

Hallowe'en '94

Issue #7



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XENORAMA



The Journal of Heroes and Monsters



GIANT MONSTER ISSUE

starring:
 GODZILLA
 GAMERA
 REPTILICUS
 CRAB MONSTERS
 VIRAS
 GIANT SLUGS
 GUILALA
 JET JAGUAR
 and
 many,
 many
 more!





JIM
KAFFENBERGER

INTAKES:

"What's that? Sounds like somethin' comin' this way... sounds like somethin' big... oh, no... it's.... it's....**GODZILLA!**" And it is Godzilla coming your way, along with all of his various brethren - Gamera, Reptilicus, Guilala, the Cyclops, Rodan, Viras, Mothra, giant slugs and crabs and many many more. This issue will be out at the end of October, or the beginning of November, and that marks Godzilla's fortieth year on this planet. SO

what more appropriate way to celebrate than with a huge **GIANT** monster issue. I hope everyone enjoys it as much as I did. And if you don't, why, pray tell, are you reading this issue?

(Incidentally, the opening comes from the live version of Blue Oyster Cult's hit song "Godzilla" from around 1980 or so.)

So then, accordingly, this issue is dedicated to Haruo Nakajima (the original Godzilla), that kid who showed me **Famous Monsters of Filmland #114** (I don't remember his name any more, eh) and the editor of that issue, Forrest J Ackerman. I had to buy an issue of FM so I could order that all-japanese issue. I met Forry this year and got my picture taken with him and that issue of FM (#125 if you must know). So thanks a lot Forry, for all the inspiration you've been.

I can't believe just how many monster movies used to be produced back in "the good old days." And how much fun a lot of them are. It seems nowadays that people are soooo concerned with realistic effects, that the fun has gone out of pictures like these. So what if you can see the wire moving Godzilla's tail once in a while? Or that the Crab Monsters had human faces? Look past that. What do they really represent? What hopes and/or fears? That's where the fun is.

Of course, I am just preaching to the converted, but even with us, there are those who won't accept something because it's not what they know (such as TriStar's Godzilla movie). Just give it a chance, or don't talk about it at all. And a lot of this may be familiar to you readers, but I've never gotten to write about these movies, so here it is. Maybe a new idea or way of looking at a movie will come about because of this. I hope so.

Star Zone Princess Nikko was very pleased with the response she got from all you readers. "Thanks for the many comments and compliments." We will be seeing more of her in this issue. And, showboat that she is, she very happy about that as well.

And one more thing - **Xenorama** is really taking off, thanks to several mentions in other fanzines, so thanks to **Kaiju Review**, **G-Fan**, **CineRaider**, **Schlock** and lastly **FactSheet 5** for all their great plugs. I do take submissions, so please, send 'em in. It's less work for me, eh. I can't promise I'll use your article, but it doesn't hurt to try.

So enough about me - get crackin' and get into the xine! You don't wanna get stepped on, do you?

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THERE'S NEW EXCITEMENT
THIS WEEK ON THE 4:00 PM MOVIE!

"WAR OF THE MONSTERS"
WEEK!
Gigantic-Ferocious-Super Creatures! Terrorizing ALL!



MONDAY	"WAR OF THE MONSTERS"
TUESDAY	"GODZILLA VS. SMOG MONSTER"
WEDNESDAY	"RODAN"
THURSDAY	"YOG—MONSTER FROM SPACE"
FRIDAY	"FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD"

**THIS WEEK ON
THE 4:00 PM MOVIE**



GODZILLA RUINED MY MARRIAGE, SAYS FUMING BRIDE!

MARRIAGE lasted only eight hours, says angry bride Jana Giurek.

By REGGIE STARR
Special correspondent

Newlywed Jana Giurek says her marriage went on the rocks only eight hours after she took her vows — because of the movie monster Godzilla!

The 18-year-old said she and her husband Leon got in an argument on their wedding night in a hotel just outside Rockford, Ill., when *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* appeared on late night TV and her groom wanted to watch it.

She told a civil court judge that she wouldn't let Leon turn on the tube, so he left in a rage and never returned. When he sued for divorce four days after the wedding, she countersued claiming cruelty.



GROOM Leon Giurek preferred Godzilla to his new bride.

Groom DUMPS her — after she turns off TV monster flick



LATE night *Godzilla* flick turned newlywed couple's wedding night into a nightmare.



Jana and Leon, in happier days.

"Leon swore he loved me and would cherish me always, then he let some stupid Japanese horror film come between us," the sobbing secretary testified in court. "He humiliated me, he abandoned me. He never gave our marriage a chance."

Giurek, 29, refused to discuss his divorce action with reporters, but his attorney said his client was determined to end the marriage.

"He feels he should not be dictated to by his wife," the lawyer told reporters.

"He has no intention of put-

ting up with that. Leon saw what he was in for and got out as quick as he could."

According to court documents, Jana and Leon were married in Chicago in an elaborate Catholic ceremony on August 29. The couple traveled to Rockford for their honeymoon. They arrived at their hotel, checked into the bridal suite and ordered a room service dinner for two.

After a meal with two bottles of champagne, the couple prepared for bed.

But while Jana was putting the finishing touches on her wedding night outfit, Giurek started reading the television

guide — and *Godzilla* put the kabosh on romance. "I came out of the bathroom in my beautiful negligee and Leon was tickled pink because his favorite movie was going to be on the late show."

"He ordered coffee so he could stay awake. He forgot all about me. That jerk didn't even notice I was there."

Jana said she became furious and pulled the channel knob off the television set. Leon, equally angry, packed his

bags and left. "Now I want justice," angry Jana said. "I want him to repay me for the damage he has done to me emotionally. It's bad enough when your husband abandons you over another woman."

"This man left me for a TV monster on the most important night of my life and I want him to pay for his cruelty."

According to press accounts, the couple have been living apart since their disastrous honeymoon.

FLYING PIG SHOCKER!

JAKARTA, Indonesia — A shocked motorist reported to authorities that his car was pelted by manure pellets from a swarm of flying pigs.

Is this the war-cry that will save the world...



"DESTROY ALL MONSTERS"

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL



Soon "BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE" Last Tuesday

GODZILLA VS. MEGALON

The most maligned Godzilla movie of all time. "The worst." "The pits." "GODZILLA VS. THE STOCK FOOTAGE" it's been called. These and many other comments have been made about this movie. Well, in keeping with Xenorama's policy of keeping the negative comments to a minimum, you won't see me saying those things about this movie. Aside from that, I love this film!

Some background info on me when I saw this movie. I was 12 years old when this movie was released here in the states. I saw the trailer during a screening of **BAMBI** and had to see it again. HAD TO. I was so excited. I had only seen **Ultraman** a couple of times in my life, and to see that Godzilla's ally in this picture would be an Ultraman-type giant robot blew me away. Plus, the other monsters looked cool as well. And there were posters up, plus lobby cards. I was in monster heaven.

Now, you have to realize, giant monster movies in theaters were rare by the mid-seventies. Fortunately, due to the success of de Laurentis' **KING KONG** travesty, more theaters were showing this type of stuff. YAY! (Imagine owing a debt of gratitude to that piece of excrement...) But I was happy. And when it finally made it's way into the Trojan Theater in Longmont, several of my friends and I were there to watch Godzilla triumph over evil once again.

The story is familiar by now. The Seatopians are upset by the topsiders atomic testing. They steal a robot (Jet Jaguar) and release Megalon to destroy the world. The good guys get control of Jet Jaguar and send him to get Godzilla from Monster Island. While the big "G" is swimming toward Tokyo, Jet Jaguar flies on ahead to battle Megalon. He uses here-to-fore unknown powers to grow to giant size and starts beating on Megalon. This works until the giant insect monster's ally Gigan shows up. Knowing that ol' Megalon couldn't stand up to Godzilla on his own, the Seatopians wisely called on Gigan, who starred in the previous film, **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN/GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND**, which hadn't been released to american audiences yet [because it was the worst, eh] but had been seen in various pictures in **Famous Monsters**. The amusing battle rages for a while, and everything ends when Jet Jaguar and Godzilla send the two invading beasts back to their respective haunts. Jet Jaguar shakes Godzilla's hand and returns to his original size.

Sure, it's a silly movie. But it's a fun movie. It's never dull and the action just sweeps you along. Adding to that are the neat monsters, and you got a brief cameo of Rodan, Angilas and Mothra at the beginning made it seem like there were lots of monsters running around. Of course, this was all stock footage, but back then I didn't know that. The movie has a lot of stock shots in it, from **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS**, **MONSTER ZERO**, **GHIDRAH**, **THE THREE HEADED MONSTER** and even **WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS**. But it isn't used as much as in **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN**, or as obviously. Godzilla himself doesn't appear in the stock footage much at all. Now let's discuss the four starring roles.

First off, Godzilla (well, duh): this is probably the second worst suit ever made for him. It is only surpassed by the hideous creation in **SON OF GODZILLA**. Here he has a pushed in face, resembling that of an ape-type thing. The rest of the suit is fine, the face just ruins it. And Toho used this face for the next two movies as well. Bleah. His atomic ray is pretty well done, although it doesn't appear to be as incendiary as it had been in the past. Or maybe because his foes are tougher they don't burn as well. His personality comes out well- brave, loyal and playful. He doesn't let Jet Jaguar get beheaded by Gigan.

Megalon is an awesome creation. A total weapon of destruction, it looks the part. Equipped with Ghidrah-like death rays (hmm, what was the reason for that?) and massive red atomic spit wads, it just levels Tokyo and anything in it's way. It can fly (albeit unconvincingly) and drill through the earth. Megalon also gets to appear in the best effects sequence in the movie, the destruction of the dam. This is an excellent scene, right down to the miniatures and high-speed photography. Just amazing. The

producers of **SUPERMAN** (1978) should have watched this for their dam sequence. It would have helped, eh. I like Megalon so much I bought the Bandai doll a couple years ago and it has a proud spot out in the living room (a surefire conversation piece).

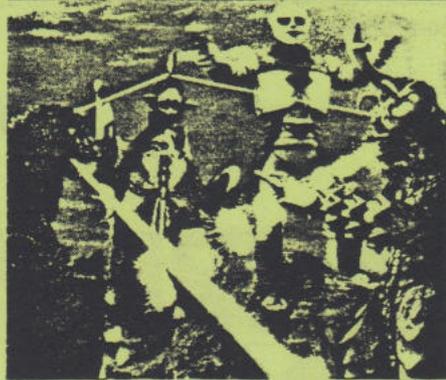
Megalon's ally Gigan is one of my least favorite *katju* due to his awful movie, but at least he looks pretty neat. It's that silly buzz saw in his stomach that I find hard to, er, stomach. I don't recall right away if he uses it in this movie - I don't think so. But it is a neat looking critter. I never thought he was very bright, though. I wouldn't have come back to Earth if I'd taken a beating like the one Gigan took in the previous movie...

