MAD MAX
THE DAY AFTER...

STATESIDE SHOCKERS
THE POETRY OF EVIL

VINCENT PRICE
MUTANT!

HAMMER '68
"THE NIGHT HOLDS TERROR"
—told in pictures
Editors of magazines in general and fantasy film magazines in particular aim to have one feature or editorial direction that sets them apart from the others on the newstands. Some succeed: among them Fangoria for gore film coverage, Famous Monsters (still) for longevity, Cinefantastique for in-depth location reports and Cineflex for detailed special effects reporting.

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

Letters have poured into our office praising the idea, offering help or enclosing mammoth lists of data.

This is obviously a timely project and, in response to your enthusiasm, we have scheduled our companion magazine, Video Fantasy, for quarterly publication beginning this autumn after its premier issue last month. We hope that you will continue to support the idea of video listings and video-related articles now that we have separated them from HoH.

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

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

So, in our typically imaginative way, we have come up with a plan that should appeal to all the comic fans and (more to the point) Hammer fans who make up such a large portion of our audience. Next issue we will be presenting a Shandor strip by long-time HoH adaptor and Warrior scripter Steve Moore and artist John Stokes, who did our recent Brides of Dracula strip. This is the first of whole series of which we will attempt to solve the various continuity problems that exist between Hammer films but will also leave room for a Hammer fan, stand in their own right as well-produced stories.

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

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

ANSWER DESK

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

POST MORTEM

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

AFTER THE END

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

STATESIDE SHOCKER NO. 1

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

MUTANT

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

THE POETRY OF EVIL

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

HISTORY OF HAMMER

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

CAMPBELL'S COLUMN

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

TEERROR TALES

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

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

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

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

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

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

ROMERO TV

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

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

HAPPY HOOPER

Tobe Hooper quickly removed himself from Re
turn of the Living once the title row erupted.
Tobe is no fan of trouble. He’s happy at Elstree
studios, in London, finishing off Space Vampires
– first announced by Cannon Films about six
years ago. Well, it’s finally in production, or
indeed, in the can, all but the tricky effects stuff
being carried out by John Dykstra plus a group of
Euro-aces, including the first SFX hot-shot out of
France. Hooper has put together a good cast on
all sides of the camera. He has Alan Hume on
camera and John Graysmark is the art director.
Ironically, the script of Colin Wilson's novel is by Hooper's success on That Other Film, Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby. Steve Railsback, on the other side, is the character, Charlie Hanson, head of the space jocks with the mystery up in it. He's backed up by Peter Firth, Frank Finlay and French please Mathilda May. I should be seeing some of the movie while at the festival and you can be sure my comments will be on this page next time around.

RAMBALDI LAND

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

HOME OF HAMMER!

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

OLD FILMS AS NEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BLACK ROOM BOY

Also made in 1981 and still looking for a buyer is The Black Room, written and directed by Norman Thaddeus Vane, scripter of Ferdy Mayne's. Actually Vane co-directed with Elly Kanner. Two helmers seem about right as the murky script has two distinct storylines — one about a pair of brothers, not far removed from Deneuve and Bowie in The Hunger, the other about a guy working his sexual fantasies out in the room of the title. As such, these tales aren't bad. Two films for the price of one and all that.

It's only when the twin meet — collide is more like it — in a rather ridiculous denouement of the brother and sister being turned into zombies by the husband and wife that the everything blows up in everyone's face. The cast will remain anonymous here to protect their innocence.

007 Mk. 1

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

He was the first ever James Bond thirty years ago in an American TV version of Ian Fleming's first 007 book, Casino Royale — eight full years before Sean Connery's cat-like walk down a Mayfair street impressed the hell out of Broccoli and Saltzman after their first encounter with the unknown actor.

YOU WANT OLDER?

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

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

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

Ever get the feeling that you've not only written the book but also seen the film and poster, Mr King? No, it's not the Italian poster for Dingo but a rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
NEW FILMS AS OLD
Tragically most of the new genre offerings come over as badly as the old stuff. Who, after all, is going to be greatly excited, much less successfully terrified, by the fact that Aldo Ray has made yet another comeback (me tried it last time in porno) with a couple of prowler movies made down Mexico way. To Kill A Stranger for starters, with Donald Pleasence involved; and Vultures in Paradise which also brought back Yvonne De Carlo, no less.
Young Canadian actor Chris Makepeace is okay in Valley of Death, despite the fact it was directed by one Sparky Greene. However, I feel Chris’s next outing, Falcon and The Snowman, will do rather more for him. His director this time is John Schlesinger.
Michael Winner has a new chiller ready called Scream For Help, which I’m told is far better than The Sentinel (which can’t be next million, and if it isn’t, Winner will just make his next million from Death Wish III. I know was good on Tony Kramathe’s Thrill Kill – but quite the opposite on one I decided to leave well alone, Richard W. Haines’ Splatter University, where in, according to the gristy hype, ‘the school colours are blood red’ and you can ean a higher degree in terror.’ Ho dum!

NEW WORLD WINNER
The company that was Corman’s – New World – has bit its first triumph since the new hierarchy took over. It is, what else, but a Steve King story.
Children of the Corn is a short story. Or, it was. Nothing but nothing, is allowed to be sparse on-screen these days, though. And so, King’s story has been streamlined out to flimsily fill that annoying 93 minutes’ gap between ice-cream/pornocorn sales time in world cinemas. And that’s too long...
Although there are one of three good moments when it pays to have taken your girl to see it with you, the feature is short only on real style, suspense, special effects and supernaturally feelings. But it’s still raking in the dollars across the pond, so what the hell do I know – right?

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

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

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

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

And just in case you don’t get the full picture...
from titles alone, Roger Corman blurs it up for us with replicant hype. Carradine's flick is set in 'an age unrecorded of, An age of mystery and magic. Of swords and sorcery;' while Hill's is 'a journey to an age of awesome magic. The might of the sword. The evil of the sorcerer.'

New horizons, indeed!

NEW CENTURY SAVES

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

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

NEW IMAGE

Room for one more ... ? Right!

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

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

ENTER: OBROW FILMS

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

The first was made in 1981 as Death Dorm, then it became known — after Porky's, perhaps? — as Pranks. It's now shaping up, via the New Imagery, as The Dorm That Dipped Blood. 'Nuff said? It's a kind of indoor Friday The 13th with Lauri Lapsinski and her campus mates clearing out a college dormitory during the vacation period. Then, along comes every recent horror film's little helper — one killer, crazed, highly repetitious, not to say downright repulsive, and forever doing his level best to make sure the scanty cast members do not squander the lowly budget by requiring overtime. They're all knocked over in rapid order. And, of course, the patsy, the oh-so obvious suspect, isn't really the slay merchant at all. Ho hum.
POWER-LESS
Much the same can be said — indeed, it has been — about the next Obrow offering, which started life as Evil Passage and then pinned George Pal’s 1968 title, but not, naturally, its artistry, and brought it Power.

Tricky title to live up to, that. I mean to be