House of Hammer Bargain Basement

H01  Illustrated adaptation of 1958 Dracula Kronos, Lee biography & filmography, 1930s FX Brazilian Horror, etc.
H02  Curse of Frankenstein Part 1, Devil a Daughter; At Hammer studios, Hammer make-up, Italian Honor
H03  Curse of Frankenstein Part 2, Night of the Living Dead The Frankenstein Gallery Hollywood Horrors Chaney
H04  Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires strip, Mexican Monsters, Oriental Horrors Undersea Creatures, etc.
H05  Moon Zero Two strip, Terrible Monsters, Lugosi — The Coming of Dracula, Deranged, Mexican Monsters Part 2
H06  Dracula — Prince of Darkness comic strip, Blood & Guts Crazies, Chris Lee Gallery, 1931 Horror Films, etc.
H07  Twins of Evil strip, The Otten, Karloff, The Werewolf Female Vampires, Devil's Men, etc.
H08  Queuismess strip, King Kong, rekyl & Hyde, Hammer Science Fiction films, Lee's NEW Dracula etc.
H09  Queuismess Pt 2, Carrie, Kong (1933), Seizure Squirm, De Palma, Living Dead At Manchester
H10  Curse of the Wewolf strip, Close Encounters, Sentinel, Fu Manchu, Son of Kong
H11  Gorgon strip Part 1, Harryhausen makes Gorgon, AS Dracula, Wizards, Sinbad, Zontan, Burnt Offerings
H12  Gorgon strip Part 2, Heretic, Blood City, Witchfinder General, 1933 Invisible Man, Face of Frankenstein, etc.

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Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger

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“A Spot of Blood” is our latest complete comic strip thriller from the files of Professor Van Helsing.

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**HOUSE OF HAMMER Volume 2, Number 4, January 1978 issue.**

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*July 1978*
Ever trying new ideas and new approaches, in 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 HoH 18. 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 Prige (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 the award-winning House of Hammer (more on that next issue, if we've got the space)!

And talking about HoH 17, it will feature our 13 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 fiction 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 quibbles 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 Deto 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 homeworld 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 enables Luke's aide 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 chunk 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 clichés as the scene where Luke returns to the old homestead to find it on fire and his family massacred, 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.
Lera 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 vessels 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 underbelly 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 armament.
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 were 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 he wanted, knowing that the computer’s memory would duplicate the same movements as many times as needed. The result

![Image](image_url)

*Disguise. Clad in koyond stormtroopers' action-men fun-suits, our heroes Luke and Han—with the omnipresent See-Threepio—squabble over rescue plans and struggle (left) in the mire of the Death Star's garbage disposal system. A garbage-eating Dasu-aug, in fact, or one tentacle and one eye, until it is improved upon for one of the film's expected numerous sequels.*
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 space ship 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-Detoo), 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 on, sharks, whales, bears, bees and other fantastical animal monstrosities! The abominable snowman is coming out of the deep freeze to curdle your '76 blood. And this Italian-media snowman is now, too, to add to all the other yetis. It is The Abominable Snowman, a sequel to the classic 1959 film, and it is set to hit the screens in the near future.

And in the left corner, the Rome producer Nicola Pomilia of Stefano Films and his baby Yeti - Big Foot.

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

A year and a few days ago, Dino, of course, was caught in a similar double-exposure battle over King Kong. As he announced his project, Universal announced their Dino took umbrage and nearly want to court over it. That time, he won. Though now he probably wishes he hadn't, following the loss, he now knows the details of his wildy-epic battle, and he's learned something.

Indeed, it seems that Signor Pomilia is the man with the golden touch. He has benefited most by Dino's luckless experiences in the monster field. While Dino with Kong, Pomilia has started shooting first. For instance (in snowy locations in Canada), the Yeti's body was shot, while the Yeti's head was shot in Italy. Dino, however, Pomilia did not begin production until he had his Yeti monster made - and in fully electronic working order. Also unlike Dino, Pomilia has not kept his creature under wraps, but shown it off, with some justification, to Rome newspapers. Big sighters they are - 25 foot tall. That's not just one yeti - two of them.

And why two? You ask. Not another sequel to the original video the original is still seen, surely? No, or at least, not as yet. "I am shooting two different endings," explains Nicola Pomilia. "In one of them, my yeti is destroyed. And not at the box-office by Dino De Laurentis, 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 brush of Hollywood newcomer, took on Universal and City Hall. And won."

