'S CLAN

And to further celebrate the publication in French - Japanese and German to follow - of my book on Steven Spielberg, let's check what his mates are up to...

Pottergeist writers Mark Victor and Michael Grais are elevated to producer status for their next scenario, *The Thin Line*, being backed by the brothers Unger, Anthony B. and Stephen A.

The *Used Cars* and *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* director, Robert Zemeckis has a bigish Indiana Jones-like hit out called *Romancing The Stone*, produced by and starring Michael (son of Kirk) Douglas.

And the *Dragonslayer* team, director Hal Barwood and his co-writer/producer partner Matthew Robbins - who wrote Spielberg's first feature, *The Sugarland Express* ten years ago - are locked into an ultra top-secret horror feature at 20th Century Fox. Sole fact that the Fox guys will reveal is that the movie will cost \$7 million. Isn't that interesting... really whets the old appetite, huh?

BIG CHILLS

Bravo! Rather than taking the simplistic route to an *Android II*, the *Android* team, director Aaron Lipstadt and writer Don Oppen, are moving into big chills country with *City Limits*. John Stockwell, the good guy in *Christine* (well, they were all good guys, but you know what I mean), co-stars with *Quest For Fire*'s nude Rae Dawn Chong. They're a busy duo. Rae Dawn, daughter of Cheech's Chong, finished *Beat Street* in time for a ritzy Cannes bash of an opening, and young Stockwell is by now up to his blue eyes in Greg Cannom's special effects for *Radioactive Dreams*.

Also stalking the *City Limits* scenery are James Earl Jones, the voice of you-know-who, and Paul Newman's son (and everybody else's from Ben Gazzara's to Jack Lemmon's), Robby Benson.



Two contrasting shots from the latest Lee. The new face (well, no, the old stone face) but a new style for Christopher Lee as the hero's adversary in the Australian spoof, *The Return of Captain Invincible*.



MAGNUM OPUS

First affect a Michael Caine voice and then say after me: Not a lotta people know dat Tom Selleck's first movie was not *High Road To China* but 1972's *Daughters of Satan* ... He got such a fright in that, his moustache grew and helped make him more magnumamous.

FRANKENSTEIN '84

Two new Baron Frankenstein's are brushing down their best suits for parties later in the year. One from France. One from Britain. Our one, aimed mainly at the big bucks of American television, is a version of the short-lived 1981 Broadway play. It was shot in Leeds (of all places) in April. Robert Powell, formerly Everett de Roche's *Harlequin* and *Survivor*, is the good/bad doctor with David Warner, as busy back home as he was in Hollywood for the last few years, as the monster. Also cast: 80-year-young Sir John Gielgud (not, I fancy as the butler) and Mrs. Paul Simon, aka. Carrie Fisher.

The frog version - just think if they tackled *Dracula* they'd have no trouble with all the garlic breath on the set - is a bit of a comedy called *Frankenstein 90*, directed by the dependable Alain Jessua. His good doc is Jean Rochefort, which should cause instant giggles outside France, as he's a veritable clone of Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau.

Rochefort's monster is Eddy Mitchell, a veteran rock 'n' roller now doing very well in movies - a move he plainly adores as he's also a renowned film buff. He also hosts a show on the third French TV network that is designed like a night out at the pictures back in the '50/'60s. He shoots all the linking stuff in a real cinema, packed with folk in '50s/'60s gear and tells them inside secrets about the evening's entertainment - always a double bill of old American movies, plus newsreel, cartoon and the commercials of the time and next month's trailers! Great idea, huh?

Without wishing to be unkind to Eddy Mitchell (real name: Schmoll), he won't require too much make-up for his new role. Not on his, er, schmoll of a schnozz, anyway.

THRILLING

The real Monster of '84 remains Michael Jackson. But his and John Landis's *Thriller* vid clip didn't get on the short list of the best short film Oscar nominations (and how he tried to!). No matter. The clip is making a mint. Indeed, in Britain it's fast outstripping the previous best-seller on cassette, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Last score I heard was: Jackson 100,000 copies; *Ark*, 80,000. In loot that adds up to £2 million. From little Britain alone.

You'll be able to get a 3-D version of *Thriller* soon - seven 3-D stills of prancing Mike, the American werewolf in Los Angeles. It's part of the latest View-master picture set and comes complete with sound.

DEATH HOUSE

Alan Beattie reverted to Gothics for his own shiver tale, *Delusion*, in 1980. A company with the grandiloquent name of The International Picture Show Company picked it up for release and then, immediately, went out of business. Hence the delay until a New York group, New American Films, moved in on the property with its eyes on the main chance of pay-TV.

The title was changed and Beattie's flick is now *The House Where Death Lives*. That's a fair comment. There's very little life in this deadly dullard account of the deaths happening in the mansion of the Fairlawn Estate.

For once, the actors can be said to be much better than their given lines and circumstances. *Particularly, redhead nurse Patricia Percy and

her crippled patient, the invariably competent Joseph Cotton. For a change from chainsaws, knives flashing in the moonlight and/or ancient Egyptian or Aztec swords and other relics, the murder(s) weapon is very ordinary, quite domestic and Agatha Christie-like - a table leg.

The cause of all the blood-letting, though, remains that tired old standby of incest past. This is being utilised so often of late that I'm beginning to have second thoughts about the life style of our own dear Norman Bates and his Momma.

DAY AFTER DAZE

Four Minute Warning time... Britain's reply to *The Day After* - the most financially successful telefilm ever released to cinemas - is the Beeb's *Threads*. Australia has a teenage version called *One Night Stand*, which features the cracking Midnight Oil group among the kids facing their last night on earth. But the West Germans have found the best title for their version ... *The Day Before*.

SPEEDY COHEN

Call him speedy. Larry Cohen is rushing through horror movies in New York. Making 'em, that is, not watching them. Shooting had hardly been completed on *Blind Alley* when he got moving on *Special Effects*. Casts of both ventures are unknowns for now. Brad Rijn is the only actor to get into both.

JACK'S ALL RIGHT

Well, something wicked that way went ... No matter, Jack Clayton is alive and well and full of plans. He's bought the rights to Shirley Jackson's book, *We Have Always Lived in The Castle* (circa 1962) and is planning to shoot Paul Thain's scenario in Britain. Shirley Jackson, of course, has been filmed before - notably by Robert Wise with *The Haunting* in 1963.

LAYING THE GHOST

But don't be sucked into seeing *Haunted*, thinking it's another Shirley (Michael or Jesse!) Jackson ghost trip. It ain't - despite the casting of Brooke Adams and Trish Van Devere. Their roles are far removed from their offerings in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* or *The Hearse*. Don't say you've not been warned. (Good film for all that; best work from both ladies in many a hot summer).

OVERHEARD ...

The next Bond film with Roger Moore. From *A View To A Kill*, looks like being the first of the series to change its Ian Fleming title. Well, Bassey can't swing it ... "And it's always a thrill/ From a view to a kill" ... Connery-Bond producer, Jack Schwartzman promises to bring Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination* to the screen next year. Good news. Now for the bad: Lorenzo Semple has a digit or three in the script ... Kevin McClory, who owned the *Thunderball* rights and got *Never Say Never Again* off the ground is at it again, preparing another breakout Bond, *Spectre* ... Auntie BBC concerned in the \$10 million tele-series stemming from John Christopher's trilogy *The Tripods* ... Christopher Lee back in India again, in Jodhpur(s) to be exact, for *The Bengal Lancers* with ex-tarzan Miles O'Keefe, Michael York and 1984's Emma Sutton. One-man-band Martin Rustrman (his own producer, director and scripter) has turned Los Angeles into *Evil Town* (not hard, believe me) with a cast of hopefuls ... Now that *Dune* is busting out all over, Police-man Stelling is making *The Bride*, from Mary (Frankenstein) Shelley's novel, directed by the guy who first stung him into movies with *Quadrophenia*, Franc Roddam.

HORROR HOTLINE

by ANTHONY TATE

SANTOS - THE LAST ROUND

This February saw the death of Santos, the famed Mexican wrestler who made about a zillion wrestling/horror films in his heyday. His exact age was unknown, but we can assume that he was born around 1933 which made him only about 51 at the time of his death. El Santo (Samson in US dubbed prints), made his big screen debut in 1952 in *The Man in the Silver Mask* and was an instant hit with Spanish speaking audiences. This led to a series of pictures spanning almost 20 years in which he met all kinds of monsters, mad doctors and super villains. But it is his *Santos* and the *Blue Demon* which is best remembered today. Ironically, although he had only recently retired from wrestling, a new Santos film was in the planning stages - the first for 11 years. Obviously those who followed his exploits are now out of luck unless Blue Demon steps in...

SHORT TAKE 1

Superman II had its American TV premiere earlier this year and had about 16 minutes of originally cut material added, thus making sense at least of some of the most confusing segments...

OLEN-RAY STRIKES BACK

A couple of issues back I told you about Fred Olen-Ray, low budget film maker extraordinary. Well, he's back with a vengeance and recently told me about his latest hopes, disappointments and plans.

"My latest picture, *Biohazard*, is scheduled for release in the near future, but the distributors 21st Century will not be handling any more of my stuff. They really screwed me over the deal and I've had virtually no money from them. *Scalps*, which they handled, has been released in New York and the South but has yet to be released in Los Angeles. It has had bad reviews unfortunately and I am very very upset at the handling of it!

"But I've struck a deal with Wizard Pictures to handle my next film, which has a good size budget. It's called *Dinosaur Girl* and is being financed by Wizard, who are also backing Mike (Wizard of Hollywood) Jittlov's new movie: *The Wizard of Speed and Time*, a feature version of his classic short to the tune of two million dollars."

More news soon on *Dinosaur Girl*...

THE ACTIVE ACKER-MONSTER

One familiar face in Jittlov's *The Wizard of Speed and Time* will be that of Forry Ackerman, ex-editor of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and fantasy film historian supreme. He's recently completed his small role only a few months after his last in Michael Jackson's *Thriller* - did you spot him eating popcorn in the cinema scene? In June, he'll be making a guest appearance in the upcoming production of *Troll*, his 15th screen appearance, believe it or not...

VICIOUS VINYL

Rhino Records, best known for producing nostalgic oddball items, have recently issued soundtracks of *Blood Feast* and Corman's *Little Shop of Horrors* and hope to release more in the future. The *Blood Feast* record is actually divided into two: side one being *Blood Feast* and side two being devoted to 2000 *Maniacs*. Music is, of course, by Herschell Gordon Lewis himself and is suitably awful though the gore content of the cover is more likely to cause Mary Whitehouse a heart attack than the 'music'...

HERSCHELL DAY, USA

February 26th was Herschell Gordon Lewis day at Hollywood Book and Poster Company. Arranger Eric Caiden, still planning to shoot *Blood Feast II*, invited numerous guests who had worked with Lewis to attend. Highlight of the day was a double bill of two rarely-seen Lewis films: *Just for the Hell of It* and *The Devils on Wheels*...

PAUL BARTELL LATEST

Paul Bartell is back with a new movie, *Not For Publication*, starring Nancy (*Strange Invaders*) Allen and David (*American Werewolf*) Naughton. His first since the delightful *Eating Raoul*, it tells the story of a group of rich society women who live a double life: by day wealthy playgirls, by night scandal sheet journalists working for a rag similar to LA's very own *National Inquirer*. Described as a screwball comedy by Bartell, it should be a worthy follow-up to *Eating Raoul*. Sadly, though, his planned project at Universal - an anthology movie based on the 1950s TV show *One Step Beyond* - has been cancelled due to the relative financial failure of *Twilight Zone - The Movie*. The good news is that by now Paul should have begun shooting the sequel to *Eating Raoul*, entitled *Bland Ambition*...

SHORT TAKE 2

Vincent Price may soon be back on the screen as *Dr Phibes!* He has read a story treatment by Paul (*Beast Within*) Clemens and Ron Magid and is reportedly delighted with it. Things look promising with 20th Century-Fox interested...

PLUTO LIVES

Bizarre-faced Michael Berryman recently reprised his role as Pluto in *The Hills Have Eyes - Part Two* and may well be playing the lead in the proposed *Blood Feast II*. In the story he would play one of two characters still living under the power of Fouad Ramses, to be played (hopefully) by Mal Arnold - the original chef of death...

WHO'S WALT TOUCH-STONE?

Someone at Disney must have finally realised that the very title "A Walt Disney Production" means death to any adult oriented film that they might come up with. So this March, with the release of Ron (*Happy Days*) Howard's new film *Splash*, Disney becomes Touchstone films. From now on all their more adult pictures will be released under this banner with the more traditional pictures staying under the title of Disney. *Splash* as a mermaid picture quite naturally contained several brief nude (topless unless you're into tails) scenes of stunning Daryl Hannah but Disney Films, scared as usual, trimmed it at the last minute to get a PG rating. This does seem to make the company name change a little pointless especially as the instant well-deserved success of the film is due more to its wit and style than to any internal Disney name change. Maybe when *Baby*, their dinosaur picture, hits the theatres later this year the name Touchstone may have more relevance but meanwhile, under the Disney banner, *The Black Cauldron* sees release in late summer and *Oz* is slated for a summer 1985 release. Hopefully too we will see more pictures of the calibre of *Never Cry Wolf* but, after all, a Disney picture is still a Disney by any name...

SHORT TAKE 3

More than 14 months after I first saw its preview, *House of the Long Shadows* is still awaiting its US release. Although MGM were planning to show it for Halloween last year, it is still (along with lesser pictures like *Sword of the Barbarians*), being wasted on a shelf...

NEW WORLD HORRORS

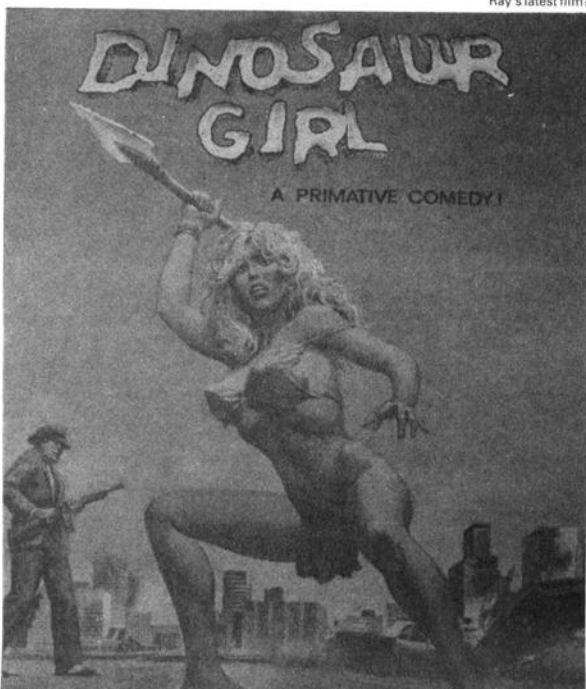
New World productions generally are ignored by the serious student of horror films. With films such as *Galaxy of Terror* and the awful *Stryker*, they have brought their bad name upon themselves - not that they could really take all the blame with Roger Corman heading the studio. But all that has changed with Roger's recent departure from the studio and better, more well-tailored productions are promised for the future. The new spearhead is headed by an adaptation of Stephen King's short story, *Children of the Corn*, which first appeared in his collection *Night Shift*. A sort of cross between *The Wicker Man* and *Friday the 13th*, the story is low gear King. The fact that the movie is far from good misses the point - by New World's standards it is a quality feature. The real judgement will come soon when John Carpenter's pet project, *The Philadelphia Experiment*, hits the screens. First reports indicate a goody, but only time shall tell...

FRIDAY THE 13th - PART BORE

Oh dear, just when you thought it was safe to go back into the movie theatre, along comes a new *Friday the 13th* film to ruin it all. The fourth episode in the adventures of Jason the deformed has make-up effects by the never surprising Tom Savini who says it will be the last in the series, as it is subtitled *The Final Chapter*. Guess he hadn't heard that preproduction work has already begun on *Part Five*...



The stunning Daryl Hannah (top) as the mermaid Madison in the new romantic comedy **Splash** from Disney...oops, Touchstone Films. (Below) After **Biohazard** and **Scalps**, how could you resist Fred Olen Ray's latest film?



SPACE VAMPIRES LIFT OFF

At last **Space Vampires** exists after years of "coming soon" ads in **Variety**! Under the wing of director Tobe Hooper, this tale of galactic necking promises well with effects by John Dykstra. The plot in case you never read Colin Wilson's fine novel, concerns life energy draining aliens set loose in London after being brought back from their hibernation in space by an unfortunate crew of explorers. A global holocaust is, quite naturally, anticipated if the vampires are not caught and destroyed. A good film might help comfort Wilson who received an exceptional offer for the film rights the day after his agent accepted a more modest one.

NIGHT CRAVEN

After high hopes of a major comeback for Wes Craven, things are not all that they should be in the hills with eyes. The new sequel to his finest movie was screened at a special limited viewing for the American Film Market and the general opinion on **The Hills Have Eyes - Part II** was that it looked bad...terrible, even! Of course, it will make money but he is rapidly losing his cult status. Interest in his latest project, **Nightmare on Elm Street**, was being drummed up at the market but the film (young girl dreams of a clawed killer who may or may not be real) will have to be hot to ensure his name selling a film. I still had faith in him after **Swamp Thing** but he now has a lot to make up...

SHORT TAKE 4

One film to steer clear of at any cost is the turkey of the Film Market: **Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tilly**. I have never seen a worse fantasy film and, indeed, it is the only movie in my life I have ever walked out of - the sheer physical pain of watching it was too much! You have been warned...

GHOULIES FROM THE MAUSOLEUM

Bobbie Breese is back! The delicious villainess of **Mausoleum** is now in the cast of **Ghoulies**, the new Charles Band film. It promises to be a black comedy about teenagers (who else?) trapped in a house full of spirits and monstrosities - distributors found the preview reel shown at the Film Market interesting. And, since **Mausoleum** is now available on video in the UK, you lucky folk can take Ms Breese home...

HORROR DEAD? NOT YET

Final interesting news from the American Film Market is the unusual amount of genre films being bargained for. More than 75 such films were on show including **Bloodbath at the House of Death**, **Dreamscape**, **Biohazard**, **Scalps**, **Splatter University**, **Mortuary**, **Warrior and Sorceress**, **Deathstalker**, **Final Terror**, **Secrets of the Phantom Caverns**, **Yor, Lost Empire**, **Rotweiler**, **Through Naked Eyes** and **Children of the Corn**. And that's not even counting promos for **The Philadelphia Experiment**, **Ghoulies**, **Ragewar** and **Swordkill** amongst others. How many you'll see on UK cinema screens is another question but, legislation permitting, you may catch quite a few on video...

SHORT TAKE 5

Hottest film of the market appeared to be **Romancing the Stone**. Reckon you'll hear a lot more about this one so I'll just sign off with my usual warped wishes from the land of dreams and deals...

HEROES OF THE 'B' MOVIES

by ANTHONY TATE

Rondo Hatton is best remembered for his chilling portrayal of the "Creep" or "The Creeper", a deformed brutish killer who menaced his way through the mid 1940's at Universal Pictures. But off screen, Rondo was anything but the menace that he showed in his films.

Rondo Hatton (his real name) was born April 29th, 1894 in Hagers Town, Maryland. Contrary to popular belief he was not the handsome young man who turned into a monster in later life that the lesser, past fantasy publications would have us believe. From all accounts, he was deformed by the disease Acromegaly from an early age and by his late twenties to early thirties he was more or less as he was to be for the rest of his life. He started his career in movies by joining the Aubrey Kennedy studios in Key West, Florida as a writer and then moved to Hollywood in the early 1930s to become a press release writer in a local press agency. His first acting break came in late 1930 when Henry King spotted him and cast him in a small role in *Hell's Harbour*. But it was a false start and Rondo wasn't to make another film until 1938.

After a mixed 8 years of press work and hitting the casting agencies, Rondo found work as an extra at 20th Century Fox studios and appeared in two films for them that year, 1938. His unusual appearance caught the eye of many directors who wanted him more as a "presence" than anything else in their films. Rondo didn't care though; it meant steady work for him and at last he was a regular on the big screen. He spent most of the 1940s at Fox, and enjoyed limited success as an extra. But Rondo's personal life was always painful. A kind, charming and intelligent man, he was stared at in the street and reacted to with surprise and often horror by the less understanding members of society.

1944 was a busy year at Universal's fright factory, with even the *Sherlock Holmes* series heading into chill-country with *The Scarlet Claw* and *The Pearl of Death*. The latter picture called for a different kind of nemesis for the Baker Street sleuth, a horrifying, bone-crushing giant of a man called The Hoxton Creeper. Rondo was a natural for the part! Although he had to be built up in height (he was not an especially tall man)

and build, he made the role his own and injected feeling into an otherwise "faceless" role. At the end of the picture he is killed, but Universal (being Universal) would not let the Creeper die... yet.

Three more films followed before Rondo made a horror picture again, including the rarely seen serial for Universal *Raiders of Ghost City*. Then came *Jungle Captive* (1945), last and most enjoyable in a weak series of three films featuring the "Ape Woman". He portrayed Moloch, the Brute, and got to recite some of the films funniest (unintentional) lines. All was not well at Universal who were in a bad financial state at the end of the war, and while the troubles brewed, Rondo made two more pictures back to back, bringing back to the screen his best friend, the Creeper. In the first film, *House of Horrors*, he tries to kill himself because of his ugliness but is rescued by a sculptor, played by Martin Kosleck, who then uses the Creeper to bump off his critics. A wild film, it is today achieving a minor cult status and deservedly so. This film was followed by the infamous *Brute Man*, which related the story of how the Creeper became what he was.

On February 2nd 1946, Rondo Hatton died from a heart attack due to accelerated growth strain. The disease he had battled for so long had finally killed him and Universal now found themselves with a film on their hands that exploited the very thing that killed him. Since they were hurting due to financial losses they decided to ship off many of their lesser completed features to smaller distribution companies who bought the rights from Universal and *The Brute Man* was an obvious choice. It was sold, complete with all advertising materials, to PRC pictures where it received small and spotty distribution. A pitiful film, it deserved little better though it certainly was not the offensive film to Rondo that it is told to be.

Times changed in the pre-war years of film and Rondo was very much a product screen-wise of the 1940s. He died and left us with a shadowy hint of stardom, the kind that could only have been in the golden age of Hollywood and he remains a one of a kind screen villain.

Film Credits

- 1930 *Hell's Harbour*
- 1938 *In Old Chicago*
Alexander's Ragtime Band
- 1939 *Hunchback of Notre Dame*
Captain Fury
Chad Hanna
- 1940 *Moon Over Burma*
Big Guy
- 1942 *Cyclone Kid*
Moon and Sixpence
- 1943 *Sleepy Lagoon*
Oxbow Incident
- 1944 *The Pearl of Death*
Raiders of Ghost City (serial)
Princess and the Pirate
Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore
- 1945 *Jungle Captive*
Royal Mounties Ride Again
- 1946 *House of Horrors*
Spider Woman Strikes Back
The Brute Man



BOOK COLUMN



The usual difficulty with a book column in a fantasy film magazine is the general lack of suitable material to review – witness our competitor's reviews of science fiction titles – but this time there is so much available I must apologise for the brevity of the comments. The range of titles too is a hopeful sign of the growing acceptance, despite judicial evidence to the contrary, of the horror/fantasy genre in cultural circles.

