SPECIAL STAR WARS ISSUE

THE HOUSE OF HAMMER

PSYCHO STABBING
THE TRUTH

SHANDOR DEMON STALKER

RABID DEATH TRAP

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And now, available at last, from the people who have brought you House of Hammer, Monster Mag, Sci-Fi Series and Mad Magazine...
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"A Spot of Blood" is our latest complete comic strip thriller from the files of Professor Van Helsing.
Ever trying new ideas and new approaches to House of Hammer, we’ve crossed our fingers and tried a somewhat experimental look to this issue.

On our cover, an action scene from the new space fantasy smash, Star Wars. (But, fear not Lewis-lovers, Brian will be back next month gracing our cover with another of his bright and beautiful paintings.)

Regulars will also notice we’re not kicking off with a comic strip film adaptation this month either. Instead, our look in front of and behind the scenes of Star Wars.

But, before the comic fans among you weep with despair, check out page 23...

By an overwhelming majority of favourable mail, you’ve begged for the return of Father Shandor, our Dracula, Prince of Darkness hero, last seen in HolH. So, as we’ve no actual Hammer adaptation, we’re giving you the next best thing with our spin-off Demon Stalker.

In fact, this could well be our best issue yet when you look at the rest of our content... an interview with head of Hammer films, Michael Carreras; a science fiction film competition; a look back at some really rare storyboards from Psycho; top-selling fantasy film book author David Pirie (Heritage of Horror, The Vampire Cinema); on Tobe (Texas Chainsaw Massacre), Hooper’s new film Death Trap; plus just about everything else you’d expect from theaward-winning House of Hammer (more on that next issue, if we’ve got the space!)

And talking about HolH 17, it will feature our 15 page adaptation of Hammer’s Vampire Circus; Michael Carreras on Hammer’s upcoming fantasy films; a look at Ray Harryhausen storyboards (to follow this month’s piece on Saul Bass storyboards); plus lots, lots more.

See you in thiry,

Editor.

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Following HoH13's preview, our in-depth look at the science fantasy smash hit movie.
The first and inevitable question one is going to ask about Star Wars is—"Is it as amazing as all the overkill pre-release publicity suggests?" Well, the answer to that, for once, is yes. It is an amazing movie. Whether or not it's a great movie is debatable but it is definitely a visual masterpiece, full of moments that had me gaping with astonishment—scenes I've pictured in the mind's eye when reading science fiction but which I never expected to see put on the screen.

I must admit that Star Wars had me enthralled for most of its running time of 2 hours and 1 minute, it was only afterwards that niggles and doubts began to percolate through my mind. For me the main problem is the story itself—set in a corrupt intergalactic Empire eons in the past it involves a young man called Luke Skywalker who leaves his uncle's farm on a small, arid planet to help rescue a rebel princess and aid her in her fight against the Empire.

The Princess Leia had been carrying vital information about the Empire's most powerful weapon, the Death Star (a space vehicle the size of a small moon which is capable of destroying whole planets) to her rebel friends at their secret base when she had been captured by Darth Vader, a black-clad super villain in the service of the Empire. But before being captured she had managed to slip the information into a small robot called Artoo Detoo who resembles a walking coffee pot. Accompanied by another robot called See-Threepio, all glittering gold with an English accent and camp mannerisms, Artoo lands on Luke's home-planet to seek out an old friend of the Princess called Ben Kenobi, now living as an hermit but one time Knight of the Jedi—a Force for good in the galaxy in days past.

The robots encounter Luke along the way who helps them to reach Kenobi, who in turn enlists Luke's aid in rescuing the Princess, informing Luke that his father was also a Knight of the Jedi. Luke, Kenobi and the robots then journey to the nearest settlement where, after brushes with both the Imperial guards and the alien thugs who inhabit the place, hire the services of young space pirate called Han Solo and his faster-than-light space ship. They then travel through hyper-space towards the Princess's home world of Alderaan but find nothing but fragments when they arrive . . . the Death Star has already destroyed it.

Meanwhile, on board the massive vehicle, the evil Grand Moff Tarkin, Governor of the Imperial Outland regions, is trying, without success, to extract the location of the secret rebel base from the Princess. Solo's ship is then captured and brought on board the Death Star but Luke, Solo and his co-pilot Chewbacca—a tall, ape-like creature—manage, after battling many
of the Imperial Marines, to rescue the Princess and get her back to the ship. Then, thanks to Kenobi sacrificing himself in a laser-sword duel with Darth Vader, they succeed in breaking out of the Death Star and head for the rebel base. But they are unaware that a homing device has been placed on board and they are unwittingly leading the Death Star straight to the rebels. However the plans Artoo is carrying enable the rebels to discover the one weak spot in the planet-destroyer's defences—a small vent in a canyon-like crevice on the Death Star's surface which leads straight down into its atomic core—and devise a plan to destroy it. The last ten minutes of the film are taken up in a climactic battle as the rebel space ships attempt to fight their way through the Death Star's numerous defences and fire a torpedo into the vent ... 

All of which is pretty banal as far as story and characters are concerned—the plot could have been lifted from a low quality, science-fiction pulp magazine of the 1930s, or from a comic strip of the same period—and the whole thing is really on the level of the old Flash Gordon serials. But that isn't surprising seeing as that was
the intention of Star Wars' writer and director George Lucas. He originally wanted to make a new film version of Flash Gordon but couldn't obtain the rights to the character so instead he wrote a script that included practically every favourite moment of his in a comic strip, or old film or book.

"It's the flotsam and jetsam from the period when I was 12," he said, "The plot is simple—good against evil—and the film is designed to be all the fun things and fantasy things I remember. The word for this movie is fun."

A statement like this from a film-maker practically disarms all serious criticism beforehand—one can't, for instance, accuse him of writing simple-minded dialogue when that is exactly what he set out to do. (Harrison Ford, who plays Solo, said: "There were times when I issued a threat to tie George up and make him repeat his own dialogue.") Nor can one complain about gaping holes in the plot or credibility-stretching coincidences or any other flaws when Lucas maintains it just meant to be a fairy story.

One is therefore not justified in asking why the universe seems to be ruled only by human beings (and of the white variety) despite the existence of other alien races, or what the mysterious Force is that the Knights of Jedi are able to utilise, or what happened to Kenobi when he disappeared during the duel with Darth Vader, or why the designers of the Death Star would leave such an obvious chink in its armour as that conveniently-placed exhaust vent, and so on.

As Lucas willingly admits, Star Wars has been cobbled together from a wide variety of different genre sources, thus we get such favourite old western cliches as the scene where Luke returns to the old homestead to find it on fire and his family massed, and the sequence in the alien saloon which mirrors countless similar ones in Hollywood westerns, including even the traditional brush with a bounty hunter—and in other sections of Star Wars we get what amounts to a futuristic pastiche of movies about the Second World War.

Grand Moff Tarkin (played by Peter Cushing) the embodiment of every evil Nazi officer to appear on the screen, and the climactic battle is really just The Dam Busters in Outer Space. In fact all the space battles in the film were choreographed from footage of WW2 aerial dogfights which, visually, work very well if one forgets that the space craft would be moving too fast to duplicate the manoeuvres of WW2 aircraft (in a real space battle you probably wouldn't even see your opponent, much less chase him around the sky at a distance of a few hundred feet).

Other sources of Star Wars include The Wizard of Oz—the golden robot Threepio is an updated version of the Tin Man and Chewbacca is really the Cowardly Lion—and Walt Disney's Snow White—as Princess

Hundred not out. Chewbacca, the centenarian Wookie (played by giant London hospital porter Peter Mayhew) co-pilots Han Solo's Millennium Falcon pirate starship and gets pretty mean if you beat him at live-chess ... or simply rub his fur the wrong way.
Leia has a more than passing resemblance to Snow White (the same hair style, for instance) and the little robot Artoo is one of her loyal dwarfs. As for Darth Vader (played by David Prowse, a Hammer film regular) he’s a cross between a James Bond villain and Marvel Comics’ Dr Doom.

But Lucas has mixed all the various ingredients together very skilfully and, as he intended, the result is fun (there’s also a nice line of humour running through the film) yet one can’t help wishing that all the magnificent sets, effects and technical expertise and talent that went into the making of Star Wars hadn’t been used to make something a little more original. Like most of the new young film makers Lucas seems obsessed with nostalgia—instead of making new films the trend is to make the old films, but better. With THX 1138 Lucas proved he can make a sophisticated and intelligent sf movie, so, despite its technical brilliance, Star Wars represents something of a backward step.

But all this is just quibbling, I suppose, because one has to credit Lucas for putting real space opera on the screen at last (This Island Earth and, particularly, Forbidden Planet came close in the 1950s) and thanks to his familiarity with sf traditions it’s the nearest a film maker has come to cinematically realizing the settings, hardware, landscapes and other elements that have been the prime ingredients of so much written of since the 1930s.

One certainly can’t quibble at all about the special effects in Star Wars which are truly remarkable and were achieved by a large team of people in both America and England. It’s really the first time since 2001: A Space Odyssey that models have been used so impressively. Never, during the film, does one get the feeling that one is watching miniatures; all the space vehicles appear huge (particularly the Death Star itself which seems to have the dimensions of a small moon).

This general impression of size is established in the opening sequences of the film when a shot of the underneath of a vast Imperial cruiser dominates the screen, giving one an idea of what a fish must experience when the Ark Royal passes overhead (the shot is so stunning it prompts audiences to break into spontaneous applause, as does a later shot showing what it might be like to suddenly start moving at faster-than-light speed).

In charge of the model photography was John Dykstra, a young effects man who had
Battle stations. Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Chewbacca and HGH (Her Galactic Highness) Princess Leia discuss their options in escaping the dreaded Death Star. Not so difficult as it seems: Han Solo (Harrison Ford, from George Lucas' previous smash film hit, American Graffiti) is a mean hand on his starship armaments...
previously worked with Douglas Trumbull on The Andromeda Strain and Silent Running. For 8 months he and his team of assistants worked in a Californian warehouse, which they'd transformed into an effects studio, producing 365 different effect shots for Star Wars—an incredible feat when one compares it to the 2 years it took the 2001 team to achieve the 35 effect shots in that film, and when one considers that sometimes one shot involved up to ten different image components (starry background, planet, various space ships, laser flashes, explosions etc) all of which had to be photographed separately and then combined on one piece of film.

The difference between the effects in 2001 and Star Wars centres on the fact that for the former picture its director, Stanley Kubrick, decided against using any of the automatic matting processes available, such as the blue screen system, because, though quick they often result in visible fringe lines around the models (the bright light from the background screen can be reflected by the edges of the model thus, in the case of a blue screen, producing a blue halo around the outline of the model in the completed composite).

So what Kubrick had his effects men do was hand-matte each model shot—in other words for each frame of film showing, say, a space ship gliding past a background of stars a hand-drawn matte was used to block out the stars behind the ship and thus prevent the stars showing through the model in a double-exposure when the two films were combined. This technique gets the best results but is generally very time-consuming, so Dykstra decided to return to the blue screen process despite its drawbacks (the system creates automatic mattes through a complicated photographic process—for a more comprehensive explanation see my book Movie Magic).

Dykstra's main improvement to the process was to cut the risk of the model reflecting any blue light by using only part of the blue screen—the immediate area around the model—and blocking out the rest. This resulted in clear, sharp matte lines around the models without any of the usual blue fuzziness, enabling him to achieve a realism equal to Kubrick's but much more quickly.

Another of Dykstra's innovations was to link his effects camera up with a computer. As a rule an effects camera has to be kept as motionless as possible when recording the various elements for a composite shot in order to prevent a "jiggling" effect in the finished scene, which is why in 2001 all the effects shots are static, with the models all filmed from a fixed camera position. But the computer enabled the camera to be placed in exactly the same position each time a run-through of an effects shot was repeated, which meant that Dykstra was able to move the effects camera as much as he wanted, knowing that the computer's memory would duplicate the same movements as many times as needed. The result.
is that, in *Star Wars*, the camera moves with the models, giving the impression in the space battles that some of the action is being filmed from another spacecraft thus greatly enhancing the realism.