Trieste Fest

Everyone was talking about it. What else? But Star Wars was sight unscreened 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 snatchd top honours from Wizards and suchlike The Rat Saviour, an allegorical number by Kristo Papic won The Golden Asteroid award. The Golden Seal went to Italy's short Fhen-bibilical by Guido Menulis Silver Asteroid acting awards were picked up by David Rodigan in Anthony Traitoff's British short The Wasp Reaction— and Kate Reid in Canada's The Ugly Little Boy, based on the Isaac Asimov story by Don Thompson and Barry More Special awards went to Guido Handrick's Belgian feature, Experts of Evil and Otto Foy's animated scenes With Bears from Hungary. Russia nabbed the event's first ever musical soundtrack trophy for Isaac Shvarts' The Flight of Mr. Mekkingin.

LETS PLAY HIDE AND GO KILL...

Ralph Bekshi's Wizards — somewhat buried in the Star Wars triumph — has been nominated for the first-ever "best animated suspense feature" award 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 for Tender's People, hit the suddenly-still-conscious screen. Serling's scenario adapts Lord Dunsany'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.

SF's Best Pal

As the star-wake pattern continues, space 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 pen. 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 liquefy. Effects are by Rick Baker who handled both the Exorcist and King Kong. Co-producer is Sam (Carquinite) Gelfman, ex United Artists.

Of course, that this combine will help produce the Universal series, and therefore our hero will soon be picking up more than his $35,000 a show—as well as playing other roles in tele-movies and the like. His company has made one TV movie already, A Matter of Convenience—no, it's not about his wife leaving Charlie's Angels.

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 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—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 Kinski plays the title role. And to some of us, Klaus always seems hypnotized. Well, he's coasted through more bad films—Italian horror included—than most guys we know.

Cut, Cut and Away

Charles Schneer and Roy Harris are beginning to mass over the possibility of a fourth Sinbad movie. "It might be called something like Simbad 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 films 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 scene, 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 chimp off the dumpling block. Chris Mitchum is in a film entitled Stingray, too [Makes a change from II!]. Lagel 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 to 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 AIP's The Island of Dr Moreau, is no newspaper 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 Oino de Laurentius re make. He was, born enough much assisted by the
Various experts discussed future fashions. Even the producers of "Close Encounters" got in on it. And Sandy Duncan, star actress of Disney's up coming "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" part of the week, though was the 3.30 KABC movie. Every day an extra-terrestrial was found. 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.

BENTON: "The Pujo-Benton/Neuman Superman script has since been reread by Neuman 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 I. On this hand, he can do everything. 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 really wants to do it as quirky as that." Not the man from DC Comics, but for sure.

T.C.

Along with Volume Two ("V" to "O") and Volume Three ("P" to "Z") the total page count is in excess of 800. By way of introduction to Volume Two, Chris Leise 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 the immensely popular field. Robert Blachman's volumes in Volume Three with his illustrations and Fritz Ackerman make a great loss in his field of study. The service rendered by this magazine is invaluable. These books do not go without photo illustrations, but, in fact, Leise has acquired a rare collection of photographs to embellish his pages. I am sure that 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 incredible reference work.

For those involved in research and genre studies these books will prove indispensable. It is also a wonder that no major film archives in the world have any information about such a work. Even "Walt's" work as such is shrouded in an enigma of its own. Because of its highly specialized nature the "Reference Guide" is not generally available at bookstores. Individually purchased Volume One is $5.00 and Volumes Two and Three are $9.50 each. The total price for the set is $29.40 plus $1.50 postage and handling. Write directly to Walt Disney Book and Magazine Box 61273, Los Angeles, Ca. 90066 U.S.A. (By International Money Order)."
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 Cine'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 loping 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 chomping 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 Ssnclair, Robert Collins, Robert Englund, Jans Lynn and Kyle Richards. Directed by Tobe Hooper. Produced by Mardl Rastam, Co-Produced by Al Fast, Executive Producer Mohammed Rastam. No British Certificate.
one minute they're perfectly normal THE NEXT...

RABID

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, Shiver. 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 Shiver, 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 be 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 Sayent 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 bent... 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 bystander.
In one scene, for instance, Rose has what appears to be a reverse-action hypodermic device implanted just above her stomach, which punctures her victims and cleans their blood-tanks dry. Yet in another sequence, this parasitical organ seems to be a whole new mouth just under one armpit, which works in a similar horrendous fashion.

It's safe, I think, to surmise that David Cronenberg edited out various explanatory-narrative sequences in an effort to keep his film moving apace. Look now, ask questions later.

