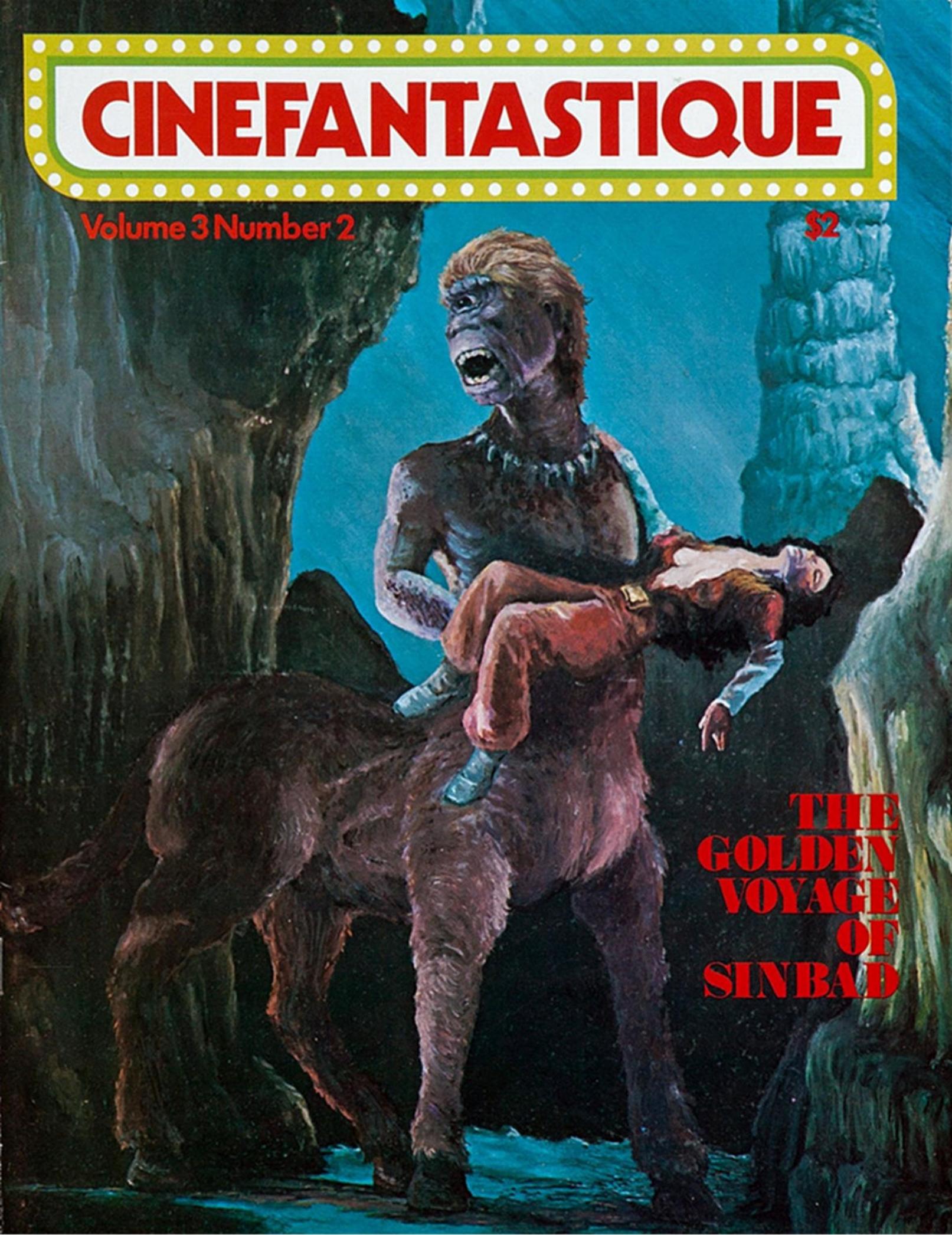


# CINEFANTASTIQUE

Volume 3 Number 2

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THE  
GOLDEN  
VOYAGE  
OF  
SINBAD

## CINEFANTASTIQUE

FALL 1970 \$1



Volume 1 Number 1

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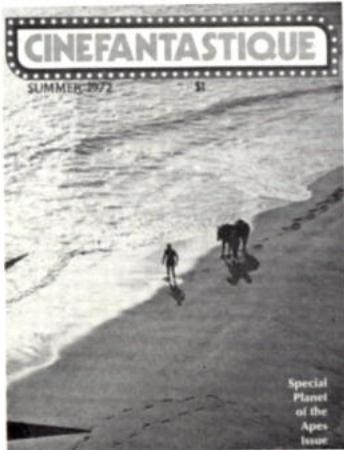
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Volume 2 Number 3

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Volume 3 Number 2

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Linda Blair as Regan from THE EXORCIST, in release from Warner Bros. Back Cover

# VOLUME 3

# NUMBER 2

# The Golden Voyage of Sinbad

Producer Charles H. Schneer discusses the creation of the latest Ray Harryhausen model animation fantasy, a film in search of an audience.

THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD is the thirteenth fantasy film designed for the screen by Ray Harryhausen in a career spanning over twenty years. Devotees of the genre who have been thrilled over the years by the imaginative genius of Harryhausen's animated models and special effects now await each new Harryhausen film with eagerness and, only recently, with a brooding sense of anxiety. The eagerness is to once again witness the unreal world of fantasy brought to vivid life on the screen as almost no one else can do. The anxiety stems from the growing infrequency of the Harryhausen Show and the dread that the latest may indeed be the last, for the model animation film, like the Puppetoon in the late 1940s, seems to be passing out of existence.

But in all this, little attention seems to be paid to the one man, outside of Harryhausen, whose commitment has made the model animation film a continuing reality. Charles H. Schneer has personally produced ten of Ray Harryhausen's thirteen films, including THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, the newest one from Columbia Pictures. Schneer began their association in 1955 by producing the second Ray Harryhausen film, IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA. This was followed by: 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH (1955), EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956), THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1958), THE THREE WORLDS OF GULLIVER (1960), THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (1961), JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS (1963), FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (1964), and THE VALLEY OF GWANGI (1969).

We met with Charles H. Schneer to discuss the newest Harryhausen chef-d'œuvre while he was in New York City to confer with Columbia executives over the marketing strategy for the film's forthcoming release. He emerges as perhaps the only film producer in the world today who can grasp and understand the problems and intricacies of the model animation film, and one who can appreciate the form's special magic. One can see in Schneer, as in his famous collaborator, a devotion to the art.

CFQ: How did you become associated with Ray Harryhausen?

SCHNEER: Ray and I were in the Army together. I was in the signal corps on Long Island City making training films, and he was attached to a unit in California, during World War II. We had met in California and I was familiar with his work, and when the war was over he brought a project that I liked, and we developed it, and we've been together ever since, except for two pictures that he did away, on loan out. He did THE ANIMAL WORLD for Irwin Allen and ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. for Hammer Films.

CFQ: In the ten year period after FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (1964) you have produced only two stop motion animation films: THE VALLEY OF GWANGI (1969) and THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1974). Why so few?

SCHNEER: In the making of these pictures, from the time we start to the time we actually get a film before the audience, it takes a minimum of three years. That's a short time. We conceive our project, and then we have to sell it to a distributor. We design it very carefully. Every shot we put on the screen is preplanned and pre-designed, so it is by no means a normal film. For example, after we prepare it and design it and shoot it, there is a full year and a half before we can put all the pieces together because much of our work is double, triple and quadruple exposures. We have to balance it all off to make sure that you can't tell the difference between the first, second, third, and fourth generations, so that they all look like one generation when the picture is screened. So, it's a very, very complicated operation.

We started making pictures in black and white when we both lived in California in the middle fifties. We had a transition from black and white to color, and when we had the transition to color, Harryhausen was very, very concerned about the quality of the color, having never worked in that medium before. When you're working with black and white film you can settle for a lot less when it comes to duping quality. Color is much more sensitive. From the time we started our first color pic-

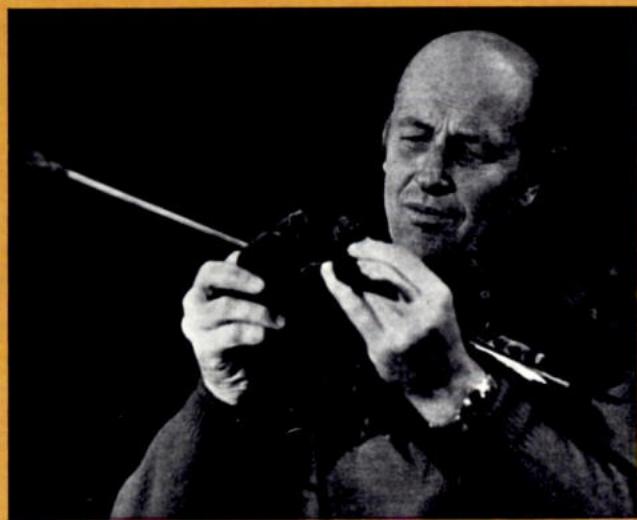
ture, which was THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD in 1957, color film has become greatly improved, in the graininess, the quality of the film itself, and the speed, all of which has helped us to bring our pictures into a more acceptable color rendition. It's not a question of our dragging our feet between pictures, because all of our time is utilized in research and planning.

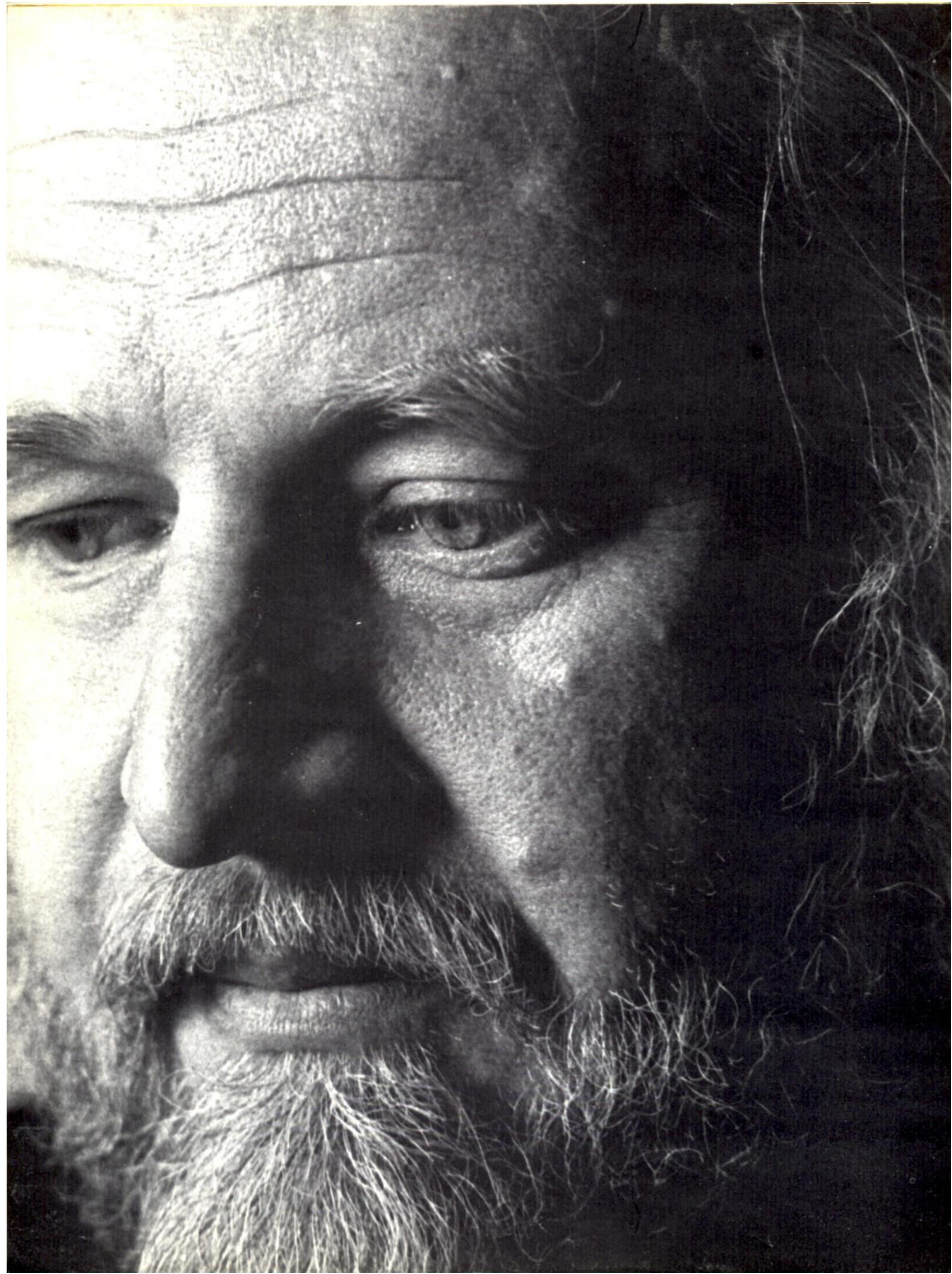
It's very difficult for us to find subject matter. It's one of the most difficult things for us to do. I particularly am dead set against repeating myself in the kind of pictures that we make. I hate to do the same thing twice, have a similar situation, and we try to make it as variable as we possibly can. The only thing we've really done of a similar nature is subject matter. We did Sinbad, as I said, fifteen years ago, and we've done it again, but it's a completely different story, with completely different characters, and none of our tricks this time are any way similar to the first time. I'm very, very particular about that. Very often Ray, in his wisdom, will forget that we did something fifteen years ago and has got to continued page 42

Scenes from THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, currently in release from Columbia Pictures. Color: The exciting battle between The Griffin, a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle, and The Centaur, a one-eyed creature of darkness with the body of a horse. Because the sequence consists purely of simple table-top animation where combination with a live-action element is not essential, the models blend perfectly with their miniature background. Left: The Siren figurehead of Sinbad's ship is brought to life by the evil magician Koura to threaten Sinbad and his crew. Middle: Special effects technician Ray Harryhausen manipulates the tiny Homunculus used in the film. Harryhausen functioned as co-producer of the film as well, having greater control and responsibility for all aspects of the production than ever before. Right: The Centaur emerges from his underground lair to capture Margiane.



Interview conducted by Dan R. Scapperotti & David Bartholomew





# MATHESON

## *a name to conjure with!*

***Mick Martin talks with the one screenwriter today whose name, more than any other, means excellence in genre films and discovers that in the film business, what you see is not necessarily what you wrote.***

The history of the horror film is speckled with occasional brilliance: the sensitive portrayals of Boris Karloff, the atmospheric non-sensationalism of the films of Val Lewton, the absolute evil of Christopher Lee's Dracula, the occasional one shot classics like ROSEMARY'S BABY and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, and, I assert, the scripts of Richard Matheson.

Admittedly, that is mighty special company for a scriptwriter. So, let us ponder the lot of said film contributor. If a film is a cohesive success, the credit is given to the director, and if it has "moments," we cite the actors. But ask any director or, especially, actor and they'll always say that a movie is only as good as its script.

For those who notice the special effects credits, directorial signature and know the names of the supporting bit players by heart, but have failed to notice, Richard Matheson has been responsible for writing an impressive list of horror, fantasy and science fiction films (see filmography on page 19).

Matheson's auspicious beginning in films with the scripting of his own novel for the Jack Arnold film THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN, caused John Baxter to observe in *Science Fiction In The Cinema*: "Few established science fiction writers have written sf films, and those that have, such as David Duncan and Jerome Bixby, seldom had distinguished writing careers. An exception is Richard Matheson who, after producing a number of successful novels and short stories, turned to the film field with the same imagination he has shown in the magazines. Written with Matheson's usual insight and directed with persuasive power, this film is the finest Arnold made and arguably the peak of sf film in its long history."

In 1960, director Roger Corman called upon Matheson to write the script for HOUSE OF USHER, the success of which led to the production of a whole series of films based on the writings of Poe. Critic David Pirie, in an article for the book *Roger Corman* published by the Edinburgh Film Festival '70, observed: "Corman's most sensitive and important guide into Poe was the science fiction writer, Richard Matheson, whose other excellent film scripts, like BURN, WITCH, BURN and THE DEVIL'S BRIDE, tend to suggest that he may be an *auteur* in his own right. Matheson's name is on only four of the Poe scripts, but there can scarcely be any doubt that next to Corman, and possibly Vincent Price, his is the greatest contribution to the series."

Two recent movies-for-television, DUEL and THE NIGHT STALKER, have proved to be the most rewarding of his seventeen-year career in terms of critical acclaim and popularity. And in February of 1974 CBS telecast a two hour version of DRACULA in prime time, lovingly and faithfully adapted from the original novel by Matheson

and filmed by producer Dan Curtis in London. If anything, Matheson is banishing, almost single-handedly, the notion that television must be "the vast wasteland" it has consistently proven to be.

Richard Matheson began writing for television, at first in collaboration with Charles Beaumont, beginning in 1959. Both were, along with Rod Serling, the earliest of the contributors to TWILIGHT ZONE. Altogether, Matheson contributed sixteen stories to that anthology, including the memorable episode "Steel," starring Lee Marvin. His work on a script for THE LAWMAN called "Yawkey," won the Writer's Guild of America Award for the 1959-60 television season as the best written anthology television show. In addition to TWILIGHT ZONE, Matheson wrote the pilot film for GHOST STORY and has contributed to THRILLER, STAR TREK and NIGHT GALLERY, and currently is developing his own anthology series of weird tales for ABC, to be called DEAD OF NIGHT.

Aside from film work, Richard Matheson has written many fine books: *Someone Is Bleeding*, *Fury On Sunday*, *I Am Legend*, *The Shrinking Man*, *Ride The Nightmare*, *A Stir of Echoes*, *The Beardless Warriors*, *Hell House* (all novels), *The Shores of Space*, *Third From The Sun*, *Shock*, *Shock II*, *Shock III* and *Shock Waves* (short story collections).

Before he sold his first story, "Born Of Man And Woman," to The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction in 1949, he attended the University of Missouri, graduating in three years with a Bachelor of Journalism degree. He was born in Allendale, New Jersey on February 20, 1926. Matheson majored in structural engineering in Brooklyn Technical High School and graduated in June, 1943. In World War II, he saw action in France and Germany and was discharged in June 1945.

The decor of the Hamburger Hamlet, a cozy eatery in Woodland Hills, California where Matheson lives and works, could not suppress the mood and enthusiasm of our discussion on film and terror. Over lunch, we managed to cover a wide variety of topics. What follows are the comments of an articulate and gracious man who has been overlooked and uncredited far too long.

**CFQ:** Most fantasy authors eschew film and concentrate on the literature. What decided you to concentrate on script writing?

**MATHESON:** I have always liked films from childhood, and always hoped that one day I would be able to write them. I do not eschew film nor leave literature behind. I also continue with my prose writing, and enjoy both of them. Writing fantasy and/or science-fiction certainly cannot result in as much earnings in the literary field as

it can in television and motion pictures.

**CFQ:** How did you get the assignment to write the screenplay for THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN?

**MATHESON:** Getting the assignment was simply a matter of the fact that I always knew I would not be able to get a film assignment until I had a property that was desired by the motion pictures. So I never really attempted to get into motion pictures in any way, but as soon as they requested that book, I immediately told them that part of the deal was that I would write the screenplay. That, to this day, remains the best way of getting in, I think.

**CFQ:** How do you feel about this film?

**MATHESON:** I just saw it the other night at the Los Angeles Museum of Art. They had a series on eight film writers and I was one of them. It was the first time I had seen the value of it, although it came out quite long ago. It was the first time I'd enjoyed it. I saw things that I had never seen before. It only starts getting good after he's in the doll house. Up to that time it is quite boring because they stripped away so much of the script. The book was written in the form of flashbacks, but at that time movies were very conventional. I feel it lost something by being presented in straight narrative.

**CFQ:** Who forced you to write the film as a straight narrative?

**MATHESON:** The producer, Albert Zugsmith (who also produced Douglas Sirk films like WRITTEN ON THE WIND and TARNISHED ANGELS, and Orson Welles' TOUCH OF EVIL), insisted that it be done in a straight narrative. As a matter of fact, when I first wrote the book, I wrote it in a straight narrative form, and I didn't like it. It was getting very dull, so I restructured the book in order to get into the story right away. Initially, I attempted to structure the screenplay in the same form.

**CFQ:** Surely, telling a film story in flashback was nothing new or unconventional in 1957.

**MATHESON:** No, it wasn't, however, in this sense it would have been unconventional: there would have to have been many flashbacks. Most of the flashbacks in the book were of an adult nature, which they really weren't interested in using. In the film, they wanted to concentrate mostly on the Robinson Crusoe-esque type epic of this little man down in the cellar. That was really the aspect that made it "filmic," so they got through the "front story" as quickly as possible, and then got to the cellar. Up to that point, it's not that interesting. It's kind of slow.

**CFQ:** Did your screenplay differ from the film in any basic ways?

**MATHESON:** No. It was changed in many little ways by another writer, and I protested and got a sole screenplay credit. Although I realized later



American-International supported my family for many years, so I won't say anything grossly bad against them, except to note that my image as their star writer for many years has not done me much good in the business.

that the man who had done the re-writing, Richard Allan Simmons, had probably stepped back and let me have the sole credit. He probably did enough work on it to warrant him getting co-credit, but he's a very nice man and a talent in his own right, and he probably felt that he didn't have to get a credit that way.

CFQ: Did you work closely or at all with director Jack Arnold on the film?

MATHESON: I didn't work at all with Jack Arnold. I know him, and I think he directed that picture extraordinarily well. I appreciate it more all the time. I think the visual aspects of the film are truly remarkable, and he creates quite a mood in the film.

CFQ: One point on which *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN* is often criticized is Grant Williams' philosophical soliloquy at the film's conclusion about God and Nature backed up by stirring religious melodies. Would you agree that this was a bit heavy-handed?

MATHESON: I had nothing to do with that. The conclusion was indicated in the book, but not as heavy-handedly. I really have nothing to say about that.

CFQ: 2001 was deeply philosophical in quite a different way. The stirring music was still there, but whatever the film had to say was expressed solely in visual terms. Would you agree this is filmically a more valid technique?

MATHESON: If it's not heavy-handed, it doesn't hurt to zing in a little message now and then. Just because it's subtle and hard to figure out doesn't mean that it's more valid, but that seems to be the consensus.

CFQ: Why didn't you continue to write screenplays for Universal?

MATHESON: I did do other screenplays for Universal after *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*. I did a sequel called *THE FANTASTIC LITTLE GIRL* which followed the shrinking man on into the microscopic world and had his wife joining him. It was a real mish-mash. Fortunately, they never made the film. I also wrote several versions of *Gulliver's Travels*, none of which were ever filmed. These were both for producer Albert Zugsmith.

CFQ: Do you find it difficult to convert novels and short stories into screenplays?

MATHESON: It was difficult at first because I was writing in a new form. However, writing a screenplay is easier than writing prose. You're stripping away various elements. For instance, you don't have to do so much descriptive writing. You can, but nobody ever sees it. It's just to impress the producer.

CFQ: What are your favorite *TWILIGHT ZONE* episodes that you wrote?

MATHESON: My favorite *TWILIGHT ZONE* episodes are not the ones that most people like. I like the one with William Shatner and Pat Breslin where they have the little penny-answering machine, called "Nick of Time." I thought Bill Shatner was absolutely superb in "Nightmare At 20,000 Feet." The part of his wife, played by Christine White, was not done well at all. The creature out on the wing was done abysmally. I was discussing it once with Jacques Tourneur, and he told me that he would have shot it by having the creature in a black suit, completely black from head to toe, with some sprinkling of silver dust on him so that you could have barely seen

him. Now, oddly enough, the actor who was under that monkey suit that looked like a panda bear, was Burt Lancaster's old partner, an acrobat, and he was in many films with Lancaster. Actually, if he had played the part just as himself with some sort of a crude outfit on, he looks exactly as I described the creature in the story and in the script, and it would have been much more effective. I thought Lee Marvin was marvelous in "Steel." That was definitely one of my favorites. People are always telling me how much they liked "The Invaders," with Agnes Moorehead, and I didn't like it at all. It was directed poorly, I thought. It was directed so slow. I thought the opening was almost interminable. By the time Agnes Moorehead got to the roof, I was unconscious with boredom. They only used half of my script. I had so much else going on.

CFQ: Both attempts to transfer your novel *I Am Legend* to the screen were abortive. Did you have any involvement with the filming of *THE LAST MAN ON EARTH* and *THE OMEGA MAN*?

MATHESON: I wrote a screenplay based on my novel for Hammer Films originally, but the censors over there wouldn't pass it. Hammer sold the property to Lippert Films in America. I became involved with it again because they told me that Fritz Lang would direct it. That got me very excited. Sidney Salkow ended up directing the film, which was a "minor" step down. He hired a writer to revise my script and he really screwed it up. So much so, that I put my pen name, Logan Swanson on it.

As far as *THE OMEGA MAN* is concerned, I had nothing to do with it and am quite proud on that point.

CFQ: It seems as if a respectable adaptation will never be made.

MATHESON: Dan Curtis has expressed an interest in making it, so we may do a good one in the future.

CFQ: Did Hammer Films commission you to adapt *I Am Legend*, or was it a project you developed on your own?

MATHESON: It was commissioned. I got a free trip to England, and lived there for two months writing it. When they bought the book, they bought me along with it.

CFQ: What was it about your script that the British censors wouldn't pass?

MATHESON: I suppose it is possible that in those days the censors were a little harder. Then again, maybe they just didn't like the script and they were telling me that the censor wouldn't pass it to be nice to me. In light of the gore that Hammer Films has presented in subsequent years it is really hard to believe that the little bit I had in my movie was all that terrible. But it's possible that in 1957 the censors were a bit harder on the filmmakers.

CFQ: Were you involved in any other unrealized Hammer projects?

MATHESON: None that I wrote. They sent me a book by the author of *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE*, called *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*, which they were going to make, but the whole thing for some reason died out, and I never heard about it again.

CFQ: You have been a recurrent screenwriter for AIP, particularly on their Edgar Allan Poe films. What began this association?

MATHESON: I was first approached by Roger Corman who had been assigned by American-International to produce and direct *HOUSE OF USHER*. I was enthused about the project and did a very careful story outline and script. Naturally, I was disappointed with the casting, except for Vincent Price, who I knew from the start was to be in it. He certainly went beyond the call of duty in playing the role. The rest of the cast I found inadequate to the job. If I like the film now better than I did when it came out, it is only because one's attitude mellows with time. It has some pretty good moments. American-International was caught completely unaware by its success. They had no plans, to my knowledge, to make a series of Poe films. Box-office results changed

their minds. The film was playing all summer in 1960, finally on a double bill with *PSYCHO*. It not only made money, but got some good reviews as well.

CFQ: How did you like the performances in *PIT AND THE PENDULUM*?

MATHESON: I thought that Anthony Carbone, who played the doctor, was really good. I think that Vincent Price must have gotten a little bored with this one. He sort of camped it up. I was told that Barbara Steele's part was dubbed in. I can't believe that that's true, but that's what I was told. Luana Anders was completely miscast and John Kerr I thought was a little stiff too. So, I wasn't crazy about it. The plot was clever.

CFQ: Were you happy with the way AIP filmed *MASTER OF THE WORLD*?

MATHESON: If they had spent more money, got a better cast, and filmed it the way I wrote it, it could have been another 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. It had all that potential. It was a very good script, but they shot the whole thing for like half a million dollars. They had to put in clips of films from *HENRY V* and from *FOUR FEATHERS*. It just didn't make it. It probably is a "kiddie" film. I liked some of the performances in it: David Frankham and Vincent Price were very good. But AIP did not realize the potential of it. It really could have been a sensational film. The only thing that was really sensational was *The Albatross*, which they made in miniature.

CFQ: With the second segment of *TALES OF TERROR*, "The Black Cat" and, most surprisingly, with *THE RAVEN*, you added comedy to what is typically considered very sombre source material.

MATHESON: When I was assigned to write *TALES OF TERROR*, I felt that it needed a balance, being three separate stories, and decided to make the middle one a comedy, combining "The Black Cat" and "The Cask of Amontillado." It proved so successful that when I was given the assignment of *THE RAVEN*, I found the very notion of converting a poem into a full-length film so ludicrous that my thinking along story lines followed suit. I haven't seen it since the year it came out but I recall some delicious moments between Karloff and Lorre, and Karloff and Hazel Court, who is not only very beautiful, but a fine actress as well.

CFQ: Of the Poe series, which stands out as your favorite?

MATHESON: I suppose *THE RAVEN* would be my favorite, although I am not bowled over by any of them. Roger Corman has been a fine camera director. He has been able to make films which move and have suspense and look good. I don't believe he has ever worked with actors particularly, and this is the weakness in his films I think.

American-International supported my family for many years, so I won't say anything grossly bad against them, except to note that my image as their star writer for many years has not done me much good in the business. That is because, to a large degree, most people never bothered to actually sit down and look at a film from American-International. But then, they have made some very poor films.

CFQ: A great favorite of devotees of the genre is your *BURN, WITCH, BURN*, which is one of the films you did for AIP. Do you care for it?