While Dykstra and his team were working in Hollywood the rest of the *Star Wars* unit was working at the Elstree film studios in England, and also in Tunisia which stood in for Luke's desert world of Tatooine. In charge of the mechanical effects (that is, the effects involving the full-size sets, the robots, full-scale explosions and so on) was British effects man John Stears who worked on many of the earlier James Bond films like *Dr No* and *You Only Live Twice*.

One of his most impressive achievements in *Star Wars* was the creation of Luke's anti-gravity car which appears to be suspended in mid-air. This illusion was created by having the light, fibre-glass vehicle supported in different areas each time it was shown on the screen—therefore if the front of the vehicle was on screen the support was out of camera range at the back, and when the side of the car was shown the support was on the opposite side etc (several vehicles were constructed for use in different camera angles). And when the car is shown moving, in a couple of sequences, with no support visible, entirely in long shot, this was achieved by matting out its under-carriage and replacing it with desert background, all of which was hand-painted for each frame of film, including the car's shadow.

Stears also created the laser swords (renamed light sabres) used by Kenobi, Luke and Darth Vader which he achieved by coating revolving rods with a highly reflective material that bounces back light aimed at it with increased intensity (similar to the material used on front projection screens) though in some scenes the light sabres were
optically produced (that is, superimposed onto the film later).

Also very impressive are the enormous and spectacular sets in the film, all of which were designed by British production designer John Barry and were built at Elstree Studios (one particularly large set was constructed within the big ‘H’ stage at Shepperton Studios).

It was up to Lucas to combine all these different components, shot in different parts of the world at different times, into one complete and apparently seamless movie (in this he was aided by his wife Marcia Lucas who helped edit the picture) and this he certainly succeeded in doing. Whatever my personal reservations about the story I have to admit that Star Wars is a landmark in the history of the cinema, and of the science fiction/fantasy cinema in particular.

**STAR WARS (1977)**

Mark Hamill (as Luke Skywalker), Harrison Ford (Han Solo), Carrie Fisher (Princess Leia Organa), Peter Cushing (Grand Moff Tarkin), Alec Guinness (Ben Kenobi), Anthony Daniels (See Threepio), Kenny Baker (Artoo-Deetoo), Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), David Prowse (Lord Darth Vader).

Written and Directed by George Lucas, Produced by Gary Kurtz, Production Design by John Barry, Director of Photography Gilbert Taylor, Music by John Williams, Special Photographic Effects Supervised by John Dykstra, Special Production and Mechanical Effects Supervised by John Stears, Film Editors Paul Hirsch, Marcia Lucas and Richard Chew, A Lucasfilm Ltd Production, Released by Twentieth Century-Fox. Time: 121 mins Cert: U
The Yetis are Coming

Hold your sharks, whales, bears, bees and other fantastical animal monster tales... The abominable snowman is coming out of the deep freeze to curdle your '78 blood. And this Italian-made snowman is none too happy about it. He has an American rival to contend with.

From another Italian producer at that — the unkindest cut of all.

In the left corner; Rome producer Nicola Pomiulia of Stefano Films and his baby: Yeti — Big Foot.

And in the right (not necessarily correct) corner, Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis, now of Los Angeles, and his latest monster enterprise: Yeti — The Abominable Snowman.

A year and a sneeze ago Dino, of course, was caught in a similar double-exposure battle over King Kong. As he announced his project, Universal announced theirs. Dino took umbrage and nearly went to court over it. That time, he won. Though now he probably wishes he hadn't, following the less than sensational business of his wildly-over-hyped 'Kong. He's learned very little, though. Hence, he's refusing to pull out of the Yeti race...

Indeed, it seems that Signor Pomiulia is the fella who has benefited most by Dino's luckless experiences in the monster field.

Like Dino with Kong, Pomiulia has started shooting first, for instance (in snowy locations in Canada). Unlike Dino, however, Pomiulia did not begin production until he had his yeti monster made — and in fully electronic working order. Also unlike Dino, Pomiulia has not kept his creation under wraps, but shown it off, with some justifiable pride, to Rome newspapermen. Big blighters they are — 25 foot tall. Yes, not just one yeti — two of them.

And why two, you ask. Not another sequel in the offing before the original is even seen, surely? No, or at least, not as yet. "I am shooting two different endings," explains Nicola Pomiulia. "In one of them, my yeti is destroyed." And not at the box office, by Dino De Laurentiis, or so he's trusting. We wish him well. He's got some cheek, after all. Fighting Dino, in much the same fashion as Dino, then the brash Hollywood newcomer, took on Universal and City Hall. And won. There's a monster of a moral in that someplace!

Joins the WWVs and Chaney's 1916 debut, The Mystery of the Leaping Fish all the way through The Monster, The Unholy Three, Phantom of the Opera, Dracula and Miracles For Sale... MGM and various Euro-archives helped provide the films — it would be great to see them again in a National Film Theatre season. Pretty please?

In the competition, Yugoslavia went to Guido Henderick's Belgian feature, Experts of Evil and Otto Foky's animated Scenes With Beans from Hungary. Russia nabbed the event's first ever musical soundtrack trophy for Isaak Shvarz's The Flight of Mr. Makkinley.

But ole Tod and Lon stole everyone's thunder...

LET'S PLAY HIDE AND GO KILL...

Wizard News

Ralph Bakshi's Wizards — somewhat buried in the Star Wars triumph — has been nominated for the first-ever "best animated suspense feature" awards of the International Animated Film Society.

TV Star Wake

Coming your way shortly on your friendly neighbourhood TV network-Star Cop. A sort of science-fiction Kojak with, for once, a successful robot sidekick. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Serling's Farewell

Gone but not forgotten. The late host/creator of Twilight Zone and Night Gallery Rod Serling has had his final script, Pender's People, hit the suddenly sf-conscious screen. Serling's scenario adapts Lord Dunsay's book about an inventor making a replica of himself which continues reproducing itself until he has a veritable robot army. Man behind the movie is, of course, George Pal, alias...

Trieste Fest

Everyone was talking about it. What else? But Star Wars was sight unseen at the 15th Trieste Science Fiction Film Festival — the grandaddy of sf movie festivals. No matter. The organisers had a real treat in store: a unique retrospective of Tod Browning and Lon Chaney, covering 1914-1939. From, in fact, director Browning's actual acting debut in the ten-minute Bill snatched top honours from Wizards and suchlike: The Rat Saviour, an allegorical number by Kristo Papić won The Golden Asteroid award. The Golden Seal went to Italy's short Fanta-biblical by Guido Manuli. Silver Asteroid acting awards were picked up by David Rodigan in Anthony Trafford's British short, The Worp Reaction — and Kate Reid in Canada's The Ugly Little Boy, based on the Isaac Asimov story by Don Thompson and Barry Morse. Special awards

SF's Best Pal

As the star-wake pattern continues apace in Hollywood, George Pal looks on in sceptical mood. Well, he has seen it all before. "But I hope none of the science fiction pictures will flop, because then they'll say, 'See, science fiction is a flash in the pan.'" Not Pal's pan. His best two classics, When Worlds Collide (1951) and The War of the Worlds (1953) are being re-issued by Paramount; and he's turning Robert Bloch's The Days of the Comet into a Paramount
Max Rosenberg

... producer of the old Amicus films, and more recently the Burroughs trilogy of Earth's Core & Time Forgot movies, has a new film under way, his 49th. Entitled The Incredible Melting Man, Columbia Film Distributors describe it as a "space shocker". It seems somewhat similar to Hammer's first Quatermass in concept: An astronaut returns to Earth, but has contracted a terrible disease ... which causes his flesh to liquify. Effects are by Rick Baker, who handled both the Exorcist and King Kong. Co-producer is Sam (Carquale) Gelfman, ex-United Artists.

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The Incredible Melting Man... and his earth-destroying secret.

TV Price

Vincent Price, meantime, has completed his latest TV film—the hour-long Death Trap, co-directed over here by Hugh Falkus, Bill Travers and James Hill. Price narrates over gruesome some films of Atypus spiders, tiger beetle grubs—and fascinating studies of plants feeding on animal life, such as the bladderwort (no kidding) and the inevitable Venus flytrap. Enough to put one off gardening for life ...

Nosferatu—or Three!

Hot German director Werner Herzog—among the leading new wunderkinds of the current West German cinema revival—is planning his own version of the 1921 Friedrich Murnau classic, Nosferatu. Which in turn, of course, stems from Bram Stoker's Dracula. Herzog recently hypnotized the entire cast of his latest triumph, Heart of Glass. We doubt he'll need to do the same with his 1978 vampire ... Klaus Kinsky plays the title role. And to some of us, Klaus always seems hypnotised. Well, he's coasted through more bad films—Italian horror included—than most guys we know ...

Cut, Cut and Away

Charles Schneer and Ray Harryhausen are beginning to muse over the possibility of a fourth Sinbad film. "It might be called something like Sinbad Goes To Mars," says Schneer. How's he going to get there? "That," grins Schneer, "is what we're trying to figure out." They've plenty of time to find the answer, as they're currently
developing Perseus and the Gorgon's Head, from the Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda. Script is by Oxford Greek and Latin scholar Beverley Cross, who also penned Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger. Fine ... but how does a Greek and Latin scholar get Sinbad into outer space? Or is that just a silly question? Meanwhile Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger is having censorship troubles abroad. Like in Britain, the film's considered suitable for all ages in the US and Venezuela. But Egypt insisted on wiping out the film's opening and closing Arabic prayer - checked and passed by Muslim experts in London. West Germany has cut out Patrick Wayne spearing the tiger in the climactic fight - and still banned the movie for any tots under six years. Without the spearing, the film would have been banned to under-twelves.

In Brief...
Mark Hamill's first movie since Star Wars is MGM's Stingray. Or it was ... Robert Mitchum's chip off the dimples block. Chris Mitchum is in a film entitled Stingray, too. (Makes a change from II). Legal tussle ahead. Who cares? Neither film is as sf as title sounds. About car chases, both.

Anyone who felt we were exaggerating about the sliced-up fate of Exorcist II (see HoH 14 & 15), think again. New Yorker Brian Camp (no kidding), writing in Variety recently, said when he caught the film - "the film's closing credits appeared right in the middle of a scene." Very novel.

Humanimals, the registered, copyrighted trademark name for the creatures in Alp's The Island of Dr. Moreau, is no newspeak word after all. Lou Breslow wrote and directed a Universal comedy in 1951 about dead animals reincarnated as people. Or as the title called them: Humanimals. Another legal tussle?

Richard A. Baker, monkey-mad stuntman and the best humanimal around Hollywood, is the guy who begged for and got the role of King Kong in the Dino de Laurentiis re-make. He was, sure enough, much assisted by the
Media Macabre


... and Hollywood’s latest sexy movie quickie is called...

Star Hops!

Superstar

We’ve been picking up on odd facts about the selection of unknown Christopher Reeve as the screen’s brand-new Superman... Apparently he’s being paid very well indeed, to avoid any feelings of exploitation, and thereby any excuse to run away from the projected series of four movies, the way previously unknown Sean Connery left 007.

Chris was chosen from, in all, more than 200 other possibilities. Including, would you believe... the dentist of one of the Salkind producer-brothers’ wives... and (honest) Elton John! The mind positively boggles.

Various experts discussed future fashions. Even the producers of Close Encounters get in on it. And Sandy Duncan, star actress of Disney’s up coming Cut From Outer Space. Best part of the week, though, was the 3,30 KABC movie. Every afternoon, an extra-terrestrial winner showed. Such as: Journey to the Far Side of the Sun, The First Man in the Moon, Genesis II, The Time Machine and The Omega Man. Follow that, BBC...

Superwriters

Robert Benton and David Newman—The Bonnie and Clyde scripters who took over the Mario Puzo Superman scenario and felt it best to split it into two movies—are completing a modern-day horror-thriller set on the streets of New York. Title: Stab. Subject: Jack The Ripper. American style, circa 1970’s.