In that department, he succeeds extremely well. This film has fine pace, excellent rhythm—and an increasingly voyeuristic tension. It never fades out either. Never has the chance to Jean Lafleur’s ultra-taut editing sees to that.

We’re simply expected to fill in any offending plot-gaps ourselves, as we follow poor Rose’s violent new life-style. She breaks out of the clinic, having infected her surgical saviour, and plenty of the patients and staff—leaving one nurse stuffed inside the drugs-fridge—and starts prowling the streets in search of more victims. More blood. Like some technological vampire.

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. Meantime, the cops are out hitting the bricks, wasting anyone with blood or foam on their lips—even running 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 as 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. Not many of Rose/Marilyn Chambers’, either, who is 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 Ryshpan (Dr. Dan Keloid), Patricia Gage (Dr. Roxanne Keloid), Susan Roman (Exhilarate Kent), J. Roger Ferrand (Lloyd Walsh), Lynne Deragon (Nurse Louise)
Written and Directed by David Cronenberg, Produced by Ivan Reitman, Andre Link and John Dunolling, 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 C t X
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EXILED FROM HIS MONASTERY AFTER HIS CATASTROPHIC BATTLE WITH THE DEMON INSOFARINX, FATHER SHANDOR WANDERS THE FOREST ROADS OF EASTERN EUROPE. HE FINDS STONE RIVERS THAT MAKE THE COOL WATERS OF A placid RIVER too great A TEMPTATION TO RESIST.

YET EVEN THE MOST placid RIVER FLOWS ON UNCEREBLY LIKE TIME ITSELF. AND JUST AS TIME BRINGS DEATH TO ALL MEN, SO THE RIVER BRINGS A DEAD MAN TO THIS MOMENT IN TIME.

YET AS SHANDOR RIVERS TO PARTY FOR THE DEAD MAN'S LOST SOUL, A SECOND BODY APPEARS... A THIRD... A FOURTH...

AND IT IS THAT CAUSE WHICH MOST CONCERNS THE DEMON-STRICKING 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 STRANGER, 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?

GONE! WELL, PERHAPS THE WOMAN WILL TALK...

BUT THE MAN IS MORE IN THE MOOD FOR FLIGHT THAN ANSWERING QUESTIONS.

However, Shandor's natural surprise soon turns to dread fascination for the croaker's forehead bears a symbol he knows too well—the sign of the horns, the mark of Satan!
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 blanches the normal order of creation.

He’s alive! But it cannot be!

AIEEEEEE!

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

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 mideous.

Again! What foul destiny is this?

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

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.

Yet he can still be overcome.

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
LOSE THIS EVIL'S HOLD.

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 RELEASE
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 MASTHER OF
DEATH, HE IS ALSO MASTER
OF LIFE. MY LIFE
AT LEAST.

THERE IS STILL TIME TO
TURN BACK SHANDOR. I
CANNOT HELP YOU NOW.
YOU ENTER THOSE DARK
PORTALS EVEN IF I
WISHED TO!

HE HOLPS MY SOUL IN BONDAGE PRIEST.
UNTIL THE COMING OF THE GREAT DAY. UNTIL
THEN, IT IS HIS TO COMPARE TO THE FLAMES
OF HELL AT HIS SLIGHTHEST WHIM.

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

THE GIRL LIES INTO SILENCE THEN, UNTIL FINALLY
THEY STAND BEFORE OMNIOUS GATES OF THANATOS
BLACK TOWER.

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

I CANNOT TURN BACK,
ELINAC, AND
WHILE I STILL
HAVE THE
SWORD OF
ARCHIMEL
SUS, MY
RESOLVE WILL
NOT FALTER!

LET SHANDOR KNOWS
HIS WORDS ARE
MERE BARTADO, FOR
THE SWORD WAS
DEFINED TO HISS IN BATTLE
WITH ANGORA, YIK
BUT THE FIRST
ATTACK REQUIRES
NO SORCEREO
DEFENCE...

RRAARGH!
AND SOMETIMES THE LORD'S WORK IS BEST CARRIED OUT WITH THE CLENCHED FIST!

YOU AGAIN! LIKE YOU THE BEST THANATOS CAN SEND AGAINST ME?

BEFORE SHANDOR CAN REACT, SELMA REMEMBERS, THANATOS SIMPLIFIED... NOW REVEALING THE THIRDS OF A HIGH PRIESTESS.