MATHESON: I like it very much indeed. I am sure I would like it better if they called it "Conjure Wife" as it should be called. However, outside of that small quibble, I still watch it with much pleasure and admiration. An interesting sidenote is that, when Chuck Beaumont and I decided we would make a screenplay from Leiber's great book, we did not own the property and even knew that Universal owned it. Undaunted by facts, however, we did the script, me writing the first half, him the second, then combining forces for a polish. Fortunately for us, American-International was able to buy the rights from Universal. Fortunately for the picture fan, not for us finan-

Top: Carl Kolchak (Darren McGavin) holds vampire Janos Skorzeny (Barry Atwater) at bay in *THE NIGHT STALKER*, one of the most popular made-for-television movies ever made in terms of Nielsen ratings. Richard Matheson based his script for the film on an unpublished novel by Jeff Rice. Bottom: Roddy McDowall as the powerful mental medium Fisher, receiving a jolt from the spirit of Emeric Belasco in *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*. Matheson claims he was sick with disappointment on seeing the film, based on his novel *Hell House*.



At right, scenes from *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*, Matheson's recent theatrical film, adapted from his own novel. Left: The physicist (Clive Revill) is unexpectedly found dead after it is believed the forces of the house have been neutralized. Right: Florence (Paula Franklin), crushed beneath the giant stone cross in the chapel and dying, suddenly realizes the secret of Hell House.

cially. But we were both very happy with it. Considering what we got paid, it was truly a labor of love.

CFQ: Why didn't you sell your script to Universal, and had you seen their earlier film based on the novel called *WEIRD WOMAN*?

MATHESON: Chuck Beaumont and I were both associated with American-International at the time and it did not occur to us to sell it to Universal. We both saw the earlier version and neither of us thought much of it.

CFQ: Were you aware that George Baxt did uncredited work on your script for *BURN, WITCH, BURN*?

MATHESON: No, I don't even know who George Baxt is, but there were no significant changes made that I know of.

CFQ: Do you feel it was wise to show the giant eagle so explicitly in the film's conclusion?

MATHESON: It was not my, or Charles Beaumont's decision to have a giant eagle shown. Nothing in our script was explicit—it was a subtle, excellent script. However, we were very pleased with the picture. It turned out extremely well.

CFQ: Many draw comparisons between *BURN, WITCH, BURN* and Tourneur's *CURSE OF THE DEMON*. Were you influenced by the Tourneur film?

MATHESON: I don't really see any connection. Obviously, Charles Beaumont and myself were influenced by Tourneur films because he remains, to this day, the master of that type of film.

CFQ: Have you been pleased with the performers called upon to interpret your screenplays for AIP?

MATHESON: I enjoyed Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone. I also like Joyce Jameson who played Price's wife in *COMEDY OF TERRORS* and David Frankham who played the doctor, and Debra Paget who played the wife, in the third segment of *TALES OF TERROR*. The entire cast of *BURN, WITCH, BURN* was excellent, but it was made in England. Most of my films were badly cast other than those people I mentioned. Even Jack Nicholson hardly showed future promise in *THE RAVEN*, but then it was hardly his kind of thing as it turned out. He probably felt silly wearing that hat with a feather. Hazel Court is a very good actress who did a very good job in *THE RAVEN*. I have probably forgotten some people that I liked in my films.

CFQ: What did you find most rewarding about working on the AIP films, aside from a financial standpoint?

MATHESON: The happiest experience, set-wise at any rate, was on *COMEDY OF TERRORS*. All the principals loved the script. I had convinced American-International to hire Jacques Tourneur as the director and the shooting was great fun. Basil Rathbone who was the oldest one in the cast, incredibly, was forever full of energy and delightful anecdotes. He told me all about the shooting of *ROBIN HOOD* with Errol Flynn which remains one of my favorite films. If any producer is reading this, I would love, more than anything, to write a swashbuckler.

I might add that I am constantly amazed at the lack of sense in the people who make films in that they refuse to use directors of proven worth sim-



Scenes from *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*, Matheson's first scriptwriting assignment for Universal in 1957. Top: Scott Carey (Grant Williams) has a touching tete-a-tete with Clarice (April Kent), a sideshow midget. Middle: Only a few inches tall, Carey devises an ingenious plan to defend himself from a marauding spider. Bottom: Filming the "great flood" sequence; director Jack Arnold, standing, in a white sport coat, and cinematographer Ellis W. Carter, seated at far left. Although the process photography was poor, the art direction and set decoration were outstanding.



## THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE

...little more than the traditional romp through a haunted house, bland enough for TV.

**THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** A 20th Century Fox Release. 6/73. In Color by DeLuxe. 94 minutes. Produced by Academy Pictures Corporation. Executive producer, James H. Nicholson. Producers, Albert Fennell, Norman T. Herman. Directed by John Hough. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on his novel *Hell House*. Director of photography, Alan Hume. Photographic effects, Tom Howard. Production manager, Ron Fry. Set designer, Robert Jones. Editor, Geoffrey Foot. Music and electronic score by Brian Hodgson and Delia Derbyshire of Electronic Limited. Technical advisor, Tom Corbett. Assistant director, Bert Batt. Continuity, Gladys Goldsmith. Casting director, Sally Nicholl. Camera operator, Tony White. Makeup, Linda Devetta. Special effects, Ron Whybrow.

Florence Tanner ..... Pamela Franklin  
 Ben Fischer ..... Roddy McDowall  
 Dr. Curtis Barrett ..... Clive Revill  
 Ann Barrett ..... Gayle Hunnicutt  
 Rudolph Deutsch ..... Roland Culver  
 Hanley ..... Peter Bowles

**THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** is a film that is simply ahead of its time. Not, unfortunately, in the conventional sense but in that it could have been a triumphant classic had the producers waited until after the phenomenal success of **THE EXORCIST** to make it.

As a novel, *Hell House* is superior to **The Exorcist**, especially in cinematic promise, because it was much faster in pace and, like all of Richard Matheson's work, has many climaxes and surprises. William Blatty's book has some definite lulls in movement and at times is quite boring, while no such passages exist in *Hell House*. Whereas Blatty uses the first half of his novel for developmental purposes, Matheson wastes no time in involving the reader.

The strong sexual overtones of both works reflect age-old associations of the perverse with the occult. **THE EXORCIST** emerges majestically as a film because there are no compromises to traditional movie standards, while **THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** is much the worse for its PG rating. While the basics of Matheson's book exist in the film, crucial details are left out in an effort to gain wider audience appeal. The end result

is a film that carries very few surprises.

The plot involves the hiring of four people by an aging millionaire, in return for \$10,000 each, who stay in the Belasco Mansion, the "Mt. Everest of haunted houses" to prove or disprove life after death. The participants are Florence Tanner, a mental medium, Dr. Lionel Barrett, a scientist, his wife Edith and Matthew Fischer, the only surviving member of a former expedition into the house. Belasco was infamous for keeping his guests indefinitely and subjecting them to all kinds of perversion including torture and drug addiction. The house writhes with the essence of the most evil man in horror fiction. Unlike most monsters, he was not a victim, but the cruellest villain outside of the Marquis de Sade.

In scripting his novel, Matheson deleted the sexual material because he felt it would provoke laughter, but without it we have little more than the traditional romp through a haunted house.

After reading the book, the only reward in seeing the film is the masterstroke casting of Michael Gough as Belasco. It was little more than a brief appearance at the end with his distinctive voice featured on the introductory phonograph record, but he received no billing credit of any kind. After his tour-de-force in **CRUCIBLE OF HORROR** as the nastiest of the nasty, he was the only logical choice. Of all the actors who frequent the genre, Gough has to be the least eulogized and credited. It is a shame that **THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** didn't allow him the guest-star billing he deserved. The rest of the cast is varied in effectiveness, Roddy McDowall gives an unusually outstanding performance as Fischer. Clive Revill is competent, but both Gayle Hunnicutt and Pamela Franklin were miscast, although they manage to redeem themselves through the hard work that it must have taken to make the film work as well as it did.

In the book they find a chapel with a "figure of Jesus (that) was naked, an enormous phallus jutting upward from beneath the legs." In the film, the statue only has horns and is painted red in color. Florence Tanner dies, crushed by the statue, in both, but while Pamela Franklin's torso is merely crushed, the book describes: "Fischer walked unsteadily to the body and stared at it. His gaze shifted

to the genitals. They were caked with blood, the outer tissues shredded."

It is implied that Ms. Tanner has sexual relations with Daniel Belasco off screen, and we later see her with some rather mild looking scratches on her back. Compare the film with Matheson's description in the book: "In an instant, she lay petrified, heartbeat staggering as she gaped at what was lying on her. It was the figure of a corpse, its face in an advanced state of decomposition. Livid, scaly flesh was crumbling from its bones, its rotted lip wreathed in a leering smile that showed jagged teeth, all of them decayed. Only the slanting yellow eyes were alive, regarding her with demonical glee. A leaden bluish light enveloped its entire body, gases of putrefaction bubbling around it. A scream of horror flooded from her throat as the thing plunged inside her." When they found her she was "naked, lying on her back, her legs spread far apart, her eyes wide open, staring upward with a look of total shock. Her body was bruised and bitten, scratched, gouged and running with blood."

Whereas **THE EXORCIST** is graphic, **THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** is bland enough for television. One scene, the big climax in fact, has McDowall tossed across the chapel, repeatedly. This is greeted by spontaneous laughter from most audiences. I suppose we cannot fault Richard Matheson for attempting to create a film geared to a general audience, but it is a shame that either he, or his producers, lacked the conviction and the courage of the original material. Also completely excised were recurring ghostly scenes of painful orgies, torture, drug addiction and disease; results of Belasco's insidious devices. Edith Barrett saw them clearly and her husband came from the dead to rape her.

So much that made the book a blockbuster horror story is left out of the film that I find it impossible to view it objectively, especially after experiencing **THE EXORCIST**. **THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE** is fine as an above average genre piece, but it could have been great had it been true to its source material. Audiences of the future will be demanding much more than this film can offer to frighten them, or even keep them sedately entertained.

Mick Martin



It really is boring to watch a film being made. In the beginning it is fascinating to a writer to go there and to think, "Jeez, this all came out of my head." That notion still occurs to me but not as often. Now I am only interested in getting some really fine films on the screen.

ply because they are past a certain age. Tourneur is a perfect example. He is in France now and I hope he is happy but he really should be in Hollywood, making incredible films. He is the master of the form, but I spent many fruitless years trying to talk people into hiring him to direct my films. Bert Granet hired him to do one of my *TWILIGHT ZONE* episodes\* and it was revealing in the following way. Every time I mentioned Tourneur's name before he got the *TWILIGHT ZONE* assignment, the answer I always got was something like "Oh, well, yes, a great director but he's too old, he's used to taking too much time, we can't afford that sort of thing anymore." So what does Jacques Tourneur do but shoot, to my knowledge, the shortest shooting schedule ever managed on a half-hour *TWILIGHT ZONE* segment. The man is so organized he couldn't possibly take too long.

John Brahm\*\* is another example, literally ousted because of age despite the fact his health was perfect and his ability as sensational as ever. If it hadn't been for Doug Benton, bless him (now working for Aaron Spelling at 20th Century Fox), Brahm would have been out of the business years earlier, which makes no sense at all. I have always said it and I say it again, if I were to start my own studio, I would have a repertory group of proven directors, writers and performers. Well, so much for that.

CFQ: Aside from enjoying the experience of working with Tourneur on *COMEDY OF TERRORS*, were you happy with the way he handled the film?

MATHESON: He handled it about as well as he could under the circumstances. He had only a two week shooting schedule, and he wasn't too happy with the heaviness of the actors' approach to comedy, which may or may not be true. He visualized it more as a very crisp British comedy, and felt that only Basil Rathbone handled it deftly and lightly enough, and he was sensational in it. But, by and large, I still enjoy it.

CFQ: Of AIP's two forays into comedy-horror, *THE RAVEN* is generally considered to be the far better of the two. What do you feel was lacking in Tourneur's film?

MATHESON: I haven't seen *THE RAVEN* in a long time. For one thing, I was told that *COMEDY OF TERRORS* was an ill-suited title, simply because the public did not like the juxtaposition of the words "comedy" and "terror," and therefore stayed away from it. Whereas *THE RAVEN* was billed as a straight horror film, and word-of-mouth got people coming into it. I think probably more children went to see it because *THE RAVEN* was more childlike, although it had some sophistication, and it was more of a period piece with castles and magicians. That's what I think made it a success.

CFQ: You are credited as "associate producer" on *COMEDY OF TERRORS*, in addition to screenwriter. Did this give you more creative control?

MATHESON: I don't know why I got that. I did nothing in any capacity as a producer.

CFQ: Owing to the success of your films for AIP it is surprising that you didn't do more of them?

MATHESON: After they became very successful, I wrote several scripts for films that were never made. One was an adaptation of a novel by

\*"Night Call" telecast 2/7/64.

\*\*Brahm directed "Young Man's Fancy," 3/11/62.

Left: Vincent Price as Robert Morgan, the last human left alive in a world of vampires, from *THE LAST MAN ON EARTH*, the first film version of the Matheson novel *I Am Legend* filmed in Italy in 1964. Matheson originally wrote the film's screenplay for Hammer Films in 1957. He so disliked the film and the changes made in his script by William P. Leicester, that he used his pen name, Logan Swanson, in the credits.

the author of *Colossus*, D. F. Jones, called *Implosion*, about the majority of the women in the world becoming sterile with the few remaining fertile ones put into camps for breeding. The British wouldn't allow that one to be made.

Another film I wrote for them was called *SWEETHEARTS AND HORRORS*, a script I think is marvelous to this day. I don't know what happened to it. Nicholson told me that some Canadian company had bought it. It was written after *COMEDY OF TERRORS*, and it was planned that the four principals of that film would star with Tallulah Bankhead, playing a family called the Sweethearts. It had to do with murder and a magician's house, and it was quite funny I thought, and I was sorry to see that it was never made. I hope that somebody makes it someday.

I did a script of H. G. Wells *WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES* for them when George Pal was interested in the project. I did a completely different version which Pal was happy with, but which they never made. I made the man who became the sleeper a young rock singer. I wasn't crazy about it, but once it gets into the future it worked quite well.

I took my story "Being," which they owned and I expanded it into a very long action science fiction picture which wasn't bad at all, but they never made it either. That was really my swan song with American-International. As I became more successful and they became more successful nothing that we did together seemed to work anymore, and we both sort of called off working with each other by mutual consent even though there were still contractual obligations on both sides.

CFQ: How would you rate James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff as filmmakers from your experience at AIP?

MATHESON: I think Jim Nicholson, who is now deceased, and Sam Arkoff are expert at the so-called exploitation film. While Arkoff has a good many advanced cultural tastes, he seems to repress them when it comes to films, I guess because he knows where the money lies. Nicholson was a very nice man and very enjoyable to work with. He seemed fond of me and fond of my work and I had many pleasant years with him at American-International. Unless I completely misread the signs, I believe that he was really my friend "in court" and was the main reason that I worked so long for the studio.

CFQ: Hammer Films' *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* has been hailed as a classic by many film enthusiasts. How do you feel about it as scripter?

MATHESON: I found some of the casting very questionable. They followed the script just about word for word, so whatever it lacked was strictly acting or production values. For instance, the horse that comes in after them while they're in the circle was supposed to be unmounted. The idea was that if you saw the rider, you'd had it. It was even in the dialogue. However, Christopher Lee was excellent.

CFQ: Why do you suppose when *ROSEMARY'S BABY* was all the rage, an excellent film like *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* got so few playdates?

MATHESON: *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* wasn't so bad that it shouldn't have gotten a few more playdates. I think the cast, except for Christopher Lee, is almost atrocious. The man who played Mocata was good, but the hero was terrible, and so was the heroine. *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, I think, is a masterpiece, primarily because of Polanski. At the time, I seemed to have had a very good chance of writing the script to that, but Polanski was able to do it himself.

CFQ: The ending of *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* is quite confusing. It is not clear at all under what power Marie (Sarah Lawson) defeats Mocata (Charles Gray), or how she suddenly comes to know those devastating lines from the Su-Sama ritual. Can you explain?

MATHESON: Yeah, the ending is confused. I don't know what was left out, but I do recall that in the book, it's the child that gets the lines from the Su-Sama ritual, not the mother. I don't know

why they did this. Maybe the child actress couldn't do it. In the book, it's very complex at this point, and complexity in a film is a little difficult to get through.

Apparently, the author, Dennis Wheatley, was happy with the film. He wrote me a letter, saying that it was the best translation of one of his books into film that he ever had, which was gratifying to me. As a novelist I have had my books butchered by other people when put on the screen, and as a screenwriter I would hate to do that very thing to other novelists, so when I get a comment like that I feel that I'm keeping the faith, so to speak.

CFQ: Another criticism of the film is that the devil is shown so explicitly and is defeated so easily by mere mortal powers.

MATHESON: I had nothing to do with the devil being shown seated on the rock in the form of a goat. This is simply an indication that Hammer is the British equivalent of AIP. Therefore, the same laxity of taste applies.

CFQ: You also did *DIE, DIE, MY DARLING!* for Hammer.

MATHESON: Yes. I thought the director (Silvio Narizzano who also did *GEORGY GIRL*) did a marvelous job. Stephanie Powers was sensational and even Tallulah Bankhead was under some control. Up until the last quarter of the film, it was really a very successful suspense picture, and then it got just too wild, and I take about as much blame for that as anyone else.

CFQ: How did you become involved in writing *DESADE*, and why was it so bad?

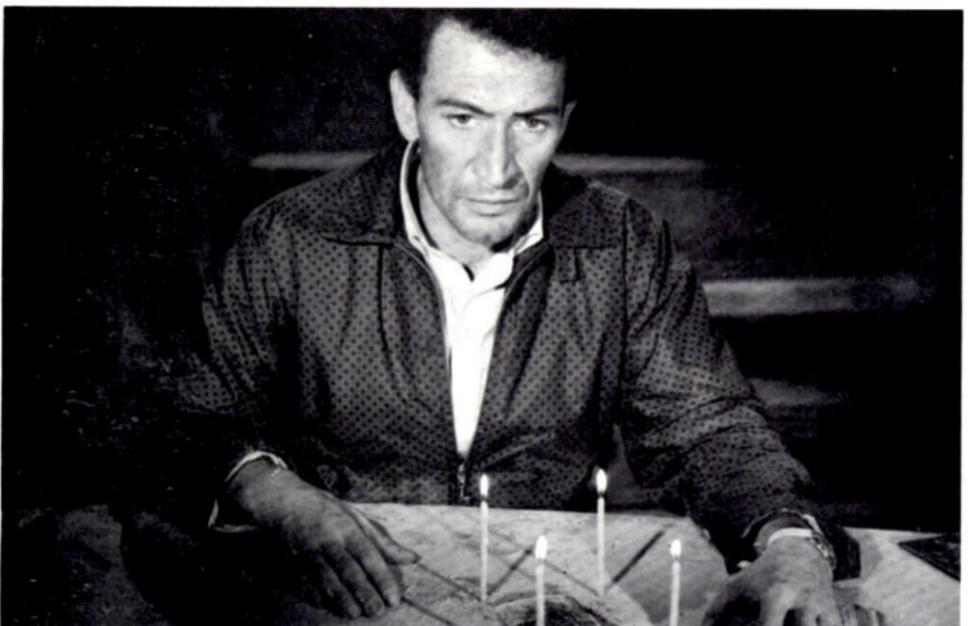
MATHESON: Deke Heyward was running the London office of American-International for years. He was going to do this project and he interested them in it. They told me about it and I did some research on DeSade and wrote the script as a fantasy. It's an experience I would rather forget for a number of reasons. It is, to this day, one of the best scripts I have ever written. It was written as a fantasy. For some reason when Cy Endfield directed it, he decided not to do it as a fantasy, and yet keep incidents in the script as they were, which made it absolutely incomprehensible. My idea was that this was all a reverie taking place in the mind of the dying DeSade. The director, who was apparently having some mental problems at the time, would X out pages of the script which would indicate to the studio that the pages had been shot, and they had not been shot. I was told that when everything was finished they had three-quarters of a film to work with. They had to cut that together to make some sort of continuity, and they sent Roger Corman over there to shoot some fast orgy sequences to fill in the breach. It all collapsed entirely. James Nicholson told me over lunch, years later, that John Huston, who appeared in the film as The Abbe, said he would have been glad to direct it at the time. Great.

Anyway, *DESADE* was a marvelous script. I would stand on it today. If someone would shoot it the way I wrote it, it would be a very successful film. They chose to emphasize the shoddy elements. There were no shoddy elements in my script. I used stream of consciousness in a very abstract way to indicate the sexual aspects. But, of course, I should have known it wasn't going to turn out that way.

CFQ: You mentioned being on the set of *COMEDY OF TERRORS*. Do you often visit the sets of the movies that you write?

MATHESON: I never went too much. It really is boring to watch a film being made. In the beginning it is fascinating to a writer to go there and think, "Jeez, this all came out of my head." That notion still occurs to me but not as often. Now I am only interested in getting some really fine films on the screen, tv or otherwise. *DEUEL* is the best experience I've had so far. *THE NIGHT STALKER* next, and both of them in one year too. But I never watched them working on *THE NIGHT STRANGLER* at all.

Incidentally, if my family and I hadn't gone to Seattle several times on camping trips, I probab-



ly would never have gotten the idea for *THE NIGHT STRANGLER*. They have what is called "The City Underneath Seattle." It's a tour. It's not as far-reaching and deep as in the movie, of course, but it does exist and there are old store fronts and run down buildings underneath the streets of Seattle. One never knows where the next idea will come from. My title for it was "The Time Killer," but they changed it to give more indication of it being a sequel.

After seventeen years in the business, it was quite a bonanza to have *DEAL* and *THE NIGHT STALKER* both on in the same season.

CFQ: Did they follow your script closely in filming *DEAL*?

MATHESON: They followed my script very closely. It was a beautiful translation of my script. Steven Spielberg not only followed my script and got every value out of my script, but added to it, which is what I feel a true director should do. Put every value from the script up on the screen and then add to it. It is when the director decides that he will do it exactly his own way and pay very little attention to the script that he becomes less than useful to the project.

CFQ: After two such resounding successes, did you find yourself in greater demand as a film writer?

MATHESON: No. I don't think that has ever happened to a screen writer. I have yet to meet one who was suddenly deluged with offers. Spielberg, the fellow who directed *DEAL*, is very young and did a beautiful job of directing. He profited much more from that than anybody did. Dennis Weaver is still doing *MCLOUD*, the producer is back doing the same old thing, but the director goes up because that's the way this town is organized.

CFQ: How did you meet Dan Curtis?

MATHESON: I met him when he was assigned to produce *THE NIGHT STALKER* and I was the writer. He has directed the two-hour version of *DRACULA* I wrote which will appear on CBS in February. Jack Palance plays Dracula. I have seen the film and it's quite good. It had been scheduled for telecast in the fall of 1973 but was pre-empted by a speech from President Nixon.

I think that Dan Curtis is a remarkably good producer. He has an excellent story sense and has been helpful on many of the scripts that I have done for him.

CFQ: Palance and Curtis teamed for the video taped special *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*. Did you see that?

MATHESON: Yes. I thought it was very well done. In fact, I think it stands as the best of the many versions of that story.

CFQ: Better even than the classic Rouben Mamoulian film?

MATHESON: I liked it simply because it made a little more sense to me. Usually Dr. Jekyll is too good and Mr. Hyde usually turns into an ape or something. What I liked about Palance's performance is that you saw both in each other. You saw parts of Mr. Hyde already in Dr. Jekyll, the older man who had these frustrated physical needs in him, and in Mr. Hyde you still saw some residue of Dr. Jekyll. The Mamoulian picture had more interesting photography, but that's simply because they had more money to spend. This is certainly not said to downgrade Rouben Mamoulian's capabilities. He was a marvelous director. The Spencer Tracy version was enjoyable too. I thought Spencer Tracy was marvelous. But the way the two characters were blended together I found most satisfying in the Dan Curtis / Jack Palance version.

CFQ: It is surprising to see Dan Curtis responsible for so much quality filmwork in the

Scenes from *BURN, WITCH, BURN*, which Matheson adapted from the novel *Conjure Wife* by Fritz Leiber, in collaboration with Charles Beaumont in 1962. Top: Norman (Peter Wyngarde) can't understand when his wife Tansy (Janet Blair) begs him not to answer the phone. Middle: Norman, a broken man, his beliefs threatened by the irrational, vainly tries to use his own knowledge of the supernatural to fight back. Bottom: Professor Carr (Colin Gordon) finds his crippled wife Flora (Margaret Johnson) crushed under a huge stone eagle, the victim of her own sorcery.

# DRACULA

...bloodsucking played for  
LOVE STORY lyricism...

DRACULA A CBS Friday Night Movie World Premiere. Telecast 2/8/74. In Color. 104 minutes. A Dan Curtis Production. Produced and directed by Dan Curtis. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. Director of photography, Oswald Morris. Edited by Richard A. Harris. Music by Robert Cobert. Filmed on location in Yugoslavia and England by Latglen Ltd.

Count Dracula ..... Jack Palance  
Mrs. Westerna ..... Pamela Brown  
Van Helsing ..... Nigel Davenport  
Arthur ..... Simon Ward  
Lucy ..... Fiona Lewis  
Mina ..... Penelope Horner  
Harker ..... Murray Brown

Why is this DRACULA different from all other versions? Why does it matter?

Richard Matheson's script avoids obvious traps—like rehashing vampire lore most viewers know by heart, or stealing from previous film versions. His DRACULA contains none of the cobwebbed eeriness of the Universal classic, and very little of the visual flamboyance and sexual ambiguity of the Hammer remakes. In fact, the viewer follows Harker through Dracula's castle wondering whether Matheson has changed the basic plot at all.

He hasn't. Instead, Matheson designs a new Count Dracula: humanized, and pitiable as Milton's Satan, but no less dangerous. This Dracula is none too pleased with his parasitic side: he recoils from the obligatory accidental cut on Harker's neck. Furthermore, unlike previous Draculas, he has his reasons for going to England: Lucy looks like his long lost love, and he will "have" her in the only way he knows. The existential paralysis wears off quickly, however. Finished with Lucy, Dracula selects other victims with less care, before Van Helsing performs his time-tested duty.

Matheson writes this character for literacy, a welcome change, albeit a thin one, since he hardly takes advantage of all the recent Dracula research. Besides the love affair, this Dracula's past includes an army command and a basement full of torture devices. A painting on a wall in Castle Dracula shows a stately Palance done up as Vlad the Impaler. And Matheson ends his film with an epilogue, which explains how this nobleman so distinguished himself by his cruelty that his countrymen dubbed him "dracula" (devil). Unfortunately, such details take longer to describe than to show. Onscreen, there are too few of them—coming too late in the story to place what has preceded in any perspective.

The problem, then, lies in the execution. Quickie flashbacks of a young Count gamboling through the woods with his beloved inject bathos at just the wrong places, making one think *Transylvania Mon Amour*, not tragedy. And we learn no more about the "human" Dracula than these brief, disjointed details tell us—much less, enough to enable us to accept a bloodsucking scene played for LOVE STORY lyricism.

Palance helps. Though angst heroes have never been his specialty, he dwarfs the pallid ingenues who clog his film, playing Dracula with slow, massive menace. But Palance also has pretensions. So when he falls into the mock-Shakespearean brogue he often uses when he is miscast, he fractures his own scenes.



Jack Palance as Count Dracula.



Producer/director Dan Curtis doesn't help. His direction is pallid, typical TV stuff, even by Curtis standards. What you see are the usual zooms, wide-angle compositions, and expensive sets used ineffectively. It all amounts to far less than the sum of its inauspicious parts. Be Matheson's script what it may, Curtis' inability to pace his action (the climax doesn't happen, it arrives) smothers whatever may have been there in the first place.

Which, is a shame. Few writers have worked so successfully in the genre. Fewer have possessed such freedom. No other writer can do what Matheson does to a housecat (*THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*), or get so much mileage out of a truck passing a car on the highway (*DUEL*). And his producers know it.

Outside suburbia, however, Matheson has not fared so well. His Poe scripts stand as creaky frameworks for the excesses of Cormon and Price, much as his DRACULA simply supports the strongarm TV tactics of Dan Curtis, without complementing them. Matheson doesn't inject his Count into the Victorian social milieu, as the Browning version did, nor does he frost over the Victorian moral landscape, as did Hammer's *Jimmy Sangster*. Instead, he gives us a few period details, and a stilted Victorian ambience which goes no deeper than the stiff costuming of the actors. DRACULA sags, where it should stretch. Matheson's literate prose forces him to give up the serial tone which keeps the Hammer vehicles moving, and the period forces him to sacrifice the menace of the mundane. He replaces neither.

Where is Matheson the philosopher, who can end a movie like *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN* with a mini-treatise on man's role in the universe? Or Matheson the rationalist, who worked out a biological explanation for vampirism in *I Am Legend*? We get only Matheson the pop tragedian, whose sole insight into the world's best known vampire legend is that even Dracula was a man once. Yet even this rationale does not hold up. A furious exchange of close-ups at Dracula's death draws sympathy to him, and away from the stake-slammimg cold fish who destroys him. Then we read, in the epilogue, how Dracula the man set himself apart from the likes of Matheson's bland Van Helsing (a far cry from Peter Cushing's dynamic man of reason). And we are supposed to sympathize.

Matheson wants us to understand Dracula's bestializing of Lucy as some sort of VERTIGO quirk in his demon soul. He also wants us to take Dracula's sudden downshifting from sympathetic figure to outright monster in the film's second half as something more than structural oversight. We can do neither. If Dracula's tragic love life serves as anything more than a facile dramatic device, the distinction remains in Matheson's head—or on the cutting room floor.