Benton says the Puzo/Benton/Newman Superman script has since been reworked by Newman and his wife and yet again by 007’s occasional writer, Tom Mankiewicz. “But I must say I’d like to do another version.” Oh yeah? Because I think Superman is the great schizophrene of our age.” So do we... “On the one hand, he can do anything. On the other hand, as Clark Kent, he can do nothing. And there’s this wonderful eternal triangle between one woman and two aspects of the same man... but nobody’s ever going to want to do it as quietly as that.” Not the man from DC Comics, that’s for sure.

T.C.

Reference Guide to Fantastic Films

Most fantasy-film fans, if not all, must have at one time or another compiled their own in a Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror film index or listing. At the beginning it is quite an addictive process, until you begin to realize that vast expanse of detailing that lays before you.

Many begin indexing in terms of sub-genre (Sci-Fi, Gothic Horror, etc), some by studio (Hammer, Universal, etc), others by director, plot, etc and many by theme (Vampire movies, Mad-Doctor movies, etc). However, it is the gigantic task that, once realised, usually deters the most dedicated and determined fan.

Walt Lee, as a preface in his first volume, wrote: “This Reference Guide to Fantastic Films is a preliminary publication; it is a living project, not a finished work. I am painfully aware of how much is still to be done.” Looking at Mr. Lee’s, now complete, three volumes of Reference Guide to Fantastic Films: Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror (Chelsea-Lee Books, 1972/73/74) it is virtual mental exhaustion to comprehend the formidable task that this gentleman undertook—and completed. That is, within the allowance he realistically foresaw. Fantastic movies do have a habit of continually appearing.

If you can imagine a set of three volumes that begin with a film entitled A (a West German/French animated short) and complete itself with the film entitled Zwarte Stunde, Die (a silent German picture of 1922/30), with an alphabetical indexing of everything between, then you visualize Walt Lee’s brilliant tomes.

Volume One (“A” to “F”) contains a most perceptive “classification” chapter that details the acceptable elements that make up the ingredients of “Science Fiction and Science Fiction,” “Horror” and borderline-fantastic films. For example: “If the fantastic element in a film is intended to be beyond science and normal logic, and the method is not applicable, the film is called fantasy. If the scientific method can be applied to the fantastic element, the film is science fiction.” “Because the unknown is so often frightening, supernatural phenomena are commonly depicted in horror films. In fact, horror films that are not actually science fiction or fantasy often achieve their effect by seeming to be.” Mr. Lee obviously expands much further on these definitions.

All three volumes also have quite a lengthy section devoted to positive exclusions from the fantastic field: The Black Raven (1943), for example, has no fantastic content but may sound (by its title) as if it could have. This extremely convenient listing continues through all three books, and helps clear up the mystery regarding many titles.

Walt Lee’s indexing, throughout, consists of the fullest factual information; an example follows:


Along with Volume Two (“G” to “O”) and Volume Three (“P” to “Z”) the total page count is in excess of 680. By way of introduction to Volume Two, Christopher Lee has written: “It is with pleasure and admiration that I commend to you the writer of this book, the work, and the diligence of one who has so faithfully and accurately recorded the contribution of the Cinema in this immensely popular field.” RobertBloch tunes in Volume Three with his introduction, and Ferry Ackerman signs out last time saying: “The service rendered by this imagindex is inestimable.”

These books do not go without photo-illustration, in fact, Walt Lee has acquired a most rare collection of photographs to embellish his pages—140 in all.

Anyone wishing to have at their fingertips all the reference details to the 7,000 or so fantastic films produced since the beginning of the century should invest in this incredibly reference work.

For those involved in research and genre studies these books prove indispensable: it is no wonder that major film archives the world over have Walt Lee’s work on their shelves as an integral part of their reference library. Because of its highly specialised nature, the Reference Guide is not generally available at bookstores. Individually purchased, Volume One is $9.50, and Volumes Two and Three are $9.95 each. The total price for the set is $29.40, plus $1.50 postage and handling. Write directly to: Walt Lee, Post Office Box 66273, Los Angeles, Ca 90066, U.S.A. (By International Money Order).
Review by David Pirie

Just about everything surrounding The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, the debut movie of Tobe Hooper, has made some kind of history. Juicy anecdotes surround it like fleas: the set swam in vomit and blood, he was nearly lynched by the cast during shooting, an actress was ordered to work until she fainted from exhaustion. Even now at least one actor has sworn he will kill Hooper if he ever sees him again. The film itself became a legend: picked for the exclusive Critic’s Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival it made a small fortune and attracted controversy wherever it was shown, including a knock-down drag-out preview debate at London’s National Film Theatre from which few of the participants emerged with credit. But as a film, Texas seemed to work in inverse proportion to the seriousness with which it was treated. Taken on any level except humour it doesn’t add up to anything very much; but as a kind of souped-up horror comedy in which every character was more revolting than the next, including (especially) the victims, Texas was a novelty. It took the ‘woman-in-jeopardy’ theme about as far as it could go, and exulted in decay with all the lurid enthusiasm and relish of an EC horror comic.

Death Trap, Tobe Hooper’s new movie was unveiled at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976 and it seems to prove the point that Hooper is far closer to William M. Gaines than George Romero. In fact all the evidence suggests that Death Trap was partly inspired by an EC story, a Jack Davis swamp-horror opus in the January ‘Haunt of Fear’ for 1954 called Country Clubbing. The setting and central character are identical and the film is very recognisably set in EC’s decaying swamp-land, peopled with degenerate cretins, crumbling broken-down shacks and hungry alligators.

The budget is obviously low but Hooper makes up for it by the same device he used in Texas of transforming the entire action into one impossibly prolonged shock/horror climax.

When some colleagues of mine turned up for the last twenty minutes, and said they were glad to see the climax, I had difficulty in explaining to them that the entire film was exactly like that. It was all climax!

There is no real plot to speak of. A prostitute is thrown out of the local whorehouse for not behaving herself and finds herself in the heart of the swampland with nowhere to go for help except to a decaying shack which turns out, laughably, to be an ancient motel. The set, specially built
in Hollywood, looks spectacular if tiny; a dark hulk of a building surrounded by blackened trees and knee-high mist. The lecherous owner makes a pass at the girl and then wastes no time in making her the first of a long string of victims for which he utilises anything to hand, especially his long scythe and the friendly alligator under the porch. Gradually, for unexplained reasons, other visitors arrive at the motel including an ugly couple with a repulsive child. In line with Texas few of these people have any redeeming features, and the young husband in particular is a timorous psychotic creep. All of them fall victim to their host who gibbers and raves his way through the movie, turning up the radio in the hall to hide the screams and moving at a crouched lolling run, brandishing the sharp and lethal scythe. One woman is tied up in the small room, others fall foul (in close-up) of the scythe or the alligator. Only the little girl manages to crawl underneath the house where she remains, screaming her head off, as the alligator snaps at her more interesting limbs.

Help is at hand in the unlikely form of Stuart Whitman, playing the local sheriff, but his intervention does not come till the last few minutes by which time few characters remain and the little girl is impaled on the top of a fence only inches away from the alligator's clicking jaws. Finally the old man becomes a victim of his pet and only his artificial limb breaks the surface of the water in a neat and explicit reference to the legend of Captain Hook in Peter Pan.

As this last touch suggests Death Trap is very much a kid's movie for adults (though it will be interesting to see what certificate it gets in the more lenient climate of America). Hooper quarreled violently with his producer and is reported to be unhappy with the way the film was edited. It probably won't help his career, but certainly deserves a showing.

DEATH TRAP (1976)
Neville Brand (as Judd), Stuart Whitman (Sheriff Martin), Carolyn Jones (Miss Hattie), Mel Ferrer (Harvey Wood), William Finley (Roy), with Crystin Sinclair, Roberta Collins, Robert Englund, Janis Lynn and Kyle Richards. Directed by Tobe Hooper, Produced by Mardi Rustam, Co-Produced by Al Fast, Executive Producer Mohammed Rustam. No British Certificate
Review by Tony Crawley

First off, one has to make it clear that no matter what you choose to think, Rabid has nothing whatsoever to do with rabies.

This is something else.
So for that matter is the very word: rabid. As my well-thumbed Penguin English dictionary explained . . .

Rabid (Rabid) adj. raging, violent; mad; fanatical; infected with rabies.

So, instead of rabies, Canadian director David Cronenberg, is making full use here of the other shades of meaning.

This film is a quick follow-up to Cronenberg's stomach-heaving hit, Shivers. Almost a re-make, come to that, as it's pretty well the same again.

Cronenberg obviously feels after his first three movies (Stereo, 1969; Crimes of the Future, 1970; and Shivers, 1975), that he has a certain reputation to live up to. So he tries, hard. However, he leaves so many gaping loopholes cluttering his script, that he somewhat damages the tenseness of his action, much of which is superb, nail-gnawing stuff. The bleak, night-time scene of garbage disposal wagons wheeling around a quarantined Montreal, for instance, manned by home guard men flinging bloodless corpses in the back of the trucks. Frighteningly awesome (however much borrowed from Soylent Green).

The film opens with Rose (Marilyn Chambers) zooming along on her boyfriend's motor-bike. Next minute, she's pinned under the burning wreck of the bike in a terrible crash with only a half-hour's life left in her.

Fortunately she's saved in some unmentionable (and unexplained) form of graft-operation using 'neutral field tissue'.

She wakes from a coma after the cosmetic-surgeon's handiwork, screaming "No!". But, too late, whatever it is that has entered her body, it is locked firmly inside. And ravenously hungry. So off goes Rose on her rabid bender . . . Sucking people's blood clear out of their bodies.

(How she manages this is impossible to report. Cronenberg never dwells long on...)

Caught in the act! Rose makes short work of an innocent by-stander.
The city fights back at what the chief medical officer inevitably sees as a rabies epidemic. "The worst attack of the century." With the fastest incubation period known to medical history. "So don't let anybody bite you," warns a clipped-toned United Nations medical expert on the TV news.

But it's not rabies. It's well, something else. Rose has it and passes it about with frighteningly high frequency. She transmits it, as someone explains, yet remains immune to its fatal aspects. Meanwhile, the cops are out hunting the bricks, wasting anyone with blood or foam on their lips—even gunning down a store's Santa Claus in the crossfire!

Marilyn finds temporary shelter in a girlfriend's flat; locking herself away from her mate, and literally trying to sweat out her malady on the bathroom floor. She cannot eat anything her friend cooks. Food makes her violently ill. Blood alone satisfies her appetite. She phones her boyfriend, but there's little he can do. And so she's back on the streets... and is soon swung bodily into a refuse wagon....

Her leather-trousered boyfriend, Hart Read (Frank Moore) is helpless. Not to say hopeless. The clinic's business brain, played by Joe Silver, steals all Moore's scenes 'and everyone else's' with some finely honed, humanistic playing. I doubt Cronenberg cut much of Joe's scenes. Nor many of Rose/Marilyn Chambers', either, who are more than adequate as the quite innocent carrier of this blood-sucking disease.

Most memorable and moving in the touching scene where she tries to explain her dreadful predicament to her lover, by phone. "I'm still me... I have to have blood. It's all I can eat. But... I'm still me!"

RABID (Canada: RAGE, 1977)
Marilyn Chambers (as Rose), Frank Moore (Hart Read), Joe Silver (Murray Cypher), Howard Rysypan (Dr. Dan Keloid), Patricia Gage (Dr. Roxanne Keloid), Susan Roman (Mindy Kent), J. Roger Periard (Lloyd Walsh), Lynne Deragon (Nurse Louise).
Written and Directed by David Cronenberg, Produced by Ivan Reitman, Andre Link and John Dunning, Photographed by Rene Verzier, Edited by Jean Lafleur, Music by Ivan Reitman, Distributed by Alpha Films, A Cinema Entertainment Enterprises (Montreal) Production.
Time: 90 mins  Cert: X
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Exiled from his monastery after his cataclysmic battle with the demon Angorfarfax, Father Shandor wanders the forest roads of Eastern Europe,硬 stone roads that make the cool waters of a placid river too great a temptation to resist.