And now, the great Jet Jaguar. I realize I am probably the only person in America who likes this neat creation. Well, that makes me unique. I had only ever seen Ultraman a few times, and wasn't able to rent **INFRA-MAN** yet, so this had to do. And he fit the bill well. He grew giant, didn't really look like a robot too much (no, I don't really care for the **Power Rangers** giant robot, or any like that). He didn't have the neat powers that Ultraman had, but that didn't matter. He just kicked butt. Until he was ganged up on, of course. I read in a book by Don Glut years ago that he was originally to be called the Red Baron, but couldn't be because of the WWI flying ace. Now this made no sense to me at all. I found out years later that there was another robot show in Japan called **Red Baron**, or something close to that. Now that makes sense.

As mentioned, this movie was released directly after the **KING KONG** remake. The ad campaign reflected it. The poster had the titular monsters placed on the world trade center towers. It's a great poster. There were also little four page comic book type promos that apparently were issued to theaters a week or two before the movie was released (none in Colorado, of course). These featured pretty decent artwork, a simplification of the story and some overly dramatic prose. It also misidentifies Jet Jaguar as "Robotman" and Gigan as "the fiendish Borodan (?)". I know the trailer called Jet Jaguar Robotman as well. I like the true name much better. (For those of you who are interested in seeing this piece of Godzilla history, I am making full color copies laser copies available for \$7.00 -cheap!- for such a rarity.)

I realize that I probably haven't changed anybody's mind about this movie. I felt it had been bad-mouthed for so long that somebody needed to stick up for it. So Damon Foster did in **Oriental Cinema #2**. Oh well. At least two of us like the movie. And if you showed it to any kids, they would be fascinated. And that's what Godzilla does best - fascinates us all.

MONSTER AGAINST MONSTER
FOR THE LOST CONTINENT OF MU!



GODZILLA VS.
MEGALON

IN COLOR-WIDESCREEN
DISTRIBUTED BY CINEMA SHARES INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION CORP.

Wile E. Coyote is not the Anti-Christ

by Len Mihalovich

This was one of my all time favorite lines from "Cheers". Have you ever been in a restaurant or bar and listened in on the conversations going on at the next table? Often I discover it's far more interesting than anything going on at my own table. I hope you'll enjoy eavesdropping with me for a few moments...

Many of you out there know everything there is to know about the television show Land of the Giants. It was a short lived series that lasted 51 episodes. Producer Irwin Allen was "on a roll" at the time. He was the proud Papa of such TV shows as Lost in Space, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, the Time Tunnel, and Land of the Giants.

I'm not supposed to talk about how Irwin Allen ran all of the shows on a low budget and many of the props could be seen interchangeably on many of these programs (so I won't tell you about that). What I am here to talk about is a whole different universe that existed outside of those 51 episodes that we all know and love.

Yes, I was once like you. I couldn't get enough of this program. I watched all the episodes over and over, trying to glean a new hidden meaning from each of them. After a while there were no longer any parts of the plot that I hadn't picked up on. It was time for me to move on to a higher plane of existence.

Books! That's right there are three paperbacks out there with new Land of the Giants stories. They exist somewhat outside what we're used to. The Spindrift flies, the Giants talk, and the communism overtones aren't there.

Without spoiling anything for you die hard collectors... Much like in the TV show the Spindrift is engulfed by a strange space warp. Steve and Dan however land the ship (without crashing) in a field. Naturally they radio for help. Mistake #1...The Giants have a sophisticated science of transportation and communication that completely unravels upon encountering radio waves. Opps, does this stop the little people, nope. They fly around using the radio hoping to find a way home. The Giants in this world however aren't stuck in the 60's (or governed by Irwin Allen's budget). They use homing missiles and numerous other methods to intercept the Spindrift.

All in all for you Giants junkies the books are a great source of new entertainment. However, it's gonna cost ya! At last look the books are very hard to find (I still haven't obtained the third sacred tome). Convention dealers that do have them, haven't exactly been sympathetic with their pricing either.

Valerie in Giantland is a novel by Deanna Lund (Valerie Scott on the show). She picks up where the show leaves off and lets us take a peek at her diary. I'd like to think that this is the direction the series would have taken, were it not cancelled. This novel currently can only be purchased through Deanna's fan Club (friends of Deanna Lund).

Lastly a Land of the Giants movie is being discussed. An all new 90's update of a hit TV series. Generally these adaptations don't do very well. It was a good show, let's not ruin it with a bad movie...

THANKS FOR LISTENING

**VALERIE in
GIANTLAND**

Haruo Nakajima * Shoichi Hirose * Ken Satsuma
The Three Giant Monster Actors--The Greatest Battle in the Magazine World

(An interview translated from
 VS BIOLLANTE)

held during the campaign for GODZILLA



Nakajima: Long time, no see. How are you?
Hirose: Long time to see you too, Naka-chan.
Satsuma: I'm sorry I haven't had an opportunity to see you for a while.
Interviewer: Thank you all for gathering here today.
Nakajima: When I met you (pointing to interviewer) for UCHUSEN last time, you were in the Godzillan suit for the ad campaign and panting like a dog.
Satsuma: Have you been in a Godzillan? No wonder you know so much about it.
Interviewer: I remember it and it makes me flush to the ears. Well now, I'd like you to talk about episodes you have experienced while playing Godzillan and the other monsters. Before all, how did you feel, Mr. Nakajima, when you were casted to play Godzillan for the first time? Did you have any reluctance? They say even the production staff had no idea what they were coming up with.
Nakajima: Well, they gave me the script and said, "Here, this is it." But they didn't have the monster. When they finished construction of the suit, I knew what it looked like, but I still had to think up how I would move in it. If only there was something I could have used as a reference.....the only help was the film of KING KONG which the Old Man (Eiji Tsuburaya) had. He showed the movie to me twice to stir my initiative and imagination, and it did help. But then, I was not able to move properly in the suit because it was made of plastic.
Satsuma: How did you operate the mouth?
Nakajima: By wire, using bicycle handles.
Satsuma: Wasn't it gas activated?
Nakajima: It became radio-controlled, maybe after the second Godzillan film.
Satsuma: Was it? I had a tough time because of the gas.
Interviewer: I hear that Mr. Katsumi Tezuka was casted for Godzillan first.
Nakajima: That's not true. He was my assistant, an apprentice. We decided to let him play the scene of the destruction of the National Diet, but he fell flat and hit his jaw, and everything turned out to be no good. So, "After all, I have to do it all!" (laugh) Once he played Godzillan for footage in the water. It happened to be my day off and I had gone fishing. But the Old Man was whimsical and suddenly he proclaimed that he wanted to do some shooting that day. Tezuka then lived in the Toho dormitory and was handy, so he was called in and donned the Godzillan suit. I heard that an electrical wire was cut and fell into the pool, electrocuting him.
Hirose: The fact is that Naka-chan and I were planned for Godzillan, but Tezuka asked the producer, Tomoyuki Tanaka, to cast him for the role. I was not very eager to do the first monster anyway.
Nakajima: Tezuka played Angilas in the second feature.
Interviewer: Did you rehearse when you came into the shooting studio?
Nakajima: Yes. There was no action adviser for the monsters. Instead, the Old Man drew a precise storyboard and that instructed us all. We would rehearse on the set without the suits, but in many cases the first time we did anything was during the shooting. That's why I threw Tezuka in the Angilas suit down into the moat and he ended up swallowing a helluva lot of water while shooting the fight at Osaka Castle.
Hirose: It is tough to do a scene with water. I had to wear weights all over my body for the scene in which I swam through the water in KING KONG VS GODZILLA because the suit would float without them.
Nakajima: When I did the "water stuff", it was during the winter. I wore a wet suit, and then the monster suit. During breaks, they built a wood fire to warm us, but if I may say so, it was better not to warm up during a break.
Hirose: Once you get warm, you become too reluctant to get cold again.
Nakajima: (pointing to Satsuma) You were in the water only during summer, so you didn't mind, did you?
Satsuma: No, that's right.



Interviewer: There was filming for the last scene when the weather got cooler. Did you need a wet suit then?
Satsuma: No. No way.

Nakajima: It was a mild winter, so he wouldn't have needed it. I had to don scuba gear to do the Godzillan movies, so I went to learn it, and I have been practicing it for 30 years. For a scene where Godzillan comes out of the water, we would set a platform under the water with Godzillan standing on it, and pull it up with a vehicle called the 'Carry', which was something like an over-sized jeep, and Godzillan would surface in front of the camera and come out of the water. I couldn't hear the cue, so they tied a rope around my leg, and when they pulled it, it meant the start of shooting. While I was waiting, I was underwater with the mouthpiece in my mouth and an oxygen tank inside the suit as well as myself. So I had to learn how to scuba.

Satsuma: I also had a mouthpiece in my mouth for the new film in the scene where Godzillan falls forward. But the neck looked bulgy, so we decided that I would just hold my breath.

Nakajima: For a scene where I just fell into the water, I used to wear no apparatus either. There was a small pool of 25 meters long where the carpenters' workshop is now. There we shot scenes like the one in which Godzillan tumbles into the water after the battle with the caterpillar Mothras, or the high-dive in the Ebirah movie. I used no breathing device in those scenes. And I had to crash through ice. Who needs anything when you just dive?

Satsuma: Doesn't he sound a little hard on me?

Hirose: We also had nothing when we rolled into the water in KING KONG VS GODZILLA. He fell on top of me and I swallowed a lot of water. But we had gone out of the frame, and it wasn't right, so they wanted another take.

Satsuma: I heard that from Director Kawakita while we talked during a taxi ride. He was there watching the shooting, and he told me that Godzillan and King Kong had been pushed off the cliff and gone rolling down into the water. He told me he had thought, "What a cruel product they are making here." (laugh)

Nakajima: Mr. Kawakita was in the effects crew doing composite work, and he used to come to the shooting site to take a look and seemed very much interested.



Interviewer: Mr. Hirose, you played King Kong in KK vs G. Had you asked Mr. Nakajima how to play a monster?

Hirose: No. He was an experienced monster player. I heard being in a suit was tough, but nothing much else.

Interviewer: Did you talk to each other on how you were going to do a fight scene?

Nakajima: I've made it my personal rule to forget things like that once I'm out of the studio. Besides, you can't tell anything before you actually are in the suit. You have to be in the suit and try moving in it to decide what's to be done. We rehearsed roughly, but as I said, the first we tried anything was for the shooting.

Hirose: That worked because we had a feel for each other. Before the shooting, the Old Man said to "Go to a zoo and see how they move!" which I didn't. I later told him that I went and learned a lot, though. (laugh)

Nakajima: I used to go there at least two weeks prior to the shooting.

Hirose: Once the shooting started, we had to work on it for at least 70 days.

Nakajima: I would convince myself that I'd have to be in the suit for the three months to come.

Hirose: You were a veteran, so you got used to it.

Interviewer: How was it for you in the suit for the first time?