But if Matheson has failed, he is in good company. Artists have been stumbling over each other for years in their rush to "modernize" Stoker's story. The original stage version is currently playing the kitsch circuit. Off-Broadway's "Dracula Sabbat" replaced the movies' frail heroines with fat girls just aching (in the nude, no less) for Dracula to take them. Terence Fisher's DRACULA (1958) set up a new sexual vocabulary which still carries most vampire films. But Fisher himself has abandoned the series, devoting himself exclusively to the Frankensteins, implying that a good metaphor (Mary Shelley's) holds the promise of more sequels than a (penny) dreadful one.

For Richard Matheson, it should be back to the suburbs and *Kolchak*.

Harry Ringel



It's really up to each individual to decide for themselves what is going on around them. Outside of hopefully exposing a few ideas to the public, I'm not going to go around standing on a soapbox saying "believe in ghosts!"

genre, especially in light of his early work on the TV DARK SHADOWS.

MATHESON: That was terrible. I don't think he actually wrote or directed any of the series. It was a day by day thing and he had little to do with it. He screened one of the two movie versions for me and I didn't care for it.

CFQ: Is your treatment of DRACULA as violent as THE NIGHT STALKER?

MATHESON: I suppose there is quite a lot of violence in it, but how much CBS will go for, I don't know, because they're a lot more sedate than ABC. Anything that Dan Curtis does will have violence because that's his "bag," and he does it well. Violence and quick plot movement are his two biggest features in telling a story.

CFQ: Would you agree that the violence of THE NIGHT STALKER played a large part in its popularity?

MATHESON: I don't know. It was an interesting idea, a vampire in Las Vegas, and it was well acted and directed. Even so, putting all these things together, I don't think anybody involved in this film, to this day, has the least notion why it was such an incredible success.

It was based on an unpublished novel by Jeff Rice, which is going to be published now. The idea was his, the action sequences were his. Outside of putting it together into a coherent script and adding the characterization of Kolchak, which was entirely different in his book, I don't want to take any more credit away from him. And certainly the character of the fast-talking, brash, irreverent reporter is hardly a creative coup on my part since they had the same thing in FRONT PAGE forty years earlier.

CFQ: Are you familiar with the novel *Progeny of the Adder* by Leslie H. Whitten published in 1970, and that it is extremely close to the plot of THE NIGHT STALKER?

MATHESON: I'm very familiar with it. I thought I was going to make it into a movie several times. I actually did an outline for it once on my own. It is similar to THE NIGHT STALKER which, thank God, has nothing to do with me. If THE NIGHT STALKER had been my original story I would be feeling very guilty about it, but there is no connection between *Progeny of the Adder* and the Jeff Rice work. It's just a sheer coincidence. It's a pity that *Progeny of the Adder* was never made, it would have made an absolutely fantastic film.

CFQ: From what I know of your Dracula project, it seems that it will be the definitive version that people have been anticipating for years.

MATHESON: Whether it's the definitive version, I don't know. Someday someone may make an even better version. As of now, it is the only good version as far as I'm concerned. I never saw one that I thought was worth a damn. I think the Lugosi film is ludicrous. The Hammer film is terrible and boring. The new version is not perfect. It's full of flaws. It had to be shot too fast, it didn't have enough money going for it, there wasn't enough time, and more. Even so it's by far the best DRACULA ever made.

My script follows the book almost literally. There are a lot of parts that had to be changed however, just out of pure common sense. Van Helsing, for instance, is forever running in and

checking Lucy and then leaving only to come back to find she has lost some more blood. I present him as a more formidable foe for Dracula. Unfortunately Dan Curtis elected not to have Dracula old in the beginning and then young when he gets to England. I told him I thought he should but he decided not to.

CFQ: *Horror of Dracula* is considered by many to be the best version to date.

MATHESON: I didn't care for it. Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing are fine actors, but the film had little to do with the book except some character names and reworked incidents. My version is based with great care on Bram Stoker's work. The Universal DRACULA was based on the stage play, so this is a first. Some things left out of those films were vital.

CFQ: You seem to be pouring more energy into television than films.

MATHESON: In the case of DRACULA Palance is more interested in doing it on television than for theatrical release. In theatres very few people see it, but on television you reach millions. I used to keep up on everything that was going on in films. I was a big buff. I still am, but I find it hard to go. For one thing, going to the theater itself is not a very pleasant experience. I don't enjoy the majority of the pictures. Outside of THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, I have nothing to do with theatrical films anymore. I prefer television, except for the commercials, which make you wince. When I saw THE NIGHT STRANGLER it was a theatrical version for overseas. You could tell where the act breaks were, but it doesn't hurt. I think it's good to have these climaxes throughout a story. Most movies don't have that, they just think of it as one great continuity and you don't have these peaks.

CFQ: Isn't the imposition of a climax in a story every twelve minutes oppressive to a writer, not to mention ludicrous?

MATHESON: It is true that sometimes the breaking up of a story into that many pieces can become very awkward. It isn't necessary that there be a stark, raving mad, "Pearl White" climax at the end of every act. I still maintain that the concept of a little jolt of interest throughout a story is not a bad thing at all. Sometimes, when films are of excessive length, they forget that they're supposed to keep the viewer interested, and it becomes oppressively dull.

CFQ: You have said that you are attracted to working in television because it is a "mass" media. But isn't that precisely the fact why television is as bland and insipid as it is?

MATHESON: It is not bland and insipid anymore. More and more television films in particular are becoming quite challenging. For instance, I am going to do a very strong film about an alcoholic, for Larry Turman, who produced THE GRADUATE. This is not at all what TV would have shown a few years ago, so it has really opened up as far as bravery of content.

Lorimer Productions has filmed a TV movie I wrote called DYING ROOM ONLY, based on my short story of the same name. It stars Cloris Leachman and Ross Martin who are very good in it. The producer, Allen Epstein, and the director, Philip Leacock, did a marvelous job. It's a fantastic piece of work. I was just delighted with it. It was so good it was almost better than it deserved.

CFQ: Val Lewton felt that for a horror film to be truly affecting, it should be set in modern, everyday places with common, everyday characters. Would you agree?

MATHESON: I agree with Val Lewton 100%. To me, the ideal horror or terror story is set in this way, absolutely, without question.

CFQ: Then you prefer the suggestive, Lewton approach to the genre, rather than the graphic, Hammer Films/Dan Curtis approach?

MATHESON: Obviously, I prefer the suggestive approach. I think that you can go too far with it, as in THE HAUNTING. There's a certain point where you've got to lay it on the line, or else

you're copping-out, and you can get bored. However, you can go too far in the other direction, and that becomes a bore too. It's just got to be balanced, that's all.

CFQ: Are there any films you feel have been particularly well done in this field?

MATHESON: I thought THE POSSESSION OF JOEL DELANEY was marvelous. It was really a good job. Shirley MacLaine was excellent in it. It scared the hell out of me. I took my thirteen year old son to see it and I didn't think it was going to be that bad. He couldn't sleep for nights.

I think ROSEMARY'S BABY is a marvelous piece of work. The old line of films with Karloff, Lugosi, etc. were simply not that good. The fans put a glaze over their eyes and they don't really see anymore. If you look at them for the first time from an objective viewpoint, you would see that very few of them were any good. The ones that James Whale did stand up very well.

CFQ: Your latest theatrical feature is THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE. My wife was saying that she enjoyed your novel Hell House, but she felt you did better when you were not writing dirty books.

MATHESON: Dirty book, please, not dirty books! (laughter) I don't usually write that type of thing. I felt if you are going to have an evil house with people doing evil things, you can't very well have them playing tiddly-winks.

I guarantee that THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, on the contrary, will be squeaky clean and undoubtedly get a PG. Stanley Chase, the producer of COLOSSUS, and I were trying to get our own production of Hell House going a couple of years before I ended up selling it because we weren't getting anywhere. He made the point, and very well taken, that the way things are now in the movies, to show people indulging in all sorts of sexual activity and then say "Isn't that perverted?" would get you laughed right out of the theater. Nothing is evil anymore, it's all comedy. So we decided to forget about that aspect, to let it be assumed and glance over it with a few words, but not go into details, to concentrate more on the other elements.

CFQ: How did you like the film?

MATHESON: The first time I saw it I was sick with disappointment, and I just couldn't get over it for weeks. Then I went to see it again, and it didn't bother me as much, but that seems to happen all the time. I wasn't wiped out by it and it apparently pleased a lot of people, so I can't really tear it down that much, I guess...

CFQ: Could you tell us something about your projected anthology series for television, INNER SANCTUM?

MATHESON: The series will not be called INNER SANCTUM, it will be called DEAD OF NIGHT. The pilot film has already been shot from my script based on my story "No Such Thing As A Vampire." I have done three other scripts for the show, one based on a Jack Finney story, and two others based on stories of mine, "Prey" and "The Children of Noah." William F. Nolan is adapting two of my stories for the show, "Theresa" and "The Likeness of Julie." It seems that the series has a good chance of being put on in the "second season," but that is not definite.

CFQ: In an article that appeared about you in the San Francisco Chronicle, the writer inferred that you were crusading for acceptance of psychic phenomenon.

MATHESON: No, I'm not crusading. I had an idea once that I was going to write a whole series of massive novels on the subject (several chapters of one appeared in my last collection). It didn't work out, so Hell House is my swan song as far as that's concerned. I believe in it, but I'm not out to convert anyone. It's really up to each individual to decide for themselves what is going on around them. Outside of, hopefully, exposing a few ideas to the public, I'm not going to go around standing on my soapbox saying, "believe in ghosts!"

CFQ: Do you have a favorite writer in this

Top: A scene from THE RAVEN, Matheson's favorite of the Poe series, written for AIP in 1963 and directed by Roger Corman. Jack Nicholson, Olive Sturgess, Hazel Court and Vincent Price find themselves prisoners in the castle of Scarabus. The film is an oft-times hilarious comedy-fantasy. Bottom: A scene from COMEDY OF TERRORS, an original black-comedy written by Matheson for AIP in 1963 and directed by Jacques Tourneur. Vincent Price checks very warily to see if "customer" Basil Rathbone is dead. Tourneur was unhappy with the heaviness of the cast's approach to comedy, except for Basil Rathbone, who handled it deftly and lightly enough.



field?

MATHESON: My favorite fantasy writer is Jack Finney. I have always been fascinated by the notion of time travel and Finney has almost made it his own. I am working on a time travel novel myself, but he has nothing to worry about. I had always wished for someone to make Time and Again into a film, and apparently Dan Curtis is going to make it into a two hour film for NBC. Although I might be cutting my throat with reagrd to my own time travel novel, I just love his novel too much to let anyone mangle it, so I am going to do the script myself.

Ward Moore is a marvelous writer. I think Walter Miller, Jr. is a marvelous writer. I think Theodore Sturgeon may well be the greatest, most talented writer the field has produced ever. Bradbury, of course, has influenced all of us. One can never mention a list of greats and favorites without mentioning his name.

My favorite fantasy novel is The Sword In the Stone by T. H. White, which I think is just a magnificent book.

CFQ: Are you working on anything else that we can expect in the future?

MATHESON: I have been working on a pilot script for a science fiction series to be called GALAXY. Horace Gold, formerly the editor of Galaxy Magazine, is involved with the series, probably as the story editor or story advisor. Richard Maibaum is, supposedly, to produce it. He first brought the notion to Screen Gems and he adapted two of the stories for it which are based on classic stories by Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov. I have two of my stories in it, I adapted those two and a Jerry Sohl story, and I did what is called the "wrap-around," which is the format of the show, and I wrote the presentation for the pilot. ABC has expressed some interest in the show as a science fiction anthology series wherein the stories will be of indefinite length. They will be only as long as the story they are adapted from calls for.

Dan Curtis has filmed my adaptation of David Chase's "The Hunter" with Clint Walker and Peter Graves as a TV movie called SCREAM OF THE WOLF. I am doing a third in the Kolchak series with William F. Nolan, the first two being THE NIGHT STALKER and THE NIGHT STRANGLER. I am just working on it now. It's called THE NIGHT KILLERS and will be filmed in March. It is supposed to be the pilot for a potential miniseries, a 1 1/2 hour movie, once a month.

CFQ: What advice do you have for aspiring fantasy writers among our readers?

MATHESON: There are no recommendations I would like to make to aspiring fantasy writers, or recommendations I would like to make to any aspiring writers, for the simple reason that you don't have to make recommendations. They are already off in a corner by themselves, writing like crazy. I have gone out to my daughter's high school on a number of occasions to talk to writing classes and science fiction classes, and I have said to them that if there is something in the person that makes them want to write, nothing you say to discourage them will keep them from writing, and if they don't have it in them, you can try to inspire them for a hundred years and you'll get nothing out of them. You can encourage them certainly, but it's got to be in them, and that's about the size of it.

Top: A scene from THE DEVIL'S BRIDE, which Matheson adapted from Dennis Wheatley's novel of the occult The Devil Rides Out for Hammer Films in 1968. The Duc de Richleau is forced to invoke the devastating litany of the Su-Sama ritual in order to protect his band from the Angel of Death. Middle: Kier Dullea as the aging and broken Marquis de Sade, from AIP's 1969 production of DESADE, one of their biggest and costliest failures. Matheson conceived the film as a fantasy, a reverie in the mind of the dying De Sade, and feels his script was one of the finest he has ever done. Director Cy Endfield butchered the screenplay and the film until it became incomprehensible. Bottom: A scene from DUET, one of Matheson's most successful films for television, shown by ABC in 1971. Dennis Weaver is the harried motorist who matches wits with a maniacal truck driver.

# MATHESON FILMOGRAPHY

1957

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN A Universal Release. 1957. 81 minutes. In Black & White and Cinemascope. Produced by Albert Zugsmith. Directed by Jack Arnold. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on his novel *The Shrinking Man*. With: Grant Williams, Randy Stewart, April Kent, Paul Langton, Raymond Baily, William Schallert.

1959

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. 26 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Buck Houghton for MGM. "And When The Sky Opened" Telecast 12/11/59. Directed by Douglas Heyes. Teleplay by Rod Serling based on a story by Richard Matheson. With: Rod Taylor, Charles Aidman, James Hutton, Maxine Stewart, Paul Bryan.

1960

HOUSE OF USHER An American-International Release. 1960. 80 minutes. In Panavision and Color by Pathé. Produced and directed by Roger Corman. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on the story "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe. With: Vincent Price, Mark Damon, Myrna Fahey, Harry Ellerbe, Ruth Oklander, Bill Borzage, Mike Jordan, Nadajan.

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. 26 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Buck Houghton for MGM. "Third From the Sun" Telecast 1/8/60. Directed by Richard L. Bare. Teleplay by Rod Serling based on a story by Richard Matheson. With: Fritz Weaver, Joe Moross, Edward Andrews, Denise Alexander.

"The Last Flight" Telecast 2/5/60. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Kenneth Haigh, Alexander Scourby.

"A World of Difference" Telecast 3/11/60. Directed by Ted Post. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Howard Duff.

"A World of His Own" Telecast 7/1/60. Directed by Ralph Nelson. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Keenan Wynn, Phyllis Kirk, Mary La Roche.

"Nick of Time" Telecast 11/18/60. Directed by Richard L. Bare. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: William Shatner, Patricia Breslin, Guy Wilkerson, Stafford Repp, Walter Reed, Dee Caruso.

1961

PIT AND THE PENDULUM An American-International Release. 1961. 85 minutes. In Panavision and Color by Pathé. Produced and directed by Roger Corman. Screenplay by Richard Matheson inspired by the short story by Edgar Allan Poe. With: Vincent Price, John Kerr, Barbara Steele, Luana Anders, Antony Carbone, Patrick Westwood, Lynne Bernay, Larry Turner.

MASTER OF THE WORLD An American-International Release. 1961. In Scope and Color by Pathé with Stereophonic Sound. Produced by James H. Nicholson. Directed by William Whitney. Based on the novels *Master of the World* and *Robur, the Conqueror* by Jules Verne. Screenplay by Richard Matheson. With: Vincent Price, Charles Bronson, Henry Hull, Mary Webster, Richard Harrison, David Frankham.

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. 26 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Buck Houghton for MGM. "The Invaders" 1/27/61. Directed by Douglas Heyes. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Agnes Moorehead. "Once Upon A Time" Telecast 12/15/

61. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Buster Keaton, Stanley Adams, Jesse White, James Flavin, Gil Lamb.

1962

TALES OF TERROR An American-International Release. 1962. 86 minutes. In Panavision and Color by Pathé. Produced and directed by Roger Corman. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on the stories: "Morella," "The Black Cat," "The Casque of Amontillado," and "The Facts In The Case of M. Valdemar." With: Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone, Debra Paget, Maggie Pierce, Leona Gage, Joyce Jameson, Wally Campo, David Frankham.

BURN, WITCH, BURN An American-International Release. 1962. 90 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Albert Fennell. Directed by Sidney Hayers. Screenplay by Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont based on the novel *Conjure Wife* by Fritz Lieber. With: Janet Blair, Peter Wyngarde, Margaret Johnston, Anthony Nicholls, Colin Gordon, Kathleen Byron, Reginald Beckwith, Jessica Dunning, Norman Bird.

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. 26 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Buck Houghton for MGM. "Little Girl Lost" Telecast 3/16/62. Directed by Paul Stewart. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his own published story. With: Sarah Marshall, Robert Sampson, Charles Aidman. "Young Man's Fancy" Telecast 5/11/62. Directed by John Brahm. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Alex Nicol, Phyllis Thaxter, Wallace Rooney, Helen Brown, Ricky Kelman.

THRILLER An NBC Television Series. 52 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Universal.

"The Return of Andrew Bentley" Telecast 1962. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: John Newland, Antoinette Bower, Philip Bourneuf.

1963

THE RAVEN An American-International Release. 1963. 86 minutes. In Panavision and Color by Pathé. Produced and directed by Roger Corman. Screenplay by Richard Matheson inspired by the poem by Edgar Allan Poe. With: Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Hazel Court, Olive Sturgess, Jack Nicholson, Connie Wallace, William Baskin, Aaron Saxon.

THE COMEDY OF TERRORS An American-International Release. 1963. 88 minutes. In Panavision and Color by Pathé. Produced by James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff. Directed by Jacques Tourneur. Screenplay by Richard Matheson. With: Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, Joe E. Brown, Joyce Jameson, Beverly Hills, Phil Barsolow.

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. In Black & White. MGM. "Mute" Telecast 1/31/63. 52 minutes. Produced by Herbert Hirschman. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his story. With: Ann Jillian, Frank Overton, Irene Dailey.

"Death Ship" Telecast 2/7/63. 52 minutes. Produced by Herbert Hirschman. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his story. With: Ross Martin, Jack Klugman, Frederick Bier. "Steel" Telecast 10/4/63. 26 minutes. Produced by Bert Granet. Directed by Don Weiss. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his published story. With: Lee Marvin, Joe Mantelli.

"Nightmare At 20,000 Feet" Telecast 10/11/63. 26 minutes. Produced by Bert Granet. Directed by Richard Donner. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his published story. With: William Shatner, Christine White, Edward Kenner.

1964

THE LAST MAN ON EARTH An American - International Release. 1964. In Black & White. Produced by Robert L. Lipper. Directed by Sidney Salkow. Screenplay by Logan Swanson and William P. Leicester based on the novel *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson. With: Vincent Price, Franca Bettoia, Emma Danielli, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Umberto Rau, Christi Courtland.

TWILIGHT ZONE A CBS Television Series. 26 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by Bert Granet for MGM. "Night Call" Telecast 2/7/64. Directed by Jacques Tourneur. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his published story. With: Gladys Cooper, Nora Marlowe, Martine Bartlett. "Spur Of The Moment" Telecast 2/21/64. Directed by Elliot Silverstein. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Diana Hyland, Roger Davis, Philip Ober, Marsha Hunt, Robert Hogan.

1965

DIE! DIE! MY DARLING! A Columbia Pictures Release. 1965. 105 minutes. In Color by Pathé. A Hammer Film. Produced by Anthony Hinds. Directed by Silvio Narizzano. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on the novel *Nightmare* by Anne Blaisted. With: Tallulah Bankhead, Stefanie Powers, Peter Vaughan, Maurice Kaufman, Yootha Joyce, Donald Sutherland, Gwendolyn Watts.

1966

STAR TREK An NBC Television Series. 52 minutes. In Color. Produced by Gene Roddenberry for Desilu.

"The Enemy Within" Telecast 10/6/66. Directed by Leo Penn. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley.

1968

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE A 20th Century-Fox Release. 1968. 95 minutes. In Technicolor. A Hammer Film. Produced by Anthony Nelson Keys. Directed by Terence Fisher. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on the novel *The Devil Rides Out* by Dennis Wheatley. With: Christopher Lee, Charles Gray, Nike Arrighi, Leon Greene, Patrick Mower, Gwen-Francion-Davies.

1969

DESADE An American-International Release. 1969. 120 minutes. Color by Berkley Pathé. Produced by Samuel Z. Arkoff and James H. Nicholson. Directed by Cy Endfield. Screenplay by Richard Matheson. With: Keir Dullea, Senta Berger, Lilli Palmer, Anna Massey, John Huston, Uta Levka.

1971

THE OMEGA MAN A Warner Bros Release. 7/71. 98 minutes. In Panavision and Technicolor. Produced by Walter Seltzer. Directed by Boris Sagal. Based on the novel *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson. Screenplay by John William and Joyce Corrington. With: Charlton

Heston, Anthony Zerbe, Rosalind Cash, Paul Loslo, Lincoln Kilpatrick.

DUEL An ABC Movie of the Weekend. Telecast 11/13/71. In color. 75 minutes. Produced by George Eckstein. Directed by Steven Spielberg. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on his published story. With: Dennis Weaver, Eddie Firestone, Charles Steel, Shirley O'Hara, Lucille Benson.

NIGHT GALLERY An NBC Television Series. In Color. Produced by Jack Laird.

"The Big Surprise" Telecast 11/10/71. 11 minutes. Directed by Jeannot Szwarc. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his own story. With: Vincent Van Patten, Marc Vahanian, Eric Chase, John Carradine.

1972

NIGHT GALLERY An NBC Television Series. In Color. Produced by Jack Laird.

"The Funeral" Telecast 1/5/72. 15 minutes. Directed by John Meredyth Lucas. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on his own story. With: Werner Klemperer, Joe Flynn, Charles Macauley.

THE NIGHT STALKER An ABC Movie of the Week. Telecast 1/11/72. In Color. 75 minutes. Produced by Dan Curtis. Directed by John Llewellyn Moxey. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on an unpublished novel by Jeff Rice. With: Darren McGavin, Carol Lynley, Simon Oakland, Kent Smith, Ralph Meeker, Claude Akins, Barry Atwater.

GHOST STORY An NBC Television Series Pilot. Telecast 3/17/72. 52 minutes. In Color. Executive producer, William Castle. Produced by Joel Regosin. Directed by John Llewellyn Moxey. Teleplay by Richard Matheson. With: Barbara Parkins, Jeanette Nolan, Sam Jaffe, Sebastian Cabot.

1973

THE NIGHT STRANGLER An ABC Movie of the Week. Telecast 1/16/73. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced and directed by Dan Curtis. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on characters created by Jeff Rice. With: Darren McGavin, Jo Ann Pflug, Simon Oakland, Scott Brady, Wally Cox, Margaret Hamilton, John Carradine, Nina Wayne.

THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE A 20th Century-Fox Release. 6/73. (see 11)

DYING ROOM ONLY An ABC Movie of the Week. Telecast 9/18/73. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced by Allen S. Epstein. Directed by Philip Leacock. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on his short story. With: Cloris Leachman, Ross Martin, Ned Beatty, Louise Latham, Dana Eclar, Dabney Coleman.

1974

SCREAM OF THE WOLF An ABC Movie of the Week. Telecast 1/16/74. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced and directed by Dan Curtis. Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on the story "The Hunter" by David Chase. With: Peter Graves, Clint Walker, Jo Ann Pflug, Phillip Carey.

DRACULA A CBS Movie Special. Telecast 2/8/74 (see 15)

Richard Matheson has written numerous screenplays and teleplays not of a horror, fantasy or science fiction nature which have not been listed here.

# RETROSPECT

## I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE

Its underlying messages about society and, more specifically, women, are important ones that are particularly relevant today.

Don Siegel's *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* is an acknowledged classic. However, the very excellence of its execution has obscured the merits of a lesser but nonetheless noteworthy film that deals in a similar theme, the alien takeover of human beings. Despite its horrendous title, *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE* is a science fiction film of unusual mood and atmosphere. Smoothly directed in 1958 by Gene Fowler, Jr. (a former editor for Fritz Lang), the film manages to be both shocking and subtle.

On its lowest level, the movie can be classed as a "monster picture," since the aliens are revealed almost immediately. The physical aspect of the invaders is inventive and quite horrible, complete with ponderously long arms, convoluted heads, and great, exposed arteries which criss-cross the face and run into the chest. The film features a plethora of fine special effects, and a nicely designed spaceship set. *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE* is most disturbing, however, in its less obvious moments. The aliens have no emotions, causing the human hosts to be curiously distant and aloof. The invaders are allergic to alcohol. But most importantly, they are clever and ruthless.

The story is simple and not particularly incredible. It is night and Bill (Tom Tryon), an attractive young man of about thirty, is driving home from his bachelor party when he sees a body lying in the road ahead of him. He jams on the brakes and leaps from the car, but the body is gone. At a sudden humming, he whirls, to find himself confronted by a terrible, glowing humanoid monster. Before Bill can react a thick, swirling vapor engulfs him and when it recedes his body is gone. He is inexplicably late for his wedding the next day, and his new bride, Marge (Gloria Talbott), immediately notices his strange, distant behavior. The couple has been driving for some time after leaving the reception, and nearly collides in the dark with another car. Marge, who has been dozing on her husband's shoulder, bolts upright and sees that he has been driving without his lights. "It's dark," she says. "How could you see?" Bill says nothing.

Fowler shows us what Bill has become in a particularly horrific scene in which the young man stands on the patio at the honeymoon resort, gazing up at the cloudy night sky. Thunder rumbles in the distance, and when lightening flashes, his face reflects a terrible alien visage. Marge waits quietly inside, and finally calls to her hus-

band. His face reverts to normalcy, he enters the room and, in a wonderfully disquieting moment, tenderly kisses his bride.

Throughout the film, horror wells suddenly, to hit the victim and the viewer hard in the face. At one point, Bill leaves the house in the evening without a word. Marge, clad in a bathrobe, follows him through the quiet, residential streets. He turns a corner ahead of her, there is a pregnant pause, and then the air is split by a sudden screech. Marge races around the corner and finds the body of a cat lying on the sidewalk. The animal motif is used more than once in the film, the first time being when Marge gives Bill a small dog as a gift. "Junior's" hackles immediately rise and he growls at Bill, who lamely offers, "Maybe dogs don't like me." Marge scowls worriedly and replies in confusion, "But you've had dogs all your life." Junior is taken down to the basement by Bill, and a moment later Marge is startled by the animal's screams and whimpers. She clatters down the steps, to find Bill standing over the dog's body. Accidental strangulation, her husband explains. Free of bothersome emotions and rationality, animals are able to pierce the invaders' thin facade of humanity.

Marge's vague fears are borne out the night she follows her husband. He goes to a small clearing in the woods outside of town, stops, and stands completely still. Thick vapor hisses from his body and shapes itself into the horrible form of a monster, which noiselessly pads to a nearby spaceship, leaving Bill's body standing like a statue. Marge approaches, her faint calls of "Bill? Bill?" going unheeded. She tentatively touches her husband's chest and he falls back with a thud, his eyes open but unseeing, his face without expression. A large bug suddenly scuttles across his features and begins to burrow into his eye. His expression remains stony, and Marge screams and stumbles away in terror, as a monologue of the monster and Bill's blank face reels across the screen.

Things soon begin to close in on Marge. One of her friends, Helen, has become engaged to Sam, a friend of Bill's. Helen stops Marge on the street and happily gushes her wedding plans, while Sam sits in the car, quietly smiling. At a picnic a few days later, Sam, a good swimmer, falls overboard into a small lake and flounders. He is rescued, but dies when the doctor (Ken Lynch) administers oxygen. "It's as though the oxygen killed him," the physician mutters.

Marge feels the first creeping tendrils of panic. She attempts to place a long-distance call to Washington, but the operator matter-of-factly tells her all lines to the city are busy. Marge goes into town and scribbles a telegram to be sent to the FBI, and as she leaves, glances in the window as the clerk grimly tears the message to shreds. As she attempts to drive from town, Marge is stopped by a police roadblock. One of the policemen warns that the bridge ahead has been washed out, and Marge says there hasn't been enough rain to do that. "The bridge is washed out," the cop quietly insists. Key people have been taken over, and the town is virtually sealed up. Marge tells her suspicions to her godfather, Police Chief Collins (John Eldredge), and he listens sympathetically, reassuring her and asking for her trust. She leaves and the chief turns to his office window. As ominous shadows play across the room, thunder rumbles, lightning cuts the sky, and the man's face dissolves in the glare to show the terrible alien visage lurking beneath.

Finally, Marge confronts her husband and blurts out all she knows. Bill shows no surprise, and explains in a dull monotone that as his world's sun gradually went nova, all the women of his race died. Knowing they were doomed to extinction unless they acted, the men made the long journey from Andromeda to Earth. "Eventually," Bill informs her, "we'll have children with you." "What kind of children?" Marge asks. Bill's voice is emotionless and low: "Our kind."

In desperation, Marge goes to the doctor for help, hoping he has not been taken over. Her gamble pays off, and to fight the menace, the doctor decides to recruit only men who have recently become fathers, knowing they will be human. A party is organized and plans made to set out in search of the ship. Marge returns home and lies that she saw Chief Collins. Bill checks and discovers her deception, and grimly climbs the stairs to the bedroom where his wife has barricaded herself, the camera ominously shooting him from above. He effortlessly pushes the bedroom door off its hinges and demands to know where she has been.