Yet even the most placid river flows on unceasingly like time itself... and just as time brings death to all men, so the river brings a dead man to this moment in time...

However, Shandor’s natural surprise soon turns to dread fascination... for the cloakers’ foreheads bear a symbol he knows too well... the sign of the horns, the mark of Satan!

And it is that curse which most concerns the demon-stalking priest...

Another one! Somewhere upstream there is work for me... and all the knowledge and weapons I possess...

Yet no fiend waits to greet Shandor as he approaches... only a strange, twisted individual, dumping the dead in the easiest way he knows... You there! In the name of God! What do you think you’re doing?

But the man is more in the mood for flight than answering questions...

Gone! Well, perhaps the woman will talk...
Yet as he moves forward, Shandor sees something from the corner of his eye... A flitting shadow, come and gone in an instant...

Shandor would think nothing of it... but a sudden scream rips the calm of the forest... and an unspeakable horror blasphemes the normal order of creation...

He's alive! But it cannot be!

Aieeee!

Clammy skin... flesh like putty... He's certainly dead... but can he be killed again?

BUT SHANDOR'S EYES TELL HIM THAT THIS IS REAL... AND DANGEROUS!

Yet it is some days since the man lived... and dead muscles have little strength... dead bones dislocate easily... and the corpse's neck snaps under disturbingly little pressure...

And not noticing the other corpse at all... nor the shadow that briefly crosses its face... nor the sudden snapping open of its eyes...

But the stiff clicking of its rising is unmistakable... the rattling grasp of rage in its throat quite hideous...

Again! What foul delirium is this?

AAAAH!

Despite his horror, Shandor looks down with compassion at a man twice-killed... hardly noticing the girl moving toward him...

This time, though, Shandor is not defenseless...

He makes no sound... feels no pain...

... and he has learned much from his first battle...

Yet he can still be overcome!

But what's this? A shadow? No, it moves too swiftly...

But if the shadow has disappeared, the horror is far from over...
HOLY! NOW EVEN THE TREES HAVE MURDEROUS LIFE! THIS IS MORE THAN MERE MORTAL STRENGTH CAN OVERCOME...

ONLY MAGIC WILL LOOSEN THIS EVIL'S HOLD...

DIRUPSITI VINCULA MEA, TIBI SACRIFICA HOSTIAM LAUDIS, ET NOMEN INVOCABO...

AND AS THE ANCIENT INVOCATION ERUPTS FROM SHANDOR'S LIPS, THE LIVING WOOD STIFFENS, DRIES, CRACKS... AND DIES...

KEEP STILL, GIRL! THE DANGER IS PAST... YOU'LL BE FREE SOON ENOUGH...

BUT AS SHANDOR SNAPS THE WITHERED BRANCHES...

THAT SHADOW AGAIN! THIS MUST HAVE BEEN MERELY A DIVERSION TO COVER ITS ESCAPE...

AYE, PRIEST! THAT IS MY MASTER... THANATOS!

THANATOS? A STRANGE NAME... THE NAME OF DEATH ITSELF!

AND IT FITS ONLY TOO WELL, YOU MUST LEAVE HERE, PRIEST... YOU HAVE ANNOYED MY MASTER. BUT I WILL DO WHAT I CAN TO REJECT HIM...

YOU'RE MISTAKEN, GIRL! IT IS I WHO SHOULD STAY AS A MAN OF GOD, I MUST DESTROY EVIL IN ALL ITS FORMS! IT IS YOU WHO SHOULD FLEE... AFTER YOU HAVE TOLD ME HOW TO FIND YOUR MASTER...

I SHALL TAKE YOU TO HIM IF YOU INSIST, FOOLISH MONK, BUT I CANNOT FLEE... FOR IF THANATOS IS MASTERS OF DEATH, HE IS ALSO MASTER OF LIFE... MY LIFE AT LEAST...

THERE IS STILL TIME TO TURN BACK, SHANDOR... I CANNOT HELP YOU ONCE YOU ENTER THESE DARK PORTALS... EVEN IF I WISHED TO...

I WOULD PRAY FOR YOU, GIRL, IF THERE WAS TIME! BUT WHAT DARK POWER DOES THANATOS HOLD OVER YOU?

HE HOLDS MY SOUL IN BONDAGE, PRIEST. UNTIL THE COMING OF THE GREAT DAY! UNTIL THEN, IT IS HIS TO CONSIGN TO THE FLAMES OF HELL AT HIS SLIGHTEST WHIM...

THE GIRL SLEEPS INTO SILENCE THEN, UNTIL FINALLY THEY STAND BEFORE OMINOUS GATES OF THANATOS'S BLACK TOWER...

DO NOT ENTER, SHANDOR! YOUR POWERS ARE NOTHING COMPARED TO THOSE OF THANATOS. ONLY DEATH AWAITS... AND AFTER DEATH... HORROR!

I CANNOT TURN BACK, SELINA! AND WHILE I STILL HAVE THE SWORD OF ARCHIMELS, MY RESOLVE WILL NOT FalTER!

TET SHANDOR KNOWS HIS WORDS ARE MERE BRAVO, FOR THE SWORD WAS DRAINED OF MYSTIC POWER IN HIS BATTLE WITH ANGOFFRAX. BUT THE FIRST ATTACK REQUIRES NO SORCERORS DEFENCE...

RAARGH!
Welcome, offensive devil one! I have your channel, you...

Thoughtful of you, Shandor, for I will have need of his services soon enough... to dispose of your lot, once I have rendered it lifeless and soulless...

For an instant, the universe holds its breath as the Dark Master of Shade battles with the agent of light... for the fate of a world...

But it is Shandor who falls...!
BUT SELINA DOES FIGHT... AND IF SHE CANNOT WIN, SHE CAN AT LEAST HAMPER...

KILL ME, SHANDOR... KILL ME NOW WHILE I HOLD THANATOS WITHIN MYSELF... PLEASE... THEN WE WILL BOTH GO TO OBLIVION TOGETHER...

I CANNOT KILL... MUCH LESS SEND YOUR SOUL TO THE HELL IT'S BURED DESTINED FOR...

AH, SHANDOR... HOW HYPOCRITICAL YOU ARE... YOU FORCE ME TO...

ADD SUICIDE TO MY MANY SINS!

... PRAY FOR MY SOUL... SHANDOR...

... AND THEN, WHEN THE ANGEL OF DEATH WILL WAIT NO LONGER, TWO ARE TAKEN... TWO TOGETHER, LOCKED IN HATRED.

AND SHANDOR CAN ONLY REGRET HIS HOLLOW VICTORY... TURN AWAY... AND LEAVE TWO MORE DEAD IN THE TOWER OF DEATH...

THE END.
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Recently we’ve been receiving lots of letters for both Answer Desk and Post Mortem asking for more information on Hammer Films’ current projects and the company’s history. We’ve had an equal amount of post suggesting we feature interviews with Hammer stars both behind and in front of the camera.

To try and fulfill all Hammer Films questions and as we are currently preparing the ‘official’ history of Hammer Films, this issue sees the start of our regular Hammer Interview feature in which Hammer magazine talks to Hammer Films.

As he’s the man ultimately responsible for all decisions on upcoming productions and knows more about the company’s past than possibly anyone else, we’re starting at the top with Michael Carreras, Managing Director of Hammer. Interview by John Brosnan and Dez Skinn.
Talking to Michael Carreras we naturally covered a wide variety of subjects, including Hammer’s forthcoming films such as *Nestle, The Lady Vanishes* and Vlad the Impaler, and a planned series of made-for-television horror films.

But in this, the first of a two-part interview, Michael Carreras describes his own past and present involvement in the company as producer, writer and director.

MICHAEL CARRERAS: First of all, so many incorrect things have been written about Hammer’s origins that I’d like to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

It all started with a man known as William Hammer, whose real name was William Hinds. He had two names because as William Hinds he was a very serious and successful business man—in the jewellery retail trade—and as William Hammer he was a stand-up vaudeville comic who used to perform on ‘The Boards’. His interest in other performers led him to open his own booking agency and with a number of jugglers, trick cyclists and others he started booking his own shows into his own theatres. And that was how he became theatrically involved.

In the early 1930s he formed a company called Hammer Films which invested in a small number of films—including *Sands Of The River*. But that company had absolutely nothing to do with the Hammer Company of today. What happened then, having been in those ventures, was that William Hinds began looking round for a wider interest in the film industry! He came across a man named Enrique Carreras, my grandfather, who at that time owned and operated a small distribution company called Exclusive Films. They joined forces and started off with a marvellous deal that got the company on its feet—they managed to get the re-issue rights to many of Alexander Korda’s London Film productions which included some of Laurence Olivier’s earliest films.

In the late 1940s the company went into production as well as distribution and a number of films were produced under the Exclusive banner (these will be fully detailed in the upcoming History of Hammer series—Dec.). But in late 1947 it was decided to re-activate the Hammer Company as its production arm and all following productions were known as Hammer Films.

HoH: How and when did you become involved in the Company?

MC: I joined it when it was still Exclusive Films. After leaving school I had 18 months to waste before I was due to be conscripted into the army—they took you at 18 in those days—so I spent the time at Exclusive’s office in Wardour Street working as the Director of Publicity, which sounded grand but simply meant that I was merely in charge of mailing out stills and posters every week to the cinemas that were showing their films.

Then I spent two years in the Grenadier Guards and came out in the summer of 1947, at the same time that Exclusive decided to go into film production in a serious way. I joined the unit as general dogsbody.

Tont Hinds was the official producer. He had already had some general production experience working on the Exclusive productions—I didn’t produce a picture until 1950 but had a go at almost everything during the time between. Tony did it all...literally did it all. His contribution was enormous because he also wrote many of the better Hammer films under the pseudonym of John Elder. He really was the major force in the development of Hammer productions.

HoH: Why isn’t he still with the company?

MC: He retired years ago. I don’t know exactly why. But I do think he became somewhat disillusioned with the British film industry. He had decided that he didn’t want to go on being known as the Hammer producer so he did something that I think was very courageous. He wanted to learn other aspects of film making so he applied to the ACTT (the film technicians’ union) for a ticket to work in a much lowerier position for other companies, and they refused him! I don’t think he ever recovered from that. It was a terrible thing to do on the union’s part when you think of the amount of employment he was giving to British technicians.

HoH: When did your father, now Sir James Carreras, become involved in the film industry?

MC: My father started as a cinema manager. Before Exclusive my grandfather owned what was the first circuit of cinemas in this country, known as The Blue Halls. When I say “circuit” I’m exaggerating—it was only three or four really. But he was the first man ever to build two cinemas back-to-back and show the same film simultaneously—the Blue Hall in Hammer-smith was the first cinema in this country to have two entrances and two screens showing the same thing. He was also the first man ever to put on a Royal Command Performance, for which he hired the Albert Hall. He was really quite an extraordinary man and in his own small way made quite a mark on British cinema. After the war, just as I was going into the army, my father came out and joined forces with my grandfather, Will Hammer and Tony Hinds.

HoH: Was it always your personal ambition to work in the film business?
short jazz films?
MC: Yes. That was when Cinemagcope first came into use. In fact the first Cinemagcope made in this country was a series of features directed by me called Band Parade. I had a marvellous time with those.

HoH: During your career you've written, directed and produced films. What aspect of film-making interests you most of all?
MC: I think that the initial writing of the film is the most fascinating aspect of film-making because it's the basic, creative idea, the blueprint for the film that is eventually made. When people send me scripts to read I find it utterly boring as I would much rather people just sent me the idea for the film. After all, when you've just seen a film you don't quote the dialogue, you say—"Have you seen that film? It's about so and so..." And usually the shorter the presentation of the idea the better it is. So writing is the most exciting part of film-making, the actual creation of an exciting idea. But I never want to be a professional writer because it can be a very lonely and frustrating process—filling those 120 pages of script. Producing is the most functional portion of our industry because first you have to find the right idea, then you've got to find the right person to write it, then the right person to direct it, and that's where you can make or break your deal. If you pick the right director it's beautiful, but if you pick the wrong one it's agony.