Hirose: It was easy to move in and light. But they sewed the back of the suit shut, so putting it on and getting out was real trouble. And in the scene of the fight in the forest, the suit caught fire on the back. They cried, "Solomon (Mr. Hirose's nickname), you're on fire! Fire!" But what could I have done myself? (laugh)

Interviewer: Sounds like a matter of life and death!

Hirose: The suit had holes in the eyes, and in the scene with the lightning, sparks came in through them.

Interviewer: In that scene, lightning is superimposed, but was it also discharged on the set?

Hirose: Yes. And while I was doing a fight scene, parts of the suit, like the butt, would come torn open. I wore gloves in those fight scenes, but usually I held sticks which were attached to dummy hands. I had to climb up the Diet Building with them. I climbed it only using my body from the waist down. And then they told me to destroy the Hall with the fake hands. "Solomon, smash it!" they yelled, but it was impossible. The miniature was made out of hard plaster.

Interviewer: They built it sturdily because Kong was to mount it, maybe.

Hirose: The scene I liked was where Kong did cartwheels while holding Godzilla's tail. I wondered if I could do it well. I

tried without worrying about the result, and I made it good. But only seconds of the footage which they thought were good were put in the film and the rest was gone.

Nakajima: The Old Man was a master editor. When he found something wrong in the footage, he would cut it out.

Hirose: Sure, he was a master. He was great.

Interviewer: In other scenes, you had to throw or swing Godzilla around. Weren't those scenes hard? Godzilla must have been heavy, even without anyone inside it.

Nakajima: I weighed more than 75 kg back then and the suit was about 70 to 80 kg. But the suit had to be heavy, otherwise the monster itself wouldn't have looked heavy.

Hirose: But when you moved around in it, it was less hard than you may think. Actually, the toughest part was when you had to wait still in the suit. To shoot the scene where Kong was drugged to sleep, I had to stay in the suit for more than three hours straight. Sweat came pouring out like a flood and it got in my eyes too. When I came out of the suit, I was pale all over.

Interviewer: Putting on and taking off the suit cost time, so they had you stay in it, I think.

Hirose: But that was the only time when the director of the studio gave us a bonus.

Nakajima: They said the director wanted to see me. I wondered what he wanted to see me for. I couldn't remember making any bummers. Anyway, I went to him and he said, "This extra pay is for you."

Hirose: He gave us fifty grand besides the negotiated fee.

Satsuma: Wasn't fifty thousand yen back then very much?

Interviewer: KK vs G is the highest grossing and most attended film of the series.

Satsuma: By the way, who was in charge of the Godzilla suit...you know...putting on and taking off the suit, and things like that?

Nakajima: It was Cho-san (Eizou Sekine).

Satsuma: It is good to have the one responsible for the construction of the suit. For me, young people like assistant directors Chiba or Kamiya worked hard on it, though.

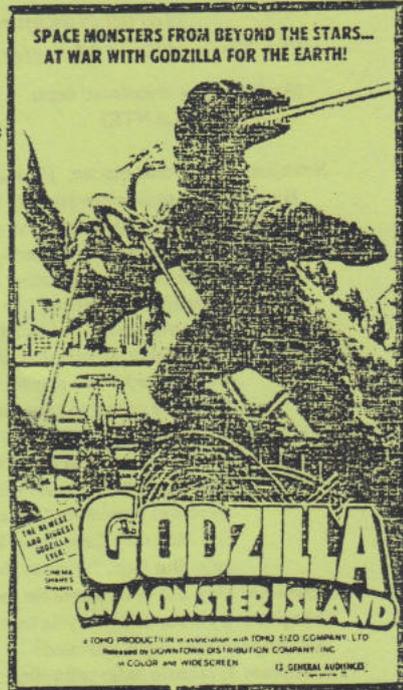
Interviewer: What followed in the Nakajima vs Hirose history of monster confrontation was the fight between Godzilla and King Ghidorah in GHIDRAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and then MONSTER ZERO.

Hirose: Unlike the case with Kong, I was in the suit for a long time. Maybe twelve or thirteen days, I think.

Interviewer: Ghidorah doesn't have arms, does it?

Hirose: There was a bar in the suit. I would hold onto it and walk half-bending. But that position was really exhausting. Besides, the costume weighed substantially...about 80 kg. It had three heads, two tails, and two wings, and each of them was hung and controlled by wires. So they had to build the suit heavy, otherwise it would have been swung around. But Ghidorah didn't have much time in those films.

Interviewer: There were spectacles in them such as the scene with Godzilla and Rodan. Did you plan the action scenes by yourselves?



Nakajima: Yes. All the Old Man would say was, "OK. We are shooting some action scenes now." He didn't instruct actors very much, yet that made him more frightening. If you have a nagging director, you just have to play as he nags. But when you are working for a director who just stares at your acting, it is kind of scary.

Hirose: If he thinks you are no good, you get the heave-ho...as I did. (laugh)

Nakajima: Hollywood once asked me to come over for a year. But I worked for three months, then took a break for two months, and then moved on to another project. That was my pace for work in those days.

Interviewer: Toho made two or three SFX movies a year back then. A Godzilla feature and a movie with new monsters and/or sci-fi stuff.

Hirose: Special effects films always filled up Toho's cash box with money.

Nakajima: I went to talk with the Old Man about the offer, and he said, "We can't make a movie without you...no way!" so I didn't go.

Hirose: On the other hand, I was to have played such parts as Sanda after Ghidorah, but I had been offered another movie role, so I told the Old Man, "I'm really sorry, but I have another film where I can show my face." And that made him angry. Ever since then, all the monster parts were given to Hiroshi Sekida. On top of it, I had to wear a mask in the film, so my face never was able to be seen!

* * *

Hirose: I guess Sekida worked longest with you, Naka-chan?

Nakajima: Yeah, he had strength.

Interviewer: He played a considerable number of monsters such as Sanda in SANDA VS GAILAH, Epira in GODZILLA VS THE SEA MONSTER, Gorosaurus in KING KONG ESCAPES, Angilas in DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, Gaborah in GODZILLAS REVENGE, etc.

Nakajima: There were many people like guys from action advising companies besides.

Interviewer: Koji Furuhashi, who played the Frankenstein monster, was not an actor, right?

Nakajima: They said he was picked up because he looked like the Frankenstein monster (laugh). But he was an amateur as an actor, so I instructed him how to act in the scenes. He was mild-mannered, listened to me earnestly and obediently, and worked very hard. He was quite a gentleman. When we were shooting this film, there was a scene in which Baragon had to roll down the cliff. The plaster surface of the set was uneven and rough and seemed dangerous, so I wore a Kendo mask, then put on the suit, and went rolling down the set of the cliff.

Interviewer: Would it be right to say that Mr. Satsuma is the last to have played Mr. Nakajima's foes?

Satsuma: It is. I was the monsters up to GODZILLA VS GIGAN in which Mr. Nakajima played Godzilla for the last time.

Interviewer: In those days, how did the experienced Mr. Nakajima and Hirose appear to be to you?

Satsuma: Even before I took the part in GODZILLA VS HEDORAH, I had been with Toho, so I had known both Mr. Nakajima and Mr. Hirose. If I hadn't, he would have looked dreadful to me, for he was the man who had been in Godzilla for so long a time. He looks hard to deal with to strangers.

Nakajima: Ha, ha. Am I dreadful?

Satsuma: In that sense. I was bold...and we got along with each other. Maybe he tried and got along with me, that is.

Nakajima: Ha, ha, ha.

Interviewer: How do you feel about Mr. Hirose?

Satsuma: Now, I feel free to call him Mr. Solomon, but back in those days, he had a terrible build, and he used to press a barbell in the dressing room. He WAS King Kong. (laugh) When I entered the room, I wondered who it could be pumping the iron there, and it was him, Mr. Solomon.

Nakajima: What's happened to the barbell?

Satsuma: It's still there. I used it while filming GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE.

Interviewer: Well, the Toho traditional barbell has helped actors up to GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE.

Hirose: They used to have other weightlifting equipment and a sandbag too.

Satsuma: I saw GODZILLA VS HEDORAH and GODZILLA VS GIGAN on video again for this interview...they were interesting.

Interviewer: Frankly, GODZILLA VS HEDORAH was received unfavorably. They said the movie was making a fool of Godzilla, like to have him fly. These days, however, the film is acclaimed as a work with a solid theme and power to appeal the theme to society. It took ten years for the film to be estimated rightly.

Nakajima: I didn't know that was what the movie was about.

Satsuma: The Godzilla in that time was a light one, daring Hedorah to fight with arms held up, or pounding on his chest like a gorilla. He started to act his emotions out, but it didn't look to be foolish, maybe thanks to Mr. Nakajima's acting capability.

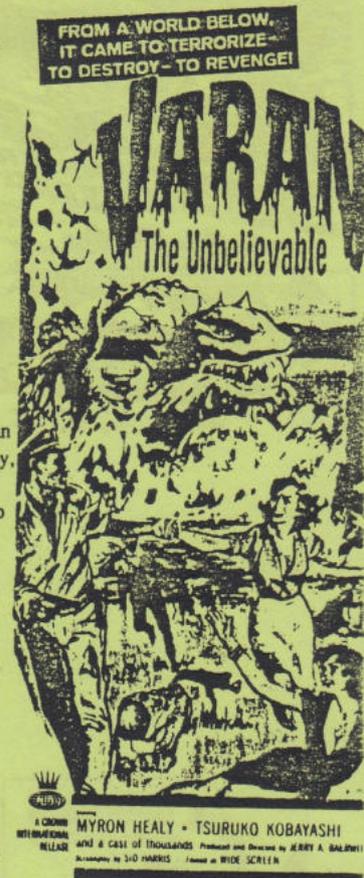
Interviewer: What do you say to your acting as Hedorah, your debut?

Satsuma: I wonder if I can call it "acting". (laugh) I talk big about it now, though. (laugh) The suit was heavy, and I couldn't move in it. So I just swung the arms quickly when Godzilla came at me, or walked slow as though crawling. I just moved this part of my body now, and that part next. I was not able to act with the whole of my body in my mind at that time.

Interviewer: I think that somehow made the movement of Hedorah uncanny.

Satsuma: Gigan had arms and legs specifically, and was easier to move in. You can do moves like brandishing the huge claws. You can think of how to play in a suit like that. Speaking of Mr. Nakajima, his Godzilla left with Angilas after they beat the enemies, but I noticed his shoulders never went evenly without swaying up and down.

Interviewer: After playing the opponent monsters, the time came for Mr. Satsuma to play Godzilla. Did you see GODZILLA



1984, where Mr. Satsuma played the role, Mr. Nakajima?

Nakajima: I did.

Interviewer: What did you think of Mr. Satsuma's performance as Godzilla?

Nakajima: I thought it was fine. (laugh)

Satsuma: Doesn't that sound a little spiritless? (laugh) Couldn't you make it more enthusiastic?