Marge's immediate fate is left to our imagination as Fowler cuts to the clearing, where darkness has fallen. The party has found the ship and stares in awe as glowing monster after monster strides forth to defend it, brandishing ray pistols. The men open fire, but the bullets make only ineffectual indentations in the pulpy flesh. Men are



I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE  
A Paramount Release, 1958. 78 minutes. Black & White. Produced and directed by Gene Fowler, Jr. Story and screenplay by Louis Vittes. Unit production manager, Don Robb. Assistant director, William Mull. Director of photography, Haskell Boggs. Art director, Henry Bumstead. Set decorator, Hal Pereira. Edited by George Tomassini. Sound, Phil Wisdom. Makeup, Charles Gemora. Special effects, John P. Fulton.

Bill Farrell ..... Tom Tryon  
Marge Farrell ..... Gloria Talbott  
Dr. Wayne ..... Ken Lynch  
Collins ..... John Eldredge  
Francine ..... Valerie Allen  
Grady ..... Maxie Rosenbloom  
Sam Benson ..... Alan Dexter  
Helen Benson ..... Jean Carson

BY  
DAVID  
HOGAN

David Hogan describes himself as "an unrepentant, 20-year-old McGovern democrat." He has been an avid film enthusiast as long as he can remember, particularly devoted to horror, fantasy and science fiction films. Favorite directors: Corman, Wilder, Hitchcock and Walsh; performers: Monroe, Bogart, Cagney, Lemmon, Diana Rigg and Barbara Steele. Hogan is currently completing his associate degree requirements at Lakeland College in Mentor, Ohio, and plans to be a writer.



Scenes from *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE*, a Paramount Pictures release of 1958, directed by Gene Fowler, Jr. Top: A publicity photo of newlyweds Bill and Marge (Tom Tryon and Gloria Talbott) threatened by the monster of the title. Tryon subsequently left the acting profession to write the best-selling novel *THE OTHER*. Bottom: Animals are able to sense the invaders, even in human form, and prove to be their undoing at the film's conclusion. The inventive and quite horrible make-up for the invaders was designed and worn in the film by Charles Gemora.

vaporized into nothingness by the alien's weapons so, as a last resort, trained German Shepherds are turned loose. The animal motif is brought to its logical conclusion as the dogs immediately go for the huge, exposed arteries at the monsters' throats. Screaming insanely, the invaders die, their bodies turning into sickly, gelatinous pulps.

The men enter the ship and find the true bodies of the hosts, including Bill, gently swaying in upright suspension along a softly glowing wall, their minds wired for memory and knowledge transfer. The small, pulsating machine at each man's feet is destroyed and the mind-links are broken. The false humans die horribly, their bodies melting into the thin gelatin which gushes from their sleeves and collars in gulping spurts. In town, the policemen fall beside their car, and Chief Collins perishes as he finishes a verbal report to his superiors saying that the scheme has failed.

Bill's imposter has dragged Marge to the ship and turns to her for a moment just before he is destroyed, the gelatin gushing obscenely from his clothes. Marge is reunited with her revived husband as the spaceship deconstructs itself with a roar. The final shot, one of dozens of ships heading away from Earth into space, is the film's weakest (done in poorly executed animation, at that), and is an unfortunate condescension to Hollywood tradition.

Happily, such pitfalls are usually avoided. Throughout the film, the aliens' utter lack of human sensitivity is beautifully emphasized. In one sequence that borders on sick humor, Sam pays Bill a visit on the pretense of an insurance matter. After Marge has left the room, Sam gestures to himself and flatly says, "I must say, the design of these things is pretty lousy." In another segment, Bill, Sam, and a third man sit in a local bar, their drinks sitting untouched before them, and coolly discuss the possibility of mating with human females. Bill says they must wait for their scientists' report about chromosome alterations before they can go ahead. The talk is cold, clinical, and thoroughly chilling.

People who stand in the way of the takeover or offer nothing of value are icily eliminated. One afternoon Bill notices a shady looking character loitering in front of his house, and telepathically contacts the two supplanted police officers. The cops arrive momentarily, question the man and, after finding out he is merely a punk on the make for Marge, shoot him dead after he has ineffectually pumped three bullets into the chest of one of them. Bill watches the grisly scene from the upstairs bedroom window and attempts to calm his wife's trepidations by explaining the noises away as backfires.

Fowler and scriptwriter Louis Vittes consistently emphasize the weak and even subservient position of women. Because she lacks the authority of a man, Marge's appeals are laughed at in the bar where she goes for help after seeing what her husband has become. One of the patrons, in a triumphantly frustrating moment, goes so far as to make a thinly veiled pass at the panicked woman. It can be seen that Marge's predicament exists on two levels: she is vulnerable not only to physical harm, but to groundless disbelief, as well. That Vittes tells the story largely from Marge's point of view adds immeasurably to the feeling of constricting horror. The framework of human society proves to be almost as much an obstacle as the alien invasion! (It is interesting to note that Gloria Talbott appeared in another "woman's-point-of-view" horror film, *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL* in 1957).

In what is probably the film's most impressive



and frightening sequence, Fowler elaborates on the low status of women, as well as the coldness of the invaders. Inside the town's bar, an extremely attractive but gaudily dressed young woman has met with silence after propositioning Bill and his companions. They leave shortly, but the hooker does not follow. She finishes her drink and steps onto the deserted, rain-slick night street a few minutes later, where she spots a man standing on the opposite sidewalk, gazing into a window. In a ritually useless gesture, she hikes up her skirt to adjust her stockings, then slides across the empty pavement, the camera shooting from below eye level. The deserted panorama fills the screen as the woman approaches the man. He wears a hooded parka and does not turn around as she draws to his side, but we hear an ominous humming. She spies a baby doll lying in the window (a particular irony) and tries to make coy small talk, but gets no response. After a few moments, she is angered and her voice rises. She thumps the man's shoulder and shrilly says, "Hey you! Look at me when I'm talkin' to you!" The humming abruptly becomes louder and as the man slowly turns from the window, the woman sees that it is not a man at all but a terrible monster. She falls back in terror and tries to stumble away, but is vaporized by the alien's pulsating ray gun before she can round a nearby corner. The invaders, so concerned with mating and reproduction, have no desires or lusts, and this revelation adds a new dimension to their malignity. Fowler paced this scene slowly, emphasizing the prostitute's suddenly pointless and wasted tricks of the trade. The deserted street with its streetlamps reflected in its watery surface is most disconcerting, and offers a haunting visualization of aloneness and vulnerability.

Fowler's interiors are equally impressive. Set designers Henry Bumstead and Hal Pereira (veterans of a number of Hitchcock's films, e.g. *THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH*, *VERTIGO*) create large, unusually shadowed rooms which host uncomfortable, tense conversations and confrontations. Only the hospital, the environment of the doctor, is fully lit and comforting.

The film works better as horror than as science fiction, which is the case with most of the better science fiction films. Radical science fiction concepts have proved unacceptable to the mass moviegoing audience, so fine films like *THEM!* and *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* are exceptional more for their style and directorial flair than for their rather ordinary themes, ordinary, at least, in what is being done in the literature of the genre.

Fowler's *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE* is much more than a conventional science fiction thriller, however. Its underlying messages about society and, more specifically, women, are important ones that are particularly relevant today. Gloria Talbott, an actress whose sharp, angular features are well suited for portrayals of frustration and creeping fear, performs more than capably as a most unconventional heroine. For once, the woman is not merely an object to be rescued by the man. Indeed, the reverse is true. This, coupled with Fowler's flair for moody menace, is sufficient to make *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE* worthy of any film fan's attention.

Scenes from *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE*, a Paramount Pictures release of 1958 that has been overlooked and ignored, perhaps unjustly, for it is much more than a conventional science fiction thriller. Top: Marge (Gloria Talbott) attempts to seek help in a local bar, only to be laughed at. Director Gene Fowler, Jr. and scriptwriter Louis Vittes consistently emphasize the subservient position of women. The framework of human society proves to be almost as much an obstacle to Marge as the alien invasion. Middle: Inside the alien spaceship the humans possessed by the aliens are wired for memory and knowledge transfer to pulsating machines. Bottom: The alien invaders are murdered by hunting dogs when the town becomes aware of their presence and seeks to hunt them down. The film's underlying messages about society, and more specifically, women, are important ones that are particularly relevant today.



# THE EXORCIST

THE EXORCIST has done for the horror film what 2001 did for science fiction: legitimized it in the eyes of thousands...

THE EXORCIST A Warner Bros Release. 12/73. 121 minutes. In Panavision and Metrocolor. A Hoyt Production. Produced by William Peter Blatty. Executive producer, Noel Marshall. Directed by William Friedkin. Screenplay by William Peter Blatty based on his novel. Director of photography, Owen Roizman. Production design, Bill Malley. Supervising film editor, J. Leondopoulos. Film editors, Evan Lottman, Norman Gay. Sound, Chris Newman. Set decorator, Jerry Wunderlich. Special effects, Marcel Vercoire. Costume designer, Joseph Fretwell. Makeup artist, Dick Smith. Associate producer, David Salven. Iraq Sequençé: Director of photography, Billy Williams. Production manager, William Kaplan. Film editor, Bud Smith. Sound, Jean-Louis Ducarme. First assistant director, Terence A. Donnelly. Second assistant director, Allan Green. Publicist, Howard Newman. Technical advisors: Rev. John Nicola, S.J., Rev. Thos. Birmingham, S.J., Rev. William O'Malley, S.J., Norman E. Chase, M.D., professor of Radiology New York University Medical Center, Herbert E. Walker, M.D., Arthur I. Snyder, M.D.

Chris MacNeil ..... Ellen Burstyn  
Father Merrin ..... Max von Sydow  
Lt. Kinderman ..... Lee J. Cobb  
Sharon ..... Kitty Winn  
Burke Dennings ..... Jack MacGowran  
Father Karras ..... Jason Miller  
Regan ..... Linda Blair  
Father Dyer ..... Rev. William O'Malley, S.J.  
Dr. Klein ..... Barton Heyman  
Clinic Director ..... Peter Masterson  
Karl ..... Rudolf Schundler  
Willie ..... Gina Petrushka  
Dr. Tanney ..... Robert Symonds  
Psychiatrist ..... Arthur Storch  
University President ..... Rev. T. Birmingham, S.J.  
Karras' Mother ..... Vasiliki Maliaros  
Karras' Uncle ..... Titos Vandis  
Bishop ..... Wallace Rooney  
Assistant Director ..... Ron Faber

THE EXORCIST has done for the horror film what 2001 did for science fiction: legitimized it in the eyes of thousands who previously considered horror movies nothing more than a giggle. Like 2001, THE EXORCIST has wormed its way into people's lifestyles by using the rules of the genre, not despite them: both are also *Zeitgeist* films, which promise a social experience as well as an artistic one. Unlike 2001, however, THE EXORCIST will never need a cult; *everyone* is going to see it—and many are waiting hours to do so.

The film is well worth the wait. It works. No mean feat in light of a) the vast preponderance of films which don't, b) the even greater number of horror films which don't, and c) audiences which gave up on fright in films long before William Castle had to turn out the lights and yell "Scream!" at them, to get any sort of reaction. If THE EXORCIST pushes us around like children, it uses rules older than we are to do so. And it uses those rules unabashedly—as if there never had been a Self-Conscious Sixties in Hollywood, after all.

The plot is monomaniacally simple, the way plots used to be: a mother, tormented by the hideous personality changes her daughter is going through, turns to the Church when the rational world fails to provide a solution. Digressions? None. Subplots? None. Scriptwriter William Peter Blatty has pared them from his own novel, leaving the main plot to tear through all incidents with horrible rhythm and inevitability.

The actors are right—and balanced, in a way one used to take for granted. As the mother, Ellen Burstyn carries her share of the audience's burden stealthily, until the time comes for her to pass it on to the insecure young priest (Jason Miller) who performs the exorcism. Demonette daughter Regan (Linda Blair) remains disconcertingly two-faced all the way to her last scene—despite all the vomit tubes, overdubs (Mercedes McCambridge went through Hell herself to create the voice of the devil), bouncing beds, levitations, and incidental mauulings the special effects department could throw at her. Lesser characters pop in and out with neither more nor less efficiency than one expects from them. In fact, the movie itself seems to dictate the size and scope of their function: a rare chemistry indeed, since the supporting cast includes such notorious scene stealers as Jack MacGowran, Max von Sydow and Lee J. Cobb.

Director William Friedkin orchestrates all this classically, demonstratively: asserting his presence without imposing it, so that everything falls into place with no creative overview to get

in the way. DeMille possessed this skill: so did the Wyler of BEN-HUR and FUNNY GIRL. In THE EXORCIST, personal statement seems to have been the last thing on Friedkin's mind; and if the film doesn't hold up as an auteur piece, it does hold up in an equally vital way: as a bucking bronco of a project few directors could have controlled, much less broken.

But break it Friedkin does—and most notably, in his evocation of a world where the most unlikely events could occur. Compare the first line of the book to the opening of the movie: "The blaze of sun wrung pops of sweat from the old man's brow" gives way to a series of epic establishing shots—and epic is not exactly the horror film's stock in trade. The scene is an archeological dig, where Father Lankester Merrin (von Sydow) uncovers a pile of artifacts which send him running to his nitroglycerine tablets. "Evil against evil," he mutters unsteadily, signaling that something terrible (the movie doesn't say what, and the book only refers to "the stuff of the cosmos") is slouching towards civilization. The effect is pure 2001, "Dawn of Man" sequence: from the overture purpose the scene serves, to the epic cutting, to the portent. The overture even ends with a symbolic confrontation between Father Merrin and a statue of the demon Pazuzu, before the plot moves on to Georgetown for the major part of the story—much like 2001's metaphoric bone, which becomes a space station when hurled into the air. THE EXORCIST, however, frosts its sense of wonder with fear. Blatty's "dim yappings" of two savage dogs distorts into banshee screeches, as the priest and devil fade into silhouette; and as the first collective terror passes through the audience, one senses that this movie means business in ways 2001 never did.

THE EXORCIST is no PSYCHO, however, and Friedkin should not be compared to Hitchcock. For Hitchcock's Gothic vocabulary of forboding motel signs and death-white bathrooms, Friedkin substitutes great lumbering zooms and details, details, details, which color the most unprepossessing scene. Thus, after the opening Iraq sequence, Friedkin spends a good long time establishing the specifics of the world into which the Devil intrudes. There is nothing so special about a divorced Georgetown mother enjoying a close relationship with her twelve-year-old daughter; but Friedkin plays the two as alter egos, so that their identities ebb and flow on such subtleties as common nasal inflection. Similarly, Friedkin doesn't settle for simply showing the young priest crossing the street to his New York slum home. He walks past a group of children demolishing an abandoned car—which transfigures a throwaway

scene into a menacing one by lending inescapability (and therefore believability) to a world figuratively controlled by the Devil, several reels before the literal one makes his entrance.

In short, *THE EXORCIST* is pure horror film; one which carefully establishes its own definition of the normal, then proceeds to tear that definition to shreds until order can be restored. Friedkin even succeeds in pacing it as the best horror films have been paced: like a funhouse ride which alternates its shocks with our anticipation of them. Regan starts things off by predicting the death of one of her mother's party guests—and urinating on the carpet before she leaves. Soon after, a psychiatrist attempts to communicate with the "person inside" Regan through hypnosis: she slugs him in the balls when he isn't looking. A good two-thirds of the film is given over to this byplay between Regan's irrational cruelty, and the attempts of trained professionals to rationalize them away. And while Regan gets worse, the explanations become more ineffectual—until the aid of the Catholic Church is pleaded for as a last resort.

*THE EXORCIST* dismisses the old suggestion vs. explicitness conflict by deftly using both. The first signs of the supernatural are heard, not seen; and when the mother goes up into a dark attic to investigate them, Friedkin shows us no more than Val Lewton might have. But then, one reel later, he does show us where these awful sounds come from—reinforcing both moments; because one has suggested what the other has shown. Similarly, to describe a corpse whose head has been turned around is one thing; to punctuate whatever image we make up with the real thing, something else again. Friedkin plays off what we imagine against what we see throughout the film; and this byplay of images must be continuing long after people leave the theatres, if the nightmare quotient is as accurate as the papers would have us believe.

What *THE EXORCIST* does show out-Hammers Hammer—mainly because Friedkin does not ritualize his gore, as so many current horror directors do. Thus, when Regan's bed comes alive beneath her, the scene saddens as well as shocks because the horror plays off the vulnerable mother/daughter relationship Friedkin has taken the time to develop. We share the mother's terror and confusion—as we do when we see her daughter jabbing a crucifix into her vagina, and when the words "Help Me" rise on the young girl's stomach. Few films have incorporated big budget special effects so naturally, without making them spectacles in themselves. Willis O'Brien works this way; so did John P. Fulton, whose tricks would punctuate a film like *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, not steal it. The same thing happens here: as soon as we have recovered from one shock, the next is upon us. We never have time to mull over an effect; we're too busy hoping that nothing worse will happen, each time someone climbs the stairs to Regan's room.

Ironically, the most nauseating scene involves no deviltry at all, but a needle being jabbed into Regan's neck for an arteriogram. Many horror films have dealt with the clash of science and superstition; few have dealt, in such convincing imagery, with the revulsion both can breed. What's more, the conflict has never been stated so absolutely as in *THE EXORCIST*. The book continually supplied loopholes for the rational: explanations which, without film's ability to reinforce

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Scenes from *THE EXORCIST*, William Peter Blatty's film of his own novel, currently in release from Warner Bros. Top: Father Karras (Jason Miller) is troubled by self-guilt and doubts his faith, and is advised by the elder Jesuit, Father Merrin (Max von Sydow), not to listen to what the demon says. Middle: Karras stares in disbelief as Sharon (Kitty Winn) shows him the marks that have appeared on Regan's stomach, "Help Me!" Bottom: Regan (Linda Blair) is subjected to the tortures of modern medical science, as doctor after doctor fruitlessly attempts to diagnose her condition. *THE EXORCIST* is the most frightening horror film ever made. It may be the most frightening horror film ever to be made.



# FILM REVIEWS

## RAW MEAT

...one of the most intelligent contributions to the genre in recent years...

RAW MEAT An American-International Release. 7/73. 88 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced by Paul Maslansky. Directed by Gary Sherman. Screenplay by Ceri Jones. Original story by Gary Sherman. Director of photography, Alex Thomson, B. S. C. Music by Jeremy Rose and Wil Malone. Edited by Goeffrey Foot. Make-up design, Harry Frampton. Make-up, Peter Frampton.

Inspector Calhoun ..... Donald Pleasance  
Detective Sergeant Rogers ..... Norman Rossington  
Alex Campbell ..... David Ladd  
Patricia Wilson ..... Sharon Gurney  
The "Man" ..... Hugh Armstrong  
The "Woman" ..... June Turner  
James Manfred O. B. E. ..... James Cossins  
and Christopher Lee as Stratton-Villers M. I. 5

RAW MEAT tells the story of what becomes of a group of men and women abandoned underground during the building of one of London's Subway train lines at the end of the last century. The film concerns just one survivor—referred to simply as the "Man"—and the effect of contact with him on a young couple and the authorities. The resulting movie is one of the most intelligent contributions to the genre in recent years, with a complexity of inter-relating ideas that one finds only in the best works. The film starts by appearing to compare Britain favorably with the United States: the girl, who is English, wants to help a man found unconscious?/dead?/drunk? in the underground; the boy, who is American, is indifferent as it happens all the time in New York. "This isn't New York," the girl replies.

The film, however, is not so simple, although the girl is always more gentle and sympathetic than the boy, thus, at the end of the film, she stops him from kicking savagely with his boot when the "Man" is lying helpless. And there is one absolutely crucial shot which indicates that Sherman is suggesting that America is more violent than Britain. When the girl picks up and leaves the boy, the latter starts playing with a toy composed of ball-bearings on strings, the same device that Dustin Hoffman had on his desk in STRAW DOGS. The main theme of Peckinpah's misunderstood masterpiece was that of the American fleeing commitment in his own country by coming to England, then shutting himself away from everyone, the toy being used brilliantly to suggest suppressed violence. If there is no suggestion of the boy running away in RAW MEAT, Sherman may be thinking of the fact that he has brought his violence with him.

It is precisely here, however, that the film beautifully subverts the arrogant British notion that the English cannot be as violent as the Americans. A scene in a cafe with the couple shows a paper telling the story of the murders apparently committed by Michael X, the British Black Panther leader. When the boy asks the girl if she wants to read the "funnies," she says they are too violent. The condemnation by the press of one sort of violence is equated with another sort of violence that it openly purveys itself.

This notion is taken several steps further by the contrast and conflict between the working-class police inspector (himself a reactionary and prejudiced man who hates young people with long hair, especially if they are Americans) and the

upper-class member of the Secret Service. Here our sympathies move to the policeman because he is being thwarted in his attempts to find out the truth by behind-the-scenes maneuvering and State secrecy. Up till then, he has come over as distinctly unpleasant, although human. An extra edge is given to the class conflict here and its political implications by the fact that Manfred, the victim found by the couple in the Underground, was in the Secret Service and yet, despite his apparent superiority as a member of the upper-class, frequents strip-clubs and accosts whores late at night. The sort of conduct that our rulers feel they should indulge in freely while using the press to castigate their opponents—especially the young—if they do the same.

Another attack on the supposedly superior British way of life is implicit in the fact that no attempt was made to save the eight men and four women trapped by the cave-in (based on fact). There was not enough money and it was felt that such an undertaking was "not worth while." Whereas the indifference of the American stems from being conditioned to violence in New York, that of the British ruling class is due to the arrogance of an imposed class superiority. The Establishment is shown to be split on class lines and only the young people come out of it well (apart from the special circumstances surrounding the treatment of the American). The police inspector becomes more understanding, however, as he begins to realize what is going on and why attempts are being made to silence his investigation.

In the light of what I have said, the treatment of the "Man" is very revealing. In one lone pan, Sherman shows his life in the tunnels of the Underground, drawing a sharp contrast between the violence of his existence—corpses everywhere—and his basic tenderness—grieving over the death of his only surviving companion, a woman. As another character puts forward the theory that the victims of the cave-in would survive by turning to cannibalism, we are prepared for the "Man's" activities. At the same time we are made to face up to the fact that such behavior has been forced on him by circumstances and the greed and callousness of his supposed "betters" above ground.

When the "Man" captures the girl, Sherman succeeds admirably in conveying the pathos of the situation, the wretched "Man" trying to communicate with the petrified girl, his only vocabulary being "Mind the doors!" his tone moving from tenderness to anger as she—understandably, given her fear and predicament—repulses his attempts at contact. The "Man" is very sympathetic, despite his appearance and way of life, his violence—that of survival—being favorably contrasted with that of the young American and, by implication, society in general. Out of a situation that could have been an excuse for sensationalism, Sherman and his script-writer have constructed a fine and noble film.

Reynold Humphries

"Mind the doors" mutters Hugh Armstrong as The Man, wandering in his dank and desolate world of subway tunnels and shafts beneath the city of London in RAW MEAT, in release from AIP.



# THE KILLING KIND

...short on surprises and lacks the rococo richness of Harrington's GAMES.

THE KILLING KIND A Media Cinema Release. 11/73. 95 minutes. In Color. Executive producer, Leon Mirell. Producer, George Edwards. Directed by Curtis Harrington. Director of photography, Mario Losi. Screenplay by Tony Crechales and George Edwards. Music by Andrew Belling.

Thelma ..... Ann Sothern  
Terry ..... John Savage  
Rhea ..... Ruth Roman  
Next-Door-Neighbor ..... Luana Anders  
Roomer ..... Cindy Williams

If I were to tell you, in hushed tones, that the new Curtis Harrington Movie, THE KILLING KIND, is about a young man who is so mother-smothered that he is driven by frustration to murder several women, you would probably smile, nod condescendingly and simply activate your fond memories of PSYCHO. But if you think you have the goods on THE KILLING KIND, think again. For this serviceable thriller is distinguished by an exceptional performance by Ann Sothern. And though it is rather short on surprises and lacks the rococo richness of Harrington's GAMES, it gives the interested horror buff an idea of what life must have been like for Norman Bates when his possessive mother was still alive.

The introverted Norman of the screenplay devised by Tony Crechales and George Edwards is Terry (John Savage), a handsome 21-year-old who is first glimpsed arriving in Los Angeles after serving two years for raping a girl at the beach. In flashback, we learn that he didn't rape her; he was merely pushed on top of her by some playful buddies and thus only succeeded in proving his psychological impotence to one and all.

Settling at his mother's rooming house, which looks as careworn as its elderly inhabitants, Terry begins the love-hate relationship at the heart of the movie. Mom (Ann Sothern) is a grand old gargoyle who prattles around the place guzzling Dr. Pepper and offering her son glass after glass of chocolate milk. To retain his precarious independence, he insists on calling her by her Christian name, Thelma, but he still seethes inside and occasionally gives voice to desperation (You're like a gigantic pillow over my face!).

A release comes when the idea of revenge on those who railroaded him to prison consumes him. First he murders the loose-living girl who charged him with rape, and later he brutally dispatches the lawyer (Ruth Roman) who failed to keep him from serving time. Finally, on the homefront, Terry turns on the attractive border (Cindy Williams) whose pushy ways practically invite the gruesome death she draws.

In the end, Mom is drawn into her son's web of slaughter, and with a true maternal devotion, she provides him with the only escape possible. And at the exact moment she decides his fate, he turns to her and calls her "Mom." It is all a bit hokey, but Harrington wisely zeroes in on Miss Soothern to give the finale a tragic twist.

Looking a great deal like the Goodyear Blimp, Miss Sothern oozes a motherly love which, around the edges, looks a trifle unhealthy, but her good-hearted impulses are such that she still draws viewer sympathy. In contrast, newcomer John Savage is so California golden that it is hard to accept his sexual dilemma. Even though he is more sinned against than sinning, his sullen Terry never gains audience pity.

In a clever scriptorial touch, Miss Anders emerges as Terry's female counterpart—a troubled spinster who hates her wheelchair-ridden father and dreams of serving him ground glass in his food. She escapes her prison by drinking, and Harrington suggests, ever so deftly, that liquor deadens the pain of an empty, wasted life while chocolate milk, served with love, only makes matters much worse.

Robert L. Jerome



Marguerite learns, fearfully, that her only friend, Aaron, is capable of destructive, even psychotic behavior. Aaron is a doll. Sondra Locke plays Marguerite, a sensitive, innocent girl living in a world of fantasy in A REFLECTION OF FEAR, directed by William A. Fraker.

## A REFLECTION OF FEAR

William Fraker walks the line between horror, fantasy, terror and mystery to create an absolutely remarkable auteur piece.

REFLECTION OF FEAR A Columbia Pictures Release. 12/72. 90 minutes. In Color. Produced by Howard B. Jaffe. Directed by William A. Fraker. Screenplay by Edward Hume and Lewis John Carlino. Music by Fred Myrow. Director of photography, Laszlo Kovacs. Edited by Richard Brockway. Art director, Joel Schiller.

Michael ..... Robert Shaw  
Anne ..... Sally Kellerman  
Katherine ..... Mary Ure  
Marguerite ..... Sondra Locke  
Julia ..... Signe Hasso  
McKenna ..... Mitchell Ryan  
Hector ..... Gordon Devol

William Fraker walks the line between horror, fantasy, terror and mystery to create an absolutely remarkable auteur piece. Perhaps not completely fulfilled in the personal sense, A REFLECTION OF FEAR is nevertheless a shattering experience, and thus an emotionally satisfying one. Fraker uses most of the conventions of the genre, like dark hallways, ominous shadows, sudden attacks in the night, the psychotic laugh, the lurking evil under the surface normality, the suppressed eroticism, the hidden suspicions, and the mystery-shrouded secrets. But he blends them with a multi-perspective that turns the conventions inward and thus also exposing the fraudulence, hypocrisy, and emptiness that lies at the basis of lives built on fantasies and untruths.

Sondra Locke portrays a sensitive, innocent girl whose only close companions are her alleged father, and a doll named Aaron whom she believes is alive and capable of destructive, even psychotic, acts. Her callous, dominating mother is completely aware of her daughter's obsession, but does nothing to stifle it, indeed almost seems to encourage it, to disastrous results that end up being truly revealing.

The film's extremely intricate, complex narrative structure is filled with Freudian implications, but Fraker wisely subdues them in favor of studying the people and their responses to the various unknown forces around them. He is not too concerned with extensive, elaborate explanations as to why and how things are the way they are, or were, but leaves the viewer with his own interpretation of the people and events. He gives us the primary information, and leaves the blanks for us to fill in, but it's no cop-out as this may seem, because Fraker fills the frame with enough powerful imagery to make one's conclusions quite shockingly inevitable.

Its point-of-view is mainly from the daughter, entering her mind with quite total absorption as she talks with her doll, but at the same time, the camera is tracking across the room full of dolls. In one stunning shot, the doll's eyes slowly open and stare at her (us), thus duplicating the scene's effect of the character's and the director's own vision of what the daughter's world consists of. This is only one example of the multiple perspectives of the film, superbly balanced by Fraker.