Our first title, for example, is the sort of project that would have seemed undreamable only a few years ago. *Robert W. Pohl Jr and Douglas C. Hart's The Films of Christopher Lee* (Scarescrow Press/Bailey Bros & Swinfin, £32.50) is a wonder of a book: a complete filmography of Chris Lee together with his comments and recollections of the films in question. Although perhaps a little reticent about his Hammer years, Lee reveals himself as a thoughtful and perceptive critic of his own work and this title can only confirm Lee's frequently expressed insistence that he is not a horror star. It also reveals just how many low budget European films he has wasted his talent in, but that's another story perhaps. An excellent volume and fairly indispensable one would think for the Lee fan, even at that horrendous price.

Rather more accessible to the average pocket but a more challenging read is *Piers Handling's The Shape of Rage: The Films of David Cronenberg* (New York Zoetrope, about £9). A publication of the Academy of Canadian Cinema, this is a collection of essays on the work of the most controversial of the current crop of respected directors. Certainly the book does not entirely consist of paeans of praise for Cronenberg but whatever you may think of his films (and personally I feel he lost direction between

Raid and the recent *Videodrome* and superb *The Dead Zone*) I think this book is worth your attention. Serious standards of film criticism are infrequent in our field but this title shows how successful they can be when applied to a filmmaker of Cronenberg's vision.

Which brings us neatly to *Pascal Martinet's Mario Bava* (Edilg, 3 rue Recamier, Paris 75341, France; 48 Francs). Bava's name conjures up a nostalgic vision for old-time horror fans but this book shows how much wider he cast his net than simply the horror film: sword and sandal, science fiction, thriller, vikings and comic strip heroics. The changing face of world cinema has meant the demise of many of the low-budget areas which threw up so many interesting directors (the Roger Corman stable above all) but Italy is still the home of the quick exploitation film (*Mad Max* clones, *Raiders* rip-offs, cannibal movies, etc) and this book gives a useful insight into that tradition. You'll have to send to France for this but, if you can read French and appreciate Italian fantasy, I'm sure you'll find it worth the trouble.

Martin Barker's A Haunt of Fears (Pluto Press, £4.95) you can find even in W.H. Smiths, on the other hand, and even though it is not about fantasy films I urge you to do so. Basically, it is a study of the concerted campaign in the 1950s which led to the banning in the UK of American horror comics (most notable the influential E.C. line) and that campaign is of direct relevance to all of us faced in 1984 with a similarly misguided and intellectually dishonest campaign against horror in general and horror videos in particular. Just as now the "research methods" of anti-video campaigners is shown to be academically bankrupt (a recent study showed an equal percentage of children enthusiastically recalling non-existent films as had recalled the "nasties" to universal press revulsion) so too in those far-off days did the campaigners twist evidence to show the pernicious power of horror comics. An essential read – if only to revel in the wonderful comic strips reprinted here. An essential warning too: nothing changes and despite the liberation of artistic freedoms over the last couple of decades there are those working away to deny us the right to see what we will. Be warned – they will win unless we put an equal effort into ensuring that the arts should be as capable of showing horror if required as they are of showing love.

The films of the 1950s were not as culturally suspect as the comics of course but *Peter Biskind's Seeing is Believing* (Pluto Press, £6.95) usefully reminds us how even the most mainstream examples of American cinema still managed to reflect the tensions and conflicts of a society in transition. Although only a portion of the book deals with fantasy films, there is enough here to provide a very thoughtful read and it is an excellent example of how film criticism can open up to us whole new ways in which to see again even the most low-budget and seemingly naive movie.

I've had a couple of letters in asking why *Stuart Samuel's 'Midnight Movies'* (reviewed in *HOH 27*) has been released over here with new authors: *J. Hoberman* and *Jonathan Rosenbaum's 'Midnight Movies'* (Harper & Row, \$9.95). The answer is quite simple: despite an identical title and subject matter (cult movies that are shown on the midnight circuit like *Rocky Horror Picture Show*), this is a completely different book. But whilst the earlier title is a leisurely stroll through some cinematic oddities, the new book is a descent into a kind of celluloid hell with an unfortunate emphasis on the works of John Waters and even more alarming underground film characters. Of the two books, I would guess that this may be of more value but be prepared to be shocked – thoughtful it may be, subtle it isn't.

Danny Peary's Cult Movies 2 (Vermilion, £6.95), however, is the kind of film book which you could give to your mother. If you saw the first *Cult Movies* you'll know what to expect, if not then let me just say it is a useful survey of a whole host of films which Peary reckons are cult favourites: *Barbarella*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The First Nudie Musical*, *Godzilla*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Sullivan's Travels*, *The Wicker Man*, etc. An interesting selection and certainly his comments often enliven your own viewing of a film but it is debatable how many of his fifty films are actually cult items; I mean, *Willy Wonka* and *The Chocolate Factory*?

Moving quickly to fanzines, we have the newly revived *Children of the Night* (\$2.95 plus postage from *Derek Jensen*, 7450 Village Drive, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208) which immediately returns this title to the small pantheon of exceptional fantasy film fanzines (like *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, *Photon* and *Midnight Marquee*) after too many years away. This issue reviews some of the latest big movies but also, more usefully, takes an overview on 3D movies and splatter films. Excellent design, glossy paper, nice stills and an obvious love of the genre all make me eager for the next issue which will appear only if this one gets enough response. Go to it!

A British fanzine I've just become aware of is *Creature* (75p plus postage from *Nick Hasted*, 147 Rushden Gardens, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex) with a special Edgar Allan Poe issue. Although comic fanzines are thick on the ground there don't seem to be many film ones and it is the sort of venture we ought to encourage; most of *HOH's* writers will recall the late 1960s when there was a veritable flood of excellent British film fanzines and, as a tip to budding writers, it almost certainly from out of the current fanzines that the next generation of *HOH* and *Starburst* writers will come. That said, *Creature* is not an outstanding piece of work and its reliance on horror stories to fill an issue seems unfortunate but it seems a project well worth keeping an eye on.

Finally, we come to a fanzine (?) which I do not hesitate to recommend to you: *Donald Farmer's The Splatter Times* (\$2 plus postage from PO Box 2733, Cookeville, Tenn. 38502). I have the first three issues to hand and am amazed at how professionally produced and interesting they are. Unlike similar US titles like *Gore Gazette* or *Sleazoid Express*, this is tabloid newspaper size with twelve or so pages an issue crammed with reviews of low-budget films, interviews with people like Herschell Gordon Lewis and Bobbie Breese, features on the Spanish Templar movies and much more. We are currently attempting to act as UK distributor for this title but, until then, rush your international money orders for a set – you won't regret it if your tastes run more to gore and unusual horror films.

I'm happy to give you an update to my complaints about *Dave Rogers' The Avengers* (*HOH 26*) which, as you may recall, did not include any material on *The New Avengers*. Apparently this omission was due solely to the copyright difficulties between the two shows rather than a decision on Dave's part – *The Avengers* is owned by EMI whilst *The New Avengers* is owned by The Avengers (Film & TV) Enterprises and (the now insolvent) I.D.T.C.

I've also had a few letters asking where titles reviewed in the column can be obtained. Well, when I'm not aware of a UK publisher or retailer I will give you the address to write to but anything where merely a publisher's name is given should be available through any bookshop by ordering or, almost certainly, from those good folk at Forbidden Planet 2, 58 St. Giles High Street, London WC2 (tel: 01 379 6042). Enclose SAE with your enquiry and tell them I sent you. Okay?

ANSWER DESK

I have in my possession a copy of **Halls of Horror 21** featuring a *Shandor* comic strip. Can you please tell me which issue contains the continuation of this storyline, and do you stock copies in your mail order department?
V. Irving, Goring by Sea, Sussex.

Dez Skinn replies: Dave has passed your question over to me for answering, V, as I'm the one to blame for the following somewhat confusing continuity. *Shandor* appeared in **HoH 6, 8, 16, 21** and the upcoming issue **30**. He has also appeared in **Warrior 1 to 10, 13 to 16, 18 onwards**. However, chronologically, **HoH 8** introduced the character as a demon fighting priest, issues **16** and **23** lead up to his meeting with *Van Helsing* (scheduled for issue **30**), which precedes his meeting with *Dracula*, told in our adaptation of *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* in **HoH 6, Warrior 1, 2 and 3** reprint the solo stories from **HoH 8, 16 and 21**, but with issue **4, Warrior** takes up *Shandor's* struggles after his encounter with *Dracula*, and will culminate in **Warrior 23**.

All of the back issues mentioned of both magazines are available from us (see ad elsewhere) except **HoH 6**, but the *Dracula/Shandor* strip has been reprinted and is currently available on the stands in our **Dracula Special**.

Now you know why Dave Reeder didn't want to answer your question! But I'll now hand the column back to him -

I think *Tise's* comments in Answer Desk (**HoH 26**) are wrong when he credits Harlan Ellison with Hugo Awards for his two *Outer Limits* scripts.
Terry Doyle, Runcorn.

Sorry about that, Terry. Yes, you're quite right: Ellison won a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Anthology Drama for *Demon With a Glass Hand*, but no Hugos for the show. Guess we thought he had won so many that a couple of them must have been for his *Outer Limits* work!

Can you help me with fan club addresses for Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing? And whatever happened to *Famous Monsters of Filmland*?
Julie C. Smith, Bournemouth.

I'm sure I've seen these lying around somewhere but just can't put my hands on them at present. Sorry, Julie, but for now I think your best bet is to drop a line (with SAE) to Colin Cowie and ask him the answer as well as for details of the interesting **Hammer International Fan Club**, 288 Lunsford Lane, Larfield, Maidstone, Kent, Oh, and do say we sent you.

Famous Monsters is sadly no more. Publisher Jim Warren filed for bankruptcy a couple of years back and the 25 year anniversary issue of **FM** never reached the printer; final number, therefore, is 191.

I've recently come across mention of the *Inner Sanctum* films in an article on Lon Chaney Jr. What can you tell me about them?
Gary Hepworth, Huddersfield.

This was a series of six films, all starring Chaney, made by Universal and based on a radio series of the same name. All were introduced by a head in a crystal ball and Chaney was alternately hero and villain in **Calling Dr. Death** (1943), **Dead Man's Eyes** (1944), **The Frozen Ghost** (1944), **Weird Woman** (1944), **Pillow of Death** (1945) and **Strange Confession** (1945). There was also a feature by Lew Landers, **Inner Sanctum**, made in 1948 which is not part of the series.

Seeing there are now plans afoot to film *The Batman* again for the big screen, could you please list his previous film appearances.
P. West, Sutton.



Ah, an easy one. Bob Kane's comic book creation first reached the screen in a Columbia serial, **Batman**, in 1943 with Lewis Wilson as the caped crusader and then, after some guest spots on the mid-1940s **Superman** daily radio show, he reappeared in another Columbia serial, **Batman and Robin**, in 1949, known on rerelease as **The New Adventures of Batman and Robin**, played by Robert Lowery. There was the famous 120 episode TV series from 1965-7 with Adam West as **Batman** together with the motion picture, **Batman**, in 1966, again with West. Finally he had another TV series (animated) and appeared on the **Super Friends** animated show and creator Bob Kane did an animal cartoon pastiche in 1960: **Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse**.

Were you really serious when you said *Elsa Lanchester's* only genre film was *The Bride of Frankenstein*, in the book column of **HoH 27**?
Trevor Roberts, Bangor, N. Ireland.

I'm ashamed to admit I was. Apologies to Ms Lanchester who, of course, later appeared in **The Ghost Goes West** (1936), **Bell, Book and Candle** (1958), **Mary Poppins** (1964), **Blackbeard's Ghost** (1967), **Willard** (1971), **Arnold** (1971), **Terror in the Wax Museum** (1971) and **Die Laughing** (1980). Shame, shame ...

I've just returned from a spell in Ecuador and over there I saw John Carpenter's classic slash movie entitled **Martes 13**. Why change the day of the week?
V. Longland, Bakewell.

Because, V, the unlucky day for Latins is Tuesday 13th not Friday! Simple, isn't it?

ANSWER DESK welcomes your queries on film, TV or written horror! Send your questions (or oddments of information you might like to share with other **HoH** readers) to - **Answer Desk, Halls of Horror**, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP.

POST MORTEM

Sounds a reasonable theory to me. Any of our readers care to imagine what kinds of horror films might start a new cycle in the way that *Halloween* did? Or even any thoughts on the old question of why we enjoy horror films? ... Dave

Stephen Bailey, Harden Walsall, West Midlands

How dare you talk about dropping the comic adaptations in *HoH*. That's what makes it so different from other so-so mag! However, after waiting so long for *Brides of Dracula*, I was quite let down by it as I don't think it captured the atmosphere of the film.

And that's another reason (should we need one) for not continuing with them - we all have different perceptions of a film and an adaptation, however good, must invariably disappoint some readers. See my Editorial and the first answer in Answer Desk for our latest plans to keep Hammer and comic fans really happy ... Dave

Bill Walker, London SE21

Thanks for bringing back *HoH*. My sole worry is that after this summer we will only be able to talk and write about most of this material - apart from *Stills* of course. Some pessimists (include me) even speculate that the big screen material will be on the receiving end of far more censorship cuts due to the general video clamp down. I have two requests and one plea.

As most of your correspondents said in *HoH* 27, please come out eventually if possible. I'm dead certain that there's a vast readership for both *HoH* and *Starburst* and each issue is so sought after that I've read through it in a couple of hours. It then seems ages before I can enjoy the delight in opening the front pages of the next one. The second perennial request is to raise the price to allow colour and, lastly, I beg you not to increase the space presently allocated for the strip adaptations. No doubt I'm at odds with most readers but you did ask for our views.

And most welcome they are, Bill. To answer your letter and those of many other readers, may I give you a quick lesson in magazine economics. It is now the beginning of May - *HoH* 28 is out in three weeks or so and this issue will not reach the shops until mid-June. We want to make sure that our financial position is secure before we venture into pastures new so that first involves looking at what we may consider to be our first 'regular' issue: *HoH* 27. The way a distributor presents sales figures to us means that it won't be until the end of June that we have a fair idea of how much that issue sold and it won't be until the Autumn that we have a reliable final sales figure. With me so far? Assuming we had a fair idea at the end of June that our sales looked promising enough to go monthly, then would I really be possible to pull an issue forward a month before number 31. Obviously, we would have to check that our contributors could cope with extra work in their schedules and we would have to see how a monthly *HoH* could fit into our regular commitments to publish *Warrior* monthly (together with all the syndication work and more that *Warrior* generates) plus our specials like *Dracula* and *Marguerite*! I don't mention the new title *Video Fantasy*. We would rather the build up was gradual and lasting than rushing into a monthly schedule and having to drop the whole magazine when sales figures came in. Be patient, try your friends about us, check your local newsagents to see if they are carrying the Quality line and wish us luck: we'll be monthly as soon as we can ... Dave

Bob Sheridan, New York

Thanks for sending me the new look *HoH* issues. I like the way that they tend to be organised thematically with articles making reference to other articles in the same issues. Best of all, though, was your editorial in 25.

Although *Bob* is a regular contributor with his *Hammer* series, he wasn't really a part of the new team as all the *Hammer* articles up to this issue were written a few years back in our previous reincarnation. Frankly, we thought he had vanished and were making arrangements to find someone else as competent to continue his series. As you can see, we've tracked him down and are delighted to report that he's hard at work on the final chapters now. Good to have you back, Bob, you had us worried for a bit ... Dave

A. Smith, Manchester

Having been initially delighted with issue 25 of your magazine, I am sorry to admit to being already disillusioned by issue 27. Having given up buying

Starburst due to its format changes, I thought that *HoH* would fill the gap. You ask what reader's want, well I'll be frank and tell you what at least one reader would like. As I said, I gave up *Starburst* partly for its format changes but also because it became full of lengthy interviews and articles about forthcoming films that eventually turned out to be a let down - a good example being *Jaws 3D*. Having read your article on the making of this tedious film I went to see it and was thoroughly bored. Now, in issue 27 of *HoH*, we what is languidly called a 'review' of the same film which is a rebash of the *Starburst* 'technical side of the movie' approach. The technical side is unimportant if the film itself is as lame. You've not had a review of a current (or even an old) film for some reprints of issue 25. Readers want to know what your staff think of current releases, etc. However, I must compliment you on information - *Media Macabre* is excellent and could well be expanded. *Campbell's Column* provides a little - intellectualism and is definitely a worthwhile feature - may I just say I agree with his comments and deplore the current attitude towards 'video nasties'? Your video listing is a good idea but I would have preferred a full synopsis of each movie and a small review rather than a checklist. But what really makes me disillusioned with *HoH* is the comic strip. Why does a magazine about films contain a comic strip adaptation? Why not just watch the film? I've nothing against comics - I used to enjoy them greatly - but not in a film magazine. If you want to be a serious and respected fantasy journal then I suggest you drop the comic strips or print them in a separate book. I'm sorry to have been so critical but I hope that I've been constructive rather than destructive. I would love to see your magazine bloom and flourish because at the moment I'm sorry to say that I have taken to buying *Fangoria* which is a shame because Britain ought to be able to come up with the best horror journal. Lastly, might not the encouragement of advertising (video companies?) help to improve the colour in *HoH*, which is presently woefully absent?

Never be afraid to be critical of us - especially when you've sat down and written a long letter filled with reasoned arguments. Even if I dispute what you say, I still appreciate that you thought *HoH* worthwhile enough to devote time and effort to. Part of the reason why we don't carry reviews is the time and long time lag between writing an issue and seeing it on sale that I mentioned above; the rest of it is that everyone else reviews films. Do you really need more? Our experience with the *Jaws 3D* review which should have originally been on sale in December 1983 to catch the film's release, has, I think, decided for us that we should stick with what we do best - in-depth or off-beat articles on the horror genre - at least for the present. The main problem we all face with previewing major films is trying to second guess which will be classics and which turkeys. All fantasy film magazines have at times clung onto the coat-tails of a bad film - at least *HoH*'s current policy means that it should happen to us less often than to our competitors ... Dave

Alan Simpson, East Kilbride

I was just about to write this morning asking where my subscription copy of *HoH* 27 was, when it flopped through my letterbox. I spent the next three hours reading every word of it and enjoyed it all. I was fascinated with the *Video Index* - I am sure it will be a great help when I'm picking videos in future. Sometimes the covers make you think the film is great when it is really a total bummer. I thought the list was so good that I thought I'd contribute some horror videos for your list.

Thanks, Alan, and thank you ALL who wrote in to say how much the *Video Index* meant to you. We have, quite literally, been swamped with responses from you and with hundreds of (thousands?) of extra pieces of info you've contributed to the new title. It's an awful lot of good people out there and we at *HoH* are simply numbed and humbled by the generosity and the spirit in which you have been sharing information. The pieces of the larger jigsaw are coming together as we've seen from last month's premier issue of *Video Fantasy* and, although we're aware of and apologise for the mistakes, we feel we've taken a big step into an area so far uncharted except by a lot of people hunched over their videotapes! We thank you ... Dave

D. Price, Wirral

I saw *Dawn of the Dead* at the cinema and on video and both versions are the same - censored! There's no head exploding, no sword in the face, etc. I now

George Turner, Sunderland

HoH 27 was, in my opinion, a big improvement on the previous two issues. It was nice to see the return of the *Hammer* comic strips and the excellent *History of Hammer* series. *Campbell's Column* was as good as ever and the video listing was a good idea and should come in useful for those of us lucky enough to own video machines. Sadly, I didn't really like the *Kolchak* article as I've never actually considered this true horror material and the *Jaws 3D* piece wasn't too exciting either. Personally, I think the magazine is sliding too far from its roots (in *Hammer* Films) in an effort to remain commercial. As such it may end up pleasing less and less of its various specialist reader sections, although I do look forward to the articles on *Price* and *Pitt* in the next issue (*HoH* 28). As a constructive criticism, perhaps you could try and obtain some rarer stills than those currently used by many of them have already been seen countless times.

Thanks for an interesting letter, George - I'm glad you enjoy at least part of each issue of *HoH*. And that is what it is all about surely? No magazine could attempt to please all of its readers all of the time, but, by concerning ourselves with the whole of the horror genre, we stand a better chance than general fantasy film magazines of pleasing horror fans. Oh, by the way, how are we supposed to stay in production if we don't make that effort to 'remain commercial'? I do take your point about the stills though - hope you've seen some improvement lately ... Dave Reeder, Editor.

Mike Wathen, Morden, Surrey

HoH 27 is to hand - best issue so far of the new run. Simon Green (H), Simon may well be right in your letters column that splatter movies seem to have run their course, but the horror film in general seems to be going through one of its periodic lulls; something which happens when the public tires of a flood of cheap, derivative junk. That's why *Hammer* ran out of steam and the various Universal classics before them. In a year or two, a new adolescent audience will appear wanting the same rite of passage that Ramsey Campbell discusses in his column. This will result in a new crop of horror films, in all probability far nastier than anything we've seen so far in order to try and outdo the present stuff. The Whitehouse lobby will be seen to have helped propagate the very thing it is now trying to suppress.

read in **Fangoria** that the US print is about half an hour longer than ours, if it is true it would be great to see it in comic form, as this would be the nearest to seeing it uncut. Maybe you could even start a whole series of comic strips based on badly censored films and banned films but show them all uncut!

What? Not only comic strip adaptations but 'comic nasties'? You've got to be kidding... **Dave**

A. Stephenson, Plymouth

I'm not one of those people who habitually put pen to paper but I was so impressed by the quality (ouch!) of both **Warrior** and **Halls of Horror** when I received them both that I felt I just had to say something by way of encouragement. **Hall** is currently my favourite magazine in the world. I felt so pleased when it returned to the newstands – like scoring a goal in schoolboy soccer all over again! After three issues it seems to be settling down nicely and recreating an image for itself. Since the first two volumes, a new wave of graphic gore horror films have emerged to challenge the traditional gothic fantasy. At present you appear to be satisfying both camps admirably and I hope this continues, although I would place myself in the gothic camp. I have a couple of requests, though. How about some appreciation of horror/fantasy series on TV? and some fanzine reviews?

Thanks for the kind words. We are currently trying to put together a major series of articles (like *History of Hammer*) on the entire range of fantasy on TV for our companion title, **Video Fantasy**, where it seems more at home. And I'm only too pleased to review fanzines in my **Book Column** but I do have to see a copy first. If you know of any, please ask the editor to send me some... **Dave**

Graham Williams, Swansea

Good to see the marked improvement in printing in **Hall 27**. Nice Mick Austin artwork on the cover, too – particularly the portrait of Darren McGavin. You ask whether strip adaptations should continue in the magazine – well yes, of course they should. The inclusion of such strips makes **Hall** stand out from the crowd.

And now – the controversial bit. You seem to have a bee in your bonnet about the censorship and seizure of horror films, and I have to say I'm getting pretty cheesed off with it.

Isn't all this paranoia about the infringement of freedom and sinister Government interference getting just a little clichéd and tiresome by now? Even **Bambos Georgiou** – who usually seems like a perfectly reasonable and intelligent person – says in his letter (**Hall 27**) that he finds the cutting by censors' scissors "infinitely more distasteful and unsettling than the stabbings and slaughter shown on the screen".

Now I realise that this kind of stance is a very fashionable one, and I certainly don't wish to denigrate **Bambos** in any way, but I sometimes wonder if people can actually hear themselves. "They'll be burning books next, you mark my words...". "Where do we draw the line?"