THANATOS IS SUDDENLY SILENT, ENTRANCED... AND, BEFORE SHANDOR'S STUNNED Gaze, A FLINT SHARP SLIDES UP FROM THE SACRIFICE'S BODY... THE SHADOW HE HAD HALF-SEEN EARLIER...

FORGIVE ME, SHANDOR, BUT UNTIL THE WORLD BELONGS TO JAMASHEELA AND HER BROTHER, MY SOUL BELONGS TO THANATOS.

SHANDOR DOES NOT KNOW IF THIS IS THE SOUL OF THANATOS FOR HE HAS NEVER SEEN A NAKED SOUL. THE SACRIFICE CALLED IT A SHADOW... AND THAT WILL DO...

DO NOT FIGHT SHANDOR! ACCEPT YOUR FATE AND AVOID PAIN! YOU KNOW THANATOS CAN ANIMATE ANYTHING - THE DEAD, TREES, EVEN STONE.

AND WHEN IT DOES, YOUR SOUL WILL NOT BE WORTH REGAINING! BUT I SHALL STOP THIS FOUL CRIBBLES'S RITUALS... EVEN AT THE COST OF MY OWN LIFE!

HOW PRIEST? YOUR MAGIC IS TOO WEAK AND YOU CANNOT REACH ME. BUT THIS CASE IS NO BARRIER TO MY SHADE!

DURING THAT BRIEF DISTURBANCE, SELMA REMEMBERS ONLY HIS UNCONSCIOUS ASSIMILATION DESIRE... LITTLE.

BY ALL THAT'S HOLY! CAN THIS BE THANATOS?

YOUR WELCOME WAS AS OFFENSIVE AS I EXPECTED EVIL! NONETHLESS I HE RETURNED YOUR ORNAT MAN TO YOU!

IT WOULD BE UNBELIEVABLE IF IT WERE NOT SO DANGEROUS... BUT BEFORE SHANDOR'S EYES A GRIPOLE FELL IN STONE, STARTS TO MOVE, FOLLER STILL IN LIFE... AND MOVING TEARS ITSELF FREE...
Incomprehensible old, his voice rasping softly, Thanatos allows himself to admit, knowing Shanidor cannot reach him within his private cave.

You are doubly welcome, Shanidor, for the sacrifice of a priest will be doubly pleasing to she whom I summon. That is why I forced Selina to lure you here...

She? That explains why your victims were all men, but that means you summon...

Jaramsheela, demon-sister of Angor-Arak!

And rising, triumphs!

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 having fallen, he rises again.

But it is Shanidor who falls.
Yet if the impact shatters the sarcophagus, it also shames Shandor... while the sword of Thanatos ascends once more.

Give up, Shandor! Let your soul depart easily!

But this time Thanatos does not choose an intimate object... his sword moves toward Selina, overwhelming her, penetrating into her living body...

No, Thanatos! Nooo! You swore not two souls in one body... I can't stand the pain!

I cannot kill... much less send your soul to the hell it's surely destined for.

But Selina does fight... and if she cannot win, she can at least hammer.

Kill me, Shandor... kill me now while I hold Thanatos within myself. Please then we will both go to oblivion together.

Ah, Shandor... how hypocritical you are. You force me to.

And then, when the angel of death will not wait no longer, two are there... two together, locked in hatred.

I cannot.

Pray for my soul, Shandor.

Add suicide to my many sins!

And Shandor can only regret his hollow victory. torn away... and leave two more dead in the tower of death...

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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 fulfil 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 Nannie the Lady Vanishes and Vial 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 Will Hammer, whose real name was William Hinds. He had two names because as William Hinds he was a very serious and successful businessman—in the jewellery retail trade—and as Will 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 theatre. 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 Sanders 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—Der.). But in late 1947 it was decided to reactivate the Hammer Company as its production arm and all following productions were known as Hammer Films.

H&H: 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—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.

Tony 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 he 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.

H&H: 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 when you think of the amount of employment he was giving to British technicians.

H&H: 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 Hammermith 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.

H&H: Was it always your personal ambition to work in the film business?

A rare behind-the-scenes look at the actual shooting of Hammer’s The Lost Continent (1968). Michael Carreras, directing, stands behind a spotlight (wearing white shirt), upper left of picture.

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 lower 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.

MC: No. I always wanted to be a musician. Jazz was my total interest. Long before I ever started cutting out pictures of Betty Grable’s legs I was a big fan of Harry James, the jazz trumpeter who she eventually married. I was much more interested in his music than her legs, which shows you what a stupid kid I was.