As a producer I interfere with everybody's writing, which may or may not be a good thing, but you cannot interfere with directing. If you employ a man to direct a picture you've got to let him get on with it. You can't have two people directing though you can have as many people writing a film as you like. Unfortunately, during my career I've made a few wrong decisions and have had to replace directors on occasions. As for directing itself, it is the most fascinating thing of all—it is a total egotistical experience.

HoH: How did you become a director?
MC: Well, I think any producer who wants to improve his knowledge of the business should direct at some point because it makes you a better producer. It enables you to understand the problems of the physical side of making a film—all the interruptions and irritations, such as when the production department can't provide you with what you want, and when the producer doesn't understand what you are doing. It's the most satisfying side of the business as well as being the most frustrating. I got into directing back in 1957 when United Artists were financing a war film of ours called the Steel Bayonet. I asked them if I could direct it, and they said yes. That gave me a taste for directing but there weren't any other opportunities to direct within the Hammer company and so, in the early 1960's, I left Hammer for a while and went off on my own.

First I made a film called What A Crazy World, which was based on a marvellous show I saw in Joan Littlewood's theatre in Stratford. I managed to get financial backing from ABC (now EMI) and I did something I always wanted to do—I took the cameras into the streets of London, into the East End, and shot the film there. We incorporated the pop stars of that time, including Joe Brown, Marty Wilde and Susan Maughan, as well as Harry H. Corbett (of Steptoe fame) and Michael Ripper (a Hammer film regular). It was, for me, one of the best films I've made and I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. It's been, without question, a totally underrated film.

Then I went to Spain and, with MGM's partial backing and Spanish money, I made the first Western there (The Savage Guns)—it started the whole trend of making Westerns in Spain. This was long before the Italians started making their "spaghetti" westerns. Then, having directed those two things and, presumably because neither of them were terribly bad, Hammer asked me to direct another picture for them, which was Maniac in 1962. In fact I went straight from Spain to the South of France where Maniac was going to be shot. Then, having got back into the Hammer fold, I returned to England and directed one of the Mummy films (The Curse Of The Mummy's Tomb, 1964).

"If you pick the right director it's beautiful, but if you pick the wrong one it's agony."

During the rest of the 1960's I directed other Hammer films, including The Lost Continent and Slave Girls. The latter film arose from an economic situation—we had built an extraordinary set at Elstree Studios for One Million Years BC so we made Slave Girls as an economic quickie to use the set and all the costumes from the previous film. But I made one terrible mistake on that film—it should have had speech bubbles because it was the perfect comic strip film. If we went back now and re-edited it, putting in balloons with the words OUCH and ARGHHH, it would be great. (Laughter.)

HoH: What's your method of working as a director?
MC: Well, after I'd directed about five pictures I was interviewed by somebody who asked me: "Michael, how do you find the technical difference between Cinema-
scope and normal lenses?" As I started to answer I suddenly realised I didn't have an answer! I had never directed anything in my life that wasn't in Cinemascope and there I was talking about directing. I didn't even know about normal lenses because, in those days, there were only two Cinemascope lenses—one for a wide shot and one for a close-up. That really brought me down to earth.

Actually the person who helped me a lot was a camera operator named Len Harris. One day when I was doing my first picture with him I asked his advice on a camera set-up and he said: "Don't ask me, I'm only the operator. What you must do is take the viewfinder in your hand and imagine you're sitting in the Odeon Leicester Square and ask yourself what you want to see up on the screen." So that's what I used to do. I walked around the set pretending I was sitting in a cinema looking at a screen.

HoH: Have you ever directed a film with someone else as the producer?
MC: Physically, yes. But I always had the

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A relaxed and bearded Michael Carreras on location with the crew of *One Million Years BC.*

The trade advertisement for Hammer's second major horror film, *Dracula* (1958), overall financial responsibility. Therefore whether anyone thinks any of the pictures I've directed show directional promise or not I will never know for sure until I've directed a picture for somebody else. You see there's so much conflict when you're trying to do both jobs that I don't know if I've ever given myself a fair chance as a director. A lot of good friends of mine have told me that I'm a good producer but not much of a director. I don't disagree with them but I'd like to give myself the test of working for another producer who carries those other responsibilities himself.

HoH: Have you any advice for any of our readers who want to get into the movies as a writer or a director?
MC: No. I've been asked this question so many times it hurts. Look, I'm a successful producer but it took me three years to get my eldest son a union ticket to work in the industry. The only advice that I can give is that if you really want to work in the industry then you've just got to keep trying. It won't be easy. There is a lot of rubbish spoken about the various film schools but don't waste your time. Anyone who enrolls in a film school should first find out whether the certificate they issue at the end of the course is recognised by the union, and the answer is usually no. In fact I don't know of any film school that is recognised by the union myself, though I might be wrong. Without a union ticket there's no way you can get to work in the industry.

"There is a lot of rubbish spoken about film schools, but don't waste your time."

HoH: What if someone has a great idea for a Hammer film? What should they do?
MC: If you've got the ultimate idea for a film the first thing you should do is try and get a Literary Agent interested. He's a professional and will know the best things to do with it. If you came straight to Hammer with a good idea you might get 4p for it but if it's really good and it turned out to be a successful book or play you could make a small fortune because then all the film companies would have to compete for the rights.

HoH: Then is it worthwhile at all for people who think they have great ideas for films to submit them to Hammer?
MC: We will all starve if people with ideas stop pushing, but they've got to expect to receive rejection slips. I'm afraid I have to send out several every week.

HoH: Do you have any final advice for our readers on the subject of trying to break into the film business?
MC: All I can say is that if you really believe in your talent keep going. I would like to say that there is a way of achieving it quickly if you do such-and-such-a-thing but I just don't know of any such way.

Next issue, in part two of this exclusive interview, Michael Carreras will discuss the problems of filmmaking in today's world as well as providing information on Hammer's exciting forthcoming projects, including their lavish production *Vlad The Impaler*, which will be based on the exploits of the true-life figure Vlad Tepes who inspired Bram Stoker to create Dracula.
STAR WARS
MASKS
TO BE WON!

C-3PO

STORMTROOPER

CHEWBACCA

DARTH VADER

It's a helmet! It's a head!
You can get any of these four
incredible characters from the
Greatest Space Fantasy of all time!
WAY, way back in HoH 4 when we ran our “free holiday in Transylvania” competition, which was limited to the over-18s, we promised a future competition for all readers.

And this is it!

Chances are, unless you’ve been in hibernation for the last couple of months, you’re aware of the biggest science fantasy film epic currently playing around the world . . . STAR WARS.

And, just to prove that when we do feature a competition, we don’t mess around, the prizes are no less than 200 top quality, American made, Star Wars full-head masks. In fact, top quality is an understatement! These masks are currently retailing in the States for as much as $35 each.

Plus, if you’re not one of the lucky 200, we’ve also got 50 Star Wars paperbacks and records as consolation prizes.

All you have to do on your way to possibly winning one of our fabulous prizes is answer the following ten science fiction film questions correctly.

Write your answers on a postcard (sorry, no envelopes) and the first two hundred correct entries pulled out of a bag on January 31st will be the winning ones. The next 50 correct entries picked will receive consolation prizes.

And be sure to cut out the special “entry stamp” from this page and attach it to your postcard.

The correct answers will appear in House of Hammer 18, and the names of the winners shortly thereafter. Also, as a favour to your ever-curious HoH staff, when entering the competition how about letting us know your favourite three features in this issue and the one feature you liked least of all. (All feature titles are given on page three.)

Send your postcards, with your answers, the entry stamp, your list of favourite/least favourite features in HoH 16, and your name, age and address to:


. . . and be sure your card reaches us by January 31st, when editor Dez Skinn and a Star Wars personality will do the judging.

As Obi Wan would say . . . "And may the force go with you".

1. The aliens in This Island Earth came from which of the following planets . . . (a) Bellus, (b) Metaluna, or (c) Zyra?

2. The 1939 Republic serial Buck Rogers, starring Buster Crabbe, was set in the 25th Century. True or false?

3. In which city did the thrilling climax of 20 Million Miles to Earth (1957) take place?

4. At the end of which science-fiction film were the audiences warned to “Keep watching the skies!”?

5. The extra-terrestrial in United Artists’ The Man From Planet X (1951) landed in which country of the world?

6. Rod Taylor’s Time Machine takes him far into the future where he helps a pacifist race of people against their barbarous rulers. What were the names of these two races?

7. In Star Wars, Ben Kenobi saves Luke Skywalker from the Sandpeople. But what was the other name for them?

8. He appeared in the 1952 Republic serial Zombies of the Stratosphere, and later shot to fame in the Star Trek TV series. Who is he?

9. Below, right, is an unusual photograph of some props from Star Wars. What are the three objects?

10. Below, left, is another unusual photograph, again featuring a piece of equipment that appeared in Star Wars. Though it is partially dismantled, can you say on which planet/world/star or spaceship it appeared?
Classic Corner time. With a difference. Seventeen years after the blood-curdling fact, HoH has the rarely-seen storyboard of the screen's most grisly horror murder... Psycho! Plus, at last, the answer to the shower-stall's major question. Who actually directed the shower-stabbing? Alfred Hitchcock... or Saul Bass? The exclusive answer comes from a chapter in our critic Tony Crawley's third film book, Scrubbers. An Illustrated History of the Bath Scene in Movies, currently being finalised for publication.
This is the most imitated killing in movies. Whether in straight drama, cop-art, Westerns or horror films. This is the definitive cause (celebre) of all the screen's slayings in the bathroom—where the shiney, often bright white porcelain surrounds make a perfect (and so slippery) background for red blood, spurtling, dripping, congealing...

This, of course, is Janet Leigh (and her double) in Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho, 1960.

"Normally," says Hitch, "any studio would have made her the love interest. I wanted to shock the audience—bumping her off early." Cue for his also much-copied gimmick that "no one, but no one" be allowed to enter the cinema after the film had begun unreeled.

But a major controversy still reigns around this classic murder sequence. And one far more important than was it ketchup or chocolate sauce doubling for the blood swirling down the bath-tub's drain. Quite simply, this query is: who really masterminded and directed the stabbing of Janet Leigh?

In his master book on The Master (Hitchcock; Secker and Warburg) French director Francois Truffaut, an acknowledged Hitch-buff, likened the killing to a rape and Hitchcock told him how the sequence was shot.

Or, how he remembered it. Or, at least, how he wanted it to be remembered...

THE HITCHCOCK VERSION.

"It took us seven days... there were 70 camera set-ups for 45 seconds of footage. We had a torso specially made up... with the blood that was supposed to spurt away from the knife, but I didn't use it. I used a live girl instead, a naked model who stood in for Janet Leigh. We only showed Miss Leigh's hands, shoulders and head. All the rest was the stand-in.

"Naturally, the knife never touched the body: it was all done in the montage. I shot some of it in slow motion so as to cover the breasts. The slow shots were not accelerated later on... they were inserted in the montage so as to give an impression of normal speed."

That's all well and good and quite technical. At the time most people, like a kid actor in one of Hitchcock's films, only wanted to know... 'c'mon, was it chocolate sauce?""

The more vital truth of the matter—one of the best kept secrets in movie history—is that Hitchcock did not direct the sequence at all. Saul Bass did and he has never officially be credited for anything else other than choreographing the scene... until now.

In order to plan the shock murder, step by bloody step, Hitchcock called upon the services of the veteran graphic designer. Saul Bass—until Psycho, better known for his remarkable new genre of credit-titles; mainly for Otto Preminger movies: Carmen Jones, Advise and Consent, Exodus, etc. Indeed, all the winning main-title formats of the last twenty years or so (particularly the 007 titles) were greatly influenced by Saul's initial and quite revolutionary switch from the conventional roll of names, or worse still, those campy, fluttering pages of a book, featuring all the film's stars and technicians.