Nakajima: Well, I thought it was fine. (laugh) After all, you had something to take after, unlike in my case. It must have been easier. (laugh)

Satsuma: It was tougher, actually, because of that. There is this "Way of Godzilla" which you established as a tradition over more than a dozen years. I have to uphold it without distorting it. It makes you feel like you're being pressured.

Nakajima: Is it like that?

Satsuma: It is like that! (laugh)

Nakajima: You start acting at the cue and they roll the camera. When 'cut' is called out, what do you do?

Satsuma: I don't stop acting at once.

Nakajima: You must not. The Old Man used to expect some footage he could use there. Though he called 'cut', he had the camera still rolling. He thought something could be there. And something was there.

Satsuma: In that sense, Mr. Kawakita did his filming in Mr. Tsuburaya's spirit of filmmaking. Even if he had a sequence shot OK, he made the camera roll again and again. Filming the same scene over and over, he made changes here and there every time. The scene had been shot OK, but he wondered if he could get something different out of the actors, so he tried the scene again. He is different from Mr. Tsuburaya, but I think his spirit is evident in Mr. Kawakita. But that wound up exhausting Eguchi, the cameraman, above anybody.

Interviewer: Succeeding Teizou Toshimitsu, Mr. Nobiyuki Yasamaru is in charge of building the Godzilla suits. The word has it that Mr. Yasamaru made the suits heavy and tough to move in deliberately so that the actor was not able to act normally inside, thus preventing Godzilla from moving in a way that a normal human does. What do you say to a suit which was built heavy and hard to move in on purpose, Mr. Nakajima?

Nakajima: Sounds like Yasamaru. It is true that Godzilla is supposed to have been originally a dinosaur, so he couldn't move like a man usually does. But when strange moves and/or fights with another monster are demanded, the suit has got to be easy to act in or it'll be a lot of trouble. Anyway, when I just walked, I bent my arms so that they looked shorter.

Satsuma: That's why, they say, that Yasamaru made a compromise for this time around. This time, Godzilla didn't have to wrestle with Biollante, but he would get attacked by the vines and have to defend/counterattack in return, so that means Godzilla had to do all of the acting on his own. Besides, we had a lot of scenes in the sea. The suit had to be a little easier to move in. As for acting as Godzilla this time, I tried to keep some part of the body moving all the time such as the wrists. And there was no move of the Japanese noh dance (moving shoulders as level as possible without bobbing up and down) this time. I personally think that a player, to do a monster, essentially has to possess three qualities. Firstly and most naturally, physical strength, followed by acting skill. And lastly, endurance, or power of will. With any of them missing, there can't be a good monster player. I call them the three powers.

Hirose: You have said something very good. You are absolutely right about that.

Interviewer: Don't you think the fans grow less and less objective as they are given more and more chances to get close to the actors in the suits? They may see Mr. Satsuma fighting with Biollante, not Godzilla and Biollante. And when Godzilla gets stabbed in the shoulder or hand, they can think, "Oh, I hope Satsuma didn't feel much pain from that!"

Satsuma: Ha, ha. Can they?

Interviewer: Anyway, I think this film was made by Godzilla lovers, which has made it very fresh.

Nakajima: I say I'm the monster of the Old Man's time. When he died, I lost the will to go on with it, but directors Arikawa and Nakano told me that nobody else could do it and persuaded me into playing Gezora (SPACE AMOeba) and two other Godzillas, but then I just quit.

Satsuma: Following Mr. Nakajima, I now play Godzilla, the tradition, as the direct successor. Although, actually it's not direct.

Interviewer: In effect, actors like Shinji Takagi, Isao ?, and Tohru Kawai have played Godzilla.

Satsuma: Yes, but I played the new Godzilla with the conviction that I'm to succeed Mr. Nakajima as Godzilla because I had collaborated with him in a Godzilla film.

Hirose: You are the one to succeed him. Who else can play Godzilla anyway?

Nakajima: Whatever, no one will break my record! (laugh)

Satsuma: I won't dare. (laugh)

Hirose: That's because they don't produce this kind of movie as much as they used to.

Satsuma: By the way, which one of the films you were in is your favorite?

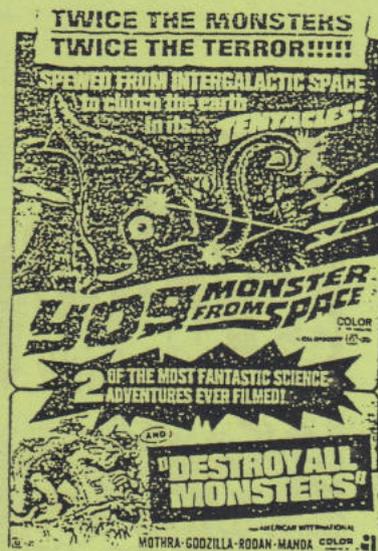
Nakajima: Everybody asks me that in every interview. The answer is every one of them.

Satsuma: I know that. But I'm asking you as an actor. Which one brought you the greatest satisfaction as an actor?

Nakajima: The first Godzilla and SANDA VS GAILAH. Especially, when I finished playing the part of Gailah, I felt complete. Besides, that was when they took a cast of my face.

Interviewer: Was Gailah made from your life mask?

Nakajima: Yes. They took a cast of the face of Godzilla too. Every time they built a Godzilla suit, the face was different than the one before. So the Old Man had them keep the cast of the face. But they lost it, so the suit came up with yet another face after all.



Interviewer: Did you play anything else unusual?

Nakajima: Well, once I played the Invisible Man. I was in place of the actor Seizaburo Kawatsu, smearing my face black.

Interviewer: The scene in which the Invisible Man becomes invisible, I guess. Did you stand in for the scene?

Nakajima: Yes. The background was black for the later effect composition. So the more you smear your face black, the more of you goes.

Interviewer: It was not unusual that an SFX movie had a tie-in plug or two. You know, the prominently placed billboards on the miniature buildings and things like that.

Nakajima: The Old Man was strict about those too. He always made sure that the placement of the billboard or the lettering was right. He kept a thorough check on those matters.

Interviewer: I understand that you incessantly kept yourselves exercised. I hear there used to be an exercise hall or a gym in the studio.

Nakajima: And besides, I'd been doing judo.

Hirose: Sekita and me...karate.

Interviewer: Mr. Satsuma was with Mifune Productions studying acting, right?

Satsuma: Right. I had been with the Jigen-Ryu School.

Interviewer: Didn't you, Mr. Nakajima and Mr. Hirose, exercise together?

Nakajima: That never happened. I used to go to the Kodo-kan Hall (Japanese Center of Jujitsu).

Interviewer: Do you have something to say about an ad campaign for a Godzilla movie?

Nakajima: In the early days, the Old Man wanted the monster to be kept as a monster, without revealing someone was in a suit. Actually, he claimed that my name shouldn't be credited. He wanted to keep Godzilla from people's eyes. You know, if you want to see Godzilla, just come to the theater.

Hirose: Yeah, so I have no memory of ever having been in an ad campaign.

Nakajima: So Godzilla came to the public shortly after he was demanded to act funny, do comical moves. Maybe after the fourth or fifth piece.

Satsuma: I've been to many places to advertise GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE, but when I was on the campaign for GODZILLA VS HEDORAH, I was just a greenhorn. When we were in Nagoya, I just followed behind Mr. Nakajima. I was always bewildered. Do you remember when we got drunk after an attraction show there, when we dallied through the streets. You became a Godzilla.

Nakajima: Don't remember. (laugh)

Satsuma: You shouldered through people. Some bumped against you, but you were calm and just went on.

Nakajima: When I did a show in a pavillion in the Osaka Expo, it was emceed by a famous comedian, and featuring Godzilla and Daiei's Gamera. The stage was a very large one. Godzilla and Gamera were to enter from each side of the stage, do some fighting in the middle, and then exit. It had been decided that we were to do three such shows a day.

But the man to be in the Gamera suit, who was from a professional stunt club, complained that he couldn't manage to make it to the center of the stage for the suit was too heavy and tough. They talked with him and he agreed to do one show in the early evening. It was good for me. (laugh) I was able to do three shows, yet I only had to do one a day.

Interviewer: How was the show to go?

Nakajima: I made the scheme for the show. I thought I needed to flatter Gamera first, so Godzilla was to be beaten by Gamera in the early part of the show. In the latter half, the table was to be turned on Gamera. The stage was so large that I came backstage to find the toenails of Godzilla half worn off. (laugh)

Satsuma: I say, you can't be in a monster suit without the three powers which I told you of. Every one of them is essential. You are all alone in the suit too.

Nakajima: Basically, to be an actor is a battle with solitude.

Hirose: Once, there was a guy who started crying for help in a suit, remember? The Old Man got pretty angry to see it, though he seldom got angry with actors.

Nakajima: It's just outrageous to cry for help like that.

Satsuma: He must have needed a stronger power of the will.

Hirose: Once you are on a job, you are not there for the money. You do it because you like it.

Nakajima: Someone who cries that he can't do this or that or for help is the last man to be allowed to be called an actor. You are asked for something difficult and you say, "Well, let's do it." That's an actor. Directors know that you are human so they won't ask you for something impossible. Some things may be too difficult for usual people, but we do those difficult things day by day. We are not supposed to say, "I can't do it." It's got to be, "Let's do it." If you don't do it, just quit being an actor. What about the scene in SEVEN SAMURAI where the actor falls from the horse head first? If he had refused to do it, the film wouldn't have been completed.

Hirose: I hear these days that actors feel free to refuse a scene. Back in those days, everybody had guts.

Interviewer: Once you take a role, you do anything.

Nakajima: Yeah. When in Godzilla, if the Old Man told me to do something, I said I would do it and I did it.

Hirose: In shooting SEVEN SAMURAI, I had to remain standing in the rain and frosted mud for almost an hour, or jump into a lake in place of Mifune in the middle of winter. The pool of water was terribly cold.

Interviewer: You know, Yusaku Matsuda played in THE BLACK RAIN knowing that he had cancer. He passed away after he saw the completion of the film.

Nakajima: It is absolutely respectable. It is literally an actor to die for a film.

Hirose: Anyway, those monster movies are good memories. The other day I watched KING KONG VS GODZILLA on tv and it was fun! There's little monster stuff these days, but I hope they can manage to keep going on with Godzilla.

Interviewer: "Godzilla Forever" is the feeling. Well, I'd like to thank you for joining this gathering of the three monsters, first in this century. I hope that Mr. Satsuma will play Godzilla as an actor with guts. And now I end this interview with my best wishes for the Godzilla series and Toho SFX films in the future.