It's easy to poke fun at the blue-rinsed puritans, the high-minded Mr. Whitehouses of this world, but let's be completely fair – the liberal views of the 'anything goes' brigade aren't above a bit of healthy ridicule either. I mean, come on – have any of you thought seriously about the kind of stuff you're defending? **Cannibal Apocalypse? Driller Killer? SS Experiment Camp?** It's not exactly Dostoevsky, is it? FRANKIE, I don't understand the reluctance of many horror enthusiasts to separate the wheat from the chaff – they lap up any puerile garbage available. The people responsible for peddling this crap are well aware of that, which is why there's so much of it floating around. Video shops are full to the brim of unbelievably tacky films produced, directed and acted by people who are so devoid of artistic flair that they shouldn't be allowed within five miles of a film studio.

My argument against the proliferation of such rotten films is not – as you will by now have gathered – rooted in any sort of social concern for the psychological well-being of the audience. I don't believe for one moment that violent images on the screen produce a generation of screaming, axe-wielding lunatics or cause social unrest. There is a strong sense however, in which these films encourage people to become undiscerning and tasteless – in short, they teach people to appreciate talentless crap.

Okay, so seizing tapes and bringing in nasty new repressive laws infringes 'personal freedom' – but freedom to do what, for God's sake? Freedom to sit glued to the goggle-box for hours on end watching some unconvincing bug-eyed nutter slaughter yet another screaming victim with a meat cleaver/ chainsaw/knife/pick axe/ shotgun? Freedom to sit munching a bag of Cheesy Wotsits while gallons of fake blood spurt from a fake wound? If that's freedom, I'd trade places with Patrick McGeehan any day of the week.

Whatever happened to style, eh? What became of subtlety, atmosphere and restraint? Are Spielberg and Carpenter the only directors around who know how to manipulate the emotions of their audience in the same way that, say, Val Lewton and Alfred Hitchcock once did? Have we all become so morose that we can only respond to cinematic images if they're decorated with flying entrails and buckets of blood?

And even if directors do have to explore the realms of gore and mutilation, why can't they do it with more style? Horror can sometimes be positively uplifting – look at **Masque of the Red Death**, or even the beautiful **Theatre of Blood**: a stylish soundtrack, a distinguished theatrical cast, and more tongue-in-

cheek humour than an episode of **The Avengers**.

I'm with Simon Green's opinion in your letters column – gore is boring. **Quatermass and the Pit** is one of my favourites too, as it happens, and it's typical of the sort of thing I'd like to see covered in **Hall**. How about getting Mick Austin or David Lloyd to do a strip adaptation? If there are people who genuinely want to see space devoted to the gore/splatter scene, there are plenty of rags around – **Fangoria**, etc. – and for real enthusiasts, there must be plenty of butchers who'd be more than willing to give a live demonstration of their skills – but let's see **Hall** leave that kind of stuff behind and concentrate on quality. I'm always willing to listen to calm, reasoned argument on the matter, of course, and will end with a quote from a reader whose name conveniently suits my mind for the moment.

"LET'S GET THE SONS OF BITCHES! Before it's too late and they start burning BOOKS too!"

Now there's a candidate for a rubber room if ever I heard one. Eat your heart out, Oscar Wilde.

Graham, I appreciate your feelings and I'm pleased to run such a coherent argument in their favour in **Hall** but I honestly believe you're wrong; terribly, naively wrong. The argument about censorship is not about **SS Experiment Camp** (which we would probably all agree is a piece of exploitation garbage) but about the principles at stake. Censorship is never a matter of drawing a line and saying "well, fine, that's a good place to stop". The history books show that it always takes one route and one route only – and that is towards greater and greater censorship. Is it a mistake on the legislators' part that the new video bill will allow censorship of the vast majority of videos, not just the 'nasties'? Why are the police seizing certificated theatrical prints of films like **The Evil Dead** if not practising a little stretch of the old reactionary muscles ready for greater, grosser things? Why are **Knockabout Comics** currently fighting a legal case for having the temerity to sell in an underground book shop, classic titles that you could normally pick up in any branch of Smiths? Can you really not see patterns emerging? A closing of the ranks of reaction? Do you really believe that in a year's time you will be able to see the chest-burst scene from **Alien** or the murders in **Halloween** or...? We're not just talking about sleaze here, we're talking about each and every horror film for God's sake, each and every film full-stop being examined on a stricter basis than at present, when we already have the most restrictive cinema censorship in Europe. The British Board of Film Censors is already cutting cinema prints in line with that they perceive the new legislation will be. Oh, and your candidate for a rubber room, award winning horror artist Dave Carson, is probably one of the most knowledgeable horror film fans I know and only about half-crazy. Say hello to 1984 and goodbye from... **Dave**

QUALITY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Quality Comics, the retail side of Quality Communications, is now offering subscriptions to a wide range of fantasy magazines.

AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER (US. Technical features) @ £14.00
CINEFANTASTIQUE (US. Detailed looks at fantasy films) @ £18.00
CINEFEX (US. Special effects) @ £19.00
CINEMAGIC (US. Amateur film making) @ £7.00
DR WHO MONTHLY (UK. Strips and features. Marvel) @ £4.50
ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS (US. Star Trek features) @ £11.50
FANGORIA (US. Graphic horror) @ £10.00
FANTASTIC FILMS (US. Fantasy films) @ £10.25
L'ECRAN FANTASTIQUE (French. Classic and new fantasy films) @ £17.00

MAD MOVIES (French. Fantasy film) @ £15.50
PREVUE (US. General fantasy – films, TV and books) @ £13.25
PRIME TIME (UK. TV history) @ £7.00
RERUNS (US. TV history) @ £10.00
S.I.G. (UK. Gerry Anderson TV series) @ £5.25
SPACE VOYAGER (UK. Space fact and films) @ £8.75
STARBURST (UK. Fantasy films and TV. Marvel) @ £6.75
STARFIX (French. Fantasy films) @ £13.25
STARLOG (US. Science fiction films) @ £10.00
TWILIGHT ZONE (US. Fantasy fiction and films) @ £11.75



Prices stated are for six-issue subscriptions. Copies posted flat. All prices include postage and packing. (Offer applies to the United Kingdom only). Double issues count as two copies against your subscription. Make cheques/postal orders payable to Quality Communications and send to:

QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, SE14.

AFTER THE END: THE POST APOCALYPSE ACTION MOVIES

by KIM NEWMAN



"Mad Max stands alone." Writes Danny Peary in his excellent *Cult Movies*, "the first and only film of a genre that could surely be explored and exploited, with interesting results, by action-oriented filmmakers. It is extremely probable, I believe, that if Australian filmmakers began churning out similar violent, futuristic car-motorcycle films full of spectacular crashes — films in which the stuntmen are the stars — it could be the start of an international craze to equal that caused by Italian westerns and Chinese *kung fu* movies a few years back." While the current plague of *if cheap* Italian future schlockers proves that Peary was right about the potential popularity of an end-of-the-world action movie genre, he was not entirely accurate in his suggestion that *Mad Max*'s venture into a near future world of anarchy, punk, leather, chrome and violence is without precedent. Quite apart from the film's obvious debt to the *Dirty Harry* (1971)/*Death Wish* (1974) rogue cop/vigilante film in its story of an obsessive lawman who tracks down and wipes out the gang of degenerates who raped and killed his wife and child, *Mad Max* (1979) was merely the breakthrough movie for a genre that had been developing since the birth of the cinema.

In the 1890s, the branch of literature that was then known as the scientific romance became influenced by the millennialism that always comes about with the imminence of a new century. Despite the complete arbitrariness of the convenient gradations civilised man has put upon the passage of time, the fact that a century is drawing to its close appears to stir up the belief that accepted views are about to be turned on their head. In earlier times, fanciful thoughts tended towards the Second Coming, but the rise of Darwinism had brought about a climate of agnosticism which led Victorian science fiction writers to conceive of the *Secular Apocalypse*, a series of scientifically rationalised Ends of the World (or, at the very least, Complete and Utter Ruinations of Human Civilisation). Turn of the century fiction gave its readers cause to fear, not the Wrath of God, but a comet on a collision course with the Earth (Camille Flammarion's *Le Fin du Monde/Omega: The Last Days of the World*, 1893-4), invading Martians (H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, 1898), world war (Wells' *The War in the Air*, 1908), the fading of the Sun (William Hope Hodgson's *The Night Land*, 1912), poison gas from outer space (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Poison Belt*), the atomic bomb (Wells' *The World Set Free* 1914), or a genocidal pestilence (Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*, 1915). After that, *World War One*, which is what these Apocalypses were really prophesising, was almost a relief.

During the silent era, the cinema lagged behind literature, locked by fundamentalists like D.W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille into the early Victorian ideas of the Bible belt. Silent spectacles were only too pleased to present crazed visions of mass devastation in religious epics like Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), Demille's first *The Ten Commandments* (1923) and Michael Curtiz' *Noah's Ark* (1929), but God-fearing mid-west audiences could relish the pagan orgies, crashing temples and smitten multitudes safe in the knowledge that they were too righteous ever to suffer the fate of the Sodomite and Babylonian extras cheerfully slaughtered *en masse* by megaphone-wielding directorial demagogues in riding britches. The main attraction in these films, which incidentally became popular all over again with mass audiences during the nuclear-conscious 1950s, was a combination of spectacular carnage and the spectacularly carnal

Mel Gibson as the most popular and typical post-apocalyptic hero, *Mad Max*

goings-on that brought down the ire of Jehovah in the first place. When Abel Gance came to film Flammarion's **Fin du Monde** in 1930, the comet was explicitly linked to the Judgement of God, and there was much stress on the ribald excesses of doomed humanity in the shadow of doom. For this reason, the film was drastically shortened for release outside traditionally libertarian France, and most extant versions have been disowned by the director. The more moral Americans, reeling under the Judgements of Wall Street Crash, Prohibition and the Depression, replied with a modern Flood, **Deluge** (1933), in which New York is swept away by a tidal wave to make way for a particularly wet three-way love affair.

The first obvious ancestor of the modern post-apocalypse movie is the middle section of William Cameron Menzies' **Things to Come** (1936). In Hollywood, economy-conscious producers took heed of the failure of **Deluge** and vented their urge to destroy the world through the rampages of machine-gun toting mobsters or back-from-the-dead monsters, but H.G. Wells had devastated the planet in print so many times that he was used to it, and itched to put his vision of the End of the Old World on the big screen. The first half of his novel **The Shape of Things to Come** uses a worldwide war to reduce civilisation to the ruins out of which the utopian technological city of the future will rise. Set in 1970, the central scenes of the film find Everytown (Wells' London) smashed by aerial bombardment, and populated by plague-ridden savages perpetually at war with the hill tribes of the home counties. The ruler is Ralph Richardson as The Boss, a fur-coated militarist barbarian who rides in a horsedrawn limousine and conducts himself like the ancestor of Isaac Hayes' Duke of New York or **Mad Max**' gayboy Hunon biker. Instead of Mel Gibson, the film has Raymond Massey in a black leather outfit, the representative of a scientific community that drops him on Everytown to deliver the first draft of Klatu's **Day the Earth Stood Still** (1951) warning – make peace or die. **Mad Max** Rockatansky is "the only law in a world gone mad", but Massey's John Cabal is the harbinger of a rule of sanity which will displace the Boss' revolver-wielding tyranny with a suspiciously fascist but eminently sensible world state.

...only the beginning

With World War Two satisfying anyone's appetite for destruction, the apocalypse movie went underground, but the war's Big Bang finale provided the science fiction boom of the 1950s with something really scary to worry about. The twin fears of The Bomb and The Commies proved a powerful inspiration for many visions of smoking, radioactive ruins. In **Rocketship X-M** (1950), the first of the Awful Warning films, mankind Learns Its Lesson by taking a trip to Mars, where the astronauts take a tour of a civilisation that has wiped itself out in a nuclear war. The plot was reused in **The Island Earth** (1955), **Dr Who and the Daleks** (1965) and **Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone** (1983). More popular is the story about the present day people who travel into a ravaged future Earth, whether deliberately, as in **The Time Machine** (1960) and **The Time Travelers** (1964), or accidentally, as in **World Without End** (1955), **Beyond the Time Barrier** (1960), and the **Planet of the Apes** series, in which astronauts return from space to find themselves in the far future. **Terror From the Year 5000** (1958) rings the changes slightly by having a mutated survivor of a nuclear war travel through time to the present in search of virile types to repopulate her world.

The imaginative visions of these atomic exploitationers are limited to a variation on the Settler Versus Indian conflicts of old-fashioned westerns, in which purebred, Aryan-looking

Good Guys are being threatened by hideously mutated, radioactive, scuzzbag Bad Guys, but are saved when the macho intruder from our world chips in with some good old scientific knowhow and a few strong right hooks to hairy jaws. The hero usually finds an unmarked, beautiful, usually dumb, savage woman to settle down with. It is probably not coincidental that these films sprang up when **Broken Arrow** (1950) and **Apache** (1954) were forcing real westerners to take a more liberal attitude to real Indians. As yet, no one has made a post-armageddon **Soldier Blue** (1970) in which peace-loving three-eyed monsters are massacred by intolerant human beings. However, **Captive Women** (1952), a cheap, lurid, moderately exciting tale of tribal warfare in what is left of New York in the year 3000 does have the novelty of an ending in which a not-terribly hideous Mute (Ron Randall) marries a hubba-hubba Norm girl and unites humanity, and, in **The Last Man on Earth** (1964), the stake-brandishing hero (Vincent Price) is captured by the race of vampires who have succeeded humanity and put to death because of the havoc he is wreaking on their unusual but functioning new society.

The first serious treatment of nuclear warfare in the cinema was Arch Oboler's chatty **Five** (1951), the bleak little story of an ill-matched group of survivors who are soon whittled down by radiation sickness, murder, and poetic justice to a more manageable Two, the first of many new Adams and Eves to settle down at the fade-out presumably with the intention of breeding like rabbits. **Five** is the archetypal Serious Nuke Movie, the direct ancestor of everything from **On the Beach** (1959) through **The War Game** (1966) to **The Day After** (1983), and very boring it is too, although the now familiar visions of lone figures walking through rubbish- and skeleton-littered streets have a momentary buzz of horror. With **The Day the World Ended** (1956), Roger Corman made the Non-Serious Nuke Movie his own province, doubtless because deserted landscapes and dry ice radiation clouds are very cheap. Throwing in Paul Blaisdell in a mutant suit ("it's skin looked like rubber," says a character in a canny speech, "but it was hard as steel"), **The Day the World Ended** is less pretentious than **Five**, and was followed up by **Teenage Cavemen** (1958), with Robert Vaughn as the post-holocaust mixed-up kid discovering the origin of his world, and **The Last Woman on Earth** (1960), with Anthony Carbone and screenwriter Robert Towne arguing over Betsy Jones-Moreland.

Falling between the Serious and Non-Serious strains are Albert Zugsmith's hysterically anti-communist diatribe **Invasion U.S.A.** (1953), which had the distinction of scaring the pants of Luella Parsons, and Ronald MacDougall's oddly forgettable **The World, The Flesh and the Devil** (1960) in which Mel Ferrer, Harry Belafonte and Inger Stevens, as the remnants of humanity after a war fought with radioactive gas (?), sort out their racial and sexual prejudices and invent an entirely new kind of family unit. If nothing else, **The World, The Flesh and the Devil** has the best depopulated city footage, with Belafonte dragging a child's cart full of canned food through the concrete canyons of early morning New York. Unquestionably the worst of the Nuke Movies is Larry Buchanan's static, rotten remake of **The Day the World Ended**, in **The Year 2889** (1965). Most of these films end with a title reading 'This is Not The End... This is Only The Beginning', and are distinguished by a dismal view of humanity that suggests there is something to be said for the destruction of mankind after all. Let's face it, who wants to live in a world

The serious approach to nuclear war with (top) **On the Beach** and (below) US TV's **The Day After**.





populated by descendants of Richard Denning and Lori Nelson?

More expensive science fiction found the prospect of World War Three so unbearable (or uncommercial) that they substituted a world-destroying natural disaster or an alien invasion for the mushroom cloud in order to present images of the destruction of civilisation. In *When Worlds Collide* (1951), *War of the Worlds* (1953), *Earth Versus the Flying Saucers* (1956), *The Mysterians* (1960), *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1962), and *Day of the Triffids* (1963), the skyscrapers came tumbling down, tidal waves surge through New York, alien airdrums rampage in Tokyo, London fries, and human descends into savagery with an almost monotonous regularity. These films present a particularly bleak picture of our civil defence measures which are not only unable to deal with the Martian war machines but handle the rioting survivors very badly – in *War of the Worlds*, desperately needed medical supplies are trampled by a mob, and in *The Day the Earth Caught Fire*, Chelsea beatniks greet the end of the world with a jazz party that gets out of hand. “You know, I’m beginning to think that these disasters only bring out the worst in people,” says a minor character in *Earthquake* (1974) when National Guardsman Marjoe Gortner uses his badge to get local punks who used to hassle him summarily executed, and even attempts to force himself on Victoria Principal. The film may be silly, but the point is well made.

As usual, the most affecting images of desolation come from the cheapest, loudest movies. *War of the Worlds* and *The Mysterians* may be fine when it comes to noisy battles, but cheapie quickies like *Target: Earth* (1954), *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1964), *Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150 AD* (1966), and *Where Have All the People Gone?* (1974), unable to afford explosive special effects, have a few unsettling moments of quiet despair amid the boring B-movie dialogue. The second *Dr Who* film, if not quite as effectively depressing as the original TV serial, makes particularly good use of blitzed London locations to suggest a decayed city of the future. By now, the central purpose of the holocaust in these films was evident. For all the anti-nuke platitudes, the catastrophes of these movies were designed not to put over a message, but to get rid of all the boring people in the world. With heroes and villains alike removed from the constraints of civilisation, there are no legal niceties to get in the way of entertaining, no holds-barred, shoot-em-ups. After the apocalypse, the world becomes the large scale equivalent of those ‘wide open’ lawless frontier towns that need a Wyatt Earp to clean up and make safe for the womenfolk.

How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb

As the world heaved a collective sigh of relief after the Cuba missile crisis, the movies’ attitude to the apocalypse became more flippant. In 1962, Ray Milland could seriously suggest in his exploitation *Panic in the Year Zero* that Mr Average Joe American can survive a nuclear war by taking his family into the hills, drinking bottled water, and shooting any leather jacket types who look like troublemakers. The absurd side of all this was obvious, but it took Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr Strangelove*; or: *How I Learned to Stop*

Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) to make it work on the screen. After seeing Slim Pickens whooping it up as he rides into oblivion with a hydrogen bomb bucking like a bronc between his legs, it was difficult for a while to take the Big Hot One seriously. “So long, mom, I’m off to drop the Bomb!” sang Tom Lehrer, and CND’s straight faced followers only had Sidney Lumet’s slightly ironic version of *Strangelove, Fail Safe* (1964) to tide them over until Peter Watkins’ still-shattering *The War Game* came along to restore the balance of terror. This was the era of zero-degree cool and radical chic, and the only nuclear conflict imaginable in *Strangelove, Fail Safe* and *The Bedford Incident* (1965) is accidental. In Corman’s *Gas-s-s-s*; or: *It Became Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It* (1970), the U.S. President manfully goes on television after a spilled bioweapon has killed off everyone over twenty-five, and admits to “a simple human error that anyone could have made.”

In *Gas-s-s-s*, Corman gave the hippies the holocaust they were looking for, and proceeded to disappoint them with a hit-and-miss satire on the counterculture values. Reversing the conventions of *Panic in the Year Zero*, Corman has Hells’ Angels become the new middle class, while all-American football teams turn to looting and rapine. “Frankly boys,” says a coach in a pep talk, “I don’t know if you’re as good enough to sack El Paso.” *Gas-s-s-s* was much hacked about by its distributors, and Corman was driven to stop directing and set up his own production company, but it remains a funnier view of the End of the World than Richard Lester’s goonish, overrated *The Bed Sitting Room* (1969) and sharper in its look at pop art amid the ruins than Jim McBride’s offbeat, semi-underground, pretty dull *Glen and Randa* (1971). It is perhaps the first post-holocaust action/adventure fun flick, and Corman would be instrumental in furthering the genre with his productions of Paul Bartel’s *Death Race 2000* (1974), a cartoonish, violent, and thrilling tale of gladiatorial combat on Transamerica freeways, and *Deathsport* (1978), the far-future template for lousy movies like *The New Barbarians* (1982), which has lots of bikes blowing up and strongly stupid performances from heroine Claudia Jennings and villain Richard Lynch.

In 1968, a kind of worldwide apocalypse seemed likely, as a conventional war in South East Asia escalated in pace with student unrest in the western world. The dawning of the Age of Aquarius was greeted in the cinema by two important films, George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* and Franklin J. Schaffner’s *Planet of the Apes*. Like Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda in *Easy Rider* (1969), Duane Jones in one film and Charlton Heston in the other go in search of America. Unfortunately for them, they find it. Romero’s film is a masterpiece, the most influential horror movie since *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Psycho* (1960), but, since it was disguised as a cheap exploitation grindhouse item, it was initially overlooked by critics who praised *Planet of the Apes* for its obvious, misanthropic satire. The film takes its redneck poses and burning bodies from Vietnam newsreels, and Romero paints a grim picture of humanity by having his living characters tear at each other in useless argument, while his dead ones yearn to tear at them in ravenous feasting.

Planet of the Apes is a twisted version of the Norms Versus Mutes story with hairy-chested Chuck Heston dumped in a future ruled by stuffy chimps. While its overkill has worn less well than the cruder Romero films, *Planet of the Apes* finally comes up with the goods with its image of the shattered State of Liberty. The film ends with an anti-nuke howl that must now cause staunchly Reaganite Heston some embarrassment. While *Night of the Living Dead* and *Planet of the Apes* are both funnier than they sound, they signalled a return to a more serious approach to the apocalypse.



Innocent victims at the mercy of nature in *Day of the Triffids* (top) whilst (below) Peter Sellers as Dr Strangelove plans a worse fate for us.

They don't make 'em like that any more...

is what Charlton Heston mutters to himself as **The Omega Man** (1971) while watching his favourite film, **Woodstock** (1970), summing up the brainless apocalypse/action movies of the mid-1970s. **No Blade of Grass** (1971), **Logan's Run** (1975), **Damnation Alley** (1977), **The Ultimate Warrior** (1975), **A Boy and His Dog** (1975), and a slew of **Planet of the Apes** sequels made the ravaged post-holocaust landscape familiar to audiences who were more worried about Watergate or the oil crisis. The end of the world was even safe enough for TV, as demonstrated by **Survivors**, the **Logan's Run** spinoff, and Gene Roddenberry's pitiful attempts to get a post-Trekkie series on the air (**Genesis II**, 1973, **Planet Earth**, 1974, **Strange New World**, 1975). The films had decent budgets, and so they could afford to come up with impressively devastated cities (the subterranean stock exchange of 1970's **Beneath the Planet of the Apes**, the corpse-littered L.A. of **The Omega Man**, the ivy-covered Washington monuments of **Logan's Run**), but they all cheapen interesting source novels into wars between ecology-conscious hippie communes and contaminated violence freaks. Roger Zelazny's **Damnation Alley** has a Hell's Angel hero who "looks at the world through crap-coloured glasses" and reads like a badass holdover from a biker movie, but, in Jack Smight's drippy film, he becomes Jan-Michael Vincent, a blue-eyed, clean-cut air force officer whose blow-dried hair is unaffected by fallout.