H&H: Didn’t you once make a series of
short jazz films?
MC: Yes. That was when Cinemascope first came into use. In fact the first Cinemascope films made in this country were a series of featurettes 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 filmmaking 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 filmmaking, the actual creation of an exciting idea. But I would 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 interruptions, 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 1960s, 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 DUCH and ARGGHH, 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 Cinemat-
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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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 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.

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"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.

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Next issue, in part two of this
exclusive interview, Michael Carreras
will discuss the problems of film-
making in today's world as well as
providing information on Hammer's
existing 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 fiction 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 is your way to possibly winning one of our fabolous 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 put the special "entry stamp" from this page and attatch 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 18, and your name, age and address to: STAR WARS COMPETITION, House of Hammer, 135-141 Wardour Street, London W.1.

...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 be with you".

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1. The alien in This Island Earth came from which of the following planets... (a) Bellerus, (b) Mataluna, or (c) Zynar?
2. The 1939 Republic serial Buck Rogers, starring Buster Crabbe, was set in the 26th 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-fantasy 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 Trak 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 story-board 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, spurring, dripping, concealing.

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—bump 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 unwrapping.

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 bathtub’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... ‘O’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 been 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 technicals.

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 Tavassini, 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!
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 retrospective by Tae Vahimage.

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 bumed 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 malvolent 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 audience's 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 13 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, Homestead, 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-six 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 Zotz (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.

Bag, 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-strip-to-movie 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 the total waste of space to those who never get much-no recognition for their efforts in the field.

The article on Mr Lee hardly did him credit, but better then nothing. The filmography was excellent, next end to the point.

Medie Macebre: In Vol. 1 No. 1, you went overboard on De Palme in a laborious 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 c&c in it No 4: you persist in news of non-genre films, such as Airport 77. No 6 gives another disaster full coverage and the rest one-liners. No 2 had news of wildlife running smokes (Squirm), but are they in the horror-fantasy-scifi grouping? Mr Herrmann, a great composer. In this field, he died covered, take a leaf from CoF and do a Necrology instead. No 6 was somewhat better but rather thin on news.

Horror and the World: No. 1 had a good article on a country little heard from. No.4: good again, but only one page. Occas articles like these are truncated to accomodate the liberal space given to the comic brigade. No. 2 was eerily crowded with titils with minute storyline, with certain films given more space.

Effectively Speaking: Although these same give the feel a behind-the-scene look, it is a mixed affair.

Drinkers of Blood: Much of the article was too familiar to be of interest.

Horrible Things: By Mr Brosnan had two film recommendations (It's Alive and Deathline) which were both recurrent in taste and content. I see no merit in being physically skimmed by such repetitiveness.

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 interest in question, or ask, they request picture. It could get better but I doubt it at the current rate.

Competition Winner: 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 public or privately.

The Omen: A review that went the whole hog, of some who have contributed little or nothing to the genre. Mr Brosnan degrades 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 book better than these tedious nonsense of articles. The contents are bare and chronologically familiar to see the least. In one he gives Bele instead of Bonis which is hardly a change.

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

Collecting: Should have taken up all of page 30, a lot more could have been said even without the fanning exclusion.

Post Mortem: Is the most biased page there is. The patronisation is overwhelming and the criticisms true. 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 taking of old chestnuts by someone with a tongue-twisting name.

Frankenstein: Is rolled out for the umpteenth time as an excuse to include Mr D. Carrete's interpretation. The Gallery idea was 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 for specific victims, being supernaturally inclined. Mr Holmes private life and Moby Ock need not have been included. These were peddling for a flobby article.

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

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

Mexicoan Monstres: 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 film. The film was lousy anyway and the behavior of the scenes article revealed nothing new to warrant a 2 page spread.

The Devil's Other Children: Covered the same 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 most of us will probably not see it, so where's the logic? A ridiculous waste of good space better employed elsewhere.

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 merged on the idiotic end and I have been most disappointed with their must have tried to obtain for only a short time we see Castle of Frankenstein which itself was somewhat erratic. I hope my effort in getting through to you end yours will not end up in the waste basket.

W K. Brinsley, address unknown.

In answer to the lengthy missive from Mr. Brinsley (who chose not to give his address when writing), 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 film 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 Flesh Gordon, Batman, Danger Island, 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, British must be the only country, these days, that still retains theusty tradition of illustrated stories being for either mongrod idots or the under-tine. 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 Chris 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 20 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 contributing to the genre well before his recent "commercial" venture Carrie. It is only unfortunate that a mere handful of his features were able to pick up on and enjoy his seminal effort (Obsession, Murder à l'Mod, 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.