SHELL GAME: THE GAMERA STORY

By David McRobie

Success of any kind breeds imitation. In 1965, due to the overwhelming popularity of Toho's GODZILLA films, rival studio Daiei decided the world was ready for another giant monster. They released DAI KAIJU GAMERA (GIANT MONSTER GAMERA) on an unsuspecting public. The results were favorable enough to spawn seven more sequels in fifteen years, plus tons of toys, books, posters and various other paraphernalia

Plotwise, DAI KAIJU GAMERA was standard giant-monster-on-the-loose fair. Gamera, a prehistoric turtle, is released by an atomic explosion. He then naturally attacks that monster magnet city, Tokyo. The world is saved when he is trapped into a rocket and sent to Mars. Gee, did they think the film was going to be successful and that they could make sequels? This way, they didn't have to figure out a way to bring Gamera back from the dead.

There are many similarities between this and the first Godzilla film (GOJIRA, 1954). Both movies were filmed in glorious black and white. Daiei had a choice. In 1956 they released UCHUJIN TOKYO NI ARAWARU (SPACEMEN APPEAR IN TOKYO [AIP-TV title: WARNING FROM SPACE]) in full color. Some of the scenes of Gamera's attack on Tokyo are also very similar to scenes in GOJIRA. The main difference is Gamera is left alive at the end of the movie instead of being turned to atoms. There is also the matter of story, GOJIRA being very somber and serious, which GAMERA tries too hard to emulate, but misses altogether.

This has to be the first giant monster movie that features an annoying little kid (Toshiro) who is sympathetic toward the monster. Daiei would continue this trend through most of the series. This film also featured some of the worst english-speaking actors in the history of japanese film. Of course, they are saddled with inane dialog such as "It must be coated with anti-electric wave paint." Huh? They are subtitled in the japanese print. Mostly these bozos show just how ineffective the military is in these situations.

The special effects are handled by Yonesaburo Tsukiji and while maybe not Eiji Tsuburaya (Godzilla's effects man) these are quite masterful. The miniatures, explosions and mattes are very well done. Also quite neat is the cartoon animation of Gamera flying in his shell. In these days of cold, computer done effects, I find these hand-made techniques quite refreshing.

Gamera himself is a fascinating creation. I don't know who actually designed him, but I get the feeling they never looked in a dinosaur book. Aside from the fact that he can pull his extremities into his shell, and that he HAS a shell, Gamera bears absolutely NO resemblance to any prehistoric turtle ever discovered.

In 1966, Harris Associates brought DAI KAIJU GAMERA over to America. They renamed him GAMMERA THE INVINCIBLE, shot some new scenes with REAL actors (and jettisoning the lousy ones) and best of all, gave Gamera a cool, rocking theme song.

The dubbing is well done, and the new scenes, with the exception of one, integrate quite nicely with the rest of the movie, all though not as well as the late Raymond Burr's did in GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (56). The one scene is an extremely hilarious "science discussion" show in which two scientists have a "dialogue" about the existence of U.F.O.s and various unexplained phenomena, which deteriorates into a shouting match while the "host" just sits and smirks. It resembles nothing more than the glut of talk shows today. Truly prophetic. I keep waiting to see this segment on Talk Soup.

Unfortunately, the Gamera series of movies almost completely disappeared from american airwaves in the early eighties.

Until, that is, the mid-eighties when Sandy Frank Productions (the same fine folk who brought you the butchered version of GATCHAMAN known as BATTLE OF THE PLANETS) bought the rights to five of the eight

Gamera movies. Instead of just re-releasing the original versions, they stripped the vocal tracks, added new english voices and used the original titles. GAMMERA THE INVINCIBLE became simply GAMERA. Sandy Frank also added new opening titles, a simple ocean wave shot with the credits projected over them. While this does give the entire series a "look", it is rather boring. The re-dubbing (is that redundant?) is also substandard, as are most of this company's releases. It also comes complete with the lousy english-speaking (?) actors from Japan. They changed Toshiro's name to Kenny, and made him, believe it or not, even more annoying! I'm surprised that more of the characters' names were not anglicanized, as this is also a common practice of Sandy Frank Productions. GAMMERA THE INVINCIBLE is by far the preferred version of this movie.

It is entirely possible that with the renewed success of Godzilla films that Gamera will return. I have heard the rumor already. In fact, Gamera is now set to return, with special effects by Toho! He will return to fight Gyaos, form RETURN OF THE GIANT MONSTERS (aka GAMERA VS. GAOS). One can only hope that Gamera is not turned into a "serious" monster, because he never really was one to begin with. I have seen a couple of photos of the "new" Gamera, and he looks really nice. The movie is to be released in Japan in March of 1995, and to be titled GAMERA: MIDAIR SHOWDOWN OF THE GIANT MONSTERS. The producers hope to turn it into a new series with the possibility of him meeting Godzilla. For more information see *Sentai #3*, currently on sale.

Gamera never had the success of his more famous reptilian cousin, Godzilla. He did however bring joy to many, many children on weekend afternoons and late Friday nights. He was, after all, the friend of all children.

THIS WEEK AT 4:00 PM
BEWARE OF:
MONSTERS
ON THE PROWL

Monday
You'll witness the...
"WAR OF THE MONSTERS"

Tuesday
When you think you're safe - it's a...
"RETURN OF THE GIANT MONSTERS"

Wednesday
Arising from an icy grave...
"GAMMERA, SUPER MONSTER"

Thursday
You're not safe anywhere from...
"ATTACK OF THE MONSTERS"

Friday
Could this be the last days of...
"GAMERA vs. MONSTER X"



The Cinematic Voyeur

"My task, which I am trying to achieve, is to make you hear, to make you feel...it is, above all, to make you see; and that is everything."

—Joseph Conrad

Primordial Soup Voyeur Style

If you are the type who habitually arrives late to appointments, meetings and gatherings; who cannot remember what a check was for and how much because you regularly refuse to keep track with the aid of the register in your account book; who cannot place the last known location of your keys or glasses; who forgets anniversaries, birthdays, and special occasions, never mind what follows.

On the other hand, if you are the type who makes a fetish of jotting down high and low tides; who fills in every square, every box of the Sunday *New York Times* crossword puzzle; who saves old newspapers for a marathon rainy day reading session and bits of strings and yarn until you have a ball of the stuff; who makes the bed daily even though you may not sleep in it every night; who files your video tapes and laser discs on the shelf by alphabetical category; then you probably noticed something slightly amiss in the last installment of this column.

Either or, note this: I'm baaaaaack!

For the moment that is, until another producer- or director-type person comes along, hooks yours truly by the ear or neck (or both) and drags me off down the yellow brick road to Babylon-By-The-Sea.

That said, let us get down to the business at hand:

Giant monsters.

Giant Monsters, you ask, one eyebrow contorting upward and in in a Mr. Spock manner. No...

G*I*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*.

And when I say G*I*A*N*T*

M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S* I am not talking about the black or dark brown hard-shelled, multi-legged things with the skinny spiked red tails that crawl up through the drain while you are buck naked in the shower, with shampoo in your eyes and soap in your ears, hitching and humping up your leg.

I'm talking about G*I*A*N*T*

M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*.

And when I say G*I*A*N*T*

M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S* I don't mean stuff like *Eraserhead* or the justified pornography of *Cafe Flesh* or the obfuscating weirdness of *Repo Man* or the semi-lecherous crypt keeper of *Tales From The Crypt*.

I mean G*I*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S* as in *Tremors* and its thirty-foot long earthworms that look like something left over from David Lynch's film version of Frank Herbert's epic story *Dune*; the giant ants in *Them!*; Allison Hayes in *The Attack of the Fifty-Foot Woman*; Godzilla in all those Godzilla movies; *The Giant Spider Invasion*; well, you get the idea when it comes to what I mean when I say G*I*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*.

Having established these loose parameters of what are and are not G*I*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*, let us now move onto how giant monsters become G*I*A*N*T*M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*.

As a rule, it seems, giant monsters (or non-giant monsters) become G*I*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S* because of something somebody human did unintentionally: Like hold the handle on the toilet down too long, substitute Bromine for table sugar (not likely to happen because Bromine, as all chemistry majors know, is a deep red liquid corrosive and sugar is usually a white solid except when heated), poison the neighbor's household pet with some clearly marked treat from a nearby chemical company that reads on its label in yellow and black block letters NOT FOR INTERNAL USE, electrocute a stagnant puddle with a live wire, detonate a nuclear device under water, etc.

Logically it follows at some point someone-- such as the town idiot or a preteen child (often

Xenorama

implied by the film or moviemakers as being on the same level as the town idiot)--will notice something is wrong: the neighbor's household pet is rabid and bug-eyed and ripping the heads off birds, squirrels and other households pets; the local water supply is bubbling and belching and emitting offensive gas; the rainy season is early and stronger than ever; etc.

Of course, because it was a preteen child or the town idiot (or someone who is both) who first noticed the anomaly, no one (read: city leaders) takes the eminent threat seriously.

And when they do it is--naturally--almost, if not completely, too late to prevent what apocalypse results.

At this point, with this said, I want to digress and dip into the sub text of such story lines, the constant message of these films and movies: screw with the laws, rules and order of Nature and you will get screwed in the end.

I find this underlying message interesting because when you stop and think about the fact that most of these films and movies were made in the 1940s and 50s--the golden age of the 'Red Threat'--it implies, perhaps unintentionally, perhaps intentionally, that if you were anything but a card-carrying Democratic capitalist, your precious bodily fluids had been polluted and corrupted and you had to be anything but a good American (which may go a long way to explain many Baby Boomers and the current administration in the White House).

But enough on that. Let's head back to the creatures, the G*T*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S* themselves and how they are physically defined and viewed.

No one has ever suggested Hollywood was constantly original in the conceptual department and in the 40s and 50s they weren't--especially when it came to Big Bugs and G*T*A*N*T* M*O*N*S*T*E*R*S*. The formula was simple: Take one garden variety bug, insect, arachnid, etc., hit it with a massive dose of some lethal substance, wait until it mutates, throw in chaos and mayhem for good measure, a pinch of gore (Not AlGore, gore) for taste, and serve. Feeds millions with plenty of leftovers for future use, half-life being fifty or so years.

But I was talking about physical appearances, wasn't I?

For whatever the reason, people in general are afraid, bothered by multi-legged things usually

found in the yard and garden. (All right, so there are a few people who think such creatures are hip and whatshername does have a tarantula for a pet, but she's just plain weird.)

Film and moviemakers know this. (Probably because more than a few of them are terrified of the aforementioned things themselves.)

Now a spider is bad enough because it skitters and things that skitter about are not nice but enlarge it a couple thousand times and the fun begins when you've got a really big skittering thing.

Well, maybe not fun fun. But a twenty-foot tall creepy-crawly thing sure can stir people up.

As in *THEM!* or *The Deadly Mantis* or *The Black Scorpion* but not as in *The Giant Spider Invasion* because that wasn't even a giant spider, just a VW Bug covered with fur and everyone knows Bugs can't hurt you.

VW Bugs, that is.

But they do float, don't they?

Simply, the Big Bug concept worked. It still works. Forty-plus years after these B-flicks were made people still love being scared and terrified and horrified.

Yet...there are those who say even though these are just reel creations and not real creations, they shouldn't exist. N'Suh.