Visually, the film is almost entirely bathed in shadows and darkness. The many uses of diffusion filters and lighting is beautifully evocative of the girl's fantasy world. Even the picnic scene on the beach possesses a murky, foreboding quality, and a touch of the erotic when after the scene, the daughter places her hand on her father's thigh. There are moments that are needlessly confusing, such as the reappearance of the dark-haired youth which could be read as an indication of many excised scenes. The boy's introduction into the girl's life is awkward and perfunctory, but not even this manages to hurt the breathtaking texture of the entire film. Its few flaws are like a drop in the ocean.

Robert Shaw is superb as always, as the girl's father, conveying the right amount of sensibility and understanding. As the girl's mother, Mary Ure makes us see the rotted interior, well-masked by the cloak of bourgeois manners and respectability, and the shimmering beauty of her large house and wardrobe. As the new wife and mother, Sally Kellerman sensitively handles a very difficult role of trying to understand and cope with the daughter's peculiar nature, without making it seem forced or unnatural.

Sondra Locke's splendid character ambivalence keeps her from becoming a female Anthony Perkins, and makes one at once completely believe that the doll is real, and that her world is as real as anyone else's. Fraker's style aids this dramatic concept completely, just as the nightmare could also be Paula's in THE MEPHISTO WALTZ. Fantasy and reality are mingled, and who can say for sure that one supersedes the other.

A REFLECTION OF FEAR was shelved by Columbia for two years before its release, and now they're throwing it away in multiple bookings. Such artistic insensitivity is very typical these days, especially when there's not enough people around to care. A pity, for a great film might pass by with just barely a nod.

Dale Winogura

James Mason as Dr. Polidori, a sadly superfluous mad doctor in the classic mold of Dr. Praetorius, whose introduction into FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY only serves to dilute the touching human drama with hokey melodramatics.



## FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY

...someone should have at least informed James Mason that he was cutting off too big a slice of ham with his scalpel.

**FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY** A World Premiere Movie Telecast 11/30 & 12/1/73 on NBC. A Universal Production. Produced by Hunt Stromberg, Jr. Directed by Jack Smight. Screenplay by Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy. Music composed by Gil Melle. Director of photography, Arthur Ibbeston, B.S.C. Production designer, Wilfrid Shingleton. Edited by Richard Marden. Art director, Fred Carter.

Dr. Polidori ..... James Mason  
Victor Frankenstein ..... Leonard Whiting  
Dr. Henry Clerval ..... David McCallum  
Prima/Agatha ..... Jane Seymour  
Elizabeth Fanshawe ..... Nicola Pagett  
Sir Richard Fanshawe ..... Michael Wilding  
and Michael Sarrazin as The Creature

Watching the second half of NBC's **FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY** gives one a keener appreciation of Victor Frankenstein's disappointment at the deterioration of his Perfect Man; for Part I of the production is indeed perfect, a masterful depiction of the Romantic and human elements of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, while part II is a degeneration of those elements into something that resembles high-class **DARK SHADOWS**.

Dark shadows: **FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY** begins with this, too. The dark shadows of Mortality, Pain and Blind Providence. After we watch a young boy drown as his brother tries to save him, after we hear a man scream as his mangled arm is sawn from his body, after we see a brilliant scientist prostrated by seizures, after we behold the bloody victims ("all fine lads") of a quarry slide—after we experience all of this, young Victor Frankenstein is not a mad doctor. He is us. And when he decides to "join the brotherhood of Prometheus" and defy the gods, we join and defy with him. And when Gil Melle's truly Promethean music begins and man takes fire from heaven, we are excited and elated as we have never been watching other Frankenstein movies. The second Adam breathes his first breath. He looks down at us from high above, he comes down to us from high above. The bandages fall from his face, he smiles. We know what the grandeur of man can be.

And so long as **FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY** allows us to know, permits us to feel, so long as it is a true story, it is a film of rare beauty. Victor Frankenstein says to his Adam, "You shall teach us how to live." It is when the production is doing this (or at least showing us something about life) that it is superior. I'm a

fraid I make the film sound didactic; it is certainly far from that. Rather, it teaches the way music does, and, indeed, Gil Melle's music score plays a large part in the effectiveness of the film. The entire score is memorable (and should be released on record); particularly, I shall never forget Melle's Creation theme, his music for the Creature's attempts to destroy itself and his truly awe-inspiring sounds for the climax in the Arctic wastes.

The story of Doctor Frankenstein and his Monster is an epic in the true sense of the word. Unfortunately, after the Creature's spectacular plunge into the ocean, the film begins to concentrate on that spectacle element of epic, sacrificing drama for mere show. We want to see Frankenstein and the Creature work out the meaning and the meaningfulness of their lives. When the film reaches its end, we do not feel that we have journeyed there; we have just been plunked down in the middle of the Arctic where the story attempts to rescue itself after an hour and three-quarters of pyrotechnics. The writers obviously thought that they had exhausted the characters of Frankenstein and the Creature or that the audience would be bored by a further examination of them, so they introduce us to Doctor Polidori, who is an excellent character—for a James Bond movie. First of all, there is no reason on earth why Doctor Polidori is needed to reveal the meaning of the story. Second, he takes up two hours of the film proving this. And third, someone should have at least informed James Mason that he was cutting off too big a slice of ham with his scalpel. I think that the annoyance of Polidori's presence would have been reduced a bit (maybe even a lot) if someone more serious-seeming, someone more subdued had played the role. For example, Richard Basehart would have been able to make Polidori a tragic character and this would have been more in keeping with the tone of the story at least. But we must be thankful for small favors. Can you imagine Polidori being played by Orson Welles in one of his phony noses?

The ice-cave climax of the film manages to recapture some of the magic of Part I. We get some sense of the mystery of the universe and of man, and when Victor (surely the name is a conscious irony) laughs as the avalanche begins, as he waits to be drowned like his brother (indeed, as he waits to be drowned with his brother), we can feel that there is worth in resignation, also. But what is most important is that we do feel.

Daniel Maslowski

## O LUCKY MAN!

...one of the most original and unparalleled fantasy odysseys in the history of the cinema...

**O LUCKY MAN!** A Warner Bros Film Release. 6/73. In Color. 177 minutes. Produced by Michael Medwin and Lindsay Anderson. Directed by Lindsay Anderson. Screenplay by David Sherwin. Based on an original idea by Malcolm McDowell. Director of photography, Miroslav Ondricek. Supervising editor, Tom Priestley. Edited by David Gladwell. Special effects by John Stears. Art director, Alan Withy.

Mick Travis	Malcolm McDowell
Monty/Sir James Burgess	Ralph Richardson
Gloria/Mint	Paillard/Mrs. Richards
.....	.....
Mr. Duff/Charlie Johnson/Dr. Munda	Rachel Roberts
.....	.....
.....	Arthur Lowe
Patricia	Helen Mirren
Tea Lady/Neighbor	Dandy Nichols
Sister Hallett/Usher/Neighbor	Mona Washburn
.....	.....
Dr. Millar/Professor Stewart/Down & Out	Graham Crowden

One of the most original and unparalleled fantasy odysseys in the history of the cinema must be Lindsay Anderson's bold, complex masterpiece, **O LUCKY MAN!** Without any of the palsied melodrama of **THIS SPORTING LIFE**, or the muddled surrealistic pretensions of **IF...**, here Anderson offers his liveliest, clear-lined, and most compelling achievement to date.

It begins innocently enough as fresh, happy coffee salesman, Mick Travis, is sent on his way to do his best in the business, in various parts of England. But he gets side-tracked, and is plunged into a series of bizarre, satirical adventures worthy of a Lemuel Gulliver, or Candide. From torture and confession into falsely admitting communist alliance, to a hospital where a mad doctor experiments horribly with human bodies, and to becoming an exporter of illegal honey for purposes of war, Mick gradually loses his faith in humanity along with his sunny optimism. But, at an audition, with director Anderson himself, he is made to realize in one brilliant, swift stroke just how ridiculous his pessimism is, and he (and we) cannot help but smile at it.

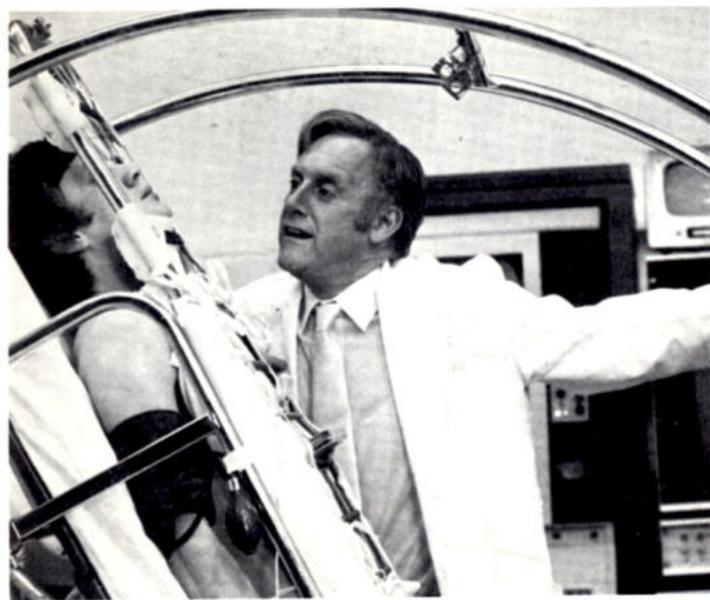
Based on an idea by Malcolm McDowell, and his life before becoming an actor, Anderson ingeniously incorporates black-outs and black-ins as both sardonic commentary, and story and character transitions. Alan Price's music and songs ("Smile while you're makin' it, laugh while you're takin' it, even though you're fakin' it, nobody's gonna know...") are also invaluable in expressing the thoughts and meanings of Anderson's work, without overstatement, as is often a danger with such a device.

McDowell's performance as Mick (the same name of his character in **IF...**, and significantly similar) comes very close to his Alex in **CLOCK-WORK ORANGE**, in manner if not intensity. Both characters change through external stimuli, and both are treacherously, dangerously used for others' ends. It is more restrained here, but McDowell goes through it with complete assurance and finesse, as he did Alex.

Many of the other actors, including Ralph Richardson, Rachel Roberts, and Arthur Lowe, play more than one role, thus lending the film a wonderous, theatre of the absurd quality that reinforces the fantasy odyssey concept, placing it in league with Swift, Voltaire, and Carroll, and playwrights Ionesco, Pinter, and Albee. It's a brilliant stroke of style that works beautifully.

But it is not ideas alone that make great movies, but execution, and **O LUCKY MAN!** is blessed with a filmmaker always in command and understanding of his purpose. The film is Anderson's triumph, and an important cornerstone not just in the evolution of **cinefantastique**, but in the greater realm of the cinema mainstream.

Dale Winogura



## PRIVATE PARTS

...the film simply refuses to be the slam-bang genre programmer everyone apparently assumes it to be.

PRIVATE PARTS A Premier Productions (MGM) Release. 1972. 87 minutes. In Color. A Gene Corman Production. Directed by Paul Bartel. Screenplay by Philip Kearney and Les Rendelstein. Music by Hugo Friedhofer. Director of photography, Andrew Davis. Edited by Morton Tuber. Set design, John Retsek.

Cheryl ..... Ann Ruymen  
Aunt Martha ..... Lucille Benson  
George ..... John Ventantonio  
Reverend Moon ..... Laurie Main

In an industry whose intensely competitive economics decree that any movie less than a smash success is automatically relegated to the dustbin (with side chute to TV) of expensive failure, it is no surprise that good films do get buried, unseen. Films seem to be judged more and more on their market prognosis than on their quality of sight and sound. Even in a genre like the horror film, where even the most awesomely shoddy efforts seem to play somewhere, and profitably, films can be misjudged and shelved and written off. A case in point is Paul Bartel's PRIVATE PARTS.

Bartel, a largely underground New York filmmaker, has made a handful of interesting short films. Among them, one called THE SECRET CINEMA, which tells the tale of a dumb but painfully sincere girl who slowly discovers that she, with the connivance of absolutely everyone around her, is the subject of someone else's film, shown in weekly installments, is an ascerbic witty exploration of film forms and an incisively brilliant parable of paranoia. Funded by Gene Corman, who with his brother has done an astonishing—and quite unheralded—amount of work in enabling new talent to break into theatrical film, PRIVATE PARTS is Bartel's first commercial movie.

On its surface, PRIVATE PARTS follows a young runaway Cheryl (Ann Ruymen) who quickly finds herself at her Aunt Martha's hotel, the King Edward, a seedy, crumbling building hidden in a luridly downtown section of Los Angeles, which turns out, like Aunt Martha herself, to be not quite as innocuous and harmlessly dotty as it appears. The main premise of PRIVATE PARTS is an age-old one slowly teetering its way to a well-deserved grave: a scary old house with a psychotic killer, or perhaps, supernatural demon, lurking within. What Bartel does with this tired material is, however, a different matter.

Even before we meet the tenants of the King

Left: Professor Millar (Graham Crowden) puts Mick (Malcolm McDowell) through his experiments during his stay at the Millar Clinic in O LUCKY MAN! in release from Warner Brothers. Right: George (John Ventantonio) is madly in love with an inflatable plastic doll in Paul Bartel's PRIVATE PARTS, pulled from release by MGM after one unsuccessful engagement.

Edward, a nasty piece of ultraviolence unexpectedly occurs in the decapitation of a peripheral character casually strolling down the hall (albeit on his way to a homosexual liaison). The killing is crude and bloody, and just as crudely (and clumsily) staged by Bartel in three quick shots. And just after that, as if it were a key, the film's slate of fruity characters begin to tumble, one by one, from the woodwork: the Rev. Moon (Laurie Main), who occasionally trades his clerical collar for leather jacket and chrome chains; the photographer George (John Ventantonio) who frequents sex shops and is at the moment in love with a full-sized plastic water doll; Mrs. Quigley, a wrinkled gray-haired harridan, who is searching the halls for a mysteriously absent daughter. And among other drunks and pederasts is, of course, kindly Aunt Martha (exceptionally played by Lucille Benson) who is photographing corpses in hopes of catching the spirit as it leaves the body and in whose homey drawl and dumpy matronly figure slinks, like in everyone else in the hotel, the impurest of evils.

Thus is uncovered Bartel and the film's biggest problem as concerns commercial movies: the film simply refuses to be the slambang genre programmer everyone apparently assumes it to be. This is evident as early as the first murder in Bartel's awkwardness with the slick violence and mechanical gore that many have come to require of horror fare. PRIVATE PARTS never seems to move as fast or as efficiently as it should. And there are many unforgivable stumbling blocks to its plot, like the killer's sparing several victims who we assumed to have been immediately done in like the others, or the character of Cheryl, who interprets adulthood and femininity as joyously giving in to George's cruel sado-masochistic ideas about sex (of course then, Jeanne in LAST TANGO IN PARIS demands much the same assumption of motives), or finally, the rather hokily tricked-up ending. Instead, Bartel drops this creaking plot with its lumpy mess of illogical events to devote the film's full energies to its incredible characters with an intensity that

ranges from the broadly humorous and parodic (Rev. Moon) to the opposite extreme (George) which some may find obscene.

But not the least of these characters is the hotel itself. Not since the Dakota menaced Mia Farrow in Polanski's ROSEMARY'S BABY has a film setting played as strong and eerie a role. In many ways, it is the true star of the film. Bartel constantly reminds us of the physical building, the walls and doors and corridors and meager furnishings which so adequately personify their owners, mainly by the repeated use of shots that frame solitary characters submerged and enclosed by the hotel's overpowering space. Since most of the film forces us to share Cheryl's (i.e. victim's) point of view, Bartel is able to communicate an extraordinary sense of danger and unease whenever we move out of Cheryl or Martha's rooms to roam through the rest of the hotel. This chilling feeling that so much cinefantastique fails to capture leads us to speculate that there are as many valid levels to PRIVATE PARTS as there are to its title, probably one of the most clever in recent years.

For instance, although sex is integral to the film, "private parts" refers quite erroneously to the kind of pornographic come-on titles that snidely attract audiences to tiresome beaver loops. It promises sexual coupling that never materializes since it can not for its characters, given their various mental imbalances. (Indeed, in the very first scene, Cheryl flees the beach house where the film's only "normal" sex is taking place.)

At its worst, one comes away from PRIVATE PARTS bothered by the fact that all its characters seem motivated by either a fear or a bitter loathing, and sometimes both, of women. At its best, however, the film represents the optimal mixture of Andy Warhol and Bert I. Gordon, and a slicked-down, buttoned-down fusion of three great, and now linked, films: LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD, CHELSEA GIRLS, and GRAND HOTEL. Critics usually reside in the middle distance between these two extremes, but whatever the position, PRIVATE PARTS is almost continually interesting to watch in a purely visual sense, a fact which shows that a true filmmaker is at work.

On the basis of a disastrous two-theatre stint in San Francisco and a few equally miserable trade reviews, PRIVATE PARTS has disappeared from view. Yet it is an impressive "first" film in many ways and deserves to be rescued from the twin oblivions of MGM vaults and MGM scorn.

David Bartholomew



Elsa Lanchester.

**TERROR IN THE WAX MUSEUM** A Cinerama Release. 6/73. 95 minutes. In Color by DeLuxe. Produced by Andrew J. Fenady. Directed by Georg Fenady. Screenplay by Jameson Brewer. With: Ray Milland, Broderick Crawford, Nicole Shelby, Elsa Lanchester, John Carradine, Louis Hayward, Patrick Knowles, Maurice Evans, Mark W. Edwards, Steven Marlo, Lissa Lu, Shanti Walulis.

This very standard but serviceable item features a lot of old actors going over a lot of old ground. John Carradine is killed off early, seemingly by one of his creations, as the owner of a London House of Horrors who is contemplating selling out to an American showman, Broderick Crawford. His untimely death brings his lovely niece onto the scene, played by Nicole Shelby, to claim her inheritance and naturally to be romanced and protected by the young Scotland Yard Sergeant assigned to the case, played by Mark W. Edwards. Newcomers Shelby and Edwards however, become lost among what is the largest assortment of old time stars and character actors assembled for a cheap horror film in recent memory. Elsa Lanchester steals every scene as Miss Shelby's idiosyncratic guardian and financial advisor, while the burden of carrying the plot of this pile of old clichés rests heavily on Ray Milland, as the snobbish sculptor and manager of the museum. When Milland is cut and abrupt and snaps his lines, we are not sure whether he is merely being in character, whether as an actor he is just a little disgusted with the shoddiness of it all, or whether he is merely tired of Elsa Lanchester stepping on his lines. It is revealed in the end, to no one's surprise, that the wax figures are not coming to life, but that the culprit impersonating them has been doing so in order to search the museum at night for hidden gold. Jameson Brewer's derivative screenplay, based on a story by producer Fenady, also features such old staples as the deformed hunchback, called Karkoff, and the bubbling vat of hot wax into which our heroine nearly falls. Not that it matters, for the fun here is strictly in seeing how many old faces you can spot. Now, let's see, the cafe owner was Louis Hayward, the inspector from Scotland Yard was Maurice Evans, the lawyer was Patrick Knowles... Patrick Knowles?

Frederick S. Clarke

**HORROR EXPRESS** A Scotia International Release. 6/72. 90 minutes. In Color & Scope. Produced by Bernard Gordon. Directed by Eugenio Martin. Screenplay by Arnaud d'Usseau. With: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Telly Savalas, Alberto de Mendoza.

The picture is set in 1905, where it opens in the Chinese province of Hang-chow with an anthropologist Alexander Saxon (Christopher Lee) discovering an ape-like being frozen in a slab of ice. Believing it to be the "missing link" between man and ape, Saxon boards a train with his find and soon bumps into his old rival Dr. Wells (Peter Cushing). In his curiosity over Saxon's discovery, Wells looses the monster on board the train while trying to have it stolen. Eugenio Martin's film is quite similar to another Cushing/Lee vehicle made at about the same time, called **THE CREEPING FLESH**, in which the two stars also played scientific rivals competing over an anthropological discovery. The missing link here, however, turns out to have been infested by an awesome alien intelligence some millions of years ago, and is capable of sucking away a person's knowledge merely by gazing at them. This process leaves the victim with the tell-tale sign of a smooth brain, with the knowledge possessing convulsions wiped clean; it also leaves them dead.

Despite the incredible nature of the film's story, it is enjoyable simply on the basis of its fast-paced action scenes, which allow Lee to perform capably in a definitive heroic role, as the pompous yet courageous scientist Dr. Saxon, who always seems to be more intelligent than his script. Cushing gives a sadly understated performance as Dr. Wells, a character with whom he seems hopelessly uncomfortable. It is indeed sad that Lee finds his zenith as an actor in the same basement where Cushing looses his.

Tim Lucas

# SHORT NOTICES

**BEWARE THE BRETHREN** A Cinerama Release (pulled). 2/72. In Color. 98 minutes. Produced and directed by Robert Hartford-Davis. Screenplay by Brian Comfort. With: Ann Todd, Patrick Magee, Tony Beckley.

Robert Hartford-Davis' film of a screenplay by Brian Comfort concerns Kenneth (Tony Beckley), a London strangler (with a little of the Ripper in him) who is convinced under his dead Mum's approval that he is doing the work of the Lord by providing his female victims with the conditions for re-birth which must begin, of course, with their death. Mixed up in all this is his Mum's religious sect (the Brethren of the title) who seem, with their fanatical Minister (Patrick Magee), to have taken over not only Mum's life but her wealth as well.

Director Hartford-Davis, known for a grimy 1968 dream-opus **CORRUPTION**, allows Ann Todd as Mum to act up an incredible histrionic storm which hardly seems warranted by the material. Patrick Magee, who with every role increasingly resembles a Plymouth Colony Pilgrim, simply loads his role with all the diabolical force he can muster, which is considerable, and at times a diverting joy to watch.

But mainly, the film works to degrade us, and by its very ineptness, every subject or idea upon which it touches, from Freud, who provides the misguided if not cheap-novelle-ish impetus for all the characterizations and turns of plot, to women, with their easy victimization, empty heads, and bared bosoms. The Minister is, at the end, nailed by Kenneth to the rust-red "Jesus Saves" cross and hoisted over the stone-cold worship room. Up to this point the film was merely a foolish and sloppy exploitative mixture of breasts and blood. With the literal crucifixion of poor Patrick Magee, it becomes simply vile.

David Bartholomew

**SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE** A Universal Release. 3/72. 104 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced by Paul Monash. Directed by George Roy Hill. Based on the novel by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Screenplay by Stephen Geller. With: Michael Sacks, Ron Leibman, Eugene Roche, Sharon Gans.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is a product of our times. In an age of impurity, disillusionment, and futile escape, he is like a modern-day expression of this, as well as a prophet. His works reveal a bizarre eclecticism, barely brushing surrealism, yet he always stays in the comfortable world of dreams and fantasies.

Now, George Roy Hill has fashioned Vonnegut's material into an absorbing, thoughtful film, which is also a product of our times. This collection of fanciful nihilism is stretched to the cinema's first brilliant combination anti-war and fantasy film, though not in the same category as Dalton Trumbo's ponderous, pretentious allegory **JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN**. Hill's film proves to be yet an even stranger, more melancholy vision of man's retreat into himself from an insane world, and a smoother, more consistent one than either Trumbo's film, or even Ulu Grosbard's uneven, touching **WHO IS HARRY KELLERMAN?**

The film's hero (Michael Sacks) is seen in three different worlds: his involvement in World

War II; his present, dull existence with his wife and child; and outrageous fantasies of future existence on another world. The transitions are rarely, if ever, unclear and imprecise, but never too obvious. This is not a film of mindless wandering like **EL TOPO**, but a cleverly, carefully constructed stylization of thought. But even reality is given some aspects of fantasy, as in the wife's tragically hilarious car ride.

There is something pleasantly natural and unimposing in Hill's direction that makes him an ideal filmmaker for transposing Vonnegut's books into celluloid life. Never too consciously arty as in the temptation with such bizarre material, Hill's compassion for the characters is thus fully able to express itself.

This is not a film that can be intellectualized too much, for the reasons why it succeeds so beautifully in so many respects becomes more visceral than rational. Indeed, Hill's work, like the body of Kubrick's work, is almost purely emotional, and his instinct for conveying this is just about faultless. Vonnegut is not only given justice, but fantasy cinema, as well as the body of cinema, has a film worthy of praise by any aesthetic standard. It's exquisite.

Dale Winograde

**SSSSSSSS!** A Universal Pictures Release. 7/73. 99 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced by Dan Sriepeke. Directed by Barnard L. Kowalski. Screenplay by Hal Dresner from a story by Dan Sriepeke. With: Strother Martin, Dirk Benedict, Heather Menzies, Richard B. Shull, Tim O'Connor, Jack Ging, Kathleen King, Reb Brown.

Like John Gilling's 1966 **THE REPTILE**, this film (don't say it, hiss it!) is another in the increasingly popular snake genre, involving the transformation of people into snakes, but lacks the sinuous atmosphere of the Gilling film. Like Bill Grefe's 1972 **STANLEY**, it centers around a man (Strother Martin) whose closest friend is a snake and also has a side plot involving the use of snakes in show business (in this case, a freak sideshow). A prologue message congratulates cast and crew on their daring snake handling, but the film offers nothing with the impact of that powerful scene near the end of **THE SADIST** when Arch Hall Jr. falls into the rattlesnake pit, or that famous serial scene in which a man wrestles a gigantic python, or even the scene showing the snake crawling into Inspector Juve's bed in Louis Feuillade's silent **JUVE VS. FANTOMAS**. Particularly disappointing is the final transformation of lab assistant (Dirk Benedict) into a snake, delayed until the end of the film when it has lost all impact. Instead of ballooning into a fantasy creation of immense proportions, Benedict keeps shrinking until a real snake is substituted. Highly praised by Howard Thompson of the **New York Times**, the film's assets are its emphasis on research, realism, characterization and fine acting, achieved mainly by the casting of good character actors in important roles. Strother Martin, a familiar face from many westerns, seems to understand the value of a sense of humor and the mechanics of low-key horror acting that Karloff knew so well.

Bhob Stewart

Nobel Craig as the pathetic side-show freak in **SSSSSSSS!** (make-up by John Chambers).



John Considine.

**DOCTOR DEATH, SEEKER OF SOULS** A Cinerama Release. 10/73. 93 minutes. In Color by Moviola. Produced and directed by Eddie Seta. Original screenplay by Sal Ponti. With: John Considine, Barry Coe, Cheryl Miller, Florence Marly, Jo Morrow, Stewart Moss, Leon Askin.

John Considine once wrote and starred in a TV drama about epilepsy. He's a talented fellow... unfortunately, one would never guess it watching his fond but failed attempt, as Doctor Death, to emulate Vincent Price (each word is savored like a gumball rolling on the tongue). There are some campy moments in this clatter dealing with the "reincarnation of the soul"—in fact, Leon Askin as a mute manservant is pure camp—but the film as a whole strains for every effect. This is probably due more to producer/director Eddie Seta's conception of the film as a long joke that has no punch line.

Robert L. Jerome

**HEAVY TRAFFIC** An American-International Release. 8/73. 76 minutes. In Color by DeLuxe. Produced by Steve Krantz. Written and directed by Ralph Bakshi. With: Joseph Kaufmann, Beverly Hope Atkinson.

Life is a pinball machine, or so it seems in Ralph Bakshi's recent follow-up to the highly successful **FRITZ THE CAT**. "I'm making cartoons that capture the reality around me," says Bakshi. "Some people think I'm sick. They want to see singing woodpeckers and fat cats chasing helpless mice. Funny cartoons can be seen every Saturday morning. If someone doesn't laugh during my film, I say, 'Man, don't worry about it. It's okay to have an emotional reaction.'" Perhaps there is still some lingering Terrytoon influence that compels Bakshi to seek laughs, however the best moments of this tradition-breaking new work are not the laughs, but the surrealistic, painful, haunted Brownsville memory flashes of his own past. There is rot and decay, a feeling that is Brooklyn. The wretchedness of the place, the despair, is captured in Bakshi's drained colors, and it becomes apparent that this is the insight missing from **ON THE WATERFRONT** and other live-action films made about Brooklyn. It is the nightmare Brooklyn of novelist Hubert Selby, Jr., Bakshi's longtime friend. In addition to the derivative titling, certain sequences and characters seem to be specifically, but loosely, drawn from stories in Selby's **Last Exit to Brooklyn**: "Tralala" (the girl on the rooftop matress); "Strike" (Corleone's attempt to end a dockworker's strike); "The Queen Is Dead" (the character of Snowflake); "Landsend" (the husband and wife fights). Bakshi says: "His writing influenced my work. He freed me. It was like going to a shrink."

In the middle of the film, Bakshi's autobiographical hero, Michael, an underground cartoonist, attempts to sell a "religious" strip to a conservative and dying syndicate head. The strip, animated, is a fantasy depicting God's sex life, and it's too much for the old man. As he dies, so does an era. For Bakshi's new film is only a warm-up for **COONSKIN**, his next animated feature (already many months in production). Each succeeding film seems to open more doors of reality, and, in this sense, Bakshi is heading in a different direction than John and Faith Hubley (**EGGS**), Richard Williams (**A CHRISTMAS CAROL**) and Heinz Edelman (**YELLOW SUBMARINE**). In films to come, Bakshi might well tire of "reality" and do a feature of pure fantasy. And that, my friends will be quite a movie.

Bhob Stewart

**BLOOD ORGY OF THE SHE-DEVILS** A Gemini Films Release. 1/73. 73 minutes. In Color. With: Lila Zaborin, Tom Pace, William Bagdad.