Two years after Psycho, Bass directed one set of titles which proved a hundred per cent better than the film they were fronting: the memorable black cat on the prow for Walk on the Wild Side.

And so, Saul Bass it was who storyboarded the Psycho stabbing.

And he also directed the sequence on a closed set with Hitchcock in close and constant attendance. It was his directing debut.

"He was very nice about it," says Bass. "I thought it was a generous thing for him to do on his picture. I learned a lot from it and very nice things emerged from it..."

No credit, though. Or none beyond that for "title-design".

THE BASS VERSION.

There were two cuts that Hitch added when I was through. We were on the stage three or four days, then I sat down with George Tomasini, the editor, and together we edited the footage. When we were through, Hitch added two cuts. A shot of the knife going into her belly—done in reverse. And some blood splattering. He felt it was too bloodless.

"I thought it would be interesting to do a bloodless murder, with only blood at the end, going down the drain. With all the water from the shower, the blood might—or might not—have been washed away immediately. Could have worked either way. Hitch felt he needed the blood, so he added the cuts."

And yes, the blood was chocolate sauce. And the worst problem Bass had to contend with:

"Originally, I planned the pullaway from the dead eye (see storyboard) with a little trickle of blood coming out from under the face and moving towards the camera—with the camera pulling away in sort of retreat. So we built a special tiled floor sorta buckled it to create an imperceptible depression through which we could direct the route of the blood and stuff. It didn't work!"

"We worked at it like forever and finally gave it up and did just the straight pullaway from where she drapes over the floor."

So now you know!

Uncredited. Saul Bass, the quiet man behind the Psycho stabbing, remains cool and far from annoyed about never being credited for his direction of the sequences. Instead, he's grateful still to Hitchcock for the opportunity, which indeed led to more direct filming: exquisite shorts for The New York World's Fair; much of the Spartacus battles; the split-screening in Grand Prix; and his first feature, Phase IV, a winning sf look at ants, made in Britain, 1972.

But it's his credit-title revolution that Saul is always to be remembered—and thanked—for. Beginning with work for Otto Preminger, he designed logo-symbols for films—the flaming rose of Carmen Jones, 1954, to the Reubenish thighs of Such Good Friends, 1971. These movie trade-marks soon utilised and animated in his title-designs, also include the segmented corpse of Anatomy of a Murder; the flip-top Capitol lid of Advise and Consent; the angular arm with clawing fingers of The Man With the Golden Arm. This arm, always outstretched, became his pet theme: brandishing a sword, Spartacus; rifles, Exodus; three balloons, One, Two, Three; in a US naval sleeve for In Harm's Way; and protruding from a globe, firmly latched on to a bagful of dollars for It's A Mad, Mad, Mad World. His greatest, longest and most expensive animated titles (£20,000 for six minutes) came with the epilogue for Around The World in 80 Days.

Later on, he began shooting special footage for his titles. A maze of frenzied streets for Something Wild; a stagecoach rolling through The Big Country; Hitler dancing for The Victors; and years ahead of its time—and equipment—the famous helicopter opening, sweeping right down to the flicking finger in West Side Story... where he had the actual credits chalked up on a wall.

Hiscoda, "I'm making the audience expectant... I try to reach for a simple visual phrase that tells you what the picture is about. It's no use going mad with the full, firework treatment just because you like the idea yourself. No matter how good, how brilliant an idea may be, if it doesn't blend with the film there's only one thing to do—throw it away, OK, file it. If you wish, for future use. But lose it now. Get rid of it. And start again."
This month’s Answer Desk column serves a dual purpose. A sad one we would rather do without. William Castle died this year, and so, partially in answer to Richard Andrews of Newcastle upon Tyne and Tony Norton of Leigh on Sea, who enquired about Castle’s film Bug, plus requests from Michael Carter, Steve Hutchinson, Anthony Harrison and John Skeggs for information on other William Castle films, this column is given over to a brief retrospect by Tise Vahimagi.

Affectionately known as the ‘Master of Movie Horror’, producer-director of mainly low-budget films William Castle died, after suffering a heart attack on May 31, at the University of California Medical Center, Los Angeles.

Castle reached his peak of success during the late 1950s and early 1960s with such exploitation fare as Macabre (1958), House on Haunted Hill (1959) and The Tingler (1959). His biggest success, financially, came with Rosemary’s Baby in 1968 (directed by Roman Polanski).

A New Yorker by birth, Castle turned up in Hollywood in 1939 after spending time producing and writing, and went on to produce or direct over 100 films; his credits up to 1956 include The Whistler (1944), Mark of the Whistler (1944), The Crime Doctor’s Warning (1945), Mysterious Intruder (1946), The Gentleman From Nowhere (1948), The Fat Man (1951), Serpent of the Nile (1953), Slaves of Babylon (1953), Battle of Rogue River (1954), The Americano (1955) and Uranium Boom (1956).

In 1958 Castle brought out the first of his gimmicky films Macabre; this one guaranteed the audience ‘One thousand dollars in case of death by fright’. A gruesome horror film involving burying people alive, this picture blazed the trail in assaulting the cinema goer with outrageous publicity saturation (‘If it frightens you to death—you’ll be buried free of charge’). Following this was House on Haunted Hill, which must be the heaviest of heavy-handed old dark house chillers. Here, Vincent Price comes across at his most malevolent while inviting a motley selection of guests to stay the night in a ghostly mansion. ‘See it with someone with warm hands!’ claimed the publicity. During the film’s original release, the gimmick was to have (at the appropriate time in the film) a skeleton zoom out of the screen and fly over the heads of the audience; this cheap-thrill process was called ‘Emergo’ by Castle.

Castle’s next one, The Tingler, had an even more bizarre gimmick to it. The story basically concerns a doctor (Vincent Price, again) who is trying to find what actually makes a person scared. He soon discovers that it is a not-so-little centipede-like creature (‘the tingler’) that attaches itself to the spine. At one stage of the plot he succeeds in capturing the creature but it escapes and gets loose in a cinema. At this point Castle’s effects went into action. The scene is where the Tingler crawls over the legs of a cinema audience and then slowly starts climbing up a girl’s leg—a switch is thrown in the real cinema and a gentle tingle of electricity buzzes every member of the viewing audience in their pre-wired seats. One can imagine the audiences’ reaction to this gimmick, during The Tingler’s first-run release.

Special ‘ghost-viewers’ were given to the audience when they went to see Castle’s I3 Ghosts, in 1960. This little 3-D type device enabled the audience to see the title characters in a process they called ‘Illusion-O!’ (‘See the ghosts in Ectoplasmic color!’). On seeing this film, when it first opened, the posters warned you ‘If you should only count 12 ghosts on the screen don’t feel cheated—One of them likes to mingle with the audience’.

In ‘61 he followed with Homicidal and
Mr. Sardonicus, both atmospheric black and white productions. Homicidal, quite an effectively scary picture, featured a 'Fright Break' whereby the audience were given a chance to get the hell out of it before Castle delivered the gruesome goods. The 'Fright Break' appeared in the form of a small clock ticking away sixty-seconds on the screen in preparation for the film's final big shock sequence. The production was styled very much in the tradition of Hitchcock's Psycho, the plot structure particularly. Mr. Sardonicus, based on the story by Ray Russell, was in the same mould as The Man Who Laughs, featuring Guy Rolfe as the title character with a permanent grin like a skull.

Castle followed through with Zoto (1962), 13 Frightened Girls (1963), and The Old Dark House (1963), the latter a co-production remake of the famous James Whale film with Hammer. This one was generally played for laughs ('The ghost doesn't walk in this family...it runs riot!').

1963's Strait-Jacket featured the late Joan Crawford in a turmoil of a story that saw 'her husband...her room...another woman...and the shiny axe...so close...!'. The Night Walker, with Barbara Stanwyck and Robert Taylor, and I Saw What You Did, with Joan Crawford and John Ireland, continued Castle's line of chillers.

His television work included the role of producer-director on the Men of Annapolis series and producer on the Meet McGraw series. Most recently Castle acted as executive producer for NBC-TV's Ghost Story (Circle of Fear) series.

Bug, his latest film, received many bad reviews and failed to score at the box-office, and Shanks (made in 1973), with Marcel Marceau as a crazed puppeteer who controls dead bodies, has yet to be released in Britain.

In 1976 G. P. Putnam published his autobiography, 'Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants Off America'. In a preparatory stage, at the time of his death, William Castle had 200 Lakeview Drive lined up for MGM.
Re. House of Hammer: After having somewhat major interest in this category of film I think that any comments I make are quite valid. Anyway you asked for comments so here are mine.

All of the comic-strips should be totally erased, there are plenty of horror comics on sale for those who crave such. But there are few magazines dealing seriously with horror films. You state these comic-strips are for those who missed the films when first released, but surely this is a childish way of portraying them. I had to wait a number of years till I saw Mr Lee don his cape and fangs. Wouldn't it be better to devote this total waste of space to those who never get much or no recognition for their efforts in this field.

The article on Mr Lee hardly did him credit, but better than nothing. The filmography was excellent, neat and to the point.

Media Macabre: In Vol. 1 No. 1, you went overboard on Dr. Palma in a labored detailing of his career. Perhaps he was topical before publication? In No. 7 you seemed devoid of news, is the genre having a slump? No. 3 had more to offer but you will include the disaster cycle films which are hardly fantastic! Rollerball for instance had an infinitesimal amount of sci-fi in it! No. 4: you persist in news of non-genre films, such as Airport 77, No. 5. gives another disaster full coverage and the rest one-liners. No. 2 had news of wildlife running amok (Squirm), but are they in the horror-fantasy-sci-fi grouping? Mr. Herrmann, a great composer in this field, had his death covered, take a leaf from CoF and do a Necroology instead. No. 6 was somewhat better but rather thin on news.

Horrors and the World: No. 1 had a good article on a country little heard from. No. 4: good again, but only 1/2 pages. Decent articles like this are truncated to accommodate the liberal space given to the comic brigade. No. 2 was rather crammed with titles with miniscule storylines, with certain films given more space.

Effectively Speaking: Although those series give the fan a behind-the-scenes look, it is a mixed affair.

Drinkers of Blood: Much of this article was too fantastic to be of interest.

Favourite Things: By Mr Brolsman had two film recommendations (It's Alive and Deathline) which were both repellent in taste and content. I see no merit in being physically sickened by such repulsiveness.

Answer Desk: Gives some of the reasons why HoH is still in its present form. One being that the under-fives aren't allowed to stay up late. Then having no intelligent questions to ask they request pictures. It could get better but I doubt it at the current rate.

Competition Winners: What was so impressive about the number of correct entries no matter how young the entrants? It takes no brains or effort to look up what were childish simple questions. Source material is readily available, either publicly or privately.

The Omen: A review that went the whole hog, of some who have contributed little or nothing to the genre. Mr. Brolsman垫es the origins of this film, but should be grateful that they ever got on film to make them so popular to copy.

The Golden Age of Horror: I find Mr. Gifford's books better than these tedious series of articles. The contents are banal and chronically familiar to say the least. In one he gives us Bela instead of Boris which is hardly a change.

The Devil's Men: Looks hardly worthy of its two male stars, one being Mr. Kinnear, another actor badly neglected in an article on his contribution to this field.

Collecting: Should have taken up all of page 35, a lot would have been said even without the fanzine exclusion.

Post Mortem: Is the most biased page there is. The patronisation is overwhelming and the criticisms tripe. Are the letters hand-picked in favour of HoH? If this is so I doubt if this letter gets to see print.

Daughters of the Night: Lacks the courtesy of a title, and one must refer to the contents page to find out what one is reading. Again we have a raking of old chests by someone with a tongue-twisting name.

Frankenstein: is rolled out for the umpteenth time as an excuse to include Mr. D. Carra donne's interpretation. The gallery idea is incomplete, dig deeper. Who is R. Rodan, why his inclusion?

Night of the Living Dead: A good review and follow-up, credit listing should be continued.

Creatures from the Deep: Kicks off by endorsing that Jaws was a horror film. Shark attack has no fantasy element and sharks do single-mindedly go in for its victim, without being supernaturally inclined. Mr Holmes private life and Moby Dick need not have been included. These were padding for a flabby article.