Take the noted paleontologist/evolutionary biologist of Harvard University:

Giant insects. The entire genre is phony. The giant ants of *Them!* would have asphyxiated [had they actually existed]. Insects have no lungs; they breathe through invaginations (called tracheae) of their surface. Ants simply wouldn't have enough surface area to oxygenate their entire volume of blood were they to grow as large as rhinos.

Well, of course he's right. And if somebody is going to make a movie about giant things they should get the rules right, right?

Now, if you will excuse me I have to go deal with a seven-foot-tall bug with tattoos on all eight limbs who's been loitering in the shower and using all the hot water.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not xenophobic. It's just all this talk about creepy stuff has The Great Unwashed One feeling the need for a bath and I did ask it nicely to leave.

Until next time, with towel in hand, my feet on the ground and my head in the clouds...

Xenorama

THE X FROM OUTER SPACE (1968)

[UCHU DAIKAJU GUIRARA/

GIANT SPACE MONSTER GUIRARA 1967]

The success of Toho's Godzilla films prompted a lot of other studios to try their hand at the *kaiju eiga* (monster film) genre. Daiei had the most success with their Gamera films, but there were other monsters released upon Japan, notably Nikkatsu's **GAPPA** [1967] and Shochiku's attempt, this film I am reviewing. There was also a Korean monster released at the time, **YONGARY**, but it was only peripherally involved with Japan. These films, among many others, were never released theatrically in this country due to their... uh, "un-marketability." Fortunately television stations everywhere needed more and more movies to show late at night, on weekends and anywhere they could fit them. American International Pictures, never ones to pass up a buck, bought these films, re-dubbed them, changed most of the titles to something more exploitative and released them directly to television. This is the story of one of those movies.

The area of space in the vicinity Mars has been mysteriously unexplored. Rocketship after rocketship is sent to explore the region, but none make it back. Finally the FAFC (Fuji Astro Flying Center) sends up the AAB-Gamma rocketship to check the reason out. With specific instructions: to investigate any flying saucers they see. The ship is manned by Captain Sano (Toshinari Kazusaki), biologist Lisa (Peggy Neal), Dr. Shioda (Keisuke Sonoi) and Miyamoto (Shinichi Yanagisawa) the communications officer. Of course, they encounter a UFO, one of the crew experiences space sickness, there's a love spat/triangle, and a moon landing, all within the first twenty-five minutes!

After exchanging the space-sick Dr. Shioda with the cantankerous Dr. Stein (Mike Danning), the AAB-Gamma proceeds back to where it encountered the UFO. After a quick meteor shower, they find their "friend." This time the odd looking craft deposits several crystalline eggs on the ship. It's never explained WHY these aliens do this, or even why their ship looks like an overbaked apple pie. Peggy and Sano don space suits and clear off the eggs, but keep one for scientific examination. Will these people ever learn? Due to the run in with the saucer, the AAB-Gamma (I confess: I love the name of this ship!) is dangerously low on power. An emergency fuel transfer is done from the moon, then all parties go back to earth, or more specifically, the monster-magnet nation of Japan...

Sure enough, the "egg" hatches and out pops Guilala (Guirara/Girara in the Japanese version). A most interesting creation, Guilala eats energy and grows **BIG!** It can fire explosive energy balls and is impervious to harm from conventional armed forces. It's up to the scientists, most specifically biologist Lisa (who apparently doesn't rate a last name) to discover the means to stop Guilala. She does so by inventing Guilalanium (what a mouthful!), which stops the creatures absorbing properties. Guilala is reduced back to an egg, the love triangle is solved and man goes back to exploring space.

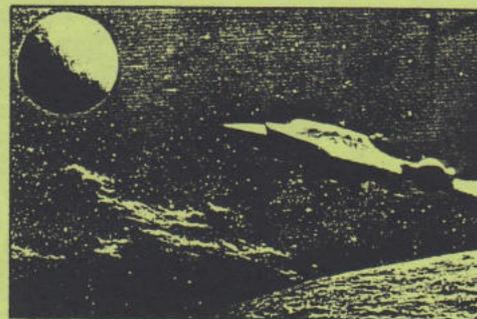
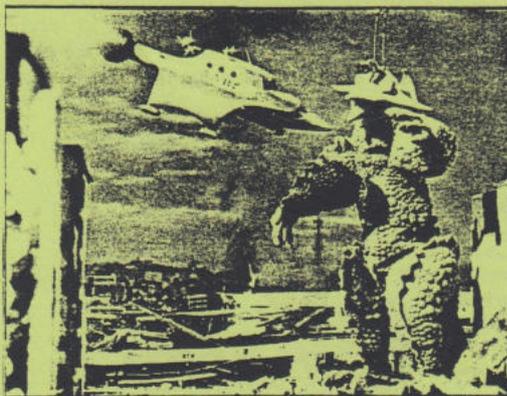
THE X FROM OUTER SPACE was released in Japan in 1967, and quickly bought by AIP-TV for release in America the following year. This is a standard monster-on-the-loose movie, with some great effects and an international cast (obviously a foreign market was planned) and a neat looking monster. It also has it's share of little quirks, which we will get into in a moment. The main difference is that there are two strong women, one American and one Japanese, in lead roles. Japan is not known for giving leads to women, and their *kaiju eiga* were no different. (This is **NOT** to say there were no strong female roles, just that even in **GOJIRA**, the lead female role was a secondary character, as most of the rest were.) The main female part is played by Peggy Neal (who got lead billing, at least in the American version), fresh from her role in **TERROR BENEATH THE SEA** (Toei, 1966). This helps the dubbing, as did any Japanese film with English speaking actors. She is no "cook" as she says, even though she gets the food and coffee for the crew. She does exhibit the brains, by discovering the Guilalanium and a lot of character by not interfering in Sano and Michiko's romance. Communications officer Michiko (Itoko Hirada) is the other female lead. While not given as much to do as Lisa, she does pilot the emergency fuel ship to the AAB-Gamma (she demands to do this, also

not usual in any films at the time) and maintains a friendship with Lisa while giving Sano the cold shoulder. Between the two women, they get most of the characterization in the movie.

In all ways, this is an unusual monster movie. From the design of the monster to the designs of the space ships, nothing looks typical. The AAB-Gamma is launched from a traditional three stage rocket, but then it lands and lifts off like an airplane. It looks like a submarine, what with all the fins and things and projections that are on the ship. But fortunately, it's a neat design. With a few exceptions, most Japanese space ships and attack mecha look great.

There are also two other Caucasian actors in this film, the aforementioned Dr. Stein and the inventor of the new rocket fuel, Dr. Berman (played by Franz Gruber). Both of these actors are also in **TERROR...** but Mike Danning had his last name spelled differently, so I don't know which is the correct spelling. The use of foreign actors was not and still is not uncommon in Japanese films. Look at **KING KONG ESCAPES**, **LATITUDE ZERO** and even **DAGORA THE SPACE MONSTER** for non-Japanese actors in lead roles. There were also many minor roles in most of the other *kaiju eiga* clear into the seventies. Compare that with the number of non-white lead roles in any American picture in the same time period.

The neatest thing about the movie is the "X" of the film, the monster Guilala. What a bizarre design! Many reviewers called it a "chicken" (I guess because it "hatched" from an egg) but it only has a beak. It has what look like periscopes on it's head, it fires energy bolts and can burrow underground. It is also colored in a distinct blue (no doubt these days it would be called "cobalt blue" or some such nonsense) and green. It's a great creation. Part reptile, part dinosaur, part sixties hallucination, Guilala is unique among Japanese monsters. It also has a distinctive voice. It looks like it did come from "*outer space*." At least more than most any Uchu Kaiju foe of Gamera's, that is. As mentioned, Guilala can fire energy bolts (like you-know-who) and when it does, it's back glows blue (also like you-know-who.) Almost all giant monsters from this time period had some form of energy ray or offensive weapon to use. As if size weren't enough. I wonder if all the other spores that the apple pie...er, flying saucer left were filled with creatures like Guilala or if there were even more, stranger creatures. I smell a sequel...



The special effects over all in this movie are fine. Granted, they are not Toho caliber, but they are all well executed. Done by Hiroshi Ikeda, the rays and bolts are nicely animated, and all the explosions look nice. The matte lines are great, which were always a problem at Toho in this time period. There are a number of neat shots in this movie, and lots of vivid colors. There are a number of complex process shots, and most of them come off quite well. Especially well done is the shot of Guilala chasing down the jeep with our heroes on it. In fact, it's remarkably similar to a shot in a certain dinosaur movie recently. Coincidence? You decide.

The music by Taku Izumi is also fun. It starts out moody and mysterious, but then turns pseudo-jazzy and fun, very upbeat. Maybe the producers thought this was going to be a comedy of some kind. But for some strange, bizarre reason, it works just fine overall. It never strays from these themes, and is never out of place, despite the tone. One of the many oddball charms of the movie strikes again, eh. And there's no intrusive pop song to confound the score.

THE X FROM OUTER SPACE is a great, fun movie. It doesn't show up on TV much anymore, but it has been available from Orion Home Video for a couple years now, and despite the "copyguarding" it is a decent print. So go rent it and have a good time. If you can, find a copy of the Japanese print. The movie will look great letterboxed. Who knows, what with a new Gamera movie being made, Guilala may break out of it's shell again to wreak havoc in the world.

THE X FROM OUTER SPACE (UCHU DAIKAIJU GUIRARA)

a 1967 Shochiku Co., LTD., production, released in America by American International Pictures in 1968.

producer: Akihiko Shimada

director: Kazui Nihonmatsu

music: Taku Izumi

special effects: Hiroshi Ikeda

starring: Peggy Neal

Toshinari Kazusaki

Shinichi Yanagisawa

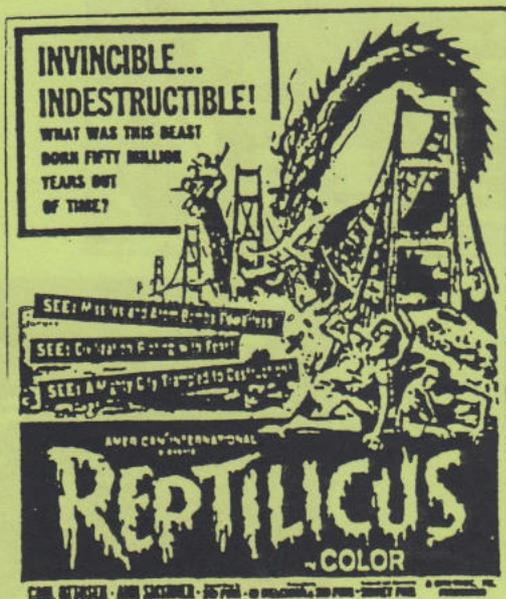
Franz Gruber

Keisuke Sonoi

Mike Danning

Filmed in Eastman Color and Shochiku GrandScope, 89 minutes.

(Versions of this article have appeared in Scary Monsters Magazine and Kaiju Review. All of them are similar, but different enough to read separately. So read all three! Sure to be collectors items! [OK, this is a joke- at least about the collectors item. Support the magazines you like, eh.]



REPTILICUS (1962)

the tale of a tail

This is one of the most reviled giant monster movies of the Golden Age of Monster Movies. Most reviewers even called it sub-japanese! Seeing as how I think that's not quite the insult most ignorant movie critics do, it should be pretty good. It almost ruined A.I.P. financially, because they thought it was so bad (!). And, truth be told, it's not any sort of masterpiece, or even a minor piece. Some people would say it is a piece, but none of them are reading this xine. Maybe because I first saw it on a flickering b-w TV late at night, but I've always had a soft spot in my heart for this movie.

Miners in Oslo, Sweden are drilling for oil. Instead they find a chunk or prehistoric tale, that still has blood and meat attached to it. Curious, they unearth the whole section, and find some local scientists to study it. Seeing as how it's the "find of the century", the native scientists send for an American to help them fathom it's mysteries. When the tail thaws, it grows larger! So it is decided to be kept at least a little chilled, after all, no telling what the thing might grow into, eh. Well, during an electrical storm, the poor, dimwitted janitor (boy, are there a lot of them in these movies!) inadvertently turns the power off, and, well, the tail grows into the rest of the mighty Reptilicus! It escapes and proceeds to wreck havoc on the Swedish countryside, not only by it's huge size, but by also spraying the residents with a mucous type green goo. I don't know if Reptilicus is just sneezing or if this is actually an offensive weapon. It's pretty gross looking, though. The military can't shell it, for fear that more monsters will grow from the pieces. (Reptilicus can also fly, but these scenes were apparently so pathetic that they were trimmed out of the U.S. version. I'd love to see them, though.) What to do, what to do? Well, thank goodness there is an American scientist type to figure it all out, eh. For the final solution, he... well, just watch the movie.

What more can possibly said about this movie? For all it's inherent faults, it is an amazing amount of fun. Reptilicus itself is quite an unusual design, part dragon and part sea monster, but mostly it's a breed related to the giant claw, that of *woodenus puppetus*. Amazingly enough, this movie spawned a series of comic books of the same name, at least until the publishers lost the license. (Not to be put off, Charlton retitled the series *Reptisaurus* and proceeded from there. The stories were perfunctory, but the art for the most part, was quite good. They did the same thing with *Gorgo* also.) I can't imagine that A.I.P. wanted a lot of money for this "character" but who knows. A clip of this film showed up in a *Beverly Hillbillies* episode, which was probably seen by many more people than in it's original theater release.

The movie is fun not because of the admittedly silly premise, or the pathetic looks of the title creature (I said I liked the design, not the actual puppet!), or all the stock shots of the Swedish countryside (which are pretty, eh.) I'm not sure at all why this movie works. It probably has something to do with seeing it on those late nights, early mornings or weekend afternoons when I was a child. There were plenty of fright flicks that I would watch and then forget about, but I would always watch *REPTILICUS*. And now that Orion has released a great copy of this movie on tape (complete with trailer), everyone can watch and enjoy this movie in the comfort of their own homes, without having to worry about green goo getting sneezed on them.

And I know how I keep ending articles with this statement, but doesn't this, of all movies, just cry out for a sequel? I say this only because of the ending, you know, that last shot of... Actually, it's probably better it never happened. The ones I thought up and played out with my friends years ago were probably better than any that ever could have been filmed.

DESTROY ALL PLANETS

Gamera starred in eight movies. Out of those eight, seven had little kids in leading roles. Fortunately the dubbing was done originally by Titan Studios for A.I.P.-TV and the kids are just pesky, not downright annoying. Of course when Sandy Frank Pros. re-dubbed 5 of the eight films... well, lets just say that their kids are good Gamera-chow.

However, this is one of the movies SFP didn't get a hold of, so it remains one of my favorite of the Gamera series. Plus, the main monster, Viras, is just the neatest of Gamera's foes. I have always had a fondness for giant tentacled things. (I got the Bandai figure this year at the Comic Con and it's way cool!)

The story is very familiar, especially if you've seen **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS** which could have been one of the reasons A.I.P. might have titled the movie this way, instead of keeping it's original title. Of course, they released both films, so maybe they were just trying to cash in on the former movie. A.I.P. cashing in on a trend? No way!

Anyway, the aliens from Viras want to take over the Earth. First they trap Gamera and the two boys underwater in a sub, where we are treated to about twenty minutes of stock footage of Gamera battling Barugon (pronounced correctly here as BARgon - the "u" is usually silent in Japanese.) and Gyoas, plus some footage from the first movie. Then Gamera frees himself and the boys, but to no avail. The aliens capture the boys and put Gamera under their control. They send Gamera out to knock down some buildings while the boys explore the spaceship and try to think of ways to escape. Here they encounter a man-sized squid type alien, and think it's captured by the Viras as well. After some more escapades, the Viras make the demand that the UN surrender the planet or they will kill the boys (like the UN has the power to do this!). Giving the boys credit, they tell the army commanders not to surrender. Of course, the UN decides to give up the planet for the lives of two boys (oh yeah, like this would happen!). Fortunately, the boys are very ingenious and manage to both escape and free Gamera from the Viras control. Gamera then promptly destroys the rattle-shaped spaceship, causing the Viras to abandon their human guise and be absorbed into the "captive" alien squid. The Viras then grows large and attacks Gamera. The battle begins!

The final battle is very well done, and quite exciting. All in all, this is a superior Gamera movie. The special effects are all well done, handled by long time Gamera effects man Kazufumi Fujii (who is not named in the English credits). The explosions are nice, and the animated rays are very neat looking. The miniatures are well done, even though I wondered why the Viras' ship looked like a baby's rattle. But it is an interesting design, and probably pretty useful, what with the different compartments and all. As mentioned, Viras is just an excellent design. It looks better than Gamera himself does, eh. Even the face looks properly mean. Like that's difficult. Despite the outrageousness of the story (especially the surrender the planet idea) it's a fun, fast paced, rollicking film. It's a good thing no one watches Gamera movies for logic, 'cause they'd sure be disappointed if they did. There's just none here, eh. These were definitely movies for kids, and at least they didn't talk down to them while they were entertaining the kids. Which is more than a lot of American films for kids can say.

Last time I was taken to task for being too easy on **GAMERA VS. ZIGRA**. Well, this is easily a better film. I though I did say that one was pretty boring for most of the movie, with only the monster scenes to liven things up. Hey, it's probably the worst Gamera movie, how's that?

Anyway, this one certainly is one of the best, even as good as some of the lesser Godzilla epics and better than **GAPPA/MONSTER FROM A PREHISTORIC PLANET**. This is the film that made Gamera the "protector of the Earth", as seen in the beginning of the film, where he didn't even wait for the Viras ship to land. But still, all Japanese giant monsters are worth a look. This Gamera movie has not been released on tape officially but chances are you can find it if you look hard enough (I hear there has been a **GAMERA VS. VIRAS** released in Canada). And this is one that's worth finding, I must say.

THE GIANT CLAW

I almost don't want to say much more about this movie than this. When I was just a kid, this movie sounded so neat in the descriptions I read. "A prehistoric bird from space arrives on Earth to make a nest. It has a radioactive force screen that keeps bullets out." Too Cool. I imagined this really cool outer space pteranodon looking giant animal. Kind of an American version of Rodan, or at least Gyoas. It would take all of the scientists in the world to defeat this monster.

OK, all of you quit laughing. I was a nine year old kid, with a vivid (very vivid) imagination. And no photo to go by. So naturally I thought of something much better than what I eventually saw. I never did see this movie on the telly, but actually bought the videotape and watched it. I had seen the creature by then, so I did know what to expect. And guess what? I wasn't disappointed at all.

The movie is a lot of fun. The first thirty minutes is quite well done, and actually builds quite a level of suspense. Things are going along smoothly, and we are ready to be dazzled by this unknown creature. The stars, Jeff Morrow and Mara Corday are both veterans of the sci-fi/horror genre and carry the movie along well. They also have Morris Ankrum to help out. Suspense and tension are growing. What is attacking the planes and outposts?

Then the bird shows up.

I can just imagine the gales of laughter this long lost cousin of Beaky Buzzard brought out from the audience. It couldn't get any better because the actors were still playing it straight faced and deadly serious, which just helps this sort of experience. You see, they thought, same as I did, this would be something quite sleek and cool. HAHAHAHAAAAA poor saps. Not until Reptilicus slithered across the screen would some another such silly critter appear on the silver screen (and then not again until 1975'S **GIANT SPIDER INVASION** which was the worst [and hilariously entertaining]). Both belong to that rare order of animals *woodenus puppetus*, which fortunately doesn't make it's way to Earth very often. Although, with the onset of these generic computer effects, I'd much rather see Reptilicus and La Kakonia than any of these two dimensional generated images.

But the bird is the worst part. The other special effects are quite nice. The process shots of the bird eating the parachuting pilots (one of the few times we ever see a giant creature eat people) are excellent. It does also have great stock scenes of destruction from **EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS** and those won't get any better. So it's just the bird that makes people go into hysterics. The effects were credited onscreen to Ralph Hammeras and George Teague. Hammeras had worked on Disney's version of **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** and I'm just sure their contribution to this movie was finding the third rate company in Mexico (well-renowned for their FX, eh) to do these effects. However, this is still just a rumor, so don't quote me, eh.

Whatever else this film means to people, it's a great deal of fun. There are people out there who consider this a "guilty" pleasure, but that's ridiculous. Enjoy what you like, whether other people think you should or not. This fanzine depends on that attitude, after all.



ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS

by Edward L. Mitchell

Well, here we are again, straining and stretching our glutes in an effort to reach far back into the fading mists of history and examine a time when the world spun a little slower: 1957. Not a bad year, overall. Ayn Rand published her classic Atlas Shrugged, while Jack Kerouac released his appealing On the Road. Albert Camus won the Nobel Prize for literature; and John F. Kennedy won the Pulitzer Prize for Profiles in Courage.

During the same year, the USSR made history by launching Sputnik 1 and 2, which officially began the "Space Race"; and Great Britain exploded it's first H-Bomb. In sports, Milwaukee won the World Series over New York, 4 games to 3; and the Brooklyn Dodgers moved to Los Angeles.

As with every year, lots of people died; great and small. Some notable passings were Dorothy L. Sayers, Sen. Joseph M. McCarthy, Humphrey Bogart, Arturo Toscanini, Oliver Hardy and James Whale.

In Hollywood, **BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI** walked away with an armload of Oscars at the Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor; while in New York **WEST SIDE STORY** opened up on Broadway for the very first time.

Also in Hollywood, sci-fi and horror films were in their heyday in 1957. Such classic titles as **I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF** (and **FRANKENSTEIN**), **MONOLITH MONSTERS**, **THE GIANT CLAW**, **FROM HELL IT CAME**, **TWENTY MILLION MILES TO EARTH**, **THE DEADLY MANTIS**, **THE AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN** and the immortal **BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** were all released to a public eager for cinematic escapism in a Cold War World.