The Omega Man is a vampire-less remake of Richard Matheson's **I Am Legend** (which had been **The Last Man in the World**) that has a great opening with Heston machine-gunning caped mutants and holding out against the world in his luxury penthouse, but goes bad with the introduction of a multi-racial crèche for whom Heston finally sacrifices himself. **The Ultimate Warrior** and **A Boy and His Dog** are tougher, in the first, survivalist Max Von Sydow tells hero-for-hire Yul Brynner that if he has the choice between saving the girl or a packet of seeds, he should stick with the seeds, and in the second, the hero feeds his girlfriend to a telepathic dog who sticks by him as he wanders through America buried under twenty feet of sludge. Even these ratty epics, which borrow their ethics from spaghetti westerns and cycle crazy movies like **Angles Hard As They Come** (1972), are not free from peace and love platitudes that clog the rest of the mainstream end of the world movies. The Bomb wipes out the straights, radioactive rednecks get creamed in the aftermath, and the future belongs to the Beautiful People. If there was any vitality left in the genre, it would have to come not from Hollywood glossies but from ragtag stickies like **The Hills Have Eyes** (1977), which would have been the first post-apocalypse western only Wes Craven couldn't afford to depict the breakdown of society: so it stands as the wildest of the backwoods massacre movies, with a bunch of Norms fighting back when the desert-dwelling Mutes attack them. With **The Hills Have Eyes** and Romero's **Dawn of the Dead** (1979), the horror movie took the apocalypse about as far as it could, and the world was ready for an avenger in black leather to put it to rights.

(Top) Pre-production art for **Beneath the Planet of the Apes**; typical post-apocalypse travelling (centre) from **Damnation Alley**; (below) Claudia Jennings offers her own welcome to the holocaust in **Deathsport**.



We're going to give them back their heroes

In **Mad Max**, a post-holocaust police chief tells his Number One man, "there are no heroes any more, well, we're going to give them back their heroes." The vaguely liberal eco-catastrophe films had emasculated their Chuck Hestons, but the flourishing apocalypse action film needed colourful, larger-than-life Marvel Comics style characters to strut their stuff in the ruins. Possibly the first of the heroes is Harry Crown (Richard Harris) in John Frankenheimer's lurid **99 and 44/100%** *Dead*, the fixer who is called into a futuristic American city run by gangsters to deal with Marty 'Claw' Zuckerman (the incomparable Chuck Connors), a hitman who replaces his missing hand with snap-on implements that range from a champagne-cork-popper to a machine gun. He was followed by Walter Hill's Street gang in **The Warriors** (1979), a bunch who define themselves solely by the mythic types (cowboy, indian, Zulu warrior) whose costumes they ape. Mel Gibson's Dirty Harry-cum-Man Who Shot Liberty Valance in the **Mad Max** films, and Kurt Russell's Clint Eastwood-croaking Snake Plissken in John Carpenter's **Escape From New York** (1981).

Since **Mad Max** is only the law in a world gone mad, the film's poster insists that we "pray he's out there." Although the film can be cited as the inspiration for the current craze, it has several severe problems. It opens with a dynamite chase, featuring spectacular stuntwork and razor-sharp editing, as the cops tackle an insane killer on the old Anarchie Road. "I'm a fuel-injected suicide machine," screams The Nightrider just before he goes up in a massive explosion. Unfortunately, **Mad Max**'s first impression is the strongest – not only does the rest of the film fail to come up with a villain to equal The Nightrider, but none of its subsequent action scenes are quite as exciting as its first. Indeed, there is a particularly soggy stretch in the middle of the film when Max quits the force for a soft focus idyll with his wife and child. The Nightrider's vicious gang kill them and maddened Max is soon back on the road in his Interceptor Vehicle on the vengeance trail, but the damage has been done and the story limps along to its sadistic punchline (Max cuffs a minor thug to a wreck and tells him to saw his foot off or perish in the explosion) without recapturing the spirit of the opening sequence. Because the film was made cheaply in horrendous conditions, director George Miller had to redub the Australian cast with bland, mid-Atlantic voices, and was never really satisfied with the finished product, which is why he leaped at the opportunity, when the movie became an international success to make a sequel and do everything right.

By the time of **Mad Max 2**, civilisation has decayed even further. The police force no longer exists, and Max roams the deserts in his battered Interceptor, accompanied by a mangy dog and a loopy autogiro captain (Bruce Spence in long johns, Richtofen helmet, and sunflower button-niere). An old-timer narrates the legend of the Road Warrior who threw in with the hippie good guys against the punk/monster villains in order to clear the way for the reestablishment of civilisation. While the first film presented Max as a rogue cop, **Mad Max 2** has him as the kind of doomed western hero John Wayne plays in **The**

THE COMPLETE STORY MFP NEVER BEFORE SEEN!

When the gangs take over the highway...

Pray that he's out there... Somewhere!

INTERCEPTOR

He's Back!

The warrior of the road

MAD MAX

MAD MAX 2

FROM TURNER BROADCAST & FILMWORKS COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY
RELEASED BY COLUMBIA PICTURES - HOME ENTERTAINMENT
© 1977 Turner Bros. All Rights Reserved

FROM TURNER BROADCAST & FILMWORKS COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY
RELEASED BY COLUMBIA PICTURES - HOME ENTERTAINMENT
© 1980 Turner Bros. All Rights Reserved



(Top) The road warrior's dynamic double bill.
(Below) Humongus and Warrior Horde from **Mad Max 2**.

STANLEY KUBRICK'S **CLOCKWORK ORANGE**



Searchers (1956) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, the man of action who is prevailed upon to help lesser mortals destroy the only world he is capable of living in. Like Wayne, Mad Max finally disappears into desert obscurity.

The sequel is actually a ninety-minute action sequence, which rather cramps the style of several intriguing supporting characters who are introduced and then brushed off, but Miller handles the whole thing with the verve of the first twenty minutes of *Mad Max*. *Mad Max 2* was retitled *The Road Warrior* in the United States (the one territory where the first film flopped), and served to establish Miller as a director of note (his segment of *The Twilight Zone*, 1983, is worth the rest of the movie put together), Gibson as an international star, and the futuristic action/adventure as the genre flavour-of-the-month.

On the streets

The key ingredients of the post-holocaust action movie are weird costumes and ultra-violence. Stanley Kubrick proved in *A Clockwork Orange* that the cinema could have these without needing an expensive-to-simulate nuclear war. In Kubrick's version of Anthony Burgess' novel, the future has become hell through simple deterioration. With inner city decay and a rising crime rate, it is not hard to envision the kind of near-future world in which Alex (Malcolm McDowell), a droog in a white boiler suit, bowler hat, and eye make up, can lead his gang of thugs through a decadent, violent London. The scariest thing about *A Clockwork Orange*, quite apart from the very dubious morality of its ambiguously anti-violence message, is that most of it was shot on authentic 1970s locations. "We are the future," declares the leader of the pack in *Class of 1984* (1982), "and nothing can stop us." Recently, the movies have turned away from the futuristic consequences and begun to linger over the present-day tide of violence which will eventually lead to the horrors of *Mad Max* or *Escape From New York*, unless the reactionary heroes of *The Exterminator* (1980) or *Class of 1984* get their way and drive the scum off our streets with flamethrowers and meatgrinders. These are the rightwing backlash films, and, personally, I find their solutions more frightening than the problem.

The most common kind of future society in the cinema is a variation on ancient Rome, in which the bloodlust of the masses is slaked by state-sponsored gladiatorial sports. In *Le Decima Vittima/The Tenth Victim* (1965), private citizens are licensed to join the Hunt, and Ursula Andress swans around a pop art Rome in search of Marcello Mastroianni, the tenth victim, who will win her untold wealth and fame and the star role in a television commercial for Ming tea. Elio Petri's film has a funny premise (from a Robert Sheckley short story), and plenty of bizarre bits of 1960s futurism (an 'antique' pinball table, a first edition *Flash Gordon*, and Andress' bullet-firing brassiere), but falls apart in the finale, which has all the characters jaunt around the countryside popping off harmless shots at each other in lieu of an actual ending. *Rollerball* (1975) does much to popularise the black-leather-and-chrome-studs outfits that have become essential dress for future heroes, but its condemnation of a colourless world where the only excitement comes from an extremely violent motorcycle/roller derby/roulette/hockey/football sport is somewhat compromised by the fact that it is a colourless film whose only excitement comes

Droog of the future, Malcolm McDowell, in Kubrick's bleak vision of the anarchic *Clockwork Orange*.



from the Rollerball sequences. Recently, **Le Prix du Danger/The Prize of Peril** (1983), from another Shekley story, proposes a TV game show in which the contestant has to stay alive for four hours while killers track him down. Despite Michel Piccoli's enthusiastically ghastly incarnation of a Bruce Forsyth-type game show host ("and you have an unusual hobby?" he asks one of the psychos who has volunteered to kill the hero), the film suffers from the fact that its action sequences are so ordinary that any sadistic audience would prefer to switch over to some old Hanna-Barbera cartoons instead. French television has a worldwide reputation for its dull respectability, so the makers of **Le Prix du Danger**, unfamiliar with the horrors of American and British quiz shows, can perhaps be excused from missing Shekley's satirical point and making a dead straight, dead boring film of his witty, pointed story.

The most serious of the future sport horrors comes from doomwatcher Peter Watkins, who has world war replaced by a single combat in **The Peace Game/The Gladiators** (1969), and the National Guard hunting down hippie radicals for the practise in **Punishment Park** (1970). Watkins' fake documentaries overstate their case habitually (**Punishment Park** ends with the offscreen voice of Watkins shouting at the top of his voice that life is unfair), but remain genuinely horrifying. Both these visions have had some influence, with **The Peace Game** reworked for American TV as **The Challenge** (1970) in which Darren McGavin and Mako settle World War III between them, and **Punishment Park** providing the inspiration for the terrible **Turkey Shoot** (1982), a lurid Australian exploitationer with camp commandants hunting political prisoners Steve Railsback and Olivia Hussey through the outbreak. Explosive crossbow bolts, a Neanderthal man, quantities of ketchup, and Michael Craig as an Establishment villain called Thatcher are variously involved.

The punk explosion of 1977, which had been sort of anticipated by **A Clockwork Orange**, emphasised that the horrific future of unemployment, misery, no-hopers and, of course, weird costumes and ultra-violence was already with us. There were a few punploitation pics, but only Derek Jarman's **Jubilee** (1977) attempts to depict the apocalypse that The Sex Pistols swore was about to happen. A time-tripping Elizabeth I (Jenny Runacre) and her alchemical sidekick, Dr Dee (Richard O'Brien) take a tour of a post-breakdown London, encountering many oddball characters, and lots of horrific, pram burning, barbed wire tightrope-walking, sickeningly violent imagery. **Jubilee** is a hectic, badly-mannered adaption of Michael Moorcock's **Romances of Entropy**, with a few startling performances from Runacre, Little Nell, and Orlando to make up for embarrassingly amateurish ones from Adam Ant, Toyah, and Jordan. (Note without comment: very few people in the cast of **Jubilee** cared to use their real names.) Ruined London made a comeback as the setting for Piers Haggard's **The Quatermass Conclusion** (1978) and the very curious **Memoirs of a Survivor** (1982), but by now there is depressingly little to distinguish these backdrops from the locations for documentary-style, serious contemporary dramas like Mike Leigh's **Meantime** (1983).

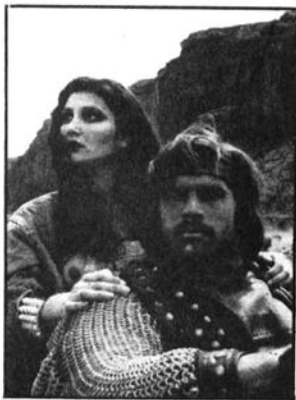
In America, the urban decay horror movie grew out of the Charles Bronson/Clint Eastwood action film; both actors were considered by John Carpenter for the role of Snake Plissken in **Es-**

cape From New York before he settled on his cheaper friend, Kurt Russell. In 1977, Manhattan is walled off as a maximum security prison, and police chief Lee Van Cleef has to recruit bank-robbing WW III hero Plissken to haul out President Donald Pleasence, who has crashed in the middle of the Big Apple. Carpenter established his plot with brisk, economical strokes that promise a high-energy, satirical adventure, but once all the fun characters (Ernest Borgnine as a molotov-cocktail-throwing cabbie, Harry Dean Stanton as the owner of an oil well in the public library, and Isaac Hayes as the Duke of New York) have been introduced and various races against time set in motion, the film runs out of gas and degenerates into a listless series of battles. Nevertheless, the film's scary setting—with severed heads on parking meters, a Chock Full O'Nuts that lives up to its name, and a transvestite revue singing "Everyone's Going to New York"—is interesting enough to make one regret the lapses in script and direction.

The most elaborate depiction yet of an American city on the skids comes unfortunately in Ridley Scott's **Blade Runner** (1982), a film that is annoying precisely because of the minutely-detailed, cluttered background completely obscures the upfront story, which means that the strong plot and sly humour of Philip K. Dick's **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?** get lost amid Scott's yellow fog, punk derelicts, Hong Kong with acid rain street scenes, advertising pyramids and irritatingly symbolic fluttering doves. Still, Harrison Ford in a trench coat, Sean Young in furs, and Rutger Hauer with dyed hair are at least convincingly artificial inhabitants of Scott's murky vision. A similarly deadbeat New York is found in the "Harry Canyon" segment of the animated **Heavy Metal** (1982), a skit on **The Maltese Falcon** (1941) and **Taxi Driver** (1976) in which Canyon (the voice of Richard Romanus) drives his cab through a city of Mohawk muggers, the best cops money can buy, and incredibly available women. Recent near-futures include the technological playground of John Badham's **Blue Thunder** (1982), in which Roy Scheider diverts heat-seeking missiles into skyscrapers and to hell with the innocent bystanders, and Francis Coppola's **Rumble Fish** (1983), a persuasive, poetic look at the fag end of the gang fighters of his **The Outsiders** (1983).

Of course it fell to the Italians to make the ultimate ripoff of the genre, Enzo G. Castellari's 1990: **I Guerrieri del Bronx/Bronx Warriors** (1982), an unashamed blend of **The Warriors** and **Escape From New York** which takes poetic justice to its logical conclusion by stealing back all the baroque stylistic quirks Walter Hill and Carpenter lifted from spaghetti westerns in the first place—a Viking funeral complete with soaring music and tearful close-ups of the Hells' Angels extras, and a fetishist display of bludgeoning, gouging, slashing, strangling, and mutilating weapons. Castellari (best known as the actor who played Mussolini in **Winds of War**, 1983) is a pedestrian director, but the assemblage of off-the-wall supporting characters makes **Bronx Warriors** value for money. In addition to Vic Morrow as a renegade cop with a line in neo-Shakespearean rant ("let the enemy have no survivors this day, horsemen!"), the Bronx is populated by a tap-dancing Broadway chorus with deadly swordcanes, 1930s gangsters, samurai, a vampire, and an s/m sister to the Wicked Queen from **Snow White and the Seven Dwarves** (1936). It was followed up with Castellari's indifferent **Bronx Warriors II** (1983), Sergio Martino's 2099: **Dopo la Capota di New York/2099: After the Fall of New York** (1983), Jules Harrison's **Barbarians 2000** (1983), and Uncle Lucio Fulci's 2033 AD: **I Centurioni del Futuro/2033 AD: Centurions of the Future** (1983). These films tend to topine down-on-their-luck Americans like Fred Williamson and Henry Silva, alongside pseudonymous Italian nonentities like Mark Gregory and Timothy Brent.

And still they come: Stryker (top), **Survival Zone** and (below) 2019: **After the Fall of New York**.



DEALERS IN DEATH... EXTERMINATORS OF THE 21st CENTURY



TIMOTHY BRENT • FRED WILLIAMSON • GEORGE EASTMAN • ANNA KANAXIS • THOMAS MOORE

Hell for leather

The **Mad Max** films borrow a lot of their hardware, costuming, cynical attitude, and overlaid soundtrack engine noise from the perennially popular bike gang/hot rod rebel cycle. The genre got a kick start in 1954 with Marlon Brando as a leather-jacketed existentialist in **The Wild One** (when asked "what are you rebelling against?", he replies, "what have you got?"), and was responsible for such important works of art as **Hotrod Rumble** (1957) and **Dragstrip Riot** (1958). After a disappointing spell in the early 1960s when Frankie Avalon got teenagers a bad name by being polite, looking neat, having beach parties, and sighing over Annette Funicello, Roger Corman revived the cycle thug picture with **The Wild Angels**, a memorable bit of gas-burning, nihilism with an all-time great cast that includes Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra, Gayle Hunnicutt, Michael J. Pollard, Dick Miller, and Bruce Dern as 'Loser'. As in **Gas-s-s**, Corman shows a gang of drop-outs who set up a society more rigid and repressive (Fonda is addressed as 'Mr President' by his followers) than the one they are escaping from. The real-life Hell's Angels chapter who appeared as extras in the film were unsure whether to sue Corman or kill him, but nothing came of either threat, and his New World company later produced similar bikesploitation epics, **Angels Die Hard** (1971), **Bury Me an Angel** (1972) and **Angels Hard As They Come** (1972).

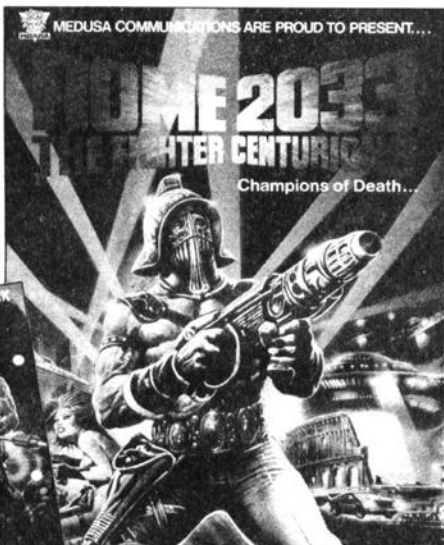
Charlton Heston, in **The Omega Man**, pioneered the use of a highpower hog as a means of getting around after the holocaust, and the Harley-Davidson was joyously taken up by David Carradine in **Deathsport** (where the perfectly ordinary bikes are inexplicably referred to as 'Death Machines') before the **Mad Max** films made burning rubber as vital a part of the aftermath of civilisation as radioactive rednecks and 'only the beginning' end titles. George A. Romero wrote a particularly nasty gang of future bikers, led by Tom Savini, into the finale of **Dawn of the Dead**, but he then reformed them and reused the props for **Knightriders** (1981), in which a cycle gang resurrect Arthurian codes of chivalry and set up one of the few viable alternative communities in the cinema that one would even consider living in. **Mad Max 2** makes petrol the currency for the future, and Harley Cokliss' **Battletruck** (1981) deals with the lust for gas and the overthrow of a tarmax tyrant who rules the road with his lorry leviathan. One gets the feeling that there will be a lot of similar tales, as witness the Filipino **Mad Max**-imitation, **Stryker** (1983) – "The odds are a million to one, and Stryker's the one!"

Enzo G. Castellari struck back with **I Nuovi Barbari/The New Barbarians** (1983), the high-spot of which is its ad line, "once you've survived the holocaust, you've got to be tough!" In 2019, the survivors are reduced to dressing up in stupid leather codpieces and driving their battered dune buggies around the Cinetita rubbish dump. The baddies are a group of fanatical gay libbers called The Templars, who believe in finishing off what World War Three started by killing everyone who is left before committing suicide, and just about the only remarkable aspect of the movie is that the heroine doesn't get raped, but the hero does. Amid the boredom of the exploding bodies, severed heads, flying stuntmen, and bad acting, there is one funny line, which has a disgruntled Templar ripping up a Bible and sneering "Books! That's what started this whole apocalypse!"

Italian cheapies like **The New Barbarians** (top) borrowed heavily from such modern classics as John Carpenter's **Escape From New York** (below).



1990 THE BRONX WARRIORS



Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone (1983) and **Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn** (1983), both in 3-D, take the **Mad Max** 2 biker/western formula and set it on other planets. **Spacehunter** has Peter Strauss as a grizzled old bounty hunter and Nikki Ringwald as a tagalong tomboy trying to rescue three white women from the indians, while **Metalstorm** is about a sheriff trying to stop the varmint who is stirring up an apache war and a prospector's daughter after the gunslinger who shot down her old man. Both films dress their hackneyed stories up with heady, vivid effects, more or less imaginative mutant characters, and garbage-heap sculpture vehicles, and are differentiated only by the fact that Lamont Johnson's **Spacehunter** is diverting trash, while Charles Band's **Metalstorm** is real rubbish. Incidentally, all four titles are meaningless, and Jared-Syn doesn't get destroyed. Band had already tried one 3-D ripoff in **Parasite** (1982), an Alien-inspired monster epic set in a **Mad Max**-ish punk future, and should have learned his lesson by now.

The End

The **Mad Max** films are fun, but perhaps the concept of the nuclear annihilation of humanity is becoming too real to be the subject of pure entertainment movies. Nothing seems more tasteless now than the After-The-Bomb bi-jinx of callous films like **Damnation Alley** or **Panic in the Year Zero**, and, with the proliferation of atomic weapons and CND-inspired debate about their possible use, the disturbing undercurrents of the 'fun' apocalypse movie have been coming to the surface. John Badham's **War Games** (1983) is a Disneyish fable about technological innocence, but its view of a Deterrent machine that might or might not up and decide to wipe the slate clean on its own incomprehensible whim is still unsettling. But the most up-to-the-minute nuke horror films, **The Day After** (1983) and **Testament** (1983), dispense entirely with the gung-ho showmanship of most commercial Hollywood movies and treat their subject with chilling seriousness. Neither film is free from the soap opera tinge of suburban life as seen on American television, but they both present the breakdown of a familiar world with an uncomfortable conviction.

In both films, the Bomb drops, and the survivors are not clear who started it, let alone who won. Nicholas Meyer's **The Day After** is a bigger movie, with more recognisable actors (Jason Robards, John Lithgow, JoBeth Williams, Jeff East) and more lurid horrors (everyone goes bald and sprouts hideous radiation scars), but Lynn Littman's **Testament**, which concentrates on a suburban Mum played by Oscar-nominated Jane Alexander, is more insidiously disturbing. **The Day After** goes into the details of instant immolation, impossibly crowded hospitals, orgies of despair and glowing ruins, but **Testament** simply deals with loss, as the heroine loses her husband (William Devane) in the blast, and her children one by one thereafter. It isn't easy to forget Alexander calmly sowing her thirteen-year-old daughter into a makeshift shroud, and, in appointed answer to the action-packed petrol-grubbing of **Mad Max 2**, the only conceivable use for petrol in the post-holocaust world of **Testament** is an aid to suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning.

Images recur from the new wave of apocalypse movies: 1990, 2019, Rome 2033 and (below) **Metalstorm**.



Movie poster mags — each one in full colour throughout, featuring eight fact and photo-packed pages of information on the film plus a giant (almost 2ft x 3ft) full-colour poster. Thirteen official film poster mags to choose from. Bracketed details give poster subject, which is often a full reproduction of the UK film release poster.

- P1** Raiders of the Lost Ark
(Amsell film poster)
P2 For Your Eyes Only
(Film poster)
P3 Heavy Metal
(Achilles film poster)
P4 Popeye
(Popeye/Olive/Sweetpea)

- P5** Clash of the Titans
(Cutting sword film poster)
P6 Superman II
(Flying villains film poster)
P8 Doc Savage (few only)
(Ron Ely poster)

- P9** Flash Gordon
(Film poster — no text)
P10 Kung Fu (few only)
(Carradine action poster)
P11 Mommie Dearest
(Film poster)
P12 The Blue Lagoon
(3 posters, Atkins/Shields)
P13 Legend of the Lone Ranger
(Film poster)

All above poster mags at 75p each (includes post & packing) or any five for £3; the full set at a special price of £7.50 (the equivalent of paying for ten, and 3 at no cost).



OFFICIAL SOUVENIR BROCHURES

- B1 Shogun:** 27 full colour illustrations, including pre-production visuals. Story synopsis, biographies and film facts.
B2 History of the World Part 1: 20 full colour photographs, synopsis, production information, star biographies, production credits.
Souvenir brochures at 95p each (includes post and packing) or the pair for £1.50

Make all postal orders/cheques (sorry, no cash) payable to
QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and write to us at:

QUALITY MAIL SALE, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP

Shops and dealers: Please enquire about our generous bulk discounts.

Orders outside UK: Seamail, add £1 (\$2.00 US); Airmail, add full cost of magazines.

STATESIDE SHOCKER

by RANDY PALMER



Earlier this year I received a letter in the mail which read, in part:

Dear Randy,

I am sorry to have to tell you that your friend Paul is no longer with us. He died July 10, last year, after being totally invalided for months.

It was signed, Jackie Blaisdell.

I was shocked and disturbed to learn of Paul Blaisdell's death. I had first communicated with Blaisdell in 1964, and for nearly twenty years we maintained a pretty steady exchange of correspondence. To know that he wasn't there any more, out in Topanga Canyon, California, was, as I said, disturbing.

But what disturbs me most, when I think of it, is that so many fans of the fantasy film field have no idea who Paul was, or what his contributions were to 'our' genre.

Paul Blaisdell first became involved with motion pictures when he agreed to tackle a particular task in Roger Corman's first science-fiction feature **The Beast With A Million Eyes**. If you've in fact seen that picture, you might legitimately have a desire to ask, 'You mean they actually paid people to work on that movie?' It's generally agreed that the best thing about that 1953 effort is probably the title – but if you have seen the film and been able to keep awake until the very end, you've seen some of Paul Blaisdell's handiwork.

Paul Blaisdell made monsters for the movies. His **Beast** was his first (but certainly not his best). But, as Paul once told me, 'the creature seen in the last reel of **The Beast With A Million Eyes** was actually the slave of **The Beast**, which had no physical being. It used a being from another star system to pilot its ship, but that fact doesn't come across very well in the script.'

The creature was an automaton and he was quite capable of doing a lot more than he was allowed to do in the film. He was about eighteen inches high – built to the same scale as King Kong. Unfortunately, all of his scenes were shot in about ten minutes, with the wrong camera angles and everything. But it's just one of those things which happens on a low-budget picture.'

Indeed it was. Similar problems plagued Paul on many of his subsequent features, from **It Conquered The World** to **Invasion of the Hell Creatures** (in Britain). But such was the climate of film production in the 1950s. 'Monster movies' were strictly low budget affairs back then. (And for most part, they remained so, until **The Exorcist** changed such things in 1973).

The Day The World Ended was the title of another early Roger Corman feature, about a group of survivors of World War Three who are menaced by seedy gangsters, dwindling resources, creeping radiation... and a voyeuristic monster.

A voyeuristic monster? That's right. I once brought up that aspect of the film and Paul commented, 'that was an interesting facet of the story. The three-eyed atomic mutant was actually supposed to be actress Lori Nelson's boyfriend, who had become mutated into this horrible creature by radiation. Of course, she wasn't aware of this.'

(Top) After the excellent make-up design, it's a pity the poster artist never saw the film!
(Below) A scene never shown from **Invasion of the Saucer-Men**.

Because the script required actual interaction between the mutant and members of the cast, Paul was required to build big this time. He constructed a full-sized suit to match his own build, and played the monstrous role himself.

Actually, I designed the mutant on the basis of how such a creature might evolve as the result of atomic explosions," Paul said. "Lou Rusoff, who wrote the script, managed to incorporate that idea into the story."

Rusoff also scripted the next picture Paul worked on, **It Conquered The World**. The film starred Peter Graves, Beverly Garland and Lee Van Cleef and was directed by Corman. Rusoff's story about an invader from the planet Venus was shown to Paul, who suggested the design for the monster be based on what was then (1956) known about the physiognomy of Venus.

"The writer wanted some kind of creature that was pretty invulnerable," Paul recalled, "and at that time the belief about Venus was that it was hot, humid, and not conducive to animal life. But since plant life might arise there, I felt the design should be based around that. I chose a mushroom as a starting point because some mushrooms are poisonous right here on Earth. Imagine what an alien mushroom would be like!"

In the original script, the creature was not supposed to move around at all; it was to sit in a niche in a cave, and conduct its dirty business from there. That's not the way things ended up in the final film, however.

Roger Corman decided we were going to have to bring the creature out of the cave in order to keep on schedule," Paul told me. "Someone had forgotten to order generators to power the lights to illuminate the inside of the cave! So there was no choice but to have the Venusian mushroom exit the cave, because it was getting later in the day, the sun was setting, the shadows were falling, and even if the photographer was using Tri-X film, he was still going to have difficulty. It became a question of doing the fastest thing you could as quickly as you could. Fortunately, I'd constructed the creature with castors on the underside, and that became her 'walking gear,' and that's how she moved! I operated her the best way I could but she was clumsy, and she looks clumsy in the movie. It was just one of those things on a low-budget movie!"

Things went a lot smoother on Paul's next assignment, **The She Creature**. The title monster was quite durable and fully articulated. It quickly became Blaisdell's most famous creation.

"**The She Creature** ended up the most imaginative of any creatures ever created for American International's pictures," Paul commented. "She was well designed. She could eat, she could drink, she could borrow a cigarette from you, inhale it and blow smoke out of her nose. In spite of how clumsy her claws appear to look, she could reach out and pluck a handkerchief from your pocket. These were some of the things I built into her to make her more lifelike."

As always, time and money constraints interfered with the final product.

"The director was in too much of a hurry," said Paul. "The tail could have slapped and slammed around, but when you see it on film it's just dragging along behind her. I also had no opportunity to operate **The She Creature**'s 'lunch hooks,' which were the claws surrounding a cavity in her abdomen. The idea was that when **The She Creature** embraced somebody and drew them in close, her 'lunch hooks' would sink into the victim's body. This wasn't due to any time constraints, though. When I first showed up on the stage and had a chance to talk to the director, he decided not to use that particular effect in the film. He thought it was too horrible."

Because Paul had built extra qualities into **The She Creature** costume, it turned out to be longer-lasting than anything else he had constructed. American International decided, in

order to save some money, to re-use the **She Creature** costume on other occasions. It next appeared in the company's 1957 picture, **Voodoo Woman**.

"The producers were determined to make **Voodoo Woman** in record time," Paul remembered, "and so consequently, as the result of some conferences in their Hollywood office, we agreed I would strip down **The She Creature** to make the zombie body, and a make-up man named Harry Thomas would make the head. And as usual, I would be inside the suit."

Several years later AIP called upon Paul to revamp **The She Creature** once again, this time for a 'gag' appearance in a haunted house spoof called **The Ghost of Dragstrip Hollow**. It was the final time Paul's favorite creature made a film appearance.

Paul also created a variety of oversized props — such as a giant telephone, enormous pencils, and the like — for AIP's **Attack of the Puppet People**. For the same company's **Amazing Colossal Man**, he was required to do just the opposite, constructing miniature props to make a normal sized man appear gigantic. He also created make-ups for **Earth Versus The Spider**, **Not Of This Earth**, **The Cat Girl** and others. His last two major assignments were for **Invasion of the Saucer Men** and **It! The Terror From Beyond Space**.

"**Saucer Men** started out as a straight science-fiction film," said Paul. "Then, about one week after production started, everybody was watching the rushes and we noticed... it was just so *ludicrous*! So then it just sort of collapsed into a comedy."

Paul sculpted several costumes for the picture, which were worn by dwarves. One fully-articulated suit was worn by Paul himself but, as in the case with **The She Creature**, many of the monster's attributes were never seen in the final product.

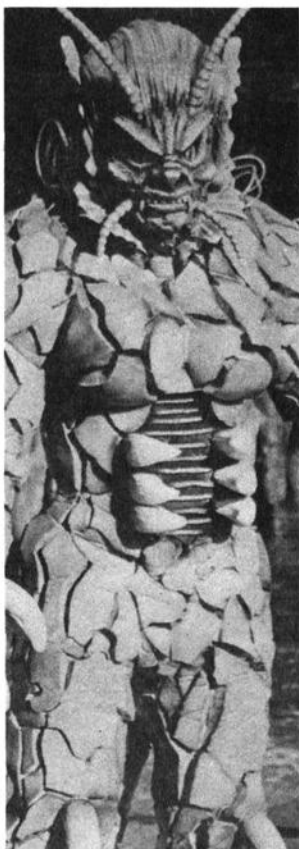
"The eyeballs on the Martian hands could look around. If somebody sneezed, for example, the eye could whip right round and look at him! About the closest I got to using some of the better effects on that picture was when the disembodied hand crawls across the pavement and punctures a car's tyres with its needle-like fingernails."

After creating another full-body suit for **It! The Terror From Beyond Space** (a United Artists picture, and a good one) Paul designed some special effects to be used in other films such as **Goliath and the Dragon**, **Jack the Giant Killer**, and such unrealized projects as **Strato-Fin** and **Year 2889**. At the dawn of the 1960s he and associate Bob Burns got together and created **Fantastic Monsters of the Films**, a magazine devoted to coverage of horror and fantasy films, much like **Famous Monsters**, but devoting more space to 'behind-the-scenes' stories than **FM** did.

After **Fantastic Monsters** had run its course, Paul retired from the hustle and bustle of the film community and lived quietly with his wife Jackie in Topanga. In one of his letters to me, Paul joked, "You know, I'm certainly not the The Man of a Thousand Faces. I guess I'm the Man with No Face!"

For posterity, though, I'd rather remember him as The Man with a Million Fans. Wouldn't you?

Another low-budget masterpiece (top) **The She Creature** with (below) an example of the excellent monster suit and power of the horror image for **It! The Terror From Beyond Space**.



MUTANT

by TONY
CRAWLEY

Forget the sheer speculation of *The Day After*, or the more moving *Testament*, or West Germany's *Day Before*. Forget, in fact, this whole switchback to filmdom's late-50s panic about *The Bomb* - *On The Beach* and all of that. Peter Watkins told it like it really will be in *The War Game*: so much so it was immediately banned by the Beeb in 1966. The re-treads, for such as they are don't show the half of it, just as TV News footage of air crashes never depict the bodies cut in half by their seat-belts, not to mention the odd decapitation.

The films are speculation because there is no answer to a nuclear holocaust. Michael Hessel-tine can talk himself blue - as he did after *The Day After*. But he had no answer. It's not enough to say relax, folks, Mumsy's in charge; or more like the Grandads in the White House and the Kremlin.

Doesn't our war minister realise that a nuclear strike will simply melt our brains, fry our balls and separate flesh from bone, blood from tissue, faster than Jack the Ripper on fast-forward. No, our elected representatives haven't even learned the messages, however simplified from *The War Game*, of *War Games*. That the only way to win the nuclear monopoly is not to play the game.

But they do and therefore bring about a more urgent problem that is happening here and now. All around us. The subject of nuclear and other toxic chemical wastes and their poisonous effects on people and environments. Any country in the world has headlined horror stories of the illegal dumping and toxic leakages almost on a daily basis.

We're killing ourselves while waiting for *The Bomb*...

And such is the premise of *Mutant*...

The place: Goodland, an ill-named near ghost town in the Southern stretches of America. Typical of the area. The tangled beauty of giant magnolia trees, blossoming crepe myrtle and overgrown azalea bushes fail to disguise the dilapidated condition of its rambling Victorian houses. Over there on Main Street, just across from the train depot, is the bank, the bar, the sheriff's office and the town stores. At the other end of the street is the petrol station.

Like most of the windows in town, the gas station is shuttered.

Enter: Josh Cameron and his younger brother, Mike. Their vacation in the country side has come to a rapid end when their car was waylaid by a tribe of local rednecks. They make their way into Goodland looking for help.

Instead they find a corpse, just about recognisable as human - and hideously maimed. The locals aren't very helpful. Next morning, Mike has disappeared. As he searches for him, Josh uncovers strange happenings afoot behind Goodland's sleepy facade. Something terrible is happening in town ... and to the townsfolk. Something ... chemical.

Rather like *War Games*, the film stems from a pair of young writers. When they wrote it, Michael Jones and John C. Kruike were mail-room clerks at the MGM studios (like Jack Nicholson had been a long, long time ago). "We simply decided there was more to do in life than rush around delivering other people's scripts," says Mike. "So, in between daily deliveries and almost every night, we collaborated on a movie idea based on newspaper stories we kept reading."

"We peddled the script intensely for over a year with no luck," adds Chris. "No one wanted to look at a script by two unknown mail clerks ... until a friend met Igo."

Igo is Igo Kantor who, as befits his name, used to be a music editor at Columbia Pictures and its TV wing. He formed his own company, Synchro-film, in 1966, did post-production work on 200 movies including Nicholson's best, *Easy Rider* and *Five Easy Pieces* - "It's excellent training, you learn everything about film-making because you're responsible for this finished product." By

1971, Kantor produced his first film, *Jud*, and has since produced everything from Jane Fonda's *F.T.A.* (the initials have to be nameless in this refined publication) to *Hardly Working* starring Jerry Lewis (who should be nameless in any magazine).

In case you're losing interest and thinking Igo sounds less than a genre man, forget it. I should mention his films with director John 'Bud' Cardos - *The Dark*, with *Testament*'s William Devane, and the American Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror's choice as best horror flick of 1977, *Kingdom of Spiders*. (Naturally, Cardos directed *Mutant*, too, and the couple have more genre projects in their bag).

Igo was quickly sold in the boys' script. He took it to Edward L. Montoro, head honcho of Film Ventures International, the backers of Kantor-Cardos' *Dark* (which had started life as a Tobe Hooper project). Montoro dug the lads' work, too, and a deal got wheeling. Story conferences followed. New ideas. More action. More flesh on the characters. And a new script - Peter Z. Orton, who lately quit being a director to concentrate on his main love, writing.

"I really like *Mutant*," says Orton. "Not only is it a tight, suspenseful film, it has an important message. It's gratifying to entertain people with something that is significant."

Montoro agrees. "I want to stress strongly that *Mutant* is not in the gore genre at all. We're stepping away from the spate of slasher films that have flooded the market recently. This story has real people that you can identify with, that you can grow to like ... or dislike."

"We wanted a quality film, not just another horror movie," adds Igo Kantor. "We've not put in a lot of gore. I believe horror films can be terrific without being outlandish. We kept re-writing the script. We developed believable characters and good dialogue. Relationships between the characters were added and therefore, the characters have been given dimension. If you care for them and believe in them, you will believe in the story."

And, naturally being a producer, Igo doesn't stop there. "We also wanted to make the film worthwhile. The subject of toxic chemical poisoning is important and timely. It's a problem that concerns everyone."

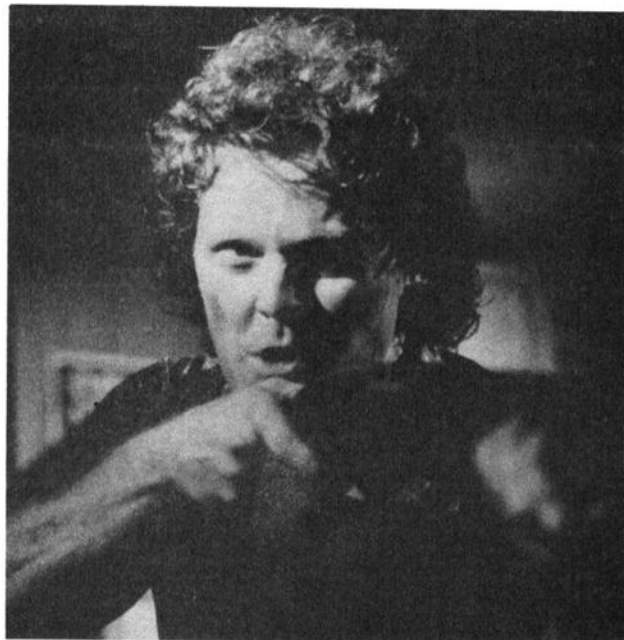
"While our purpose is to entertain," stresses Edward Montoro, "we do say that toxic waste has been loosely handled and that people are getting hurt. If the film causes just 1% of the population to think differently about toxic waste, then the picture has some other reason for existing."

While the makers were congratulating themselves on the improved script, and brushing up their own idealism - as if none of them were in it for the money! - the rest of the team were hunting locations in Utah, North and South Carolina and Georgia. They settled on a small community outside Atlanta, a place where all progress seems to have moved on, bypassing the burg on some fast lane, since the 1940s.

Location manager Elaine Smith found the town - and then the sites within it. Or damn near it. "We needed three different houses. They had to be substantial, old, Victorian-style, in a rural setting and with rooms large enough to accommodate the film crew."

And with 'Bud' Cardos directing, space becomes very important. Likes his stunts, does Bud. He would: he used to be a fall guy, himself. Indeed, he used to be everything in films. Actor. Stuntman. Cameraman. Gaffer. Special effectician. Production manager. Oh, he's been everywhere, man. And done it all.

Bud started aged five in the *Oz* Gang comedies. He had a role alongside Henry Fonda in *The Return of Frank James* (1940). At 15, he switched to the rodeo circuit as cowboy and clown alongside Slim Pickens. Bud's affinity with animals, plus his stunting talent, brought him back to Hollywood for the *Sergeant Preston* of



the Yukon (no kidding!) TV series. "I ran dog sleds over cliffs and did horse falls in the snow." As for directing those 5,000 tarantulas in **Kingdom of the Spiders** – hell that came mighty easy for a guy that worked with Hitchcock on **The Birds** (1963).

"We've taken the original script of **Mutant**," explains Bud, "and developed it in many ways – including making it a strong action film. We've intensified the terror by adding action where you don't expect it."

This often meant varying Elaine Smith's pinpointed location sites to suit Bud's needs. Finding a house is one thing. Finding one to suit one stunt which specified the need of a second-floor bedroom roof is quite another. Elaine hunted about anew and came up with a choice of four. Good gal, Elaine.

In another scene, Bud had a car crash through the double doors of a warehouse, creating all kinds of havoc inside. "Originally, the sequence was scheduled to be shot with the car simply pulling up outside," laughs Cardos.

For another scene shot on Main Street, he had a car tearing around a corner with a mutant clinging to the roof. The car careens up on two wheels, throwing the mutant mess through a plate glass window.

"Well," says Bud, "that's better than just having him falling to the ground, right? I tell ya, the action will lift this film out of the ordinary. The way we actually shot a lot of scenes in the script are now one helluva lot more dramatic."

As if the story isn't dramatic enough ...

When we left Josh, he was looking for his missing brother, Mike, right? Well, not only Mike is long gone. The corpse they found isn't there anymore when the sheriff lopes by to take a gander. All that's left are a few drops of amber fluid. The local lady doctor runs a test on this stuff and finds a chemical toxic that kills humans by devouring their red blood cells.

Next, in company with the town's school-teacher, Josh finds a second body – a little girl in the basement of the schoolhouse. Believe me, she is far from being the film's last victim. Many more are found (I nearly said, unearthed!) and all have the same tell-tale wounds. But they are NOT dead ... They become a type of zombie; mutants craving fresh human blood to sustain their own attacked supplies.

The good doctor's further experiments determine the cause of the ongoing horror as being toxic chemicals permeating the earth, contaminating the residents' blood. Josh decides to investigate the nearby New Era chemical plant, runs into the factory thugs and is soon faced, alone with Holly, the school marm, with a town full of mutants ...

Far-fetched? Well, of course it is. But it's not all fiction and could well be a real fact by, well, how about the day after ...

Item: Contaminated water from a bathroom shower in the small township of Lee, Maine, caused a victim's "eyes to redden, his skin to crack and itch and his hair to yellow and fall out."

Item: In a New York area called Love Canal, toxic wastes from an abandoned dump found their way into the soil, backyards, ground-water, basements and the air resulting, according to Virginia's Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes, "a long nightmare of boarded-up homes, miscarriages (only four normal babies born out of 22 pregnancies in a year), birth defects (56% of the Canal children were born with birth defects during a four year period), genetic damage and the highest rate of lung cancer in the state of New York."

(Top) Star of **Mutant**, Wings Hauser, attempts to hold the disintegrating town at bay as (below) the chemical pollution unleashes an orgy of violence.

Item: American industry, alone, generated about 250 million tons of hazardous wastes every year. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that over 90% of these wastes are disposed of improperly. Indeed they've listed 15,000 uncontrolled dumping sites all leading to contamination of drinking water supplies and various listed adverse incidents of damage to human health, natural habitats, fish, livestock, crops, sewer systems and soil.

Item: One of the CCHW reports says, "Sometimes you can see black smoke rising from a stack at the local factory, or an oily substance floating on the surface of your river or creek, or black goop bubbling or seeping from the ground near your home. Many contaminated areas had a sweet odour in the air or an unmistakable chemical smell."

It was reports like these that led Chris Kruike and Mike Jones to write their script. They read the papers, looked at one another, the light bulbs lit up and they said: "Sounds like a horror film!"

Well now it is - with the oddly monickered Wings Hauser (a writer, himself, he supplied the story of Gene Hackman's *Uncommon Valour* movie) as our hero, Josh Cameron, a complete opposite of his sadist killer in *Vice Squad*. Having quit *Dynasty*, Bo Hopkins was free to become the sheriff, with Jody Medford as the schoolteacher and Jennifer Warren guesting as the doctor - and all grewed up from *Ben* and *Burnt Offerings*, Young Lee Montgomery as the missing Mike.

Also in the cast, as one of Jody's schoolkids, is little Cary Guffey, the kid who had that remarkable close encounter with Steve Spielberg... and later had a special edition re-run of it. Cary is getting older, too. All of eleven years and seven films old now.

Paul Stewart, the man with the *Twilight Zone* tragedy hanging over his head, was in charge of the film's effects, assisted by Vernon Hyde. Dave Miller supplied the mutant strain of prophetics. And just to show that you can take a producer out of the music department, but not the music out of a producer, Igo Kantor had Richard Band's effective score recorded with our National Philharmonic Orchestra at London's Olympic Studios... so there Hollywood!

Since the film wrapped, Igo has formed himself a new production company called Laurelwood. Well, he has a family to keep in work. Enid Kantor was *Mutant's* production co-ordinator and was also responsible for the Hollywood end of the casting, while Loren Kantor was among the four production assistants, two others of which belonged to the Edward Montoro family.