Monsters from the East: Another rarity or something new, but let's hope they are not all like Onibaba.

Terrible Monsters: This is more like it, but which meaning did the title convey to the article? Deranged: A good feature article, but will the film get general release? If Chainsaw is anything to go by, I doubt it.

Mexican Monsters: An excellent article, at least we had the titles translated. But again invariably too short.

To the Devil—A Daughter: Gave a lot of coverage to some people who don't figure much in this field. The film was lousy anyway and the behind the scenes article revealed nothing new to warrant a 2 page spread.

The Devil's Other Children: Covered this kind of theme prevalent after The Exorcist, but included films covered elsewhere, rather repetitiously.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre: Mr Fleming gives a ludicrous review, why review it at all if it's that bad? Except for local showings a good piece of HoH? If this is so I doubt if this letter gets to see print.

Blood and Guts: A nice title, I don't think: this sort of thing gives the genre a bad name. Why include the two westerns which are outside the horror category? Wholly unnecessary except as padding.

The Crazies: Another ludicrous review, a total waste.

In closing, if my comments are a bit caustic they only serve to get a better magazine. Other magazines of this type have verged on the idiotic and I have been most disappointed with their reviews. The best I managed to obtain for only a short time was Castle of Frankenstein which itself was somewhat eratic. I hope my effort in getting through to you and yours will not end up in the waste basket.

W. K. Brinsley, address unknown.

In answer to this lengthy missive from Mr. Brinsley who chose not to give his address when writing in), the following was prepared with the thought of offering every reader an insight on the general intentions and policies involved in the production of House of Hammer magazine.

Illustrated fantasy and filmed fantasy are, contrary to popular belief, closely related. Both utilise dramatic visuals to relate a story, and have for a long time borrowed themes, stories, and characters from each other; in terms of filmed adaptations, consider Flash Gordon, Batman, Danger!, Diabolik, Tales From the Crypt, etc. The other end of the line brings you, for example, the American illustrated publications on Logan's Run, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Planet of the Apes, etc. Sadly, Britain must be the only country, these days, that still retains the musty tradition of illustrated stories being for either monogloidal idiots or the under-ten, in offering an illustrated coverage of early Hammer films, HoH has never considered itself to be catering for the "Biffo the Bear" contingent!

Obviously, the article on Christopher Lee was in no way intended as the definitive breakdown of the actor's career in terms of critical evaluation. This approach, surely, would be best left to the authors of hardback tomes who can aim at a limited readership (the Christopher Lee fans) and have the page-count to enable in-depth analyses of each film. An important point to consider, on this topic, is that it is unrealistic to presume that one's
appreciation of a certain subject or item is automatically universal. Besides, there is now approximately thirty years of accumulated literature available on every aspect of Christopher Lee, so any further pursuit would result in duplication.

Director Brian DePalma, now suddenly a cult figure, has been called a master filmmaker. His films to the genre well before his recent "commercial" venture, Carrie. It is only unfortunate that a mere handful of aficionados were able to pick up on and enjoy his earlier material (Blood Sisters, Obsession, Murder à L'Mode, etc.), so it is only logical that when an opportunity arose to detail DePalma's talents in print we went ahead. From your comment, Mr. Brinsley, one would have thought that you (having "a somewhat major interest") would have been at least conscious of the creative Mr. DePalma.

"Directorial films" come very much into the fantasy category, unless the film deals with an actual event; then it would be either a documentary or a dramatization. Until Los Angeles is devastated by an Earthquake, the film is sheer fantasy; until there is a 138-storey building in San Francisco, and it also happens to catch fire, Towering Inferno can be nothing else but fantasy. Anything that is set in the future, scientifically based or otherwise, again, falls into the fantasy genre. A horror film (terror is a more suitable term), needless to say, is a film where there is a deliberate attempt to frighten or unnerve the audience; James Whale's Frankenstein is made with the intention of scaring the hell out of the audience.

"Horror Around the World" aims itself at illuminating the fantasy-film output of certain otherwise-neglected countries, with the emphasis on films that rarely make it to these shores. The general theme of the articles is to associate the reader with the various film characters and plot structures relating to the particular country and break from the more familiar Anglo-American productions and actors.

Effectively Speaking was a section purely devoted to the special effects. By covering this area of filmmaking in a way that can be accepted and understood by the majority of English-speaking people, the reader is given an insight to an otherwise neglected field.

John Holman's My Favourite Things is pure and simply a selection of reflective thoughts by the author on films not unknown to the masses. When a cinema audience leaves the theatre after watching a film each person takes with them (hopefuly) the personal memories of fear or disgust. Only a small few will have thoughts that coincide, and it would be absurd to expect everyone to fall in with one's own conclusions.

The purpose of An Answer to the Desideratum is to supply exactly what the heading implies: answers. If the reply to a reader's request is by way of detailed information, then the answer appears in the text. If the illustration can fulfil a particular request, then the appropriate still is printed. This section serves simply to offer various readers information (trivial or otherwise) they may not easily find elsewhere.

Regarding the Competition Winners, Mr. Brinsley, their names were put into print by way of acknowledgement from the magazine for their efforts in attempting the quiz. Your comment on this seem to make it obvious that you must consider yourself an elitist among fantasy-film buffs, probably not wanting to place yourself alongside the "younger element!"

The Omen was viewed and then reviewed by John Brosnan with the critical evaluation based on his experience as a film critic and genre authority. Reviews are usually annoying to some and pleasing to others, never intended to pacify and humble the reader.

Denis Gifford's Golden Age of Horror may shortly be appearing in book form, adding to his already popular list of literature on the genre. Needless to say, it will sell as well as all his other works, proving that there is always a market (an avid readership) to make welcome such material. If you, Mr. Brinsley, have reached a higher intellectual plane and now find this sort of material bland, then your reading matter must be extremely limited.

Collecting memorabilia: a lot more can be said about everything, if your aim is to cater for an acknowledged specialty. This piece was initially intended as an introduction to potential collectors, and any further detailing of the subject would simply cater for the already-involved than alienating a goodly section of the readers.

Contrary to persistent belief that all letters of comment that appear in periodicals are "doctorated", it is the psychology of 99.9% of letter-writers to say something, apt or inapt, rather than condemning, it is pointless, not rage, that mainly induces readers to write in to a publication, so magazine editors (should they even be inclined) have no need to resort to "propaganda" tactics in their Letters Column. Should we actually receive an intelligently-constructed letter criticising any part of the magazine, if only to show no bias, we would print it.

The apparent lack of a title-heading for "Daughters of the Night" is literally one of those errors that develop during the printing process, in this case too late along the schedule to rectify. This article was aimed at taking a retrospective look at the growth and development of an important ingredient in films of gothic fantasy. Maybe the sub-division discussed was too esoteric for Mr. Brinsley? Also, should the author decide to blend in with his environment he could always adopt an Anglo-Saxon pseudonym.

Monsters From The East? Onibaba: another example of Mr. Brinsley's attitude toward films of fantasy, and Cinema in general. Kaneto Shindo's Onibaba is one of the most beautifully constructed, atmospheric excursions into the Oriental approach to fantasy filmmaking ever seen; maybe Horror at Party Beach or Corpse Grinders aims more at Mr. Brinsley's cultural level?

According to the comment on To the Devil . . . A Daughter, it seems that Mr. Brinsley would prefer to only hear horror-fantasy films that contain established genre performers (what few there are). Surely the film itself is more important in terms of what it has to offer to the buffs than who is actually cast in the picture; the success of The Omen is a good example.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre review is the way critic John Fleming sees it (whether it be good, bad or ugly) and was included for the strict purpose that it may not be widely released throughout the U.K. If you are the fan you presume to be then you would be interested in all genre films, whether you think you'll ever get to see them or not.

Mr. Brinsley, what is it that makes a particular film valid for inclusion in a horror-fantasy film periodical? If one has to be selective then you would result with a myopic viewpoint of what is happening in the genre. No one will ever find a publication that appeals 100% to them, there will always be something that doesn't match your point of view. The best one can hope to achieve with a reader is to try and find, in some form of emotion, be it pleasure or (unfortunately) displeasure; in either category the aim is entertainment.

I'd like to commend your fantastic artists, they are doing a superb job. Just the other day I was comparing the art in HoH with that in an American magazine and there was just no comparison. HoH was so much more professional in its style.

The feature I enjoy most in HoH is The Golden Age Of Horror by Denis Gifford and I feel it would be a mistake to concentrate solely on current horror in the cinema.

Keep up the excellent work! Edward Hillier, Taunton, Somerset.

After the great artwork on The Quatermass Experiment and The Curse Of The Werewolf, the artwork on The Gorgon in House of Hammer 11 had to be the poorest on a main strip published in HoH. I found it both static and uninspiring.

Much better was the Van Helmont Terror Tale, "Lair of the Dragon" drawn by Brian Lewis, who seems to have an affinity with ancient weapons and armour. After seeing his magnificent dragons, I hope that if you ever get round to doing an adaptation of One Million Years BC you will assign him the job.

John Milburn, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear.

If you're a regular reader, John, you'll know by now that we did "get round to doing" One Million Years BC in HoH. However, the artwork was handled by John Bolton, but Brian did manage a look in, turning in another magnificent cover for that issue. Perhaps when we adapt Hammer's When Dinosaurs RULED The Earth, Brian will be able to find time for the full artwork.

I recently read House of Hammer 11 and I can only say it was brilliant. The film adaptation was truly excellent. Please convey my congratulations to Trevor Goring and Alberto Cuyas for turning in some really magnificent adaptations.

Raymond Kell, Gilesgate Moor, Co. Durham.
Feature by John Fleming

A little old lady goes out one day with her shopping trolley and a big bag of prunes. She goes to a building site and watches the men working. One construction worker is riding up the side of the uncompleted building, standing on a steel beam. Suddenly, the cable snaps. The beam falls. The man plummets hundreds of feet. An ambulance arrives with a stretcher.

"Better get a sack," the ambulance men are told.

The old lady goes back home. The blind man who has been watching goes home too.

Homebodies is a geriatric thriller. It is about a group of old people who, at first, murder strangers, then each other.

Producer Marshal (sic) Backlar started his career by making the Oscar-nominated short Skaterdater. It was the story of a young boy who loves his skateboard. Then he meets romance, in the form of a 10-year-old girl on a bicycle with braces in her teeth. Romance triumphs.

Backlar's next production was the extremely odd Pretty Poison, in which Tony Perkins, and Tuesday Weld's homicidal fantasies turn into realities.

Then he joined educational and documentary director Larry Yust to film Trick Baby, the story of a fair-skinned negro con man's revenge on white society. It was based on a book by "Iceberg Slim" (Robert Beck, a black pimp-turned-writer).

Backlar and co-producer James R. Levitt sold Trick Baby to Universal for more than twice its cost. So, smelling success, they again teamed with director Larry Yust.

The result, Homebodies, was made in 1973, but has hardly been seen in Britain. It was filmed in Cincinnati or, as the city used to be nicknamed, "Porkopolis". (It was the largest US pork-packing centre in the nineteenth century.) A boring city and an interesting film.

A group of old people have been living contentedly in an apartment house for decades. But now the whole street is being knocked down and the people who live there are to be moved out into "nice clean rooms" elsewhere.

"They'll come for us tomorrow," says one of the oldsters. "I remember how it was. . . . There's always dirt now." The sound of their conversation is almost drowned out by the pneumatic drills and hydraulic machinery on the nearby building site, where the huge new office block is rising noisily.

At least, it was rising noisily. But now, because of the accident, work on the site has stopped. The old people can enjoy peace and quiet again.