A worldly-wise critic once observed that if we had no motion pictures with titles like this exploiter, we would surely have to invent them to nourish the dark side of our imagination. Sadly, these lurid, exciting and often profane titles are seldom justified, and in this particular instance, a low-budget movie of no particular distinction, it is a case of overwrought acting and underdeveloped scripting defeating a promising theme



Japan mimics western film archetypes with *LAKE OF DRACULA*, Toho's entry in the vampire genre.

(Black Magic Vs. White Magic).

For the record, the story concerns Mara, the Witch Queen, who resembles a demon Bea Lillie without being half so entertaining. In her gloom-ridden California mansion, she practices the Black Arts, and she is very big with Sabbath rituals, sacrificial altars, magic mirrors, protective amulets and sinister seances which bring forth the spirit of an American Indian who speaks terrible truths in Tonto fashion ("Me warn 'um little squaw!"). Unhappily, despite Mara's concern with the paraphernalia of her trade, quantity does not denote quality, and even a last minute production number, with Mara's disciples doing a little interpretive dance over the hero's trussed-up body, fails to obscure the fact that there is scant nourishment in tame blood orgies and unappealing she-devils.

Robert L. Jerome

**NIGHT WATCH** An Avco Embassy Release. 8/73. 105 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced by Martin Poll. George W. George, Bernard Straus. Directed by Brian G. Hutton. Screenplay by Tony Williamson based on the play by Lucille Fletcher. With: Elizabeth Taylor, Laurence Harvey, Billie Whitelaw, Robert Lang, Tony Britton, Bill Dean, Michael Denvers Walker, Pauline Jameson, Rosario Serrano, Linda Haydon, Kevin Colson, Laon Maybanke.

This is one of those teasing, cheating lady-in-distress mystery-horror films that could have been fun if executed with style, verve, and meaning. But Brian Hutton fills his film with visual and aural gimmickry and loudness, most of it as clichéd, contrived, and telegraphed as the narrative, and ultimately just as dull.

One cannot fault Elizabeth Taylor, who looks more ravishing than ever, and performs with strong, intense conviction. Laurence Harvey is also very fine as her cheating husband, played with sincerity and a touch of dash, and Billie Whitelaw is effective as his mistress who helps him plan the wife's demise.

For performance level and solid technical execution, the film must be given its due. But it's so hokey and obvious, without even the strong dramatic development of *WAIT UNTIL DARK* or the tragic inevitability of *SORRY, WRONG NUMBER* to sustain it, that it ends up as unrelentingly dreary and unimaginative as a bad TV film. As for the ending, only the most ignorant, unenlightened person will not successfully guess it after the first half-hour.

Dale Winogura

Elizabeth Taylor.



plies "Trinity, schminity. This is none of your Christian schmitten. This is your kosher yiddish magic," and he gives them a talisman, magic sand and holy water to ward off the attacks by evil spirits sure to come. This scene is the best in the film. Even Lacey takes on some life as a foil to Amer who, in an absent minded way rushes about proclaiming the dangers they will face but they're "not to worry, not to worry." He is a delight to behold.

Mike Raven, as The Stranger, has one or two good moments, but for the most part acts as if still in the grave. The film owes much to the camerawork and color photography by William Brayn. One long shot of a gallows is particularly good with its brooding background of dark clouds.

Dan R. Scapperotti

**AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS!** A Cinerama Release. 4/73. 87 minutes. In Color. An Amicus Production. Produced by Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Screenplay by Roger Marshall. With: Peter Cushing, Herbert Lom, Patrick Magee, Ian Ogilvy, Stephanie Beacham, Guy Rolfe, Geoffrey Whitehead, Rosalie Crutchley, Janet Key.

This film is a splendidly detailed filmic creation of a legend, which begins in the mystifying middle, flashes back to the beginning for explanation, then neatly comes full circle to the revenge tale's demonically fulfilled end. The effectiveness of it all rests almost entirely on the elusiveness of the Fengriffin family curse, whose bloody and murderous effects we see, with our heroine, without knowing how or why. Roy Ward Baker's sturdy and energetic direction intrigues us with these strange goings-on at the Fengriffin estate. Although, as expected, the film pales somewhat once the curse is explained, Baker manages to bring us back up to a generally chilling climax.

It depends too much, perhaps, on a healthy appreciation of Polanski's *ROSEMARY'S BABY* (the endings of the two films are remarkably similar in style), and the blend of the supernatural and the criminal in the film tends to adhere too rigidly to an antique set of Old Testament ethics. Thus, just before fadeout time, it comes as no surprise that at the end of a long involved movement, the camera comes to rest on a quote about "the sins of the fathers," etc.

The film is beautifully photographed in achingly sharp focus by Denys Coop, and the performances are quite good, notably Peter Cushing as Pope, a Freud-cum-Sherlock Holmes figure; Herbert Lom as a leeringly evil debaucher; and Patrick Magee as the rasping skittish country doctor. Also watch for Guy Rolfe (alias MR. SARDONICUS) in a minor role as the lawyer Maitland, who has the privilege of being the first victim of the Fengriffin curse, somewhat a pain in the axe, at least for him.

David Bartholomew

**SLEEPER** A United Artists Release. 12/73. 88 minutes. Produced by Charles H. Joffe and Jack Grossberg. Written and directed by Woody Allen. With: Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, John Beck, Mary Gregory, John McLiam, Regis Cardine.

Contrary to popular opinion, Woody Allen is not a very good filmmaker. His self-indulgent nebbish-ism is inorganic, pointless, coarse, and often dreary. His style is not ground-breaking, but frequently inexpressive and shabby. So I must reluctantly admit some admiration for his current film, which is probably his tightest, most disciplined work to date. For a change, he does not beat one to death with gags, visual and verbal, that often clink or clunk, and make one groan after an under- or over-timed guffaw.

He envisions a lop-sided future with lots of zany ideas, concepts, and gimmicks (mostly the latter, unfortunately). Some of them work, while others are either empty, forced, meaningless, or badly-timed. Technically, it's very impressive.

Dan R. Scapperotti

The Templarios torture a victim in a scene edited from the American release of *THE BLIND DEAD*.



Woody Allen & Giant Banana.

and sometimes witty in an infantile way.

Like most ambitious fantasies today, the film achieves much less than it aspires to. It's easy to fall for its comedy, slapstick, laughter, and simple, yet really lofty satiric ambitions, and harder to see just how ineptly the filmmaker is manipulating you. Comedy is not just manipulating the big laugh, it's an expression of human weakness, folly, and ineptitude, that uses dramatic elements as well. But all Allen cares about here is making laughs, and it doesn't always work. Woody Allen is still groping, still adjusting to film, and he's slowly getting there. Too slowly for comfort in fact.

Dale Winogura

**THE BLIND DEAD** A Hallmark Co Release. 1/73. In Color (Black & White Release). Produced by J. Perez Giner. Directed by Armando De Ossorio. With: Cesar Burner, Lone Fleming, Helen Harp, Joseph Thelman, Maria Silva.

Although this Spanish import doesn't add to the "art" of the genre, it does succeed in entertaining the audience for which it was intended: the less discriminating horror buffs. The title, changed from *TOMB OF THE BLIND DEAD* just prior to release, refers to a thirteenth century sect known as the Templarios. This cult was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of women in their blood rituals. They were subsequently executed and their bodies left for the crows which pecked out the eyes of the corpses. The film's gimmick is that these creatures return from the grave and can only find their victims by sound.

The graveyard sequences are eerie. True, we've seen it all before, but the mists rising from the tombs, the withered hands clutching from the opening graves, and the appearance of the skeletal beings all add to the mood of the film. The use of slow motion as the undead mount their horses to pursue a fleeing victim emphasizes the ghostly quality of the apparitions. The creatures themselves are slow moving and most of their victims are either trapped in rooms, petrified with fear, or very clumsily making their escapes. In fact, the cast is rather decimated by the film's conclusion with only two members making good their escape. One girl destroys a resurrected corpse with fire while another escapes only to bring disaster to a train full of people. The film suffers from the usual inconsistencies found in others of its type, and characterization in the writing and performances is almost non-existent.

Dan R. Scapperotti

# RATINGS

# FILM RATINGS

## THE RATINGS

++++	High	++++
+++		+++
++		++
+		+
0	Average	0
-		-
--		--
---		---
----	Low	----

## TOP RATED FILMS

THE EXORCIST (3.7)
O! LUCKY MAN (3.0)
THEATRE OF BLOOD (2.6)
DON'T LOOK NOW (2.4)
SISTERS (2.4)
DAY OF THE DOLPHIN (2.3)
SLEEPER (2.1)
AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! (2.0)
SCHLOCK (2.0)

Only films seen by four or more participants are given an average rating. Of 72 films currently in release, only nine listed above received an average rating of 2.0 or better.

## THE RATERS

DB	= David Bartholomew
DRS	= Dan R. Scapperotti
DW	= Dale Winogura
FSC	= Frederick S. Clarke
JM	= John McCarty
MM	= Mick Martin
RLJ	= Robert L. Jerome
TL	= Tim Lucas
Av.	= Average Rating

FILM TITLE	DB	DRS	DW	FSC	JM	MM	RLJ	TL	Av.
AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! (Roy Ward Baker) Cinerama, 4/73, 87 minutes, color.	++	++				++		++	-2.0
BABY, THE (Ted Post) Scotia Int'l, 4/73, 85 minutes, color.				++					
BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES (J. Lee Thompson) 20th Century Fox, 5/73, 86 minutes, color & scope.	--	0	++	+	---	+	0	---	-0.6
BEYOND ATLANTIS (Eddie Romero) Dimension, 4/73, 84 minutes, color.				---	+		-	-	-1.2
BLACKENSTEIN (William A. Levey) L. F. G. Film, 8/73, 92 minutes, color.								--	
BOY WHO CRIED WEREWOLF, THE (Nathan H. Juran) Universal, 7/73, 91 minutes, color.	--	0	---		---		0	+++	-1.2
CAGED VIRGINS (Jean Rollin) Boxoffice Int'l, 9/73, 80 minutes, color.			-						
CANNIBAL GIRLS (Ivan Reitman) AIP, 4/73, 80 minutes, color.			---			-			
CHARLEY AND THE ANGEL (Vincent McEveety) Buena-Vista, 4/73, 94 minutes, color.	0		++			0			
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (Charles A. Nichols & Iwao Takamoto) Paramount, 3/73, 94 minutes, color.		0	+			++	+++		-1.5
CLONES, THE (Paul Hunt & Lamar Card) Film Makers Int'l, 9/73, 95 minutes, color.							-	---	
CODE NAME: TRIXIE (George Romero) Cambist, 3/73, 103 minutes, color.			-						
CRYPT OF THE LIVING DEAD (Ray Danton) Coast Industries, 10/73, 93 minutes, color & scope.						0			
DAY OF THE DOLPHIN (Mike Nichols) Avco-Embassy, 12/73, 104 minutes, color.	0	++	++	+++	---			---	-2.3
DEMONS (Toshio Matsumoto) Film Images, 1/74, 135 minutes, black & white.	0								
DEVIL IN MISS JONES (Gerard Damiano) M. B. Productions, 3/73, 74 minutes, color.	--	+	0	---					-1.0
DEVIL'S WEDDING NIGHT (Paul Solvay) Dimension, 4/73, 90 minutes, color.			+		-	0			
DOCTOR DEATH, SEEKER OF SOULS (Eddie Saeta) Cinerama, 10/73, 93 minutes, color.				0					
DON'T LOOK IN THE BASEMENT (S. F. Brownrigg) Hallmark, 9/73, 95 minutes, color.	---			++	---		---	---	-2.4
DON'T LOOK NOW (Nicholas Roeg) Paramount, 1/74, 105 minutes, color.	+++		++	+			+		-2.2
DRACULA (Dan Curtis) CBS-TV, 2/74, 104 minutes, color.				0					
EXECUTIVE ACTION (David Miller) National General, 11/73, 91 minutes, color.	++		0	--	++	0			-0.7
EXORCIST, THE (William Friedkin) Warner Bros, 12/73, 121 minutes, color & scope.	+++		+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	-3.7
FANTASTIC PLANET (Rene Laloux) New World, 12/73, 72 minutes, color.			+						
FLESH AND BLOOD SHOW (Pete Walker) Entertainment Ventures, 6/73, 95 minutes, color.									
FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY (Jack Smight) NBC-TV, 12/73, 208 minutes, color.	++	+			++		++		-1.8
GODSPELL (David Greene) Columbia, 4/73, 103 minutes, color.				++	---	+++	++	+	-1.2
GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, THE (Gordon Hessler) Columbia, 3/74, 105 minutes, color.	0	++							
GRANDE BOUFFE, LA (Marco Ferreri) ABCKO, 10/73, 125 minutes, color & scope.	++								
GRAVE OF THE VAMPIRE (John Hayes) Pyramid, 10/73, 95 minutes, color.									
HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY...LOVE GEORGE (Darren McGavin) Cinema 5, 8/73, 90 minutes, color.	--								
HEAVY TRAFFIC (Ralph Bakshi) AIP, 8/73, 76 minutes, color.	++	0	0	+++			+	+++	-1.8
HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER (Clint Eastwood) Universal, 4/73, 105 minutes, color.	++		+	+	+	+	+	+	-1.4
INVASION OF THE BEE GIRLS (Denis Sanders) Centaur-Sequoia, 7/73, 85 minutes, color.	0						-	-	
JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (Norman Jewison) Universal, 6/73, 103 minutes, color & scope.			++	+++	++	0			-1.0
JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL (Hall Bartlett) Paramount, 12/73, 114 minutes, color & scope.			++	++			0		

# FILM RATINGS

# FILM RATI

FILM TITLE	DB	D R S	DW	FSC	JM	MM	RLJ	TL	Av.
LAKE OF DRACULA (Michio Yamamoto) Toho, 8/73, 82 minutes, color & scope.	o							-	
LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK, THE (Charles W. Pierce) Howco, 6/73, 90 minutes, color & scope.	---		++	++		-		0.0	
LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, THE (John Hough) 20th Century Fox, 6/73, 90 minutes, color.	o	++	+++	++	+	+	+	+++	+1.8
LIVE AND LET DIE (Guy Hamilton) United Artists, 6/73, 121 minutes, color.	o	++	-	++	++	++	+	++	+1.2
LOST HORIZON (Charles Jarrott) Columbia, 3/73, 150 minutes, color & scope.			-	-		o	----	-1.5	
MANTIS IN LACE (William Roteler) Boxoffice Int'l, 7/73, 73 minutes, color.							----		
NEPTUNE FACTOR, THE (Daniel Petrie) 20th Century Fox, 6/73, 97 minutes, color & scope.	o		----			o	o	-1.0	
NIGHT STRANGLER, THE (Dan Curtis) ABC-TV, 1/73, 75 minutes, color.				++				+++	
NIGHT WATCH (Brian G. Hutton) Avco-Embassy, 8/73, 99 minutes, color & scope.	-		++	+		o	++	0.0	
O! LUCKY MAN (Lindsay Anderson) Warner Bros, 6/73, 177 minutes, color.	---		----			+	----	+3.0	
PYX, THE (Harvey Hart) Cinerama, 11/73, 111 minutes, color & scope.	+	++					+		
RAW MEAT (Gary Sherman) AIP, 7/73, 88 minutes, color.			+	+++	-		++		+1.0
RESURRECTION OF EVE (Artie Mitchell & Jon Fontana) Mitchell Bros, 10/73, 85 minutes, color.	---								
ROBIN HOOD (Wolfgang Reitherman) Buena Vista, 12/73, 83 minutes, color.	+	++	o	++	++	+	+++	+1.6	
SCHLOCK (John Landis) Jack H. Harris, 4/73, 80 minutes, color.		+	+++			+	+++	+2.0	
SCREAM, BLACULA, SCREAM (Robert Kelljan) AIP, 6/72, 95 minutes, color.	---		++			-	++	0.0	
SIDDHARTHA (Conrad Rooks) Columbia, 8/73, 86 minutes, color.	---		+		-	o		-0.8	
SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT (Theodore Gershuny) Cannon, 9/73, 87 minutes, color.	+								
SISTERS (Brian DePalma) AIP, 4/73, 93 minutes, color.	---	+	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+2.4	
SLAUGHTER HOTEL (Fernando DiLeo) Hallmark, 9/73, 100 minutes, color & scope.							++		
SLEEPER (Woody Allen) United Artists, 12/73, 88 minutes, color.	---	++	+	-	++	+++	++	+++	+2.1
SOME CALL IT LOVING (James B. Harris) Cine Globe, 11/73, 90 minutes, color.	o								
SO SAD ABOUT GLORIA (Harry Thomason) Centronics, 7/73, 90 minutes, color.							+		
SOYLENT GREEN (Richard Fleischer) MGM, 4/73, 100 minutes, color & scope.	-	+	+++	++	+	+	o	+	+1.1
SSSSSSSS! (Bernard L. Kowalski) Universal, 7/73, 99 minutes, color.	++	++	o	+	o	+	+++	+1.3	
TALES THAT WITNESS MADNESS (Freddie Francis) Paramount, 10/73, 93 minutes, color.	o			+++	+	o	+++	+1.4	
TERMINAL ISLAND (Stephanie Rothman) Dimension, 4/73, 90 minutes, color.				+++		o			
TERROR IN THE WAX MUSEUM (Georg Fenady) Cinerama, 7/73, 95 minutes, color.				o		--	-	++	-0.2
THEATRE OF BLOOD (Douglas Hickox) United Artists, 4/73, 104 minutes, color.	++	++	++	++		+++	++	+++	+2.6
VAULT OF HORROR, THE (Roy Ward Baker) Cinerama, 3/73, 105 minutes, color.	-	+		--		+	+	++	+0.3
WEREWOLF OF WASHINGTON, THE (Milton Moses Ginsburg) Diplomat, 9/73, 90 minutes, color.									
WESTWORLD (Michael Crichton) MGM, 8/73, 88 minutes, color.	o	+++	++	+++	-	+	++		+1.4
WHEN WOMEN HAD TAILS (Pasquale Festa Campanile) Film Ventures Int'l, 6/73, 110 minutes, color.						o	---		
WICKED, WICKED (Richard L. Bare) MGM, 4/73, 95 minutes, color & scope.	o	+	++			o			-0.8
WONDER WOMEN (Robert O'Neill) General, 5/73, 82 minutes, color.						o			
ZAAT (Don Barton) Horizon Films, 3/73, 100 minutes, color.							--		

The films listed below, while in release during the rating period, were seen by no one. This is an indication that these films are in very limited release. Some titles are merely new films which have not been in release long enough to appear on the chart, but will be included in the future.

ARNOLD (Georg Fenady)  
Cinerama, 11/73, 100 minutes, color  
BRIDE, THE (Jean-Marie Pelissier)  
Unisphere, 8/73, 85 minutes, color  
CASE OF THE FULL MOON MURDERS, THE  
Sean Cunningham, 8/73, 74 minutes, color  
DERANGED (Jeff Gillen)  
AIP, 2/74, color  
DEVIL'S DUE, THE (Ernest Danna)  
D&D Distrib, 4/73, 90 minutes, 16mm color  
DR. BLACK AND MR. WHITE  
Dimension, 10/73, 90 minutes, color  
DON QUIXOTE  
Continental, 11/73, 107 minutes, color  
DRACULA'S BLOOD  
Cannon, 3/74, 90 minutes, color  
FROM THE MIXED UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E.  
FRANKENWEILER Cinema 5, 9/75, 105 min, col  
GARDEN OF THE DEAD  
Pyramid, 10/73, 76 minutes, color  
GODMONSTER, THE  
Ellman, 6/73, 95 minutes, color  
GORILLA GANG, THE  
Hampton Int'l, 5/73, 89 minutes, color  
HEX (Leo Garen)  
20th Century-Fox, 11/73, 93 minutes, color  
HORRIBLE SEXY VAMPIRE, THE  
Paragon, 10/73, 91 minutes, color  
HORROR HIGH (Larry Stouffer)  
Crown Int'l, 3/74, 85 minutes, color  
HOUSE OF THE 7 CORPSES, THE (Paul Harrison)  
Int'l Amusements, 1/74, 90 minutes, color  
HUNCHBACK OF THE MORGUE  
Cinemation, 8/73, 90 minutes, color  
IDAHO TRANSFER  
Cinemation, 8/73, 85 minutes, color  
I, MONSTER (Stephen Weeks)  
Cannon, 3/73, 80 minutes, color  
IT LIVES BY NIGHT (Jerry Jameson)  
AIP, 1/74, 94 minutes, color  
LEGEND OF HILLBILLY JOHN (John Newland)  
Jack H. Harris, 9/73, 86 minutes, color  
MADHOUSE (Jim Clark)  
AIP, 3/74, color  
MISS LESLIE'S DOLLS (Joseph G. Prieto)  
World Wide, 3/73, 85 minutes, color  
MISTER SUPERINVISIBLE (Antonio Margheriti)  
K-Tel, 9/73, 91 minutes, color & scope  
NAKED APE, THE (Donald Driver)  
Universal, 12/73, 85 minutes, color  
NAKED EVIL (Stanley Goulder)  
Hampton Int'l, 5/73, 89 minutes, color  
NIGHT GOD SCREAMED, THE  
Cinerama, 4/73, 87 minutes, color  
NIGHTMARE HONEYMOON  
MGM, 11/73, color  
PHASE IV  
Paramount, 2/74, color  
RHINOCEROS (Tom O'Horgan)  
Am Film Theatre, 1/74, 104 minutes, color  
SENSUOUS SORCERESS  
Cinepix, 6/73, color  
SUGAR HILL (Paul Maslansky)  
AIP, 2/74, color  
TOUCH OF SATAN, THE (Don Henderson)  
Dundee Prod, 3/74, 87 minutes, color  
UFO: TARGET EARTH  
Centrum Int'l, 2/74, color  
VOODOOIST, THE  
Cannon, 3/74, 90 minutes, color  
ZARDOS (John Boorman)  
20th-Fox, 2/74, 105 minutes, color & scope

# NEWS AND NOTES

## SENSE OF WONDER

Welcome to the tenth issue of CINÉFANTASTIQUE (sin-eh-faun-tass-tee-k). the magazine with a "sense of wonder," devoted to the examination of horror, fantasy and science fiction films. The past year has proven to be an almost unprecedented one in terms of excellent genre films. The biggest and most exciting news is, of course, director William Friedkin's excellent screen version of William Peter Blatty's *THE EXORCIST*. To find another work of equal magnitude and importance one must go all the way back to 1968 and Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*. Friedkin's film, like Kubrick's, is a breakthrough, a landmark film in the genre and in the body of the cinema mainstream as well. And like Kubrick's film, *THE EXORCIST* has caught the eye of public popularity as well as struck the raw nerve of movie critics who have failed to appreciate its unique achievements due to their subconscious (and sometimes conscious!) prejudices against the horror film.

The problem most critics have with the film has its roots in their lack of a "sense of wonder," which is an open frame of mind willing to suspend disbelief in the search for knowledge, experience, adventure and entertainment. Most ten-year old kids have got it. Most of the moviegoing public have got it if the success of *THE EXORCIST* is any measure. And most of the intelligentsia have not. Although director William Friedkin has created a logical and disturbingly believable world in which the devil lives, most critics are unable to see past the constraints of the real world into Friedkin's world and the chilling implications that it holds for our own. We should pity them.

The public has taken to *THE EXORCIST* because it does that best for which the horror film is uniquely suited: it deals on a richly symbolic level with life, death and the forces of the universe. It reaches its audience on an entirely emotional and atavistic level in its demarkation and manipulation of such abstract concepts as good and evil, God and the Devil, and draws upon a subconscious and deepseated well of primitive awe and fear of the unknown that harks back to the days when early man squatted in the darkness of caves and required the concepts of gods and monsters to explain the world around him. And it is precisely because *THE EXORCIST* touches and disturbs its viewer on such a basic level

Scenes from MGM's science fiction attraction *WESTWORLD*, which has made in excess of \$12,000,000. Top: Director Michael Crichton and Richard Benjamin on location. Crichton's T-shirt reads "Caution: Contents Under Pressure. Do Not Puncture Or Incinerate." The quip may have closely approximated his actual state of mind during the shooting of the film, his first theatrical feature. 2nd: On his first day in *Westworld*, Dick Benjamin guns down gun-slinger robot Yul Brynner. 3rd: On the succeeding days, however, the conflict becomes all too real, as the gun-slinger robot malfunctions and stalks him with mechanical precision. Benjamin defends himself with fire and any other means at hand. Bottom: Crichton shoots one of the few shots in *Medievalworld*, as Dick Van Patten beds a servant girl robot.



# WESTWORLD

Stuart Kaminsky interviews Michael Crichton, the best-selling science fiction novelist turned filmmaker, about his first theatrical feature.

Michael Crichton is six feet, nine inches tall, lean but not thin, with almost traditional movie star good looks. One would take him more for an NBA superstar than a 30-year-old physician who is now a movie director/writer in addition to being the author of such best-selling novels as *The Andromeda Strain* and *The Terminal Man*. He appears somewhat tired when he talks, but says, before the interview begins, that he is not at all tired, that he "always looks this way," which means essentially confident and at least outwardly relaxed.

Crichton was born in Chicago and raised with his brother and two sisters in Roslyn, New York. He entered Harvard in 1960 and graduated *summa cum laude*. While in Harvard Medical School he turned to writing detective paperbacks under the pseudonym of John Lange. In 1968 he wrote a novel on abortion called *A Case of Need* under the name of Jeffrey Hudson. The book won the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Allan Poe Award and was filmed in 1972 as *THE CARY TREATMENT*. In 1973 Crichton wrote the screenplay for *EXTREME CLOSE-UP*, a film about governmental invasion of privacy released by National General Pictures.

His current film, *WESTWORLD*, is based on his own original screenplay and deals with a vacation resort called Delos in the not-too-distant future which is manned entirely by sophisticated robots programmed to cater to the fantasies of urban weary guests. The story follows two companions, played by Dick Benjamin and James Brolin, who choose to visit the Westworld park devoted to recapturing the machismo of the American frontier, and the dire consequences they encounter when the machines begin to break down and malfunction. The film is only Crichton's second directorial effort and his first theatrical feature. He directed an ABC Movie of the Week segment entitled *PURSUIT*, based on a novel called *Binary* which he had written under a *nom de plume* during his days as a medical student. His current best-selling novel, *The Terminal Man*, has been sold to Warner Bros for a large advance and has been scripted, produced and directed by Michael Hodges.

This interview was conducted after a screening of *WESTWORLD* in Chicago, where MGM experimented with a new market strategy by opening the film in saturation bookings accompanied by extensive media promotion and advertising. This resulted in a boxoffice gross of over two million dollars for the Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland area in only the first week of release. By the third week, MGM had completely recouped its production cost and investment in the film, and is already planning a sequel to be called *FUTUREWORLD*.

CFQ: How do you work as a director when you're shooting?

CRICHTON: I've never had the luxury of anything but rigorous planning. But in another sense I haven't had time for a great deal of planning. *WESTWORLD* was cast 48 hours before shooting started. We didn't have all the sets constructed when we started to shoot. So I didn't have time to really go in and plan angles. Most of what I do is rehearse a scene and walk around, trying to give most of my attention to the performances. Then I'll say something like, "It looks

good from here."

CFQ: You had a veteran cameraman on the film, Gene Polito, who also shot *COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT*. Did you rely on him heavily for camera placement and lighting?

CRICHTON: Yes. We would discuss general lighting conditions, because I am not competent to light. I'll say I'm not competent to light, but I was much more involved in framing and camera movement which I think is more the director's job. If the cameraman had an idea, we would discuss it.

CFQ: How did you work with actors like Dick Benjamin and Yul Brynner?

CRICHTON: I think it's a good idea for me to have a clear idea of what I want the actors to do, and then try to be loose enough to recognize that what I want may not be working which is really an important consideration. And when someone has an idea that's an improvement, I try to be my own filter.

CFQ: So you have improvisation on the set?

CRICHTON: Yes. In *WESTWORLD*, for example, there's a commercial for Delos, the vacation world. I didn't write this. As we were doing it, we didn't like it so we just let the actors go, encouraged them to improvise with me saying I liked certain things or didn't like others until we pulled something together. We then edited it roughly to make it appear like it was shot live for a television commercial.

CFQ: How long did it take to shoot and edit *WESTWORLD*?

CRICHTON: Thirty days to shoot. It had a typical post-production schedule, taking about 12 or 13 weeks. Five weeks were for the director's cut. We had shot about 110,000 feet of film on a budget of \$1,300,000. We finished under budget and on time. In editing the picture I must have seen it, literally, hundreds of times.

CFQ: What do you still like best about it after seeing it so many times?

CRICHTON: I think it might be the sequence near the end where Brynner is almost blind and he finds Benjamin. That whole last half hour of the film is essentially silent. That's what I wanted to do, make that as a silent picture, with no dialogue.

CFQ: When Benjamin is fleeing from Brynner he stops and talks to the engineer, Steve Franken, and after being told that he has no chance, Benjamin says firmly that he is confident that he can beat the robot. Where did he suddenly get this confidence?

CRICHTON: It's my line. I wrote it. There were a lot of discussions about script changes. And it was all unpleasant. Something I don't want to do again. I decided that I didn't like the line because it comes out of nowhere. It doesn't fit the rest of the scene. Their argument was, shoot it and you can always cut it later.

CFQ: Isn't that a standard argument to evade the issue, because if you shoot it, they can always put it back after you've cut it?

CRICHTON: Yes, but the director can always sabotage it while shooting. But in this case, it was a totally corny moment anyway, the kind of thing I don't always trust my own instincts about. I took it out on my first cut and they argued that it should be put back in for the first preview to see if it would work. And it worked.

CFQ: You have said that the western element

of *WESTWORLD* is based, intentionally, on cliche. In what sense?