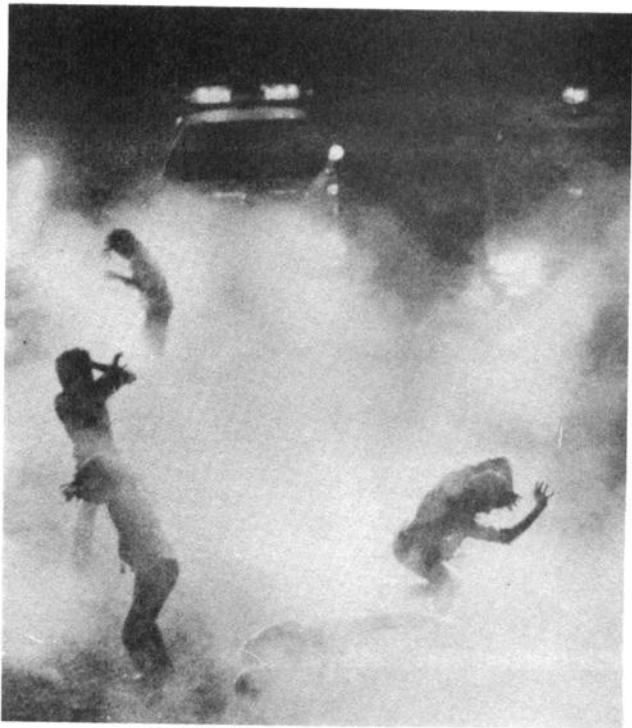
Bud Cardos is joining Igo's first two Laurelwood movies, both sticking close to our genre, they tell me. Titles? *Deadly Encounter*, which could be a sub-title for *Mutant* - and *The Most Dangerous Man in the World*, which could be, but is not *The Ronnie Reagan Story*. In fact, I don't yet know who this dangerous guy is, but Bud did admit that Sybil Danning will be chasing after him. (Lucky him!)

As for the boys in the mailroom, they're still at MGM.

"But we have worked out a way out of the mailroom now," grins Mike, who has, by the way, a Master's Degree in Film from Ohio State University. He's now in MGM's TV Business Affairs Dept., while Chris Kruike, who got his degree in Communications (perfect for a mailroom, right?) at Washington State University, is ensconced at the MGM Production office.

What? Oh sure, they're still writing in harness - whenever their wives give 'em time.

Before even the day after of nuclear holocaust,
there is the polluted night before of *Mutant*.



Three stations from Charing Cross
you can meet your favourite heroes at

QUALITY COMICS

South London's top fantasy bookshop • 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 Tel: (01) 691-7327



* American comics from
the 1940s to the 1980s.
Prices: 10p up

* American & British fantasy
film magazines from 30p

* Original comicbook art
from £5

* SF paperbacks at 50p -
Ace, Bantam, Del Ray, etc.

* Over 50,000 items
currently in stock



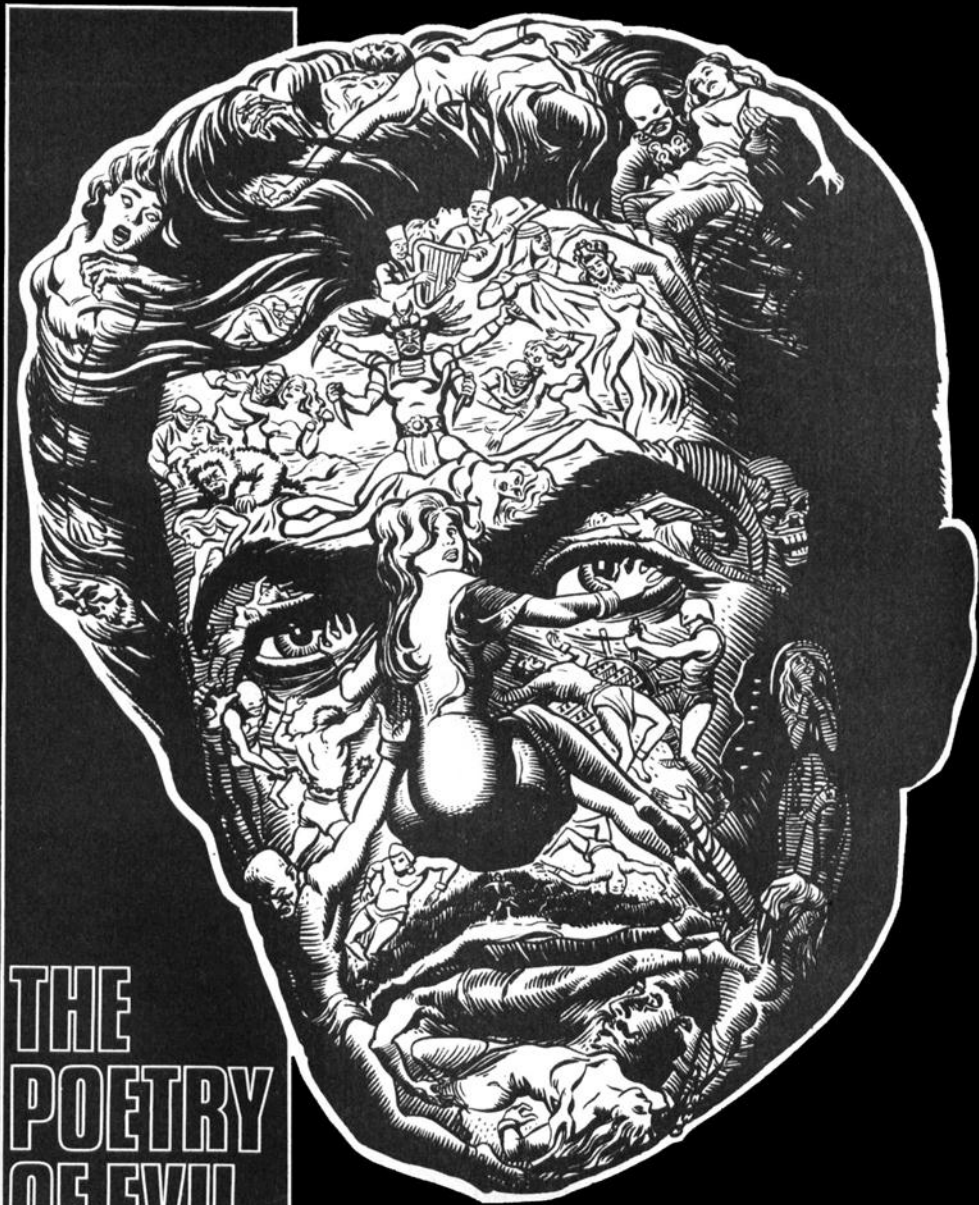
QUALITY COMICS

Open Monday-Saturday 10 - 6.00

Comics bought sold & exchanged

Opposite Goldsmith College
Buses: 21, 36, 53, 141, 171, 177

Train or Underground to:
New Cross or New Cross Gate



THE POETRY OF EVIL

by Stephen Jones

Since making his acting debut on the London stage in 1935, Vincent Price had risen to the heights of Hollywood stardom. His first film was a romantic comedy, *Servicio de Luxe*, in 1938, but within a few years he was already appearing in the type of film that would later make him famous: In *Tower of London* (1939) he co-starred opposite Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone, and followed in the footsteps of Claude Rains when he (dis)appeared in *The Invisible Man Returns* (1940). Throughout the 1940s, Price was cast in a wide variety of parts, but it was his starring role in *House of Wax* (1953) that elevated him to one of the screen's leading horror actors. Many similar films followed, such as *The Mad Magician*, *The House on Haunted Hill*, *The Fly* and *Return of the Fly*, and by the beginning of the 1960s his name on a movie marquee just about ensured box-office success.

Price's first film of the decade was once again for showman producer/director William Castle: In *The Tingler* Price played a doctor who discovered a creature at the base of the spine that thrived on fear. Only by screaming could its victims save themselves from a very unpleasant death. In one particularly tense scene, the creature was loose in a darkened movie theatre and Price entreated the audience to scream for their lives – at which appropriate moment certain cinemagoers really 'tingled' when they were subjected to a minor electrical shock from a device placed under their seats! Understandably, this William Castle gimmick was quickly abandoned – doubtless to the relief of the audiences.

Throughout the previous decade, American International Pictures had been churning out a long succession of teenage horror and science fiction films, made for very little investment and shrewdly aimed at the youth market. By 1960 the company's highly successful co-owners, Samuel Z. Arkoff and James H. Nicholson, decided they were ready to expand into more prestigious productions. They initially signed Vincent Price to a three-picture contract and hired whizkid director Roger Corman for the first of these projects. Corman had been responsible for many of AIP's biggest successes – the young director had a reputation for speed and merciless cost-cutting.

This combination of Price and Corman was to be a historical teaming that would significantly shape the direction of both their careers.

The first of their unique collaborations was *House of Usher* (1960, retitled *The Fall of the House of Usher* in Britain). Based on the classic tale by Edgar Allan Poe, the film was scripted by noted fantasy author Richard (The Incredible Shrinking Man) Matheson. Price starred as the hyper-sensitive Roderick Usher who was obsessed with the belief that a family curse had resulted in him burying his sister alive. It was a theme that the Corman/Poe films would return to time and time again. Arkoff and Nicholson were originally wary about releasing a horror film that didn't feature an obvious monster, but Corman's ruthless efficiency ensured that the film's meagre \$300,000 budget – large by previous AIP standards – was used to full advantage (the fiery climax was still being revived as stock footage years later!) Price gave a subtle performance as the doomed Roderick, and it was a role he personally was very pleased with: "It's a great story," he said. "I loved the character I was playing because he was the most sensitive of all Poe's heroes ..." However, the supporting players were not up to the same standard, and it was left to the good-looking production values and exciting climax to turn the film into a huge box-office hit and something of a cult success.

"They didn't have a Poe series in mind to begin with," said screenwriter Matheson, "but when Usher got such a good reception financially and critically, they just jumped at the idea."

But Price's second film for American International, directed by William Whitney and once

again scripted by Matheson, was based on the writings of another respected author: *Master of the World* (1961) combined two novels by 'the father of science fiction', Jules Verne. Price was ideally cast as Robur – a brilliant, but obsessed, inventor similar to Verne's other anti-hero, Captain Nemo. Using a gigantic flying machine, 'The Albatross', Robur destroyed the armed forces of the world in an attempt to force an end to all war. "Master of the World I loved because I thought it had a marvellous moralising philosophy," said Price. "I adored it – A man who sees evil and says 'Destroy it' ... and if it's the whole world, then it's got to go."

Matheson's screenplay included all the right elements for a fantasy to rival Disney's classic Verne adaptation, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), but it was marred by AIP's penny-pinching approach. The juvenile adventure used a great deal of stock footage from other films (much of it monochrome tinted in colour) with the ludicrous result that in one scene the 19th century flying fortress is shown apparently bombing Elizabethan London! Price gave a colourful performance as the half-mad Robur, and he was ably supported by Charles Bronson and Henry (Werewolf of London) Hull as his adversaries.

Next, Price was reunited with Roger Corman for their second AIP/Poe collaboration. *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961) was loosely adapted by Matheson, who utilized the title's torture device for the film's exciting climax. Price portrayed Nicholas Medina, a 16th century Spanish lord haunted by his father's evil reputation and slowly being driven mad by his unfaithful wife. Corman, never a strong director of actors allowed Price to go unashamedly over the top, cackling gleefully as he tortured his victims, and it was left to horror queen Barbara Steele to stand out from the typically weak supporting cast. Once again the film overcame its minuscule budget, mostly due to the expertise of the crew Corman was gathering around him: Floyd Crosby's fluid camerawork, Daniel Haller's imaginative set designs and Les Baxter's strident music score were an integral contribution to all the early Poe films.

Then Price was off to Italy to appear in a trio of little-seen films. He played the high priest of Ancient Egypt in *Nefertite Regina Del Nilo* (1961, *Queen of the Nile*), a white-slaver pitted against Ricardo Montalban's swashbuckling hero in *Gordon, Il Pirata Nero* (1961, *The Black Buccaneer* or also known as *The Rage of the Buccaneer*), and the title character in *L'Ultimo Uomo Della Terra* (not released until 1964 as *The Last Man on Earth*). This last film was based on Richard Matheson's acclaimed science fiction novel *I Am Legend* and starred Price as the last human survivor in a world populated by vampire-like creatures.

Director Sydney Salkow did the best he could with a pitifully low budget, but Matheson was very critical of the result: "I thought it was terrible," he said. "At first I wrote the screenplay for Hammer Films, but they told me that the English censor wouldn't pass it. They had someone rewrite it and made it abysmal ... Price, whom I like as an actor, was completely wrong for the part." A later version, titled *The Omega Man* (1971), starred Charlton Heston in the Price role, had a much larger budget, and was even less faithful to the source novel.

Vincent Price, Peter Lorre and Basil Rathbone – a trio of horror stars from AIP's *Tales of Terror* (top). (Below) From *The Black Cat* segment of that film, Lorre exerts a dreadful price from his enemy Vincent.



Price narrated **Naked Terror** (1961), a quick documentary about barbaric Zulu customs, before starring in **Confessions of an Opium Eater** (1962), judiciously retitled **Evils of Chinatown** in Britain. He also turned up as an art-loving author in the prison drama **Convicts 4** (1962, titled **Reprieve** in Britain) before returning to horror once again.

Tower of London (1962) was hardly a remake of the 1939 movie that introduced Price to horror films. Directed by Roger Corman and produced by his brother Gene for Admiral Pictures, this Shakespearean historical horror once again had Price overplaying his role – as Richard of Gloucester, surrounded by the ghosts of past victims and some nasty torture devices.

The next Price/Corman film was much better. Richard Matheson's script for American International's **Tales of Terror** (1962) featured the actor in three separate episodes based on stories by Poe: **Morella**, in which Price kept his mummified wife in their bed, was the weakest of the trio, although it contained elements of his later film, **The Tomb of Ligeia**. The second segment was a great improvement – it combined **The Black Cat** and **The Cask of Amontillado** in black comedy in which Price fell in love with Peter Lorre's much put-upon wife (Joyce Jameson). Unfortunately the infidelity was discovered and the lovers were walled up by the inebriated spouse. The acting honours in the final episode, **The Case of Mr Valdemar**, went to Basil Rathbone as a scheming mesmerist who kept Price's mind alive after death to force his victim's wife into marriage. The climax had Price, his features disintegrating into oozing slime, claiming just revenge on his tormentor. Once again, the production values were excellent for such a low budget film and the stories benefited from the presence of three of the screen's finest horror stars.

The unexpected success of the humorous middle section of **Tales of Terror** prompted AIP to follow it up with **The Raven** in 1963. Suggested by one of Poe's most famous poems, Matheson created a totally original story line ("It wasn't much to work with," he said, "anyway, I couldn't have done another serious one.") The film co-starred Price with Boris Karloff (returning to the screen after four years' absence) as rival mediaeval sorcerers, and Peter Lorre played another magician, transformed into the raven of the title. Director Roger Corman, more interested in the technical difficulties, allowed his stars to ad-lib at every opportunity, but managed to conclude the film with an impressive dual of magic utilizing excellent special effects. The supporting cast included Hazel Court as the 'Lost' Lenore and a young Jack Nicholson as the bumbling hero.

Price narrated **Chagall** (1963), an Oscar-winning documentary about the artist, before appearing in **Twice Told Tales** (1963), another anthology film, this time based on three tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne. An obvious attempt by Admiral Pictures to repeat the success of AIP's Edgar Allan Poe series, director Sidney Salkow lacked Corman's style. **Dr Heidegger's Experiment** featured Price as the discoverer of an elixir of 'eternal' youth. In the classic **Rappaccini's Daughter** he was the father of a girl who destroyed all she touched. The final episode was a truncated version of **The House of the Seven**



Price meets his "lost Lenore" in the Corman classic **The Raven** whilst a young Jack Nicholson looks on (top). As a lawman obsessed with homicidal urges, Price gave a compelling performance in **Diary of a Madman** (below).

Gables, which Price had originally appeared in back in 1940 – this time, however, he was cast as the villain.

Price's next film was also based on a well-known supernatural tale, **The Horla**, by French writer Guy de Maupassant. Reginald Le Borg directed **Diary of a Madman** (1963), in which Price gave a good performance as a magistrate, possessed by a being from another dimension that feeds on evil.

Matheson and American International took time off from plundering Poe to make **The Comedy of Terrors** in 1963. Veteran director Jacques Tourneur did his best, but the result was disappointing and only the fine cast made it watchable. "AIP used the old stars because they could get them cheaply," revealed Matheson. "It was a good script but it didn't translate all that well on to the screen ... but with a two-week shooting schedule you can't spend too much time on anything. That's all the time AIP ever spent on any of those pictures. That's how they made their money." Vincent Price and Peter Lorre played two unsuccessful undertakers who were reduced to creating new business by murdering their clients. However, it was left to Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone and comedian Joe E. Brown in cameo appearances to keep the humour bubbling. Sadly, the film marked Peter Lorre's last genre appearance (he went on to make a Jerry Lewis comedy) and an obvious double was used in several sequences.

Price stayed with comedy to make a guest appearance as Big Daddy in AIP's **Beach Party** (1963), the first of their 'sun and surf' series featuring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello.

Although credited to another poem by Edgar Allan Poe, American International's **The Haunted Palace** (1963) was in fact a fairly faithful adaptation of H. P. Lovecraft's short novel **The Case of Charles Dexter Ward**. Price gave an unusually low-key performance as Ward, who returned to his ancestral mansion in the New England village of Arkham and was gradually possessed by the vengeful spirit of his evil forbear, a warlock named Joseph Curwen, also played by Price. Producer/director Roger Corman and improved production values ensured the film looked good (except for a brief shot of a very unconvincing Elder God), and Price was ably supported by such stalwarts as Lon Chaney Jr., Elisha Cook Jr., and John Diekers.

For the next Poe adaptation, AIP decided to film in Britain. **The Masque of the Red Death** (1964) was scripted by Charles Beaumont and R. Wright Campbell and combined the title story with another Poe tale, **Hop Toad**. Price gave an outstanding performance as the Devil-worshipping Prospero, an enigmatic 12th century Italian prince attempting to hold his castle and its revellers against the onslaught of the red death, ravaging the country outside. Price allowed his character some fine touches of sardonic humour, Nicholas Roeg's colour photography was stunning and Roger Corman's direction was filled with poetic imagery. Amongst the British supporting cast, Hazel Court, Nigel Green and particularly Patrick Magee stood out.

Price's next film, based on Poe's poem **Ligeia**, brought the actor back to Britain. Robert (China-town) Towne's literate script marked the last of the Corman/Poe collaborations, and **The Tomb of Ligeia** (1964) featured Price in a wonderfully underplayed performance as the bizarre Verden Fell, possessed by the will of his dead wife. The film's remarkable blend of the supernatural, hypnotism, Egyptian magic and hints of necrophilia made this one of the best, and most underrated, movies of Price's career. The prowling photography atmospherically captured the 900-year-old Norfolk Abbey location, and Elizabeth Shepherd was very effective in the dual roles of Fell's two wives, the innocent Rowena and the dead Ligeia.

Once again based in Britain, AIP's **The City**



Under the Sea (1965, titled **Wargods of the Deep** in America) was directed by Jacques Tourneur. Unfairly dismissed as a juvenile fantasy/adventure, this entertaining film was based on one line from a poem by Poe. Price played the Captain, the leader of a group of Cornish smugglers trapped for 100 years beneath the sea in the lost city of Llyonesse. Unfortunately, the film also included David Tomlinson, his pet chicken and some very unconvincing Gillmen.

Price returned to Hollywood to narrate the documentary **I Tabu** (1965, U.S.A.: **Taboos of the World**), and then went on to play the diabolical scientist of the title of Norman Taugog's science fiction spoof **Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine** (1965). This hit-and-miss comedy parodied AIP's beach party/horror series as Price created an army of beautiful, but deadly, robots. When given an extremely limited release in Britain, the title was changed to **Dr. G and the Bikini Machine** when a real Dr. Goldfoot threatened to sue!

AIP quickly followed up with an inferior sequel, **Dr. Goldfoot and the Girl Bombs** (1966), in which Price's good-looking robots exploded on contact. Filmed in Italy and featuring a dire comedy team named Franco and Ciccio, it was directed by Mario Brava on one of his off days.

Price returned to America to make **The Jackals** (1967) and then moved to Madrid to play a white slaver in a German/Spanish co-production, **Das Haus Der Tausend Freuden** (1967, **House of 1000 Dolls**). Price recalled that "One day after filming I walked back to the set to see what was going on. They were re-filming exactly the same sequence we'd shot earlier, only the ladies in it were stark, bare-assed naked! They weren't even the same women, because you couldn't get a Spanish girl to take off her gloves, let alone her clothes."

The following year Price returned to Britain to give one of his finest-ever performances. **Witchfinder General** (1968) was in fact based on a novel by Ronald Bassett, yet in America it was released as Edgar Allan Poe's **The Conqueror Worm** to give the false impression that it was a continuation of the AIP series. In a powerful performance, Price played Matthew Hopkins, an opportunist lawyer from Ipswich, who toured Cromwell's England torturing and burning alleged witches. Criticised for its violence, it was superbly directed by Michael Reeves – his third and, tragically, his last film as he died of an overdose of barbiturates a year later, aged only twenty-five. Beautifully photographed in muted tones amidst authentic East Anglian locations, the film boasted strong supporting performances and proved that, when not parodying his own image, and given the right motivation, Price is an extremely talented actor.

A couple of forgettable appearances followed, in a Clint Walker western **More Dead Than Alive** (1968) and a cameo (along with John Carradine) in the Elvis Presley musical **The Chastelard** (1969, in Britain retitled **The Trouble With Girls ... And How To Get Into It**, before the actor returned to Edgar Allan Poe once again).

Annel Lee (1969), from Warner Brothers, was a ten-minute short directed by Ron Morante which cleverly utilised retouched still photographs. Price's distinctive voice narrated Poe's

Price and Jane Asher meet an unwelcome guest (top) in **The Masque of the Red Death** (Below) No, not **Curse of the Faceless Ones**, but a dramatic moment from **The Haunted Palace**.

poem about a dead woman calling her lover back to the graveside.

It was certainly much better than American International's *The Oblong Box* (1969), which had almost nothing whatsoever to do with Poe's story. Laurence Huntington's haphazard screenplay was filled with gratuitous throat-slashings, voodoo curses, insanity and that old stand-by, burial alive. Originally to have been directed by Michael Reeves (and one can only speculate how much better it might have been), Gordon Hessler's lacklustre direction added nothing to this British-filmed Victorian melodrama. It was only of interest for the first teaming of Price and fellow horror star Christopher Lee – but both were wasted and shared only one brief scene together. During filming, Price observed that "Pure evil, as much as pure good, is poetic." However, this interesting premise was not developed by the film-makers.

Scream and Scream Again (1969), an AIP/American co-production also made in Britain, went one better and added Peter Cushing to the Price/Lee combination (proof that filmmakers

never learn that an all-star cast does not necessarily mean a good film). Based on Peter Saxon's novel *The Disorientated Man*, this odd mixture of artificially-created humanoids, vampirism and political intrigue grievously wasted its three stars, with Cushing killed off after only one scene and Price and Lee given little screen time between them. "The plot can be twisted as you like, but the horror film must be pure logic, like mathematics," said Price. The convoluted storyline made *Scream and Scream Again* an interesting cult film, either loved or hated by critics. With Gordon Hessler's hectic direction and Alfred Marks' off-beat performance as a hard-nosed police superintendent, the result is a strangely compulsive blend of science fiction and horror.

Throughout the 1960s, Price managed to keep busy between film assignments with stage work, college tours and lectures on art, cookery and films. He continued to appear regularly on television, and besides numerous quizzes, chat shows and variety specials, he guest-starred in

many of the fantasy series that proliferated during the latter part of the decade: As Victor Marton he menaced super-spys Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* episode *The Foxes and Hounds Affair* (1967); between 1966-67 he appeared in five episodes of the popular *Batman* series as guest villain Egghead, ably assisted by Anne Baxter's Olga; Admiral Nelson and Commander Crane battled his Professor Multiple, a puppet master from a machine-ruled civilization, in *The Deadly Dolls* episode of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1967), and as the Transylvanian Count Storza he scared the soldiers of *F Troop* in the *V is for Vampire* episode (1966).