"Master 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 dramatisation. Until Los Angeles is devastated by an Earthquake, the film is mere 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), needles to say, is a film where there is a deliberate attempt to frighten or enrave the audience, James Bond has been 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 national production, a 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.

"Brinsley'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 viewing a film each person takes with them (hope- fully) a new memory or at least, a new 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 Critics is to supply exactly what the headline implies: answers. If the reply to the reader's request is by way of detailed information, then the answer appears in the text of the illustration, if the reader's question is more apropos the film 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's names were put into print by way of acknowledgement from the magazine for their efforts in attempting the quiz. Your comment on this seems 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 Oman was viewed and then reviewed by John Brozman 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 please and humble the reader.

Owens 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 suffer the same fate as all his other works, proving that there is always a market (an ever-growing one) to 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 a specific period of time. This space was initially intended as an introduction to potential collectors and any further detailing of the subject would simply cater for the already-involved the eliminating a goodly section of the article.

Contrary to persistent belief that all letters of comment that appear in periodicals are "doctoral", it is the psychology of 99.9% of letter-writers to say something at all appreciative rather than condemning it. Therefore, I do not rate that merely induces readers to write in to a publication, so magazine editors (should they even be inclined) have no reason to resort to "propaganda" tactics in their Letters Column. Should we actually receive an intelligently-constructed letter criticizing any part of the magazine, I prefer to show no bias, we would print it.

The apparent lack of a title-heading for "Auditors of the Night" is literary 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/ One More: another example of Mr. Brinsley's attitude toward films of fantasy, and cinema in general. Kaneto Shindo's Onibabe is one of the most beautifully constructed, atmospherically excursions into the Oriental approach to fantasy filmmaking ever seen; maybe Horror at Porth Beach or Corpse Orlandia emulates more 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 about horror-fantasy films that contain established genre performers (what few there are left). Surely the film itself is more important than the role what set has added to the buff's then if that is actually cast in the picture, the success of The Oman is a good example.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre is a film which Mr. Brinsley might find interesting, in its feature of cross dressing, the success of the film is that the actor that it may not be widely released throughout the U.K. If you are the fan you presume to be but you would be interested in all genre films, whether you think you'll want to see it 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. None will ever find a publication that appeals 100% to them, there will always be something that doesn't match your point of view. The view is the one can hope to achieve with a reader is to have the same form of emotion, be it pleasure or (unfortunately) displeasure, in either case 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, Teunton, Somerset.

After the great artwork on The Quatermass Xperiment 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 uninteresting.

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

John Malburn, 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 14. However the artwork was handled by John Bolton, but Brin did manage a look in, turning in another magnificent cover for that issue. Perhaps when we adapt Hammer's When Dinosaurus 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 Cuyes for turning in some really magnificent work. Raymond Kell, Gisgaroe Moor, Co. Durham

Address all letters of comment to BEST MORTEM, House of Hammer, 135-141 Wardour Street, London W1.
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 completed 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 Marshall (see Backlar started his career by making the Oscar-nominated short, Skaterdate. 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 four-skinned negro conman'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, "Porkapola." (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 noticeably.

At least, it was rising noticeably. 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. Blackley. 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 crowded 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." The cast is equalled in the year, a 76-year-old actress who appeared in Paint Your Wagon, The Andrew Tapes. On a Clear Day, etc. She is well known in TV commercials and has understandably been called "a kind of B-picture Ruth Gordon." Mr Blackley 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...
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 says, keeping him there. She has a packet of prunes in her hand.

When he enters the house, a noose tightens around his neck. He flies up the stairwell, caught like a tiger, hanging upside-down over the edge. 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 stairwell.

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, spurting, 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, that's only one thing to do."

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

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, a 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 hurles 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 cudgel. 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 Mame), Frances Fuller (Miss Emily), Peter Brocco (Mr Blakeley), 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 Benjet Slins. Distributed by Essentail 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 hurls 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 fang teeth?"

What does producer Morris Barry think of the previous Draculas?

"Our one is completely different from the first one, Nosferatu, in 1922. 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."

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

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One terror-locked hand rigid on the wheel, Crouch swerved 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.

What are they doing to him?

Hang on, he's okay if he 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.

I'll get a bottle of plasma.

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.

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.
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