CRICHTON: When Benjamin kills Brynner the first time it is a total cliche: the lines, the staging, and the angles. I was very careful not to do anything visually tricky, because I wanted it to have a very standard look that I could play on later.

CFQ: What about the deaths in slow motion?

CRICHTON: I think that has become a western violence convention. After Peckinpah, when people think about killing a gunfighter in the old West they see it in slow motion. I want the audience to see it as a Western convention, because the death in slow motion is unreal. The real deaths later are handled differently.

CFQ: Do you think this was a particularly difficult role for Yul Brynner?

CRICHTON: Yes. It's very hard to give the impression that you are a robot with no personality while at the same time having some sense of presence and personality. Brynner has this. I didn't cast Brynner or the other two principals, but I am very pleased with them in the film. Brynner is the gunfighter since *THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN*. If anyone really built a place like Westworld, they probably would make the gunfighter robot in the image of Brynner. By the way, I did cast everyone else in the picture.

CFQ: Do you feel being a writer is an advantage to you as a director?

CRICHTON: Yes. If you know what your concept is, it gives you a base that's very important. There were very few times during the production when I didn't know what I wanted, and even though things changed a lot, there was always a starting point. The other big advantage of the writer is that you work out a lot of options on paper. The only drawback is the possibility of getting locked into an overly rigid conception.

CFQ: Do you have favorite directors?

CRICHTON: Kubrick. I think I admire Kubrick more consistently than anyone else. Orson Welles, Costa-Gavras, Pontecorvo. I'm always interested in someone who can create a reality and sell it. It's not something that I tried to achieve in *WESTWORLD*. If I had directed *THE TERMINAL MAN*, I would have taken this approach. I did a script for that, by the way, and it isn't being used.

CFQ: What writers do you admire?

CRICHTON: Vonnegut, Updike, Mailer...H. P. Lovecraft is an eccentric favorite.

CFQ: Have you ever considered doing an H. P. Lovecraft novel as a film?

CRICHTON: The attempts to do Lovecraft stories on film have been wretched. It's awfully hard. It's somewhat the same kind of problem that comes out with *Dracula*. It's better as a book than it has been in any film. There's some quality of imagination missing. You can scare yourself better than you can ever be shown anything that is frightening or upsetting.

CFQ: Were there any problems on *WESTWORLD* that you'd like to mention?

CRICHTON: I shot without options. Given the reputation of MGM I edited in the camera, shot tightly and didn't cover. The decisions I made were irrevocable. There was no way to change them later. I was lucky. I got away with a lot.



# AMICUS PRODUCTIONS

Chris Knight looks into recent developments with the most vital production unit in the world devoted to genre films.

Max J. Rosenberg (New York) and Milton Subotsky (London) continued the prolific activity of Amicus Productions as an English based supplier of moderately priced, high quality, horror films in 1973. Using well-known horror film personalities, as well as drawing upon Britain's ample supply of top-notch character actors, the production unit based at both Shepperton and Twickenham Studios finished work on three features: *THE REVENGE OF DR. DEATH*, *TALES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE*, and *THE BEAST MUST DIE*. John Dark, as associate producer, assisted Milton Subotsky in charge of production.

*THE REVENGE OF DR. DEATH* began filming on location and at Twickenham Studios on May 14, in association with American-International Pictures. The film, based on the novel *Deathday* by Angus Hall, had long been a part of AIP's production plans and was announced for filming as early as 1970 under the title *DEVIL-DAY*. The film stars Vincent Price as the aging horror actor Paul Toombes, trying to make a comeback on London television. Two decades earlier he had been tried and found innocent of the murder of his fiancee. Although acquitted, the experience left him shattered and ruined his career playing the popular horror film character Dr. Death. It is during his stay in London that three women with whom he comes in contact are found murdered, killed in ways that parallel situations in the old Dr. Death movies. This brings back sad memories of the past to haunt him as well as puts the police on his trail, who suspect that he may be doing in real life what he once performed on the screen. The film also features Peter Cushing, Robert Quarry, Adrienne Corri, Natasha Pyne and Linda Hayden.

The film is directed by Jim Clark from a script by Greg Morrison. Clark has been an editor and has worked for David Wolper assisting director John Schlessinger on a documentary about the Olympic Games. A large amount of location work on the film made this documentary training valuable. Two weeks of studio filming were a cramped and crowded scene at Twickenham, relatively much smaller than the Shepperton Studios, the usual home base for Amicus. I bumped into Angus Hall on the set one day. Hall had originally published the novel on which the

film is based as *Qualtrough*, and remarked that of all the filming and the rushes that he had viewed, there seemed to be little of his book in any of it. The character of Dr. Death, however, is the same, and Hall mentioned that he had Vincent Price in mind when he originally wrote it.

*TALES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE* began filming on June 4, and marked the return of Amicus to the Shepperton Studios where the company has filmed most of their productions. The film also marked their return to a favorite format, the anthology, this time four tales based on short stories by R. Chetwynd-Hayes published in the collection *The Unbidden*. The framework story this time involves a small antique shop in London called Temptations Limited, with Peter Cushing playing the old proprietor who caters to very odd tastes. One of the tales concerns an old carved door which, when installed, opens to reveal an elegant blue drawing room. On the wall is the portrait of a handsome Restoration gentleman. It is when the gentleman appears in the flesh, decayed and rotted with age, that the terror begins to manifest itself. The film features Ian Bannen, Ian Carmichael and Ian Ogilvy, not to mention, Nyree Dawn Porter, Donald Pleasance, Diana Dors and David Warner and is produced for release by Warner Bros.

The stories by R. Chetwynd-Hayes were first brought to the attention of Milton Subotsky by Kevin Conner, who directs the picture from a script by Robin Clarke and Raymond Christodoulou. Conner previously worked as an editor on such pictures as *YOUNG WINSTON* and *OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR!* Working with him on the film is cinematographer Alan Hume who achieved some strikingly stylized visuals last year on *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*. Over 26 different sets required in the production were designed by Maurice Carter, who has worked on several period films, including *BECKET*. The highlight of the film surely must be the disintegration of the "phantom blue room," on which Carter worked hand in glove with special effects expert Alan Bryce.

*THE BEAST MUST DIE* followed in production at Shepperton almost immediately and became the 21st feature Amicus has shot there. The film is produced for release by British Lion

in the United Kingdom and release plans for the United States have yet to be finalized. The screenplay by Michael Winder is based on a novelette by well-known science fiction writer James Blish and deals with a multi-millionaire game hunter, played by black actor Calvin Lockhart, who attempts to trap the biggest game of all—a werewolf! Set in modern times, the hunter assembles a group of people together in a lonely house whose grounds are covered by radar, infra-red television cameras, microphones, machine guns with silver bullets and even patrolled by helicopter. The guests are all connected with lycanthropy in one way or another and the hunter is convinced that one of them is, in fact, a werewolf. They include: Peter Cushing as Lundgren, a Nordic expert on the werewolf, Charles Gray as Bonnington, a discredited member of the diplomatic corps, Michael Gambon as an ailing concert pianist and Claram Madden as his girl, and Tom Chadbon as a celebrated pop artist. Anton Diffring plays Pavel, the hunter's assistant. An interesting feature of the film is that it uses much of the Shepperton Studios' grounds and Old House, providing a fine record of an historic estate that dates back to the eighth century. It first became a film studio in 1931.

The film is directed by Paul Annett, who began directing ATV television programs in 1969, among them the fantasy series *DEAD OF NIGHT*. He worked with a talented crew including two former Oscar winners, cinematographer Jack Hillyard (*BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI*) and art director John Stoll (*LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*). The make-up on the film is done by Paul Rabeiner. The werewolf is not a human one, but a specially trained Alsatian wolfhound named Sultan, who had his own make-up man, hairdresser and dentist!

Amicus is preparing four projects for filming in 1974: Edgar Rice Burroughs' *THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT*, *TALES OF THE INCREDIBLE*, to be based on the old EC science fiction comic books, *BLOOD CITY*, a science fiction western, and a science fiction property called *CLONE*. Amicus continues to be the most vital production unit in the world devoted to filming horror, fantasy and science fiction properties.

Chris Knight

## BIBLIO-FANTASTIQUE

Val Lewton: *The Reality of Terror* (Viking Press, New York, 1973, 176 pages, \$5.95 hardcover, \$2.75 paperback) succeeds best as a documentary, in print, on the life of horror film producer Val Lewton. Liberally sprinkled with stills, the long biographical essay which forms the basis of the book reads much like Pauline Kael's "Raising Kane," or more recently, Gavin Lambert's extended exploration of the roots of *GONE WITH THE WIND*: a chatty, straightforward blending of historical reportage with analytical comment. One can hardly fault Siegel's ability to research and collate material: his book is jammed full of letters, interviews, references to unpublished scripts, and other critical evaluations of Lewton's work. That he substitutes such material for fresh insight into the films themselves is perhaps the price all such scholarship inevitably pays for placing so much importance on *Inside Dope*.

Relying heavily on family letters and interviews with Lewton's wife, Siegel scraps together a picture of a man who thrived on the budget of the B film, and died waiting for various studios to come up with the proper A project which, from his last RKO film in 1946 to his death in 1951, they never did. The credits of the pre-RKO Lewton make him out to be something of a creative assembly line: nine novels published before he was thirty, "about a hundred" articles contributed to various magazines, radio scripts, newspaper work, pornography. With the formation of his own low-budget film unit at RKO, Lewton's ability to use the best of the talents around him for his own purposes blossomed. Rarely assuming screen credit (and then, only under the pseudonym "Carlos Keith"), Lewton collaborated daily with his writers, to embellish or rework the script. Directors like Robert Wise (*CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE*, *THE BODY SNATCHER*), Mark Robson (*THE 7TH VICTIM*, *ISLE OF THE DEAD*), and Jacques Tourneur (*THE CAT PEOPLE*, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*) first cut their teeth under Lewton's active tutelage--to the point where Robson, Siegel writes, even assumed many of Lewton's physical mannerisms. By 1949, with Lewton sitting unused on the MGM lot, James Agee was referring to him as "one of the three greatest movie makers this country ever produced under contract."

Away from his work, however, Lewton was more a puzzle; and Siegel intersperses his text with large chunks of personal evaluations by virtually every important figure who ever worked with Lewton. Most see Lewton as a man torn between what he was, and what he felt he ought to be. Ardel Wray described him as "strong willed, but exasperatingly vulnerable to every passing opinion, even from people

Scenes from THE REVENGE OF DR. DEATH, an Amicus Film Production in association with AIP. Top: Vincent Price and colleague Peter Cushing at a monster masquerade ball held in honor of aging horror actor Paul Toombe. Middle: Vincent Price fits well into the slightly autobiographical role as horror film actor Paul Toombe, who is trying to make a comeback as Dr. Death. Bottom: Price and director Jim Clark go over the script which is based on a novel by Angus Hall.

whose opinions he knew to be worthless." Alan Napier said "He wasn't particularly good at athletics, but felt that he ought to be.... On the surface, he appeared to be a lusty, physical man, but inside he was a very sensitive, creative man, very tightly strung, with a capacity for extreme anxiety and strain." In short, Lewton's personality seemed ideally suited to making "good bad" films: a term as contradictory, Siegel implies, as the man himself.

Exactly why these films did work so well is left unexplored. Siegel seems to have been aware of this problem, for he has included a lengthy appendix, in which he reviews each film as if it had just been released. Research aside, his insights range from the familiar to the banal, and for the most part fit into well-worn grooves: Tourneur at the top, Wise in the middle, and Robson at the bottom. Predictably, *THE CAT PEOPLE* is "so frightening because it never really shows us anything, thus affording us the greatest indulgence of terror--the freedom to frighten ourselves." *THE BODY SNATCHER*, as usual, is "intelligently constructed, acted, and filmed," while *ISLE OF THE DEAD* is dismissed as "tiresome," allegedly a victim of the sabotaged script syndrome.

Quoting Susan Sontag for support, Siegel praises Lewton's best films solely as exercises in style: "Ultimately, the greatest source of emotional power in art lies not in any particular subject matter, however passionate, however universal. It lies in form." What about content, then? Why do Lewton's films reverberate with clashes between faith and reason? What does the use of a Hogarth painting do for a film like *BEDLAM*? Siegel only tips his hat at such questions. On neither a literary nor an iconographic level does he attempt to come to terms with them.

The cover of the book is a still from *BEDLAM*: hands flailing through bars, reach out towards a calm, stooped silhouette of a man in a hallway. That figure, Siegel seems to say, is Lewton: at once content with, and victimized by, the confined, shadowy world in which he worked best. One would have hoped that Val Lewton: *The Reality of Terror* would put to rest, once and for all, the Pauline Kael line of thought that "Lewton's horror pictures aren't good, they're just better than the other cheap horror pictures Hollywood has been grinding out." Through Siegel, Lewton himself stands exonerated; the definitive word has yet to be written on his work.

Harry Ringel

Obviously, one's reaction to this printing of the screenplay of Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* (Ballantine Books, New York, 1972, app. 200 pages, \$3.95 paperback), based on the novel by Anthony Burgess, is going to be influenced by your reaction to the film. I, personally, was one of the few fence sitters: admiring of the technique but less than happy with the subject. The attempts to capture a particular film between the covers of a book have been legion, and the recent spate of published film scripts have brought the problem to the fore. The Simon and Schuster series, *Classic Film Scripts* and *Modern Film Scripts*, for instance,



Facing Page: Scenes from two recent Amicus Film Productions. Left: Peter Cushing as the proprietor of a strange London antique shop in the framework story of *TALES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE*, another in their line of anthology films, based on four stories by R. Chetwynd-Hayes. The film will be released by Warner Bros. Right: Calvin Lockhart as millionaire big game hunter Tom Newcliffe in *THE BEAST MUST DIE*, based on the novelette by science fiction writer James Blish involving a werewolf. No release in the United States has yet been finalized.



have been almost the straight shooting scripts, each shot described, interspersed with the dialogue, with a number of stills in clumps throughout the book. Not unsuccessful, they still require a certain amount of filmic knowledge and do not flow trippingly across the eye.

The *CLOCKWORK ORANGE* book to hand, however, is a breakthrough. Prepared in close collaboration with Kubrick, the film was studied frame-by-frame and exactly the right stills were pulled out to indicate every shot. These are correlated with the dialogue in exact order; there are few double pages with less than four pictures and one receives a real sense of the flow of the film as one reads. Even those sequences totally reliant on motion (the choreographed rumble early in, for instance) are given some coherence by pages of pictures alone. I would be most curious as to the reaction here of someone who has not seen the film. If you have, this book is certainly the best substitute so far to owning a print of the film until video cassettes come in. How many films I would love to see booked this way!

About 50 pages of *Karloff: The Man, The Monster, The Movies* (Curtis Film Series, New York, 1973, 352 pages, \$1.50 paperback) by Denis Gifford is devoted to a superficial biography of Karloff, interesting mainly for the little-known facts of his pre-Frankenstein career, an extremely varied one from Canadian farmer to participant in a burlesque sketch. The overwhelming impression, particularly strengthened by quotes from Karloff himself, is reinforcement of the too-true-to-be-true (but obviously true) image of the gentle, intelligent, almost courtly personality doing a job and doing it well. The rest of the book is a knock-out piece of research: credits, synopses, excerpts taken from typical reviews, and the author's commentary on almost all of the over-100 films that Karloff made (even he didn't know how many there were, since the film career dated back to 1919!). It makes for interesting browsing.

*Great Monsters of the Movies* (Doubleday, Garden City, 1973, 101 pages, \$4.95 hardcover) by Edward Edelson is a juvenile, and one that is most worth while. I hesitate to suggest an age level (people were always annoying me by giving me books aimed at 10-year-olds when I was 10), but if there's a youngster around who is interested in horror films, is young enough not to quite know how movies are made or much about their history, and is atypical in that he or she knows how to read, this would make a grand gift. Edelson goes a bit into the primal legends of vampires, werewolves and mad scientists (a nice bit of thinking there), who is responsible for what in a movie (he credits Karloff's success not only to that estimable actor but also his makeup man, Jack Pierce), suggests that the reader make note of director's names so that he will know whose pictures to keep an eye out for, and then tells a bit about the great films of the genre. His critical remarks are very well put, and should give a young fan some basis for judgement without undue influence. Try this book on your young Frankenstein. He may like it.

Baird Searles

Scenes from *VAMPIRA*, director Clive Donner's horror film spoof for Columbia Pictures. Page Opposite: David Niven as Dracula is about to put Marc (Nicky Henson) under his influence with a quick bite. At Left, Top: Maltravers (Peter Bayliss), Dracula's manservant, is a little anxious over the time it has taken Dracula to bite Helga (Linda Hayden). Middle: Teresa Graves as Vampira. Bottom: Director Clive Donner (right) goes over a scene with David Niven and Linda Hayden.

# COMING

CHILDHOOD'S END is being readied for production at Universal by George Litto Productions. The novel by Arthur C. Clarke deals with the ultimate evolution of the human species under the tutelage of an alien super race, and has been compared to his monumental work with Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*. Abraham Polonsky will direct from his own script, now in preparation...

DOC SAVAGE...THE MAN OF BRONZE began filming January 23 for release by Warner Bros. Producer George Pal worked long and hard for a period of two years firming up the right production deal on the film, preparing screenplays from the material contained in over 181 Doc Savage novels written by the late Kenneth Robeson, and arranging for merchandising and exploitation tie-ins to mine a tremendous resurgence of nostalgic interest in the old pulp magazine superhero. After preparing an initial script entitled *DOC SAVAGE, THE ARCHENEMY OF EVIL*, a distillation of elements and plots from several of the novels, Pal decided that the first film must show the origin of the superhero in detail and commissioned the present script, based on the first Doc Savage novel of the same name. Ron Ely, formerly Tarzan for producer Sy Weintraub, has been signed for the title role. Pal envisions doing a series of feature films over a period of several years based on the Doc Savage character, and eventually a television series. The film is being directed by Michael Anderson who directed 1984 (2:1:44)...

THE DYBBUK is to be produced by Leon Mirell Productions and distributed by Jack H. Harris, based on the play "Between Two Worlds" by S. Ansky. Filmed twice previously in 1937 and 1967, the story involves the possession of a young girl by the spirit of a deceased bridegroom. No doubt spawned by the success of *THE EXORCIST* and the first of many imitations to come...

THE GRAVE IS ALIVE is to be an anthology of three tales written by fantasy writer Clark Ashton Smith. The film, described as "big budget," is a coproduction of Roger Corman's New World Pictures and British Lion and will begin filming in London this summer. Curtis Hanson will direct from his own screenplay...

THE LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES is a Hammer/Shaw Bros horror/kung fu coproduction being filmed in Hong Kong by director Roy Ward Baker. Peter Cushing and Julie Ege star in a script by producer Don Houghton...

LOGAN'S RUN is being prepared for production at MGM by producer Saul David. The science fiction novel by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson tells of a future society in which individuals are put to death at the age of 21 and one individual who chose to beat the system rather than submit to extinction. The project was originally developed at Metro by producer George Pal in 1968, who worked for over a year on scripts and treatments and scouting locations, only to have the project lost in the shuffle of changing top management. David produced *FANTASTIC VOYAGE* at 20th Century Fox. Stanley Greenberg is scripting now...

# VAMPIRE



## David Niven dons a pair of plastic fangs and a black cape to play Count Dracula in a horror film spoof directed by Clive Donner.

When it was announced in the Summer of 1973 that David Niven would star in a film as Count Dracula, the event received among the most extensive press coverage of any genre film ever announced for production. Throughout Britain, the national and local newspapers carried photos and stories of the new film, first announced as *VAMPIRELLA*. The producer, Jack Wiener, later changed the title to *VAMPIRA* to avoid confusion with a comic book character of the same name with which the film has no association.

*VAMPIRA* began shooting at the EMI-MGM studios at Elstree and at various locations in and around London on July 30 for Tiger/World Film Services Productions and Columbia Pictures release. The film is set in modern-day London and Transylvania, to save on the cost of period settings no doubt, and features Niven as a very suave and mannered Count Dracula, in the mold of the classic Lugosi portrayal, often dressed in a tuxedo or a black raincoat with a large black hat. The script by Jeremy Lloyd is not intended as a straight horror film, but is a subtle blend of fantasy and comedy in which Dracula, along with Vampira played by Teresa Graves, becomes involved with various upbeat characters and beautiful women. Peter Bayliss plays Dracula's manservant Maltravers. Also in the cast are Jenny Linden, Freddie Jones, Veronica Carlson and Linda Hayden.

I managed to visit the unit at Elstree on a hot day in August when, fortunately, the shooting was taking place in the relative coolness of the studio's underground parking lot. The normal dimness of the car park was shattered by arc lamps as their strong beams played upon three cars, and it was under their glare that I caught my first glimpse of David Niven. At the time, he was being directed in a scene in which he comes to the aid of a young girl (played by Carol Cleveland) being attacked by a ruffian. Niven disarms him and stabs him through the foot with

a walking cane which conceals a sharply pointed blade. Although Niven does play Count Dracula in the film, the Count is a very chivalrous vampire who is fond of coming to the aid of young ladies in distress, and who would rather sink his fangs into a deserving blackguard than some innocent victim.

The scene was being directed by Clive Donner, who is a joy to watch. Never still, always looking for new camera angles, he rushes about directing his artists while making a multitude of strange noises which are his impressions of racing cars. Donner has had considerable experience as a director on many British films including *WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?*, *ALFRED, THE GREAT, HERE WE GO 'ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH* and *LUV*. Other members of the crew include Tony Richmond (Cinematographer), Philip Harrison (Art Director), Bill Butler (Editor), and two members of the old Hammer unit, Bert Batt (Assistant Director) and Phil Leakey (Makeup).

During the day's shooting, I spoke briefly with the film's producer, Jack Wiener, to learn what was behind the project and its somewhat offbeat casting. "I always wanted to do a horror film that was different," he said. "I wanted to go back to the days of Bela Lugosi and do a film with a little more elegance. I love horror, but I think horror has to have a mixture of humor, suspense and all the thrills that go with entertainment. But it has to be done in a suave way, as perhaps Basil Rathbone would have done it. I told David long ago that when I had something written that would suit his character I would offer it to him. I was having lunch one day with Jeremy Lloyd and he told me that he would love to have a crack at it, and he wrote the treatment for the film. That's how it was born.

"David Niven said he wouldn't do it, at first, but as I explained it to him that Bram Stoker had envisioned Dracula as a Count and that he was a

great gentleman from Transylvania from landed gentry, who was better to play such a role than David Niven? He slowly came around to the idea after he had read the treatment, and said that if we did the script on that basis he would go along with it. It's not a funny film, but a film that is smooth and tongue-in-cheek, so that people can take it either seriously or perhaps with a little giggle here and there."

Wiener feels that films like *VAMPIRA* will help to broaden the horror film audience. "We've tried not to disappoint those people who have been going to see horror films for years, but at the same time we're trying to get some of those people who have not been going to those films that publicize lots of nudity and gore. If that type of thing is well done, bravo, but here people will see that it's David Niven and that it might be fun. If they like our film, they may patronize other horror films that they would ordinarily avoid. We also wanted to make the film suitable for children. I'm a lover of the fantastique, and I used to watch these films when I was around thirteen. I think horror films are good for young kids. I don't want people to be old before they get a chance to see a horror film, and that's one of the ideas behind the project."

David Niven came over for a few moments while the special effects people were trying to make the ruffian's foot bleed for the cameras, and I asked him whether he felt the public would accept him in a horror film playing a role like Count Dracula. "I don't know," was his honest reply. "It's good, and it's a spoof Dracula, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. But the problem is that you fall between these two emotions, comedy and horror. I still do the thing with the fangs going into the neck and drinking the blood, but here it's just being played a bit more relaxed, that's all." He did make one point perfectly clear, however, there will be no sequel.

Chris Knight



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what is said with what is seen, allow for a certain weak-kneed verisimilitude. The movie leaves no such loopholes. Reaction shots do not lie—especially not when a level-headed mother sees her daughter's bed bounce, then becomes hysterical only when she is told that "it's not your daughter's bed—it's her brain." And there is no reading between the lines of levitation—particularly not when the scene is used to open the eyes of a Doubting Thomas priest.

There might be a Devil at work in the book, there is one loose in the movie. And one of the most frightening aspects of the film is that no earthly power can keep that devil contained. Science fails; the law—a detective (Cobb) who keeps smelling religious maniac—fails. Even that most spiritual of all institutions, motherhood, falls short. By the end of the movie, the only institution left to keep that demon up in its room is God: or whatever force in man passes for God. And if the Supreme Being Himself doesn't come down out of Heaven to save the day, his teachings do. Just when it looks as if the last great institution might fail, the Christian act of self-sacrifice beats the Devil at his own game.

THE EXORCIST, then, is no more about the Devil than the Bible is. If anything, the film makes God the fashion—not Satan, as most reviewers would have it. And if we look beyond the shocks, we just might glimpse a warning in all the secularized priests and shibboleths of reason with which Friedkin has coated his film. The Waste Land world of THE EXORCIST has not only shunned its spiritual disciplines (in the book, the mother is an active atheist), but has begun to mock them as well. Early on, a statue of the Virgin Mary is found defiled in a New York church. The detective attempts to tie the crime to the Georgetown mystery, but gets no further than his reason will take him. Similarly, Regan opens the Pandora's box of possession in the most innocent fashion: all she does is play with an old Ouija board she finds in the attic. But Ouija boards aren't toys—and neither is Satan, Regan discovers, though her punishment far exceeds her crime. This is how evil works, THE EXORCIST reminds us: if we don't take care of ourselves spiritually, we are leaving ourselves open to the very scourge which takes over Regan. And the message applies, whether we accept the existence of God or not.

But if the message doesn't pull people together, the experience of it does. I, for one, spoke to more Puerto Ricans during my two hour wait in front of a New York theater than I did the entire two years I lived in New York. And the vomit spattered bathroom after the show (you couldn't even get near the sink) may well be the closest the Melting Pot ever comes to blending literally.

If the way to America's heart is through its stomach, so be it: exhausted or enlightened, THE EXORCIST audiences are leaving theaters a little bit closer to their neighbors, a little more aware of their common humanity. After all, another word for "exorcism" is "purge;" and isn't that what art is all about?

Harry Ringel



Scenes from THE EXORCIST, directed by William Friedkin, currently in release from Warner Bros. At Left: Father Merrin (Max von Sydow) and Father Karras (Jason Miller) attempt to use the Catholic rite of exorcism to rid the body of 12-year old Regan of a terrifying demon. At right: Top: "I cast you out in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is He who commands you." So repeats the exorcist, Father Merrin, as the demon wails, and spits, and curses, and uses all of the forces of Hell to battle for the Jesuit's own immortal soul. Bottom: No sooner than the old Jesuit exorcist has stepped inside the door of the MacNeil home, the demon lets loose a blood-chilling howl that stuns even those who have come to know and fear its power: Sharon (Kitty Winn) on the steps, Willie (Gina Petruska) the maid, Chris MacNeil (Ellen Burstyn) and Father Karras who have come to the door to greet him. The film is the quintessential personification of the conflict of good and evil, a conflict at the heart of nearly all great horror films.





Behind the scenes of *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD*, in release from Columbia Pictures. Above: Special effects director and co-producer Ray Harryhausen confers with Charles H. Schneer concerning the pre-production sketches on which the film is based. Below: The animation model of the six-armed statue used in the film. The model is animated in front of a screen on which a background scene or action is projected. This stop-motion technique is now referred to as Dynarama.

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be reminded, and therefore we start all over again on a new sequence to do something different.

**CFQ:** Could you explain the genesis of your latest Sinbad film?

**SCHNEER:** Ray Harryhausen and I are in a desperate search for material in which we believe we can make the unreal, real. We've dealt with H. G. Wells material, Jules Verne material, material from Greek mythology, and we felt it was time to go back to the Arabian Nights, since no one else has been dealing with it and we had a great success with it in the late fifties. We felt there was a new audience that was ready for it. We knew of no other producers who were considering this type of material, largely because they probably didn't know how to handle it on a basis where it became economically viable. Therefore, we selected it, and we made about a dozen master sketches of visuals that we felt would be intriguing and interesting and characteristic of the period, and we started with Ray's sketches. Some of the key sketches became key scenes in the picture, and from there we began to link the story. We hired Brian Clemens, who is a very fine screenwriter, to do the screenplay based on Harryhausen's sketches.

**CFQ:** You chose to return to Sinbad rather than to Jason, yet at the end of *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS* it looked as if there might be a sequel.

**SCHNEER:** There may still be. But there was fifteen years difference between the first Sinbad and the second. Audiences who were then fifteen are now thirty, and our fifteen year old audience now wasn't even born at that time. They know nothing about that picture. I would say that if we get an audience today of up to eighteen or nineteen, they never heard of the first picture, if we get them up to twenty-five or thirty, they will have heard of it.

**CFQ:** Ray Harryhausen is credited as "Co-producer" this time. What function did he perform in that capacity?

**SCHNEER:** In this particular picture, unlike the others, he bore a greater sense of responsibility. Apart from doing the animation, which we call Dynarama in this picture, he was vitally concerned with every phase of it as a producer is, with the casting of it, the writing of it, the editing of it, and the scoring of it. In his prior pictures, he was not as closely identified with all of these operations. When you are involved with a picture as intricate and complicated as this, from my point of view, four eyes are better than two. That's the way we work, and we've worked for many years together. We have a very good working relationship. We feel that we complement each other because his long suit is my short suit, and vice versa.