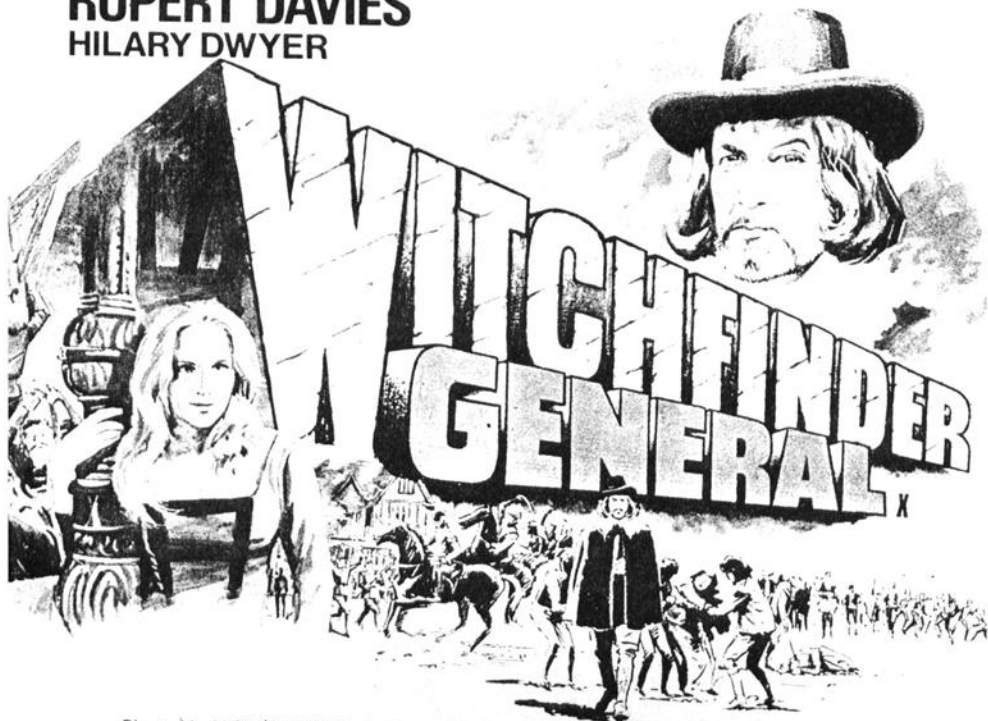
But by the end of the decade Price's film career had just about reached its peak. Many old friends and colleagues, including Karloff, Lorré and Rathbone were dead, and the actor himself was approaching 60. Although he would remain consistently busy, in later years the size and number of his screen appearances would be significantly reduced ...

TONY TENSER presents

VINCENT PRICE

RUPERT DAVIES

HILARY DWYER

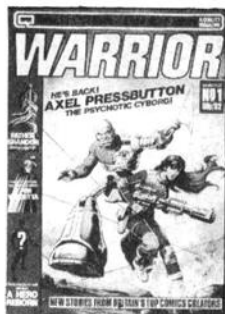


Directed by MICHAEL REEVES Producers ARNOLD MILLER-PHILIP WADDILOVE-LOUIS M. HEYWARD



RELEASED BY TIGON PICTURES LTD. • A TIGON BRITISH - AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION

WARRIOR BACK ISSUES:



ISSUE ONE ...£1.00(\$4)
Rebirth Marvelman, Legend of Prester John, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton. Special features: "True Story" by Moore & Gibbons, Marvelman article.

ISSUE TWO ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, intro: The Madman. Special features: Dispatches, Pressbutton article.



ISSUE THREE ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Zirk solo strip by Moore & Bolland.

ISSUE FOUR ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, Pressbutton origin, The Madman, Shandor, V for Vendetta, Dispatches. Special feature: Fearn's Golden Amazon by David Lloyd.



ISSUE FIVE ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Bonus V for Vendetta complete strip.

ISSUE SIX ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: "Mrs Murphy's Murders" by Steve Moore & Dave Gibbons.



ISSUE SEVEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Marvelman colour pin-up by Mick Austin.

ISSUE EIGHT ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: "Stir Crazy" by Hunt Emerson.



ISSUE NINE ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Warpsmith by Alan Moore & Garry Leach

ISSUE TEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special features: Warpsmith conclusion + Warpsmith colour pin-up.

ISSUE ELEVEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Legend of Prester John Part 2.

ISSUE TWELVE ...75p(\$3)
Anniversary Special featuring Young Marvelman, BoJeffries Saga, The V Theme, Pressbutton solo story, The Spiral Path conclusion, Prester John conclusion.

ISSUE THIRTEEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, BoJeffries Saga, Shandor, V for Vendetta, Dispatches. Special features: Zirk by Henry & Leach; Twilight World preview; Parkhouse/Ridgway SF short story; Zirk pin-up

ISSUE FOURTEEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Twilight World, V for Vendetta, Father Shandor Demon Stalker, Dispatches. Special features: Ektryn by Cam Kennedy + Future History article.

ISSUE FIFTEEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Twilight World, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special features: Writer Interview with Steve Moore; LE/PB pin-up

ISSUE SIXTEEN ...75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Twilight World, V for Vendetta, Father Shandor Demon Stalker, Dispatches. Special features: Daz Skinn on creating comics; Zirk Christmas Card; Marvelman pin-up

ISSUE SEVENTEEN ...75p(\$3)
V for Vendetta, Twilight World conclusion; The Marvelman Family 12 page complete strip. Special features: Jaramsheela solo strip + colour pin-up; Alan Moore on creating V for Vendetta.

QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS,

3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND

Wholesale enquiries to: Titan Distributors, P.O. Box 250, London E9

DRACULA

COMICS SPECIAL No. 1



featuring
**HORROR OF
DRACULA**

A 21 page adaptation
by
DEZ SKINN & PAUL NEARY

DRACULA PRINCE OF DARKNESS

A 16 page
adaptation by
DONNE (AXA)
AVENELL &
JOHN BOLTON



plus...
JOHN BOLTON'S
DRACULA
Sketchbook

20 pencil sketches
previously unpublished



A QUALITY SPECIAL on sale now 70P/\$2

HISTORY OF HAMMER

Part 9

By BOB SHERIDAN

The last Hammer Film of 1968, **The Lost Continent** marked the end of Hammer's USA distribution arrangement with 20th Century Fox, which had begun with **The Nanny** in 1965. Warner Brothers-7 Arts replaced Fox as US distributors of Hammer features released in Britain by Warner-Pathe. **The Lost Continent** was Hammer's second filming of a Dennis Wheatley novel, quickly following the release of **The Devil Rides Out**. This time however, the film was not based on one of Wheatley's Black Magic novels; instead it was derived from a fantastic adventure entitled **Uncharted Seas**. Scripted by Michael Nash, **The Lost Continent** was produced and directed by Michael Carreras.

Unfortunately, **The Lost Continent** failed to capture the feel of Wheatley's work. While **The Devil Rides Out** offered a tightly-knit narrative, **The Lost Continent** meandered. Particularly in its first half, the film seems like a soap-opera version of **Ship Of Fools**. Worse, there isn't even a 'lost continent' in the film, except perhaps in a symbolic sense. Actually, the titles comes from a 1951 Lippert film of the same name which Exclusive Pictures had distributed in Britain (see HoH 18).

The Hammer film is occasionally mistaken for a remake of the earlier Lippert production. Instead of a genuine land mass, the 'lost' world of Wheatley's is a Saragoso Sea - an area where masses of vines and seaweeds have trapped sailing ships for centuries. Survivors of a Spanish fleet maintained their civilisation, with their descendants still observing the customs of their ancestors in the twentieth century. In this case, that means that the Spanish Inquisition lives, at least on a small scale. The area is also inhabited by various strange (and unexplained) creatures.

Filmed on a higher budget than usual for Hammer, **The Lost Continent** is most memorable for its impressive sets, particularly the weed-overgrown ancient ships. The monsters are less successful, as their mechanical nature is readily apparent. Still, the film does offer its fair share of action and horror, along with the bizarre plot elements for which Hammer films are justly famous.

On the level of acting, **The Lost Continent** is distinguished mainly by the emotional conviction of Hildegard Knef. On the female side, the film also introduced rock singer/actress Dana Gillespie in the role of Sara, one of the inhabitants of this seaworld that time forgot.

A startling pre-credits decapitation sequence sets the tone for **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**, Hammer's first release of 1969. By far the grimmest of Hammer's Frankenstein entries, the film once again teamed star Peter Cushing with director Terence Fisher. The script, which Fisher claimed to have a hand in, was credited to Bert Batt, assistant director on this film as well as a number of other Hammer productions. The film's basic story was devised by Batt and Anthony Nelson-Keys.

Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed finds the baron, under the name Fenner, hiding from the police at a boarding house run by pretty, young Anna Spengler (Veronica Carlson). Her fiancé, Karl (Simon Ward), is an intern at a nearby madhouse. In order to pay hospital bills for Anne's ill mother, Karl has been stealing and selling drugs, juggling the books at work to cover the supply shortages. When 'Fenner' learns of this, he reveals his true identity to Karl and Anna, and blackmails them into assisting him. It seems that an old colleague of Frankenstein's, Dr. Brandt, is an inmate at the hospital at which Karl works. Frankenstein kidnaps Brandt, intending to cure his insanity by an operation. However,

From **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed** with Peter Cushing (top) as Baron 'Fenner' Veronica Carlson's best performance (Centre) as Anna Spengler and (below) Freddie Jones' sympathetic monster.





Brandt is mortally injured during the escape, and so Frankenstein transfers Brandt's brain into the body of Professor Richter, a doctor at this hospital. When Brandt/Richter awakens after the insanity-curing operation, he is driven mad again by the realisation that, as he puts it, "I have become the victim of everything Frankenstein and I ever advocated". Rejected by even his (Brandt's) own wife (Maxine Audley), he sets a fiery trap for Frankenstein and, by the film's conclusion, all of the major characters are dead or dying.

Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed is an extremely intense film, with consistently strong acting ensuring constant audience involvement. Freddie Jones, as the film's 'monster', is heart-wrenchingly pathetic in his agonising alienation (director Fisher has mentioned that the film was to have included more footage of the encounters between Jones and Audley, but this and other material was eliminated to get the film down to its 97 minutes running time). Veronica Carlson, who was adequately put-upon in her first Hammer film, **Dracula Has Risen From The Grave** (see **HoH 28**), gave probably the finest performance of her career in **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**. Portraying an innocent driven to madness by the horrors she must endure, she managed to breathe such life into Anna that the character could draw empathy from the coldest of viewers. Simon Ward, like Oliver Reed in **The Curse Of The Werewolf** (see **HoH 21**), was guided by Terence Fisher through a performance which proved that his talent went far beyond the requirements of the usual 'juvenile' leading role in films of this type. Soon after his appearance in **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**, Ward was given the title role in the prestigious **Young Winston**.

Despite this 'competition', Peter Cushing's is still the finest performance in **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**. Baron Frankenstein, whose character had been softened in the previous two series entries, is more fanatical and conscienceless than ever this time. Lacking any genuinely monstrous Frankenstein 'monster', the film offers Frankenstein himself as its true fiend. But Cushing's (and Fisher's) Frankenstein is still not merely a one-dimensional 'mad scientist'; by his own rules, he is a dedicated idealist. His ultimate goal in this film is the preservation of great minds. He is seeking a method (which Brandt discovered before going mad) of keeping the human brain alive permanently. While his treatment of other characters in the film is shocking, Frankenstein is a firm believer in the notion that the end justifies any means. Cushing, who has always shown a fondness for the role, wrings every nuance out of Frankenstein's complex character. Never before had Cushing achieved the depth of character to be found in **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**.

After filming **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**, Terence Fisher suffered a second leg injury (see **HoH 25**). This, coupled with the director's increasing inactivity throughout the 1960's, led to speculation that the Hammer Frankenstein series, as filmgoers had come to know it, was over. Further evidence to support this notion was forthcoming shortly.

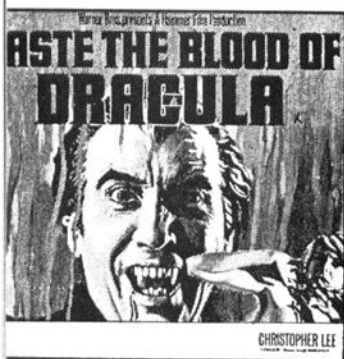
Hammer's next release, **Moon Zero Two**, was a high-budget science-fiction adventure directed by Roy Ward Baker, from a Michael Carreras script which in turn was from a story by Gavin Lyall, Frank Hardman, and Martin Davison. Instead of being straight science-fiction, **Moon Zero Two** is a rather tongue-in-cheek 'space-western'. The film's locations include a futuristic spaceport bar, which is strongly reminiscent of the standard western film saloon (some eight

years later, an outer space cantina would be the setting for one of the most famous sequences in George Lucas' **Star Wars**). As its main plot element, **Moon Zero Two** offers the premise of 'claim jumping' in outer space. Naturally, this leads to thrilling shootouts and chases involving a vengeful hero (James Olson) and his sidekick against extremely nasty villains. The western motif is even carried over into the film's dialogue, which includes a number of amusing reworkings of stock western lines. Even on the level of music, **Moon Zero Two** is decidedly offbeat, featuring a score by jazzman Don Ellis and title song performed by jazz/rock singer Julie Driscoll.

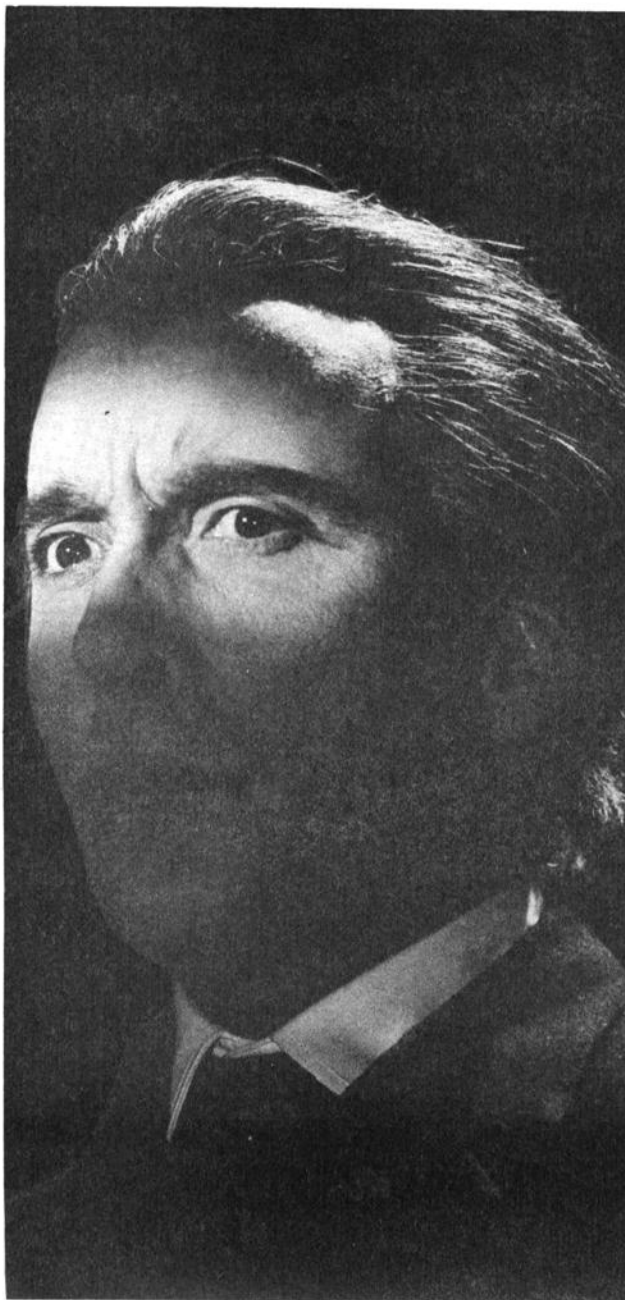
Despite some excellent special effects and an able cast which included Adrienne Cori, Bernard Bresslaw, and Michael Ripper, **Moon Zero Two** was a boxoffice failure. Coming in the wake of thought-provoking productions such as **Planet Of The Apes** and 2001: **A Space Odyssey**, **Moon Zero Two** is comparatively lightweight entertainment, lacking the 'significance' of its contemporaries. Another explanation is suggested by the fact that **Moon Zero Two** was released the same year that the first manned landing occurred – perhaps the people were unwilling to go and see this sort of fiction, when they could stay home and see 'the real thing' on television.

More traditional Hammer territory was travelled in **Taste The Blood Of Dracula**, which marked Christopher Lee's fourth starring appearance in the series and Hammer's first release in 1970. Anthony Hinds, once again under the name John Elder, wrote the screenplay. Lee and Hinds, longtime Hammer veterans, were offset by two newcomers to the Hammer 'family', both fresh from British television. The revival of Dracula, in the familiar person of Lee, is held off until mid-film. Up until the entrance of Dracula, the film's central evil character is the decadent young Lord Courtney, played in his feature film debut by Ralph Bates. And Hinds' script was filmed by Hungarian-born director Peter Sasdy who, like Bates, had never worked in theatrical films before this one.

The film's plot is constructed around the sort of revenge/retribution theme which Hinds seemingly favored during this period in Hammer's history. As usual, it is the details and variations that matter, and this time they are particularly nasty. The hypocritical perversion of Dracula's victims is matched – and surpassed – by the perverse irony of their fates. The victims, a trio of well-respected members of polite British society, are shown to be shockingly strict and cruel in their treatment of their teenaged children. Meanwhile, the three gather by night to seek illicit thrills in the seamy section of London's East End. Their increasing dissatisfaction leads them to a chance meeting with Lord Courtney, who persuades them to purchase the remains and artifacts of Count Dracula – some red powder, a ring, and a cape. These are in the possession of a salesman (Roy Kinnear) who had witnessed Dracula's demise on a golden cross (via some nice editing employing footage from **Dracula Has Risen From The Grave**) and collected them in a daze. In a desanctified church, they begin an unholy ritual to revive the vampire king. Courtney cuts himself and mixes his blood with the red powder. When the others refuse to drink this vile brew, Courtney himself does and promptly dies, wearing Dracula's cloak and ring. After the others flee in fear, Courtney's corpse transforms into Count Dracula – alive, or at least actively undead. Enraged by the death of such a dedicated disciple as Courtney, Dracula vows to destroy the young Lord's accomplices. This he does by vampirising their children and then willing them to kill their fathers in varied but consistently grisly ways. It is a credit to director Sasdy that these despicable characters become nearly sympathetic figures before their respective dooms overtake them. Dracula himself is



James Olson (top) goes through lunar customs in **Moon Zero Two** with Warren Mitchell (centre) as a wealthy magnate. (Below) Cute reworking of a contemporary milk campaign by Hammer.



destroyed when the church, which he is using as his base of operations, is re consecrated.

Taste The Blood Of Dracula showed off the classic Hammer advantages to a greater extent than usual. The scenery, sets, and costuming are all well-integrated and shot to great atmospheric effect. James Bernard's score, which he has named as his personal favourite, is indeed particularly fine, from the moody and sensitive opening themes to the anticipated reworkings of the major theme which Bernard originally composed for Hammer's first *Dracula* (see part two in *HoH 19*). However, **Taste The Blood Of Dracula** did have one flaw that particularly irritated Christopher Lee ... his dialogue was consistently awful, to the extent that Lee personally eliminated much of it, refusing to do the film otherwise. Further Lee publicly announced that he would not portray Dracula in any more Hammer series entries. However, his performance in **Taste The Blood Of Dracula** still contains moments of the old magic, implying that Lee was unable to resist the lure of the character.

Next came *Crescendo*, directed by Alan Gibson. Jimmy Sangster and Alfred Shaughnessy adapted the film's script from an original screenplay by Shaughnessy. Starring Stephanie Powers and James Olson, the film was a vain attempt at repeating the success of Hammer's earlier psychological thrillers. This meandering tale of a crippled composer (Olson) haunted by mystifying nightmares unfortunately offers nothing new or distinctive, and any Hammer fan worthy of the name could deduce the film's 'surprise' ending within the first half hour of its 95 minute running time.

Hammer's most popular characters, Frankenstein and Dracula, returned faster than ever before courtesy of a double-bill released in Britain by MGM-EMI and in America by Continental Pictures. Fans of Hammer's Frankenstein series were disappointed to learn that neither Peter Cushing nor Terence Fisher were involved in the making of **Horror Of Frankenstein**. Hopes were raised by the information that Jimmy Sangster, writer of the first two films in the series, served as writer (with Jeremy Burnham), producer, and director of the new film. The film's casting seemed to indicate that **Horror Of Frankenstein** was designed to showcase the new crop of actors at Hammer. Ralph Bates replaced Peter Cushing as Baron Frankenstein, supported by Veronica Carlson, Kate O'Mara, John Finch, and Dave 'Darth Vader' Prowse as the monster.

Instead of continuing the Frankenstein series which Hammer had been unfolding for well over a decade, Sangster chose to take his younger cast through a remake of the first film in the series, **The Curse Of Frankenstein** (see part two in *HoH 19*). This time, though, Sangster was without the balancing effect provided by Fisher and Cushing the first time out. Thus, the film went totally overboard in its sarcastic humour and unpleasant tone. Frankenstein is depicted as an overgrown spoiled brat, with every other character appearing to be either pompous, greedy, or, in most cases, merely stupid. The only moments of any warmth come out of the relationship between a graverobber (Dennis Price, doing Hammer horror for the first time) and his wife (Joan Rice). As for the monster, he has no personality whatsoever and functions as a plot device rather than a character. In conclusion, suffice to say that **Horror Of Frankenstein**, unlike **The Curse Of Frankenstein** never spawned a sequel, much less a series.

Christopher Lee as Dracula in **Taste the Blood of Dracula**—the old magic still there even though Lee was now getting tired with Hammer's interpretation.



HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN

starring RALPH BATES • KATE O'MARA
VERONICA CARLSON and DENNIS PRICE
Screenplay by JOHN ELDER • Based on the play by MARY SHREVE
Produced and Directed by JIMMY SANGSTER
TECHNICOLOR • Released through MCA/UA



SCARS OF DRACULA

starring CHRISTOPHER LEE
with DENNIS PRICE • ANITA HAYES • CHRISTOPHER MATHIAS
Screenplay by JOHN ELDER • Based on the play by MARY SHREVE
Produced and Directed by JIMMY SANGSTER
TECHNICOLOR • Released through MCA/UA

Scars Of Dracula, on the other hand, was part of Hammer's established vampire series, being a sequel to **Taste The Blood Of Dracula**, surprisingly starring Christopher Lee yet again. This time, the "John Elder" screenplay provided Lee with a comparatively large amount of well-written dialogue and had the count revived and claiming his first new victim prior to the opening credits. Directed by Roy Ward Baker, **Scars Of Dracula** is a violent but gloomy film almost entirely devoid of the sort of excitement viewers had come to expect of the series. Having finally returned to within his castle for the first time since **Dracula - Prince Of Darkness** (see HOH 27), **Dracula** remains within its walls throughout the rest of the film. As in **Dracula - Prince Of Darkness**, he has a servant named Klove, this time played by Patrick Troughton. And, as in **Dracula**, he has a female vampire consort (Anoushka Hempel). In addition, this time **Dracula** is shown to have power over bats, with one huge bat in particular serving as a sort of grotesque watchdog.