"A man died," explains the little old lady. "I'd given him some prunes." There are six oldsters in the house. The friendly, pixie-like, prune-pusher is Mattie. The blind old man at the building site was Mr Blakely. Then there is Mr Sandy: an old man who has spent the last 15 years in the house vainly working on his memoirs. His room is crammed with thousands of papers and hundreds of books. There is Miss Emily, who talks to her father despite the fact he is long-since dead and buried. She hasn't been out of the house for 20 years. Last, but not least, there are Mr and Mrs Loomis. Everyone is being moved out tomorrow; the building is going to be knocked down. But Mr Loomis is obsessively repainting the outside of the house.

Next day, a young girl comes from the local Council to arrange for everyone to leave. But they all refuse. To force them out, the girl gets all gas, light and water supplies cut off.

"That girl doesn't worry about us," says Mattie. "There's no reason for us to worry what happens to them."

Mattie is played by Paula Trueman, a 76-year-old actress who appeared in Paint Your Wagon, The Anderson Tapes, On a Clear Day ... etc. She is well known in US TV commercials and has understandably been called "a kind of B-picture Ruth Gordon". Mr Blakely is played by Peter Brocco. The face is familiar, even if the name isn't: he has appeared in over 200 movies and 500 TV programmes. Other than these two, though, the cast are unknowns as far as British audiences are concerned. All the movie has going for it is very detailed, cluttered sets and very eccentric plotting.

Mattie goes back to the building site the next day. Three men enter a cage-lift on the outside of the uncompleted building. They rise smoothly up and up. Then, there's a
sudden electrical explosion. The men are “fried like bacon”. Someone, in panic, cuts off the power supply. The lift falls hundreds of feet onto the concrete below. The $50 million project is closed down again. The men go home. Silence reigns.

Next day, the girl social worker arrives with police to evict the old people from their house. Trouble is expected. But the oldsters are docilely waiting, perfectly happy to go. They are all taken to a vast, featureless modern block—their new home. All, that is, except Mattie and Miss Emily. They have disappeared.

The young social worker in her pure white dress goes back to find them. They must be hiding in the house. Down in the dark, shadowy cellar? No. She climbs the stairs as the detective did in Psycho. Nothing. Except a figure half-seen in the shadows behind her. On the first floor, a door creaks. The girl goes innocently into the room like a lamb to the slaughter. But there's no-one there.

She crosses the corridor to another room. Completely empty. No furniture. Just wallpaper, curtains and creaking floorboards. She opens a cupboard.

A long, sharp knife is pushed into her stomach by a small figure. The knife goes straight through her body; its sharp point
comes out of her back.

Miss Emily pulls the knife out. Blood begins to soak the fabric of the girl's white dress. She falls to the floor.

By the time night has fallen, all six oldsters are back in their house. But now there's a problem. How to get rid of the body. So they steal a wheelchair from the local park while its occupant is exercising.

They put the stiff, dead girl in it and wheel her off to a bridge, where she is thrown into a passing train.

Later that night, the property tycoon who is financing the $50 million office complex visits his trouble-torn site. He meets an old lady who persuades him to come to a boarded-up house. "It's important," she keeps telling him. She has a packet of prunes in her hand.

When he enters the house, a noose tightens around his legs. He flies up the stairs-well, caught like a tiger, hanging upside-down. If the rope is cut, he will fall, head-first, storey-by-storey down onto the floor. His head will split open. The old people stand around him at the top of the stair-well.

He yells:

"These old buildings are coming down and there's nothing you can do about it!" The oldsters are impassive. Frightened, he promises new flats with garbage disposal systems. No reaction. Nothing seems to have any effect. He threatens the oldsters with the police.

His captors let him down. They bind and gag him. They put him in their stolen wheelchair and take him across to his own unfinished office building. They take him up to the very top. To the very edge of the building. They're going to throw him off the building? No. They put him in a large box and bring over a hosepipe. Out of the pipe, surging, splurging, comes grey, liquid cement. He starts to gurgle through his gag as the level of the cement rises. One of the kind old ladies mops his brow. Then the grey liquid covers him.

"I hope they put enough lime in it," says one of his murderers. Then someone sees the tip of one of the dead man's shoes sticking out of a hole in the box.

"Well, there's only one thing to do."

A sharp fire-axe slices off the tip of the shoe—and the dead man's toes. The box is tidied-up, grey concrete mixing with red blood. And the toes are popped into a pocket for safe-keeping.

The next day, despite the disappearance of the project's boss, the demolition men return. Machines start to destroy the row of houses where the oldsters are hiding. The most destructive machine is one which uses a huge iron ball to knock down walls.

The day after that, as the demolition expert starts to swing the iron ball towards a house, the chain gives way. The ball flies off and lands on a portable toilet hut. Inside, someone has been caught with his trousers down.

All this violence is too much for Mrs Loomis. She goes to tell the police what is happening. But, as she leaves the house, there is a noise above her. She looks up. A silver urn filled with a loved-one's ashes hurries down from an upstairs-window. It hits Mrs Loomis on the head, knocking her unconscious to the ground.

The oldsters are now turning on each other and it is too much for Mr Sandy. He goes to his room where, amid piles of ageing newspapers, he starts to type a letter. He doesn't see, behind him, a figure with a cudgele. Mattie raises the murder-weapon and brings it down onto Mr Sandy's head with a thud.

Miss Emily, terrified, flees the house and runs—or rather totters—out into the daylight for the first time in 20 years. She is chased by her remaining accomplices. But one of the hunters soon becomes the hunted, and, after a chase across a lake in pedal boats, a watery grave awaits one of the oldsters. Or, it seems to. Because the film features a return from the dead and a sting in the tail. You'll have to see it to believe it. Whether you can see it depends on that near-mythical beast: The British Distributor.

**HOMEBODIES (1973)**

Paula Trueman (as Mattie), Frances Fuller (Miss Emily), Peter Brocco (Mr Blakely), William Hansen (Mr Sandy), Ruth McDevitt (Mrs Loomis), Ian Wolfe (Mr Loomis).

Directed by Larry Yust, Produced by Marshal Backlar, Screenplay by Larry Yust, Howard Kaminsky and Bennet Sims. Distributed by Essential Cinema.

Time: 96 mins. Certificate X
The role made an international star out of Bela Lugosi in 1931 and 27 years later it did the same for Christopher Lee.

Even the infrequent cinema-goer knows immediately that this refers to the now-legendary character of Count Dracula.

And now, another 19 years on, the cape and fangs have found a new owner. But for neither a relatively unknown actor or widescreen theatrical release.

If you've bought your HoH before the Christmas holiday period, grab hold of a copy of Radio Times and prepare for a surprise...

BBC TV have made a new version of Count Dracula (co-financed with America's WNET).

"It's been knocking around for a long time," says producer Morris Barry. "It was offered to two other producers. One, unfortunately, was Martin Lisemore (of I, Claudius) who died in a car-crash. So somebody else took it on—Tony Coburn (of Poldark)

who unfortunately died of a heart-attack."

The production was originally planned as a 4-part serial; then a 3-parter; then a single long play. It is now to be transmitted around Christmas in a 2½-hour version, then repeated next year as a 3-part serial.

"I don't know when it's going out," says Barry. "I hope after the Nine O'Clock News, not before. I think it might frighten quite a number of people. There will be an enormous number of visual effects, with stakes going through people's hearts, heads getting cut off and so on."

The production schedule was six days at BBC Television Centre, with one week's filming at the BBC Film Studios in Ealing and three weeks on location in Whitby, Northumberland and London.

Whitby is still very much as it was in the 19th century, but the boat sequences have been filmed in a BBC studio.

"We've got a new technique for model shooting," says Morris Barry. "BBC Visual Effects are not using water for waves: they're using plastic. I think it's come off marvellously."

Who is starring as the evil Count Dracula? Louis Jourdan, clean-cut star of Gigi.

"I think it's insidious," says Barry. "He's not immediately horrifying. He's a very charming, benign, good-looking man. But there's something slightly odd. Then it builds up. The way director Philip Saville has done it, one gets a flash of what he might become. Did I or did I not see fanged teeth?"

What does producer Morris Barry think of the previous Draculas?

"Our one is completely different from the first one, Nosferatu, in 1923. The Bela Lugosi one in 1931 started off rather well, but was really rather silly. You'll see plenty of blood in our version. Times have changed. I think it will be quite frightening, quite terrifying."
A WINDING COUNTRY ROAD ON A MISTY NIGHT... A CAR DRIVER YAWNING AFTER A LONG DAY AT THE WHEEL... AN INFALLIBLE RECIPE FOR DISASTER, AND IT WAS A DISASTER OF A PECULIARLY SINISTER KIND THAT ENGULFED TRAVELLING SALESMAN JOHN CROUCH, FROM THE MOMENT HE NOTICED ON HIS WINDSCREEN... A SPOT OF BLOOD.

CROUCH BRACED HIMSELF WITH A NIP OF WHISKY FROM HIS HIP FLASK...

... THAT WAS A TRAGIC MISTAKE

AAH!

CROUCH SCRAMBLED SHAKILY FROM HIS CAR...

UH...

HE'S STILL ALIVE... BUT IF I CALL THE COPS... THEY'LL THROW THE BOOK AT ME...
Crouch's panicstricken loss of nerve condemned his injured victim to death...

As soon as he got home, Crouch washed away the evidence...

That's odd... I didn't notice that spot of blood...

Hey! No cutting in!

Instant is what it says, man... and instant is what I need...

Car shock! 154

What the hell? Can't be the same spot of blood... can it?

Water slashed bleezfully across the stained windshield...

That's got rid of the filthy thing... if it was really there...

But one morning, a week later...

A week later, John Crouch's nightmare began...

Hit and run fatality:
Hospital technician bleeds to death in ditch. Guilty motorist could have saved his life, say police.

So later the same day...
The next two weeks were untroubled, and Crouch got his nerve back...

UH-UH... This is the road where it happened... But hell, what have I got to worry about?

The answer to Crouch's question was... plenty...

One terror-locked hand rigid on the wheel, Crouch slewed the car into the ditch...

Oh God — who's doing this — what do they want with me?

You expected Crouch to be killed, didn't you? Ah, but you haven't heard the end of the story yet...

Uuh...

Hang on, he's okay... If we get him to hospital pronto, he'll make it...

The patrolmen got Crouch to the hospital in time...

He's lost a lot of blood. He'll need an immediate transfusion...

But the hospital technician was in for a shock...

Huh? Every last bottle in the blood-bank smashed... overturned... emptied!

I tell you, there's not a drop of plasma in the hospital!

I'll get a bottle of plasma...

Then we've lost the patient! Without that transfusion... Mr. Crouch is a dead man...

Don't ask me how the blood-bank got emptied! I'm new here! Maybe it was the fault of the technician who had this job before me... the one who died last month in that hit-and-run accident...

The End.
## MAD BACK ISSUES

GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST! Already we have sold out of our Jesus issue of MAD (No. 168), our Rollerball issue (No. 170) and our Kong One issue (No. 178), and stocks are dwindling fast on many of the others. But we’ve managed to get our hands on a quantity of now sought-after issues dating back to early 1975. (Issues 157, 161 and 163.)

This is your chance to see the much talked-about MAD version of our very own Dr. Who (161), not to mention what MAD did to The Towering Inferno and The Great Gatsby.

All back issues are 35p each (including postage) and are available from the address below. Cheques/postal orders made payable to Top Sellers Ltd.

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## POSTER MAGS

The following are full colour magazines, each containing an eight page fold out poster. 35p ea.

**MM vol. 2. No. 1** Lee Poster: It's Alive

**MM vol. 2. No. 2** 1958 Dracula film poster.

**MM vol. 2. No. 3** Scars of Dracula, Lee poster.

**Dok Savage** Facts and pie on film & books.

**Kung Fu 2. David Carradine issue.**

**Planet of Apes** From books to film to TV.

**Psycho 1** 30p Companion to NM. Comic strip horror.

**Psycho 3** 30p More comic strip scare stories.

**NM1** 30p 36 pages of comic strip horror.

**NM2** More monsters, mas-fits and horror.

**NM3** Go on, go for a full set of NM 1.

**QMM4** 40p 100 pages of fear film features.

**The ADVENTURE STORIES** 40p 2nd issue, Yet more fantasy comics.
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...