**CFQ:** Did Harryhausen sit in on the filming of the live-action?

**SCHNEER:** Wherever he could, because sometimes we had two units working, and when we had a unit working where he was primarily concerned, then he was not with the live action. He had to give all of his time and attention to those sequences and backgrounds with which he was vitally concerned. I would say that he did not give his time and attention, by virtue of the very dictates of the limited time that he had in

which we were working, where all the elements had to be pulled together. So he concentrated on the non-live elements.

**CFQ:** Some of the sets in the new Sinbad film are standing sets, and some are miniature sets. The Fountain of Destiny set, in particular, was evidently a miniature set.

**SCHNEER:** The Fountain of Destiny was a Harryhausen designed miniature. I think it's one of the best of its kind. It was a miniature to this extent: it is combined with an actual set which we built in our own studios in Madrid. The only thing that's miniature in that set is the fountain. Everything else is built.

**CFQ:** The Stonehenge setting of the fountain is real?

**SCHNEER:** We built it on the stage. But the fountain was, as you say, miniature set. That and only two other sets were built in miniature in the picture. The others were the underground Cellar set and The Temple of the Green Men set.

The village of Moldavia we shot in Majorca, which is actually a village that was built there a number of years ago as a tourist attraction. It is a replica of the architecture of many of the various provinces of Spain. And of course we dressed it to suit our purposes.

**CFQ:** On board the ships, actors are always photographed against a dark background or a sky background and long shots appear to be miniatures. Did you use a real ship in the water at any time?

**SCHNEER:** No, we didn't use a real ship, but little miniatures, and they were shot in Malta, in a tank which is the only tank in the world which has a normal horizon, looking right out into the Mediterranean. We used that tank and the miniatures there, and the deck of the ship was actually a full sized ship which we built on the plains of Madrid. They've never seen a boat in their lives there, because there's no water in Madrid, but there's a full-sized boat that we built there.

**CFQ:** Did you run into any unforeseen production problems on the film?

**SCHNEER:** There was one problem that arose. We went to a very remote area in Majorca called Torrente de Pareis in the north which is very hard to get to for the average tourist. We went there fifteen years ago when it really was an outpost, reached by very circuitous roads, very hazardous, not well paved, very hard to get to and get your equipment there. Fifteen years ago, when we went there, it was really completely deserted, really a no-man's land, and we figured things wouldn't have progressed that much and we'd go back there. Fifteen years ago, when we went there, there was a six room motel. Now there is a 136 room motel, and when we got to that little section of beach where they landed, tourists were all over the beach. And of course, it's public property and anyone who wanted to be there had a perfect right to be. We had a problem of trying to get them to cooperate with us, and we had to get what we wanted by using a zoom lens that focused only on our little group. We took one shot for a little ten-minute television featurette on the film in which the zoom camera pulls back and you see our group surrounded by a thousand people watching the operation.

**CFQ:** In the scene where Sinbad's party is landing on the beach, there seemed to be a rather revealing shot of Miss Munro's cleavage.

**SCHNEER:** As a matter of fact, I guess I've seen this picture a thousand times, and we looked at it on a movieola which you know is a positive picture about 8"x10", and we looked at it for well over a year and never saw it until we put it on a big screen. And then when we put it on the big screen we had as much revelation as you did. We were quite surprised to see what



we saw. Much to my surprise the UK censor, if he saw it, ignored it, because no mention was made of it at all. I don't even think Miss Munro was aware of it. But you did see what you thought you saw. It's there\*.

CFQ: We're you satisfied with the duel between Koura and Sinbad that ends the film?

SCHNEER: It's the way we planned it and the way we designed it. What did you have in mind?

CFQ: The concept of Koura becoming invisible bit by bit didn't come off well visually. The scene also seems anti-climactic coming after the spectacular fight between the Griffin and the Centaur.

SCHNEER: If anything may be said about it, it's in the wrong place in the picture. We thought about that, and structurally we really couldn't change it because the dramatics of the piece require that the conclusion be a final confrontation between Koura and Sinbad. The scene really can't precede, as it perhaps should have from a visual point of view, the fight between the good animal and the bad animal being controlled by the two antagonists. If we were making the picture for Griffins and Centaurs rather than people, we might have turned the order of the scenes around, but we were hoping that we were going to get more people than Griffins to see the picture. That's the reason for it.

It's a point well taken, and we knew about it, but we didn't quite know how to manipulate it to satisfy the visual requirements.

CFQ: A more spectacular conclusion than that which is used is anticipated.

SCHNEER: One thing that we were not satisfied with, that we were unable to master within the time and money framework that we had, is that we tried to have a scene where you could see the sword knocked out of Koura's hand and disappear. But we were unable to do it satisfactorily. It disappeared on film, but we could never make the effect stand out, so that you could see it go into the fountain. We hope the audience assumes that's what happens, although visually we were unable to make it work.

CFQ: Were there any creatures or new model animation concepts that you conceived that had to be abandoned due to cost or other reasons?

SCHNEER: Well, I'll tell you, a number of years ago I tried to encourage Ray Harryhausen to do a story with a Centaur, and he felt that he really couldn't make it work. This was at least ten years ago. We talked about it for a number of years and finally did some models, and it finally came to work in this picture. At one time we thought about a Centaur for *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS*, but we never improved it until this picture. So these things have a way of germinating over a long period of time.

CFQ: Most critics jump on the live-action aspects of your films, perhaps because they really don't understand what goes into the effects. They are afraid to admit that they really are enthralled by them.

SCHNEER: That's right. When the critics go to most of these movies, they are evaluating human relationships and human problems rather than problems that give rise to pictures of fantasy and take you to another world. Our chief accomplishment, as far as we're concerned is making the unreal, real. And the critic's picture is making the real, more real.

CFQ: Your work is aimed at a juvenile audience. Don't you feel that the

disfigurement of the Grand Vizier in the film is too gruesome?

SCHNEER: The picture has not been rated in this country yet. In England, where the rating system has been under very heavy attack recently, they gave this picture what is equivalent in this country to a G for General Audiences. In England they gave it a U, and there they're more concerned with the protection of children from violence than anything else, and they passed it without any changes whatsoever.

CFQ: Do you usually have a distributor deal worked out before you start?

SCHNEER: Never. The business has changed tremendously since we first went into the picture business. In the early fifties we had the umbrella of a distributor. Columbia has taken our pictures and done very well with them over this period of time. In the early days we had a multiple arrangement with them where we would do them so many pictures over so many years. Now, it's a completely different industry. It's a wildcat industry. Wherever you drill a hole and come up with oil, a distributor might get on to you, and say let's have one of your pictures, and arrange financing for you or with you.

CFQ: Has Columbia set a marketing campaign yet?

SCHNEER: No. Columbia is a very intelligent organization, and they are conducting a number of surveys and screenings, trying to search out the proper market. They'll be doing that in the next ninety days, and we hope they will have found where their market is, what their theaters are, who their audience is, and aim for that particular market, and they hope to be doing it in the early part of next year. It will probably be done on a regional basis, where we'll have a caravan of exploiters going in territory by territory in the United States.

CFQ: This seems to be a change from the recent trend where distributors were dumping films with very little pre-release publicity. They were opening films in New York that nobody ever heard of.

SCHNEER: I hope that Columbia doesn't do this. They say they are not going to do this, because they are really going to study their market, as to where each picture should go, and when it should go into release. This is a holiday-playing time type picture. It is a picture that has to be given to the public at a time when the public is able to go see it. The time factor has to be regulated with the theatre so that your audience can be available to see your movie, and they're just not available 52 weeks a year.

We're trying to find our audience. There's no point in trying to sell a picture to an audience you know won't accept it. First of all, admission prices are very high, demands on people's time are great. You've got to find that right audience, or don't sell your picture at all, don't throw it on the market without knowing what it is.

CFQ: Could you give us the rough negative cost on your new film?

SCHNEER: Negative cost is made up of a lot of things, and the definition of negative cost is spelled out in 42 pages of contracts. But I will tell you approximately what this picture cost, having been made in four different cur-



Scenes from *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD*, currently in release from Columbia Pictures. Top: Sinbad attempts to rescue Margiane from the cave of The Centaur. Middle: Sinbad and his crew land on the mythical island of Lemuria. If the terrain looks familiar that is because it is the same beach used in the filming of *THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD* in 1957 at Torre de Pareis in Spain. Bottom: The Grand Vizier unmasked, his face horribly burned and scarred from an encounter with the evil sorcerer Koura.

\*It was there. A brief scene exposing Caroline Munro's breast as she jumps from a landing boat has been trimmed at the request of the Code and Rating Administration, otherwise the G-rated film would have received an R rating.



## THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD

...one of the better fantasy films in recent years but not Harryhausen's definitive work...

THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD A Columbia Release. 3/74. 105 minutes. In Color and Dynarama. Produced by Charles H. Schneer. Co-producer and director of special effects, Ray Harryhausen. Directed by Gordon Hessler. Director of photography, Ted Moore. Screenplay by Brian Clemens based on a story by Brian Clemens and Ray Harryhausen. Production designer, John Stoll. Art director, Fernando Gonzalez. Makeup by Jose Antonio Sanchez. Special effects, Manuel Baquero. Edited by Roy Watts. Music by Miklos Rozsa.

Cast: Sinbad ..... John Phillip Law  
Margiane ..... Caroline Munro  
Koura ..... Tom Baker  
The Vizier ..... Douglas Wilmer  
Rachid ..... Martin Shaw  
Haroun ..... Kurt Christian  
Ahmed ..... Takis Emmanuel

The latest production from special effects wizard Ray Harryhausen proves to be one of the better fantasy films in recent years. By leaving the overworked worlds of prehistoric animals and returning once again to the era of myths and legends in which his two best efforts were laid (*THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD* and *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS*), Harryhausen is able to call upon his fertile imagination and the myths of two cultures to bring some startling new creatures to the screen in his newest film entitled *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD*.

The film was originally announced for filming in 1971 as *SINBAD IN INDIA* and was later changed to *SINBAD'S GOLDEN VOYAGE*. Boasting five new monsters as well as some lavish sets, the film has all the qualities that made the previous Harryhausen films so enjoyable.

Unfortunately, the film also has many of the drawbacks that make Harryhausen's films of limited interest to other than those with a keen appreciation for his model animation techniques. As the performers must act as props to the stunning visual effects, which are the real attractions of the film, strong, in-depth characterizations are not called for. Consequently, we are placed in a fairy tale world of good and evil. The actors are called upon merely to look the part and to reflect the simple virtues and vices of their roles. John Phillip Law makes a strong Sinbad, out to thwart the plans of the evil Prince Koura played by Tom Baker. Although Baker has the best role, it is still undemanding. On the distaff side we are given Caroline Munro. Although she is given little to do in the film, her presence is often a welcome diversion.

In the story, written by Brian Clemens from ideas developed by Ray Harryhausen, Sinbad

gains possession of a strange metallic object which he wears on a chain around his neck. On a visit with the Grand Vizier, a deposed ruler of an Arabian kingdom, he is given another piece which fits together with the first. Sinbad determines that the pieces represent two-thirds of a nautical chart. The Vizier, who wears a Golden mask to hide a hideously scarred face burned by the evil Koura, tells Sinbad that the three conjoined pieces would show the location of a fabulous fountain which would give the possessor absolute power through "youth, a shield of darkness and a crown of untold riches." Realizing that the third and missing part of the chart is on the mythical island of Lemuria, Sinbad agrees to help the Vizier in his plan to gain the treasure and his revenge against the evil Koura.

The remainder of the film is a showcase for the model animation and special effects scenes. Filmed in what is purported to be a new process called Dynarama, the picture offers some of the best examples of stop motion animation on the screen. The scenes in The Temple of the Green Men where Koura brings a six armed statue to life are excellent matches of color and textures between the animated model and live action. Prior to the entrance of Sinbad and his men, the stone creature does a Hindu dance with the head moving from side to side as the arms take on the traditional pose. When Sinbad and his crew arrive, they are confronted by the statue wielding six swords. The battle which ensues is a logical progression from the unworldly duels in previous Harryhausen films. The sound effects of clashing swords and grinding stone heighten the realism of the effect. A false note is sounded in the sequence, however, due to the lack of fatalities. Although the men are constantly being knocked down or thrown against pillars, no one is killed or seriously wounded. This lack of bloodshed is carried throughout the film. In an adventure filled with dangers, Sinbad loosens only one crewman.

As the slave girl Margiane, Caroline Munro has her big scene when she, Sinbad, the Vizier and crew are captured by the Green Men who decide that she should be sacrificed to their god. She is lowered into a pit and left there. The only way out seems to be through the mouth of a gigantic tunnel over which is painted a single, staring eye. Soon there are sounds of something approaching, and a huge, one-eyed centaur appears and carries off the girl. Sinbad and his men escape the Green Men, rescue Margiane, and confront Prince Koura at the magic fountain. The sorcerer, who had previously regained the three pieces of the charm, has been restored to youth and calls upon the powers of darkness to aid him. The centaur reappears

complete with studded bracelet and necklace and carrying a menacing club. He attacks, but is diverted by a giant Griffin, with the body of a lion and the wings and head of an eagle. The two behemoths clash, representing the eternal conflict of good and evil. The creatures seem evenly matched until Koura intervenes and wounds the Griffin, leaving it to be killed by the centaur. As this is one of the few animation scenes where live action is not required most of the time and the interaction of the two is not essential, the models blend perfectly with their miniature backgrounds. Rear screen projection is, however, used for the geiser-like Fountain of Destiny.

The film's sets, both full scale and miniature, are impressive. Two of the table top sets which are well done and are realistic show that the problems special effects people have had with fire and water when used in conjunction with miniatures still persist. The exterior of The Temple of the Green Men, with its columns, Hindu figures and jungle growth is set off by a towering statue embedded in one of its walls. The problem is created by the flames roaring in front of the statue which give away its true size. Water spoils the effect of the Fountain of Destiny.

In model animation the most unconvincing creatures are those that fly. While The Griffin fails to take flight, the tiny Homunculus does not. Fortunately, much of its time is spent on the ground. Standing only a few inches high, the winged demon has a head and body which is similar to the Ymir used in Harryhausen's *20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH*. The Homunculus is created by Koura (one of the ingredients being his own blood) to act as a spy, an extension of his own eyes and ears. It is through the use of the Homunculus that the magician is able to learn Sinbad's plans.

Perhaps the weakest moment in the film is the confrontation between Sinbad and Koura at the conclusion. The evil magician has succeeded in regaining his youth, and his shield of darkness slowly renders him invisible as he duels with Sinbad. The concept is imaginative, but fails visually to be convincing, and one can only wish for the more spectacular ending that a film of this magnitude cries out for.

While *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* is not Harryhausen's definitive work, it will ably sustain our interest in his work until the next project. Hopefully then, he will be able to avoid the juvenile trap into which he fell with his current offering. The film, despite its faults does entertain and reaffirms the fact that any film undertaken by Ray Harryhausen is worth seeing.

Dan R. Scapperotti

Left: Caroline Munro as Margiane looks on as Sinbad (John Phillip Law) meets the evil magician Koura (Tom Baker) in a final duel to the death that ends the film. Right: The forces of darkness triumph momentarily when the evil Centaur defeats The Griffin controlled by Sinbad at The Fountain of Destiny.

rencies. This picture cost \$2 Million, more or less, and in this day and age, that's an expensive movie. One of the reasons it costs so much is that it takes so long to make. I don't have to tell you what happened to interest rates and we participate in those interest rates, whatever they are. If they're high, we pay them, and it contributes tremendously to our cost.

CFQ: As a producer, you have done non-fantasy films without Ray Harryhausen. Are they as successful, or as satisfying to produce?

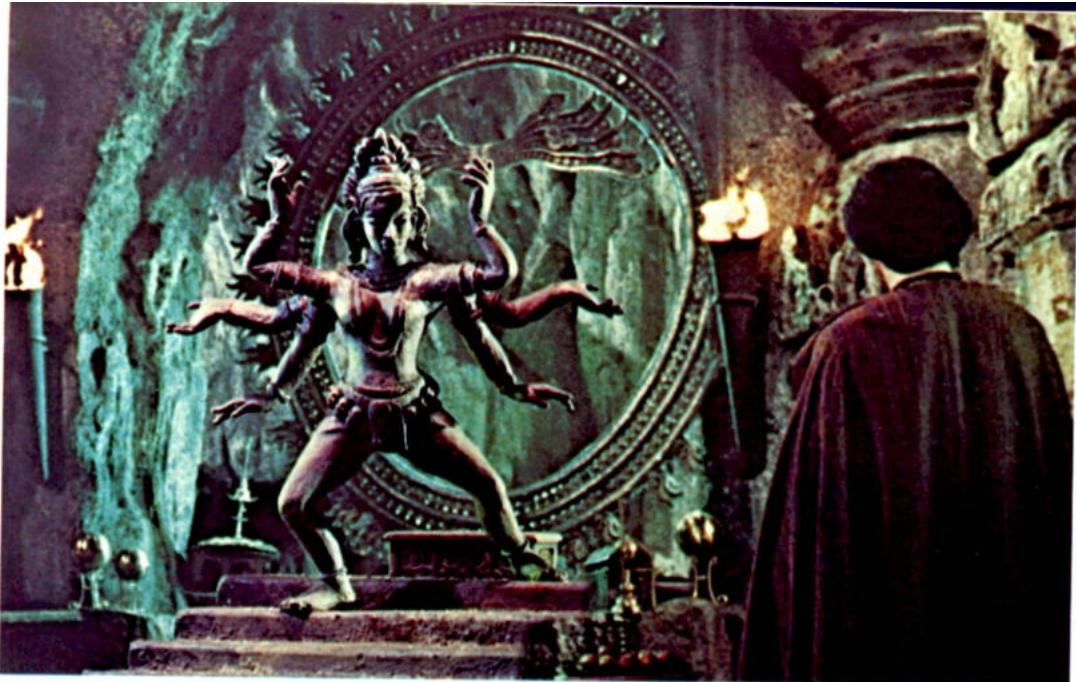
SCHNEER: When you're making a Dynarama picture, you are making a kind of picture that no one else makes. There's satisfaction in that, because you're not competing with anyone else because they don't have the knowhow, or the technique, or the patience, or maybe the foolhardiness of getting involved in any project that takes three years of your life. That's a long time in anybody's life to do anything. The catalog of pictures that we've made with these special effects is probably a record for continuity in the entire film world, and our library of special effects films will remain long after we're gone, because no one will really be able to repeat these techniques. It's as if I say to you, well, we've got to have another Rafael, or Michelangelo, or another Picasso and there's only one of all of them. That's the way our pictures are. These pictures are very unlikely to be remade unless another fellow like Harryhausen comes along, who from the age of 14 decides to develop his technique up to the time he is sixty. It's a very, very painstaking kind of labor that involves a great deal of money, and once you don't have that facility, these pictures will not be made.

CFQ: There have been other model animation films like *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH*.

SCHNEER: There is no comparison to his technique, none at all. Anyone who is in the special effects business will tell you that he is the leader of the field. No one else touches him in this area.

CFQ: Are you planning your next Dynarama film now?

SCHNEER: Yes. We're studying a number of subjects. One of them, which we have thought about for a long time, is H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Whether we'll do it or not, is uncertain, because a lot of research has to go into it. There are other subjects we are considering, but we really won't turn to anything seriously for another six to eight months, until we see how the public accepts this picture.



Scenes from the Charles H. Schneer Production *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD*, in release from Columbia Pictures. Top: Under the spell of the Black Prince Koura the six-armed statue in The Temple of the Green Men descends from its pedestal. Middle: The tiny winged Homunculus, created by Koura to spy on Sinbad, crouches in the shadows unseen. Bottom: Under the direction of Koura the Siren figurehead of Sinbad's ship steals the navigational charts of the unknown waters which surround Lemuria. *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* is the tenth collaboration between model animation expert Ray Harryhausen and film producer Charles H. Schneer, an association that has spanned two decades and been responsible for some of the most magical moments in screen history.

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## LETTERS

Many thanks for the Special Issue which you recently sent me.

I can honestly say that as a result of the painstaking research undertaken by everyone concerned, the article which appeared in your magazine devoted to myself forms undoubtedly the most accurate and detailed record of my career in films. It is really a pleasure for me to realize that so many people not only appreciate, but really do understand some of the things that I have tried to do in the past in my work and will hopefully continue to do in the future. Your collective appreciation is the greatest reward I could ask.

I think that what pleased me most about the issue was the extremely agreeable fact that all my comments were accurately and fairly quoted. This is so rare for someone in my position as to be almost unheard of. In this respect you have achieved something unique!

CHRISTOPHER LEE  
London, England

Congratulations on your Special Christopher Lee Issue. It's a fine tribute to a fine actor. I hope to see more in your pages by James Parish and Michael Pitts. Those rare stills of Lee's early career were particularly interesting. One of the things that surprised me was the fact that Mr. Lee was still struggling as an actor even after the release of CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and (HORROR OF) DRACULA.

The still from the film THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN identifies Lee as Dracula. In Gary Parfitt's Famous Film Stars Lee states: "I did not play Dracula!", but the Ship's Vampire." Lee says he will only play Dracula in a serious vein. You mention his appearance in MOULIN ROUGE. Parfitt also has Peter Cushing down in the cast of that picture in his Lee filmography. Was Cushing in the film?

RAYMOND GRIFFITH  
Rd 1, Box 433, Chester NJ 07930

The old debate as to whether graphic horror is better than suggested horror is really a marginal point. True horror is always moral horror. Bernard Shaw saw it clearly when he said that the true horror in the burning of Joan of Arc wasn't that she was burned by evil men, but by honorable men trying to do their duty as they saw it. The moral dislocation between the actor and the act is what truly affects us. And this is mainly why, in spite of its idiotic dialogue and feeble-minded plot, DARK SHADOWS was effective.

For horror to be effective, the moral shock has to bear the brunt of it. A picture will stand or fall on that. Without this moral shock, suggestion becomes boring and graphics turns into an exercise in sadism. When there is a moral shock, graphic horror can become distracting and superfluous. And as some Chinese sage once said: A superfluous cat is less than no cat at all.

A topic I feel needs deep consideration is the definition of 20th Century horror themes: what is it that we fear, and what is it that we'd like to fear. We pretend to be shocked and scared by what was very effective a century ago. And we would like to believe that it does frighten us, but it doesn't. When in Victorian England Dracula bared the

throat of his victims, the sex-repressed audience was truly shocked, but in these Freudian times, Dracula gets more instant analysis than President Nixon.

A primary rule is that for horror to be effective, you must accept and believe in it. Now why should anyone invoke the Devil? To get power? For that you do not sit around naked in a circle, you move to Washington. There are good stories to be written about pacts with the devil, secret societies and secret purposes, but they happen in Washington, in the cloakrooms of politicians, and in the sinister games played by the CIA.

The horror of the 19th Century gave us Larry Talbot and the Wolfman. "Even a man who is pure in heart, and says his prayers by night, may become a wolf, when the wolfbane blooms, and the moon is full and bright." Today, Lieutenant Calley and many others like him are wolfmen, basically nice people who didn't know what they were capable of until it was too late.

I think that if the horror film is to have a future it has to be brought into the 20th Century, and by that I don't mean a costume drama in modern costume. We must deal with what really scares us and doesn't let us sleep at night. And please, no more crazed killers. That's just an excuse not to write down motivation (he's just crazy), but then, we do get a lot of corpses thrown in to make up for this.

ADRIANA I. PENA  
Box C-2487, Lewisburg PA 17837

What's the point behind "Short Notices" issue after issue your critics (ho-hum) tear films to shreds. Is it to discourage "us" from seeing "bad" movies? I don't think so, because I am going to see a movie regardless of what a critic says. Often, the more a movie is put down, the better it turns out to be. Have Jerome or Bartholomew ever directed or acted or produced a movie? Do they know better—if no, then why criticize the production or direction of another, one who has been doing it for a long time. I have an idea, a very good one: let's have Bartholomew or one of your other critics make a movie—then you can hire Bert I. Gordon, Edward Dmytryk, William Crain, Bunuel, etc. to review their movie. Justice at last!

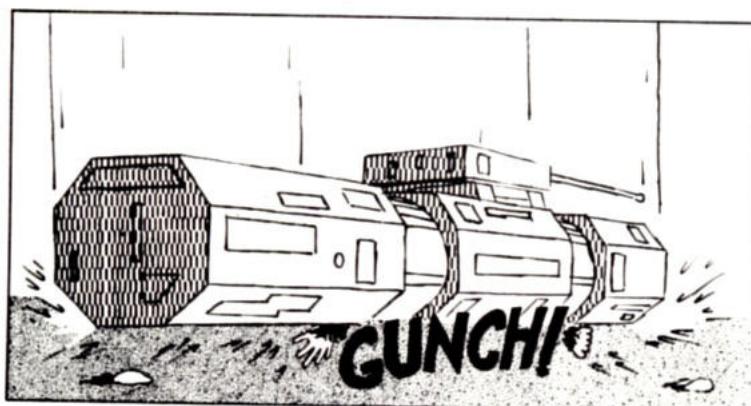
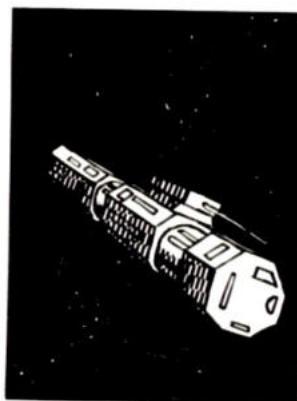
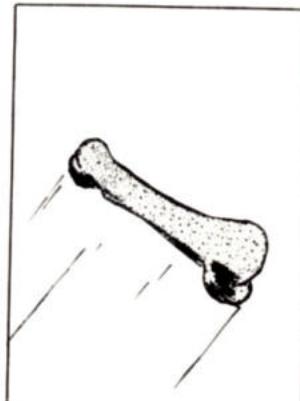
JACK GUERREIRO  
1540 Brentano Blvd, Mississauga, CAN

I'm getting extremely tired of filmmakers and critics and their simplistic attitude toward excess violence. This includes all mayhem and gore unnecessary to the plot or basic concept of the movie in question. Is it really necessary to have extended closeups of a stab wound gushing blood? When will they realize that this is not exciting, suspenseful or horrifying? It is simply gruesome and in most cases ugly.

Case in point: SISTERS, a good film entirely destroyed by unnecessary gore. Not only was it unnecessary, but detrimental to the horror of the film. The victim writing on the window for help would even be more horrifying if it slowly dawned on the audience that he was writing in his own blood. DePalma makes it very obvious that the hero was getting stabbed. I don't think it was necessary or enhancing to let us know where and how badly. Let the minds of the audience work! Filmmakers of yesteryear realized that a person's imagination can create far greater horrors than any graphic experience dished out by today's wallowers in guts.

Gratuitous violence is an easy way out. It takes no great thought on the parts of the screenwriter or director, and, it seems, many feel it is the only way to shock today's audiences. Today's audiences are not thirsting for blood. They are thirsting for excite-

# 2001: A SPACE ODDITY



ment and adventure and do want to be scared. Gore does not scare.

RICHARD MEYERS  
236 Old Post Rd, Fairfield CT 06430

You may be interested to know that I am one of the instructors in a course being given at the University of Massachusetts entitled "Horror In Film & Literature." I find your magazine invaluable as research material, and commend you on its high degree of literacy. In the Spring we will be offering a course entitled "Science Fiction In Film & Literature," for which I will also, no doubt, find it useful. I also know of a course dealing with horror films and literature at the University of Bridgeport. Perhaps films of a fantastic nature are becoming course material across the country?

STANLEY WIATER  
3 Lawrence Plain Rd, Hadley MA 01035

A character actor in many B horror films that I feel should not go unmentioned in your pages is Milton Parsons. When I was a teenager, my friends and I used to try and spot him in as many movies as we could. He used to play, it seemed almost always, the butler, and his appearance and demeanor was such as to draw immediate suspicion: bald, with a thin reedy frame and gaunt face which contained large, bulging eyes. He looks as one might imagine an undertaker, a role I believe he has played several times.

The New York Times Directory of Film gives his filmography as follows: WHEN TOMORROW COMES (1939), EDISON, THE MAN (1940), SKY MURDER (1940), BEHIND THE NEWS (1941), DEAD MEN TELL (1941), DRESSED TO KILL (1941), MAN AT LARGE (1941), ROXIE HART (1942), REMARKABLE ANDREW (1942), THE GREAT MAN'S LADY (1942), WHISPERING GHOSTS (1942), MAN IN THE TRUNK (1942), LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHT-THIRTY (1942), CRY OF THE WEREWOLF (1944), LOST IN A HAREM (1944), OVER MY DEAD

BODY (1946), MARGIE (1946), DICK TRACY (1946), DICK TRACY VS. CUE-BALL (1946), SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY (1947), BURY ME DEAD (1947), DANCING IN THE DARK (1949), and HOW TO BE VERY VERY POPULAR (1949)

While most of his films were made during 1939-1949 (is the list complete?) he has done subsequent work in television. I remember seeing him in one of the DICK VAN DYKE SHOW segments in 1963 about a haunted cabin. He came in carrying an armload of wood and unnerved everyone with one of his spooky laughs. I most recently spotted him in a television commercial for the American Motor's Gremlin, with the couple driving the car all over the grounds of the ceremony—Milton Parsons was the minister. I hope some of your readers can supply more information about this minor, but interesting character actor.

GEARY S. JOHNSTON  
Pacific Stars & Stripes, Box 15  
APO San Francisco CA 96503

Milton Parsons creeps in THE HIDDEN HAND, Warner Bros, 1942.



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