Much of **Scars Of Dracula's** bleak atmosphere is developed after the local villagers decide, after all these years (annd films) to destroy **Dracula** themselves, by setting fire to his castle. The count, resting in a remote area of the castle, survives and takes swift revenge. All of the village women and children have been waiting in a church during the attempt to destroy **Dracula**, and he sends a swarm of bats to massacre them. From this point on, **Dracula's** partially ruined home becomes a symbolic mirror of the spiritual corruption of the count himself. Arranging for potential victims to be brought to him, he nonchalantly drains their blood. For greater thrills, he delights in torturing Klove for an act of disobedience and slashes the vampire girl to a bleeding mess of flesh before dispatching her by drinking her blood... again, because she had acted against his wishes.

Dracula's incredible sadism in **Scars Of Dracula** is made even more horrific by his inhuman appearance. His face is completely drained of colour, and his visage suggests that of the bats he controls. Christopher Lee gives a precisely controlled performance which is perfectly suited to his appearance and the overall mood of the film. When, in a startling and effective shot, he rapidly scales the sheer outer wall of the castle, he moves more like a giant lizard than a man. By the end of **Scars Of Dracula**, Hammer had taken their saga to the point where **Dracula** had become so powerful and depraved that it is difficult to imagine the series continuing. Depending on how one wishes to view it, it is either divine intervention or the sheerest luck that finally destroys the bloody count at the end of **Scars Of Dracula**, and it is perhaps fortunate that there would be no direct sequel to this film. The **Dracula** saga started by Hammer in 1958 had finally come to its gruesome but satisfying conclusion.

At this point, it may appear that, at least as far as Hammer Films were concerned, **Dracula** and **Frankenstein** were past history. If so, where was Hammer heading? Did the beginning of the 1970s mark the end of an era, for both Hammer and the horror film in general? The answers to these questions are not as simple as film historians might wish. In any case, 1970 did not mark the end of the history of Hammer, and next issue we shall trace Hammer's progress through this decade.

FILMS

Key to abbreviations used in this filmography.

Ref: Year in which film was released.
Dir: Film directed by.
Sc: Screenplay written by.
Ph: Film photographed by.
Art Dir: Art direction by.
Ed: Edited by.
Mus: Music composed by.
Exec Prod: Executive Producer.
Assoc Prod: Associate Producer.
Prod: Producer.
Dis: Distributed by.

1968-70

The Lost Continent (Ref: 1968)

Eric Porter (Las Capt. Larsen), Hildegard Knef (Evil), Suzanne Leigh (Unity), Nigel Stock (Webster), Neil McCullum (Hemmings).

Dir: Michael Carreras. Sc: Michael Nash, from Dennis Wheatley's novel *Uncharted Seas*. Ph: Paul Beeson. Art Dir: Arthur Lawson. Ed: James Needs and Chris Barnes. E: Lects: Cliff Richardson. Mus: Gerard Schurmann. Prod: Michael Carreras. Dis: Warner-Pathe (UK), 20th C. Fox (US). Time 98 mins. Tramp steamer discovers a freak civilization descended from Spanish royalty. Poor entry.

Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed (Ref: 1969)

Peter Cushing (as Baron Frankenstein), Veronica Carlson (Anna Spengler), Simon Ward (Karl Holst), Freddie Jones (Prof. Richter), Thorley Walters (Insp. Fritsch), Maxine Audley (Ella Brand).

Dir: Terence Fisher. Sc: Bert Batt. Ph: Arthur Grant. Art Dir: Bernard Robinson. Ed: Gordon Hales. Mus: James Bernard. Prod: Anthony Nelson-Keys. Dis: Warner-Pathe (UK), WB/Seven Arts (US). Time: 87 mins. Complicated plot with Frankenstein attempting brain transplants but enlivened by Freddie Jones' touching performance.

Moon Zero Two (Ref: 1969)

James Olson (as Bill Kemp), Catherine von Schell (Clemence Taplin), Warren Mearns (L. J. Hubbard), Adrienne Corri (Liz Murphy), Al Levy (Karsinski), Dudley Foster (Whitsun), Bernard Bresslaw (Harry).

Dir: Roy Ward Baker. Sc: Michael Carreras, from a story by David Levell. Ph: Paul Beeson. Art Dir: Scott MacGregor. Ed: Spencer Reeve. Mus: Don Ellis. Prod: Michael Carreras. Rel: Warner-Pathe (UK), WB/Seven Arts (US). Time 100 mins. Western-style adventure on the moon complete with mining camps and range wars. An oddity.

Taste the Blood of Dracula (Ref: 1970)

Christopher Lee (as Count Dracula), Geoffrey Keen (William Hargood), Gwen Watford (Martha Hargood), Linda Hayden (Alice Hargood), Peter Sallis (Samuel Paxton).
Dir: Peter Sady. Sc: John Elder. Ph: Arthur Grant. Art Dir: Scott MacGregor. Ed: Chris Barnes. Mus: James Bernard. Prod: Aida Young. Rel: Warner-Pathe (UK), WB/Seven Arts (US). Time: 95 mins. Fourth Hammer **Dracula** with the vampire count attempting revenge on a set of rich thrill seekers - **Dracula** rather wasted in this plot.

Crescendo (Ref: 1970)

Stefanie Powers (as Susan Roberts), James Olson (Georges Jacquet), Margaret Scott (Dorothy Flynn), Jane Lapotina (Lillian), Joss Ackland (Carter), Kirsten Berth (Catherine).
Dir: Allan Gibson. Sc: Jimmy Sangster and Alfred Shaughnessy. Ph: Paul Beeson. Art Dir: Scott MacGregor. Ed: Chris Barnes. Mus: Malcolm Williamson. Prod: Michael Carreras. Rel: Warner-Pathe (UK), WB/Seven Arts (US). Time: 95 mins. A Hammer psychological thriller. Powers is faced with dealing with the insane widow of a great composer, intent on marrying off her sons.

Horror of Frankenstein (Ref: 1970)

Ralph Bates (as Victor Frankenstein), Kate O'Mara (Alysi), Graham James (Wilhelm), Veronica Carlson (Elizabeth), Bernard Archer (Elizabeth's father), Dennis Price (Grave Robbers), David Prowse (Monster).
Dir: Jimmy Sangster. Sc: Jeremy Burnham and Jimmy Sangster. Ph: Moray Grant. Art Dir: Scott MacGregor. Ed: Chris Barnes. Mus: Malcolm Williamson. Prod: Jimmy Sangster. Rel: MCM-EMI. Time: 95 mins. Basically a retelling of Hammer's first Frankenstein feature, but this time played for some macabre laughs.

Scars of Dracula (Ref: 1970)

Christopher Lee (as Count Dracula), Dennis Waterman (Simon), Jenny Hanley (Sarah Fransen), Christopher Matthews (Paul), Patrick Troughton (Klove), Michael Gwynn (Priest).
Dir: Roy Ward Baker. Sc: John Elder. Ph: Moray Grant. Art Dir: Scott MacGregor. Ed: James Needs. Mus: James Bernard. Prod: Aida Young. Rel: MCM-EMI. Time: 96 mins. Lee as the poltergeist host to a party of visitors who are after revenge for a dead brother. Climax is suitably fiery with the burning body of **Dracula** plunging from the turret of his castle.



Available at last...



In answer to your demands, Quality Communications is proud to present its custom-made volume binders.

There's no further need for your copies of *Warrior* and *Halls of Horror* to be damaged, lost or permanently borrowed, when they can be easily kept in mint condition in presentation volume binders.

Not only are the binders beautiful display pieces, in deep textured blue with gold spine lettering, but they are functional too. Each new issue can be easily slotted into the binder, with no need to remove the covers or damage the staples, and the issues can be referred back to at a glance, transforming loose magazines into top quality hardbound volumes.

All binders are despatched in purpose-built packages to remove the risk of damage in transit, and can make ideal gifts... for a friend or for yourself.

While ordering, why not take an extra volume for the upcoming issues, and transform your favourite magazine into perfect part-work!

As well as *Warrior* and *Halls of Horror* binders, we also have available a limited number of binders without spine lettering, which are ideal for any other magazines you collect and wish to preserve. Just to be sure the magazine is no more than 11½" deep.

As a bonus, all volume binders come with sufficient dry-transfer gold-coloured lettering to enable you to mark the volume number and the year as your collection grows.

All binders are £3.75 each within the British Isles (post included). Overseas: \$12.00 (U.S.) or equivalent. Airmail: add \$4.00.



Make all postal orders/cheques (sorry, no cash) payable to
QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and write to us at:
QUALITY MAIL SALE, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP

CAMPBELL'S COLUMN

There are depths of darkness in any human mind to which the logic of storytelling might point the way, but which are far better left alone."

So says Michael Stamm, reviewing Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* in *Fantasy Newsletter*. That sounds to me like a recipe for blandness and reassurance, the kind of horror fiction that does out polite shivers but would shrink from the possibility of being too disturbing. It isn't my kind, as I hope my fiction shows. The best horror fiction is a report from the edge of experience, and the only security it need offer is the reader's knowledge that it's fiction: the kind of horror Clive Barker, of whom more later, writes. Nevertheless I tend to agree with Stamm that *Pet Sematary* ultimately fails, however honourably, and I should like to offer a few thoughts on and around the reasons why.

First, however, a warning. In order to discuss *Pet Sematary* I shall have to give away the ending. If you haven't read the novel, please skip the rest of this article and pick it up at the last paragraph, unless you want to ruin both the effects King worked to achieve and your own pleasure. (And if you do, you may find that my little friend who scuttles up people's backs and undoes people's heads when he finds them looking at the last pages of books is behind you.)

Fantasy Newsletter ran a parallel review of *Pet Sematary* (as 'Stephen King's best novel') alongside Stamm's. In it Michael A. Morrison writes: "From an offensively simplistic point of view, one could describe *Pet Sematary* as King's 'zombie novel'." The trouble is that by the end of the book it's possible to feel that the description is rather too appropriate. *Pet Sematary* is King's finest horror novel until the last thirty pages, which belong to a different book.

The plot is the simplest of any King novel. A cemetery on the site of an old Indian burying ground has the power to resurrect the dead. The protagonist, a father, loses his youngest child in a road accident, and succumbs to the temptation to engineer the child's resurrection. (As a matter of fact I don't think I'm giving away any secrets so far; I imagine King wants us to know, and dread, what's coming.) A dismaying theme, yet the real source of the book's power is in scenes that don't involve the supernatural: the wife's harrowing monologue about her crippled sister's death and the guilt she herself suffered; the raw conflict between husband and wife this guilt causes, in scenes far more disturbing than the marital conflicts in King's novel *The Shining*; above all, the nightmarishly realistic (reality being the greatest nightmare) scenes of the child's death and his funeral, which King introduces by contradicting Lovecraft thus: "It's probably wrong to believe there can be any limit to the horror which the human mind can experience" — a line which can be read as announcing the ambition of the book. King has surely dug deeper into himself for his material than ever before, and it's perhaps a measure of the artistic courage involved that at the last his nerve fails him.

It's also a measure of the difficulty of the theme he is addressing: the child as victim and/or monster. Robin Wood and Tony Williams have analyzed at length the numerous horror films in which the 'monster' is the product of a family (*Psycho* being the prototype for the 'seventies') but as far as I know, nobody has analyzed the possibility that some of these films may appeal to a hatred of children. I suspect Max von Sydow, who played the exorcist in *The Exorcist*, was right to fear that audiences were being invited to enjoy the sufferings of possessed Linda Blair (especially since everything she does in her possessed state can be responded to as a caricature of adolescent rebellion, which the film ascribes to the influence of the devil), in case I seem to be exaggerating, consider this:

"I think we — that is, in Western society — feel that children are darling little angels who do

nothing wrong, and we have to be nice to them no matter what they do... We like to think that underneath any bad behavior is a heart of gold, when actually we know that underneath that vicious behavior is a black heart, a little demon. People can cope with their children all day long, put them to bed, kiss them goodnight, and then pick up one of my books and read about how these kids really are!"

This loathsome and dangerous nonsense comes from a writer whom I refuse to publicize further, interviewed in *Twilight Zone* magazine (presumably on the basis of letting him convict himself out of his own mouth). At least it's valuable in making explicit an attitude I suspect to be more widespread than is generally recognized — disturbing, surely, that it should go unnoticed while the tendency of some recent horror films to serve up women as victims was so widely deplored. There are far more books and films about children as monsters than children in peril. King has written several exceptions, of course, and there's *Claw*, the first published work of Norfolk horror novelist Jay Ramsay, a book about the vulnerability of children which, besides including a scene of cannibalism that makes the banned videos pale, raises the point that not only might it be difficult to distinguish the effects of a child-hungry evil on parents from the kind of parental behaviour our society seems to find acceptable, but that even those who notice mightn't intervene. (At least in *The Shining* one can reassure oneself that all this wouldn't happen if there were other people around.) The irony is that it's King's love of children and his dislike of fiction that treats them as evil which cripples *Pet Sematary*: when he has to present a child as a monster, it comes across as less deeply felt than the rest of the book. Bluntly, the zombie child of the last thirty pages — however intellectually horrifying the notion may be of a wholly innocent child possessed by an obscene homicidal spirit — belongs in a George Romero movie, not in this novel.

I thought there could have been a finale I would have found far more terrifying: that the child returns, unquestionably dead but not possessed, and the family have to adjust to this. Would that be far better left alone? It might well be a theme most horror writers would flinch from.

Clive Barker might not, in case you thought I'd forgotten about him. (ALL RIGHT, I'VE STOPPED GIVING AWAY THE PLOT OF *PET SEMATARY*. YOU CAN COME BACK NOW.) Barker is the author of the *Books of Blood*, just published in three volumes by Sphere Books and soon to be published in America by Berkeley. I wrote the introduction to them (and I don't want to repeat myself) but if any contemporary writer can lead the genre into new territory, he can — indeed, already has. Stephen King has characterized the horror genre as essentially reactionary and normative; so far as I'm concerned as a writer, he's wrong, and Barker clearly disagrees too. Barker is a writer who's prepared to go all the way, wherever the logic of his imagination may lead him. He seems to me to be the first true voice of the next generation of horror writers, and I greet the news of his first novel *The Damnation Game* with cheers and eagerness. I'm proud to have introduced him. The genre needs him.

**NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE
OCT 19th!**



SLEEP IS THE GATEWAY TO MANY FANTASIES... FANTASIES THAT APPEAR MOST REAL TO THE DREAMER! ANTON BELASCO WAS A DREAMER, HIS DREAMS OF EVIL AN ESCAPE FROM THE HUMDRUM REALITIES OF LIFE, UNTIL HE DISCOVERED THAT...

THE NIGHT HOLDS TERROR

VAN HELSING'S TERROR TALES



DURING THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY MATTHEW HOPKINS WAS THE MOST RUTHLESS OF WITCH-FINDERS...

BIND THIS DAUGHTER OF SATAN... SO THAT SHE MAY BE CLEANSED OF HER EVIL!



...HIS METHODS THE MOST CRUEL AND INHUMAN!

AIIEE
EEE!



THE VILLAGERS ARE ECSTATIC...



THE WITCHFINDER IS APPEARED...



...AND SO IS BELASCO!



THE MORNING FINDS BELASCO WAKING UP TO THE COLD, PLACID REALITIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS...

IF ONLY I HAD REALLY LIVED IN MATTHEW HOPKINS' DAY...



HIS MIND RECALLS THE DREAM WITH RELISH...

BUT TONIGHT I WILL DREAM OF EVEN GREATER THINGS... HAVE TO WAIT FOR... TONIGHT!



SCRIPT: TISE VAHIMAGI

ART: BRIAN LEWIS

AND SO, EVENTUALLY, NIGHT FALLS
AND WITH IT COMES A NEW DREAM
FOR BELASCO...

LET THIS
SERVE AS A
WARNING TO
ALL WHO DO NOT
FEAR THE GREAT
VLAD!

AAAYEEEE!

FOR VLAD THE
IMPALER, HUMAN
LIFE WAS BUT A MERE
TOY...

IT WAS NOT WITHOUT REASON
THE VLAD EARNED HIS
NAME... THE IMPALER!

SO END ALL
ENEMIES OF
VLAD THE
IMPALER...

AND WHEN BELASCO WOKE
FROM THE TRAUMATIC
EXPERIENCE... WHICH WAS
ALMOST REAL!

...ALMOST TOO REAL!

COULD IT BE? HAD A
FRAGMENT OF
BELASCO'S DREAM
FOLLOWED HIM... TO
THE DAYLIGHT HOURS
OF REALITY?

WHAAT?
MY HANDS
— THEY'RE
COVERED...
IN BLOOD!

NO! NO! IT
CAN'T BE...!
I WON'T LET IT!
IT'S ONLY A
DREAM!

ONCE ASLEEP
BELASCO HAD NO
CONTROL OVER HIS
DREAMS. AND SO
WHEN NIGHT CAME...



GO ON...
COSH 'ER!
COSH 'ER!

THE MUSTY
STREETS OF LATE
19th CENTURY
EDINBURGH WERE
A BREEDING
GROUND FOR ONE OF
THE MOST UNHOLY
TRADES... BODY
SNATCHING!



RIGHT,
BURKE!
'OLD 'ER
STEADY...

THE PARTNERSHIP OF BURKE
AND HARE WERE ABOUT
TO CLAIM ANOTHER VICTIM...



'MON HARE,
URRY UP!
COSH 'ER
...FORE SHE
WAKES THE
WHOLE CITY!

NAIEEEEE!!



THE GRISLY GOODS ARE
DELIVERED...

GOOD, GOOD—
BUT I HOPE SHE'S
A FRESH ONE...



FRESH
ALRIGHT, GUV!
SHE'S STILL
WARM!

AND WHEN A
NEAVOUS BELASCO
AWAKENED...



WHA...
WHERE...
WHERE AM
I...?

...HIS MIND ON THE
VERGE OF SNAPPING!



NO! IT
CAN'T BE
IT WASN'T
REAL! NOT
REAL!

BELASCO TRIES TO
ESCAPE VIA
EXCESS ALCOHOL...



NO... MORE...
DREAMS! NOW
...TOO DRUNK
...TO... DREAM...

DEEP IN A DRUNKEN
SLUMBER, BELASCO
IS NOW EVEN MORE
VULNERABLE TO WHAT
EVER HORRORS THE
NIGHT HAD IN STORE
FOR HIM...





A LONE FIGURE MADE ITS WAY THROUGH THE FOGGY AVENUES OF 1888 LONDON...



AFTER 'IM!
IT'S JACK THE
RIPPER!

BELASCO WAS AWAKENED BY A SUMMONS AT THE DOOR...



UUUH!
WHAT'S HAPPEN...?

AN UNBELIEVABLE SIGHT MET HIS EYES WHEN HE OPENED THE DOOR...



KILL 'IM!
KILL THE
RIPPER!

AND, BACK IN BELASCO'S REAL, MODERN DAY WORLD...



WHERE DO DREAMS
END AND REALITY BEGIN?
BELASCO TOOK HIS
DREAMS FAR TOO SERIOUSLY
...UNTIL THEY FINALLY
TOOK HIM! YOU COULD
ALMOST SAY HE DIED
IN HIS SLEEP!

HoH COLLECTOR'S ITEM BACK ISSUES



HoH7 45p
Twins of Evil strip, The Omen, Karloff, The Werewolf, Female Vampires, Devil's Men, Wonder Woman, etc.



HoH8 45p
Quatermass strip, King Kong, Jekyll & Hyde, Hammer Science Fiction films, Lee's NEW Dracula, etc....



HoH9 45p
Quatermass Pt 2; Carrie, Kong (1931), Seizure, Squirm, De Palma, Living Dead At Manchester.



HoH10 45p
Curse of the Werewolf strip, Close Encounters, Sentinel, Fu Manchu, Son of Kong, Shadowman.



HoH11 45p
Gorgon strip Part 1, Harryhausen speaks, Cushing AS Dracula, Wizards, Sinbad, Zoltan, Burnt Offerings.



HoH12 45p
Gorgon strip Part 2, Heretic, Blood City, Witchfinder General, 1933 Invisible Man, Face of Frankenstein, etc....



HoH13 45p
Plague of Zombies strip; Star Wars, Uncanny; Paris Festival; People That Time Forgot; Godzilla; Zombies.



HoH14 45p
Million Years BC strip; John Carradine; Romero on Martin + review; Dinosaur films; Mummy's feature; Paris Festival Films.



HoH15 45p
Mummy's Shroud strip, Dr. Moreau, Audrey Rose, Blue Sunshine, Fanatic, Mummy's feature, Frankenstein etc.



HoH16 45p
Special Star Wars issue, Rabid, Psycho storyboards, Homebodies, Carreras interview, New Shandor strip.



HoH17 45p
Vampire Circus strip, Carreras 2, Harryhausen storyboards, Cathy's Curse, Child, Hair, Grounds of Horror.



HoH18 45p
Frankenstein, Dracula and Werewolf strip, Cushing interview, History of Hammer I, Rattlers, Deep Red.



HoH19 45p
Reptile strip, Cushing filmography, History of Hammer II, Peking Man and Dinosaurs & Monster Birds.



HoH20 45p
Kronos strip, Incredible Melting Man and Savage Bees reviews, Vampire Hunters feature, Hammer III.



HoH21 45p
Chris Lee Speaks, Shandor strip, Wrightson, Bolton, Lewart, Warlords of Deep.



HoH22 45p
The Mummy strip, Sorcerers, Black Sunday, Roger Dicken FX, Hammer mummy films.



HoH23 45p
Quatermass 2 strip, Last Wave, Argento interview, 3-D films, Rosemary's Baby, The Shout.



HoH24 50p
Special all comic strip issue: Seven Golden Vampires, Quatermass Experiment ... 7 stories



HoH25 75p
Monster Club Pt 1: Bolton strip + 2pg colour poster; Slash Movies, Hammer, Video horror, classic gore, Bloch on Psycho 2.



HoH26 75p
Monster Club Pt 2: Barbara Steele; Lon Chaney by FJA; Lore, Lugosi, Pleasance, Karloff, Carradine, Critics & censors.



HoH27 75p
Brides of Dracula strip, horror video listing, Argento, Kolchak, Jaws 3-D, History of Hammer & Media Macabre.



SB1 55p
Jeff Hawke strip, The Making of Star Wars, Harry Harrison, Star Trek Writers, Trek episode guide, Things to Come.



SB2 55p
C-3PO interview, Spider-Man Movie, Ray Bradbury on Close Encounters Wizards, The Prisoner, Space Cruiser, Jeff Hawke.



SB3 55p
Han Solo interview, Quark, Star Trek: the movie, Superman, Logan's run, Close Encounters Superman poster, SF films.

Make all cheques/postal orders payable to **QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS** and send to:
QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND

SIX YEARS LATER: THE UNSEEN COVER FROM SEPT 78

The
original
NUMBER 24

BRIDES OF DRACULA

-the bull film
told in comics

CE
02105

HORROR

HALLS OF

PLAGUE OF THE
ZOMBIES

Doug Trumbull on
SPECIAL EFFECTS

THE REPTILE