Directors with names like Nathan Juran, Bert I. Gordon, Jack Arnold, Edward L. Cahn, Fred F. Sears, Herbert L. Strock and W. Lee Wilder all strode like Olympian gods (more or less) along the hallowed halls of B-moviemaking during this time. Also clawing his way up the cheap heap of low-budget celluloid was a young Turk by the name of Roger Corman, who would eventually take his place as The Leader in film schlockdom.

However, in 1957, Roger was still considered the new kid in town. So with his typical enthusiasm, he cranked out a record number of films that year; including genre favorites such as **NOT OF THIS EARTH**, **THE UNDEAD**, **THE SAGA OF THE VIKING WOMEN...**, **WAR OF THE SATELLITES** and **ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS**.

With **CRAB MONSTERS**, Corman used a technique that would become a trademark in most of his productions. With efficiency and economy in mind, he gathered about him people in the cast and crew who had worked with him before and would do so again in the future.

For his script, Roger employed the writing talents of his friend, Charles "Chuck" Griffith, who was also an associate producer, as well as having a small part in the film itself. He would later have a role in Corman's **CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA**. Cast in the lead roles were Richard Garland and Pamela Duncan, both of whom worked with Roger on **THE UNDEAD**.

Mel Welles was also in the cast (using an unbelievably outrageous french accent). Mel worked on **THE UNDEAD** as well, and would later portray the hilariously ethnic Gravis Mushnic in **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**. Corman's pal, Beach Dickerson, had a small part in the film; and like Chuck Griffith, later turned up in an equally small role in the bizarre **CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA**.

Rounding out the cast were Russell Johnson (in his pre-**Gilligan** days) and a really young Ed Nelson. And even though Ed's part turned out to be as short as his name, he ended up performing throughout the rest of the movie inside a giant monster crab, pulling wires (along with Beach Dickerson) to manipulate the claws and legs.

So, armed with a budget of \$70,000, Corman took his cast, crew and giant cranky crab down to Leo Carrillo State Beach, just north of Malibu, and made a film that has since taken it's rightful place as one of the most imaginative little schlockers to come out of the 50s.

As the movie opens, the viewer finds himself (or herself) immediately having to play catchup when, following the credits, an introduction flashes itself quickly across the screen, relating a series of events that have previously occurred; not too awfully much different from the technique used in the opening sequence of **STAR WARS** twenty years later. If nothing else, Corman was definitely an innovator. And even though the intro was used for brevity and budget limitations, it still managed to kick off the story with a certain sense of desperation that was maintained until the film's climax.

It's interesting to note that during the titles and exposition, the viewer is treated to a rousing score by composer Ronald Stein, which suddenly switches to a few measures of Leith Stevens **WORLD WITHOUT END**, made the previous year. But on reflection, it's not so surprising after all. Old Ron probably had access to the stock music scores available at Allied Artists, which produced both **WORLD** and **CRAB MONSTERS**. And just for the record, in 1963 Stein again wrote a couple of effective music scores for Corman's **THE TERROR** and **DEMENTIA 13**, which played on a double bill in many cities.

Anyway, back to the story: Following an atomic bomb test somewhere in the South Pacific, a team of scientific researchers have mysteriously disappeared after landing on an "unnamed atoll." A second team has been sent, accompanied by a few navy boys in a seaplane, to find out what happened to the first batch. No sooner do they land on the island when things start to happen. While the supply boat is being brought ashore, a sailor falls overboard and disappears beneath the water. When his body is pulled aboard, it's missing it's head! Gulp!

Shortly after that, the seaplane mysteriously explodes during take off, killing most of the navy personnel (including Lt. Ed Nelson). The surviving team members find themselves alone and marooned, completely cut off from civilization. Then they start hearing a strange, ghostly voice calling them in the night; a voice belonging to one of the original researchers who disappeared! Eek!

And all during this time, inexplicable explosions have been occurring, causing the island to slowly crumble away into the sea. Then the scientists themselves begin to disappear, after which the survivors can hear the voices of the vanished, inviting them to join them in the darkness.

Eventually, the antagonists reveal themselves to be giant carnivorous crabs, mutated by all the atomic testing that has been going on in the area (surprise!). It seems that once these crafty crustaceans consume the brains of their unfortunate prey (along with anything else that can be gobbled down), they absorb the victim's mind, along with their will to live; thus increasing their own intelligence and aggressiveness.

One by one, the survivors are whittled away in this manner, until, eventually, only three remain. With the island diminished away to almost nothing they but why spoil the end for you? Let it suffice to say that the climax is absolutely "shocking"; OK?

When Roger Corman made this little crackler, he released it on a double bill with **NOT OF THIS EARTH**. I myself saw it at that time at a drive-in with my dad. I was slightly less than nine years old at the time; and I'm compelled to admit that **CRAB MONSTERS** gave me a few nightmares for some time afterwards. I suppose it was that all-pervasive sense of menace that relentlessly keeps coming and coming, while all avenues of escape keep shrinking smaller and smaller. Whatever it was, it was a long time before I could bring myself to listen to the snap, crackle and pop of Rice Krispies in the morning; mainly 'cause they sounded too much like the cracking and snapping of the Crab Monsters, just before they strike! Who knows? Maybe that's when I first developed my taste for oatmeal...

OUTTAKES:

Wow. This is the biggest issue of **Xenorama** ever. And what better way to celebrate Godzilla's fortieth anniversary? I owe him that much. He is truly King of the Monsters. I have been a Godzilla fan for almost twenty-five years, which is just a little over half his forty years. I don't know exactly why Godzilla struck such a chord with me, but I'm certainly glad he did. I have met many fine people due to him, and watching his movies has always been a cathartic experience for me (getting all those destructive tendencies out harmlessly, eh).

Sure, it's been difficult at times. I saw **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** at the theater during a Christmas showing (parents dropped off carloads of kids so they could shop and have some peace and quite for a couple hours) three of four years in a row. I was about five the first time, and that was the only time my friends and I cheered for Kong. Our greatest accomplishment was getting one whole row to cheer for Godzilla one year. But after most of my friends "grew" out of that "phase" it was still important to me. It's a good thing I had one or two friends who either still liked fantasy or at least accepted me despite my eccentricities. I next saw **GODZILLA'S REVENGE** and probably since I hadn't seen any of the other films, I loved this one, which set me up to love all the seventies films, and then the rest of the films when I saw them. And I always wondered why Gamera never met Godzilla. This was of course before I realized that separate companies produced the films. Life was good those days, even pouring through the TV Guide to find out if there was a Godzilla movie on (or any monster movie, for that matter), then waiting up for the movie (or setting the alarm to get up) and then half the time falling asleep and waking up in time to see the end of the movie. It was still great. The chase and finding and the *anticipation* were the fun. And though I love video, and having access to these films at any time, I miss the thrill of waiting for a week to see a much sought after movie appearing at 3:00 in the morning. Nothing like it.

And now here I am, writing about Godzilla, Gamera, Rodan and all the rest. It's great. I never thought it would happen, but I just sat down and did it. I'm not even sure why I do this, but as I tell most people "Everyone is entitled to my opinion." And the response from you readers has been great. Thanks, eh.

I notice that the last two issues have prominently featured Japanese monsters and movies in general. Sorry, but that's one of my areas of expertise. Write what you know. And that's what I do. Although there won't be *nearly* this amount of Japanese stuff in the next couple of issues, so anyone who is sick of it can rest easy. Although I hope that isn't too many of you, eh.

I got a copy of the **ED WOOD** movie soundtrack in the mail the other day, from the fine folks at Hollywood Records. This is a first. Thanks guys. I enjoyed it quite a bit. I've yet to see the movie, and I'm not a complete Wood-o-phile, although I don't think he deserves the rap as "world's worst director" (ever heard of a fella named Jerry Warren?) with the dreck that pollutes the theaters these days. His films are always enjoyable. There are 21 tracks, all but two are written by Howard Shore. Filled with bongos upon bongos, I think Ed would have liked it. Hey, give me a break, I've never done an album review before! It isn't something I plan to do a lot of, but maybe in the future some one will want to do a column about the appropriate music reviews. That'd be cool. Any takers out there?

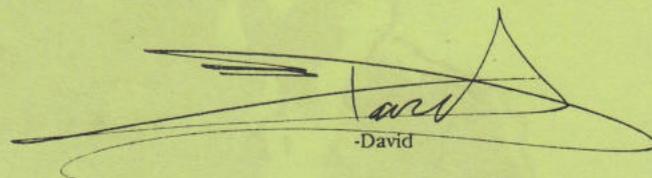
(What I mean by *appropriate* music reviews is music that pertains to the same sort of subjects that are covered in here. I don't want reviews of regular albums - no "Whoah, dude, the latest Pearl Jam album rocks!" [like that could possibly be true! To rock, it can't suck, which Pearl Jam does] so if someone can find cool monster and hero related music, please go for it!)

Anyway, it's a fun soundtrack, worthy of the name. Check it out if you'd like to have a different piece of the Ed Wood puzzle.

Hey, does anybody out there have a mid-seventies Saturday morning live action kid's show called "**The Kids From C.A.P.E.R.**" on tape? It was a spoof of the spy movies and TV shows that were popular about five years earlier (I had never seen the Man from U.N.C.L.E., which tells you how much TV executives thought of kids back then...) I don't know how long it lasted, but this is one of my greatest wants in the whole world. I would trade well for any episodes that can be found. It probably will never show up, but can't hurt to ask, eh.

I can't believe I'm done with this issue. Seven issues. Who'd have thought it? It's a good thing that this is just a hobby, or I'd go mental with all this writing, I must say. But it's been a lot of fun. And it'll continue to be a lot of fun. And I promise, when it's not fun any more, I'll stop the zine. But don't worry, this won't happen for a while.

And this is truly the best issue I've done yet. I hope that **Xenorama** will always continue to improve, and that all of you readers will keep me on my toes (and probably stepping on a few of yours). So until then, don't touch that dial and *stay tuned!*



-David

NEXT ISSUE: will feature popular folk heroes from various cultures.

Movies on men like Zorro, Hercules, the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet will be in here, as well as some Chinese heroes like Fong Sai Yuk and Wong Fei Hung. And don't worry, I've already figured out a way to get Godzilla in here. There will also be true life folk heroes such as Bruce Lee and the long overdue *El Santo* will be present as well. We'll be back to digest size as well. In fact, this should be the last such giant size issue for quite a while.

BACK ISSUE DEPT: looks a lot like last issues back issue dept. That means issues #1 and #3 are three dollars a piece (and these are quite embarrassing for me to read - I've come a loooooong way since then!) and issues #4-6 are still \$2.00 a piece, cover price. Thanks to all of you who wanted to read these pups. Be patient, please, as sometimes I have to have some more copies made and it takes a little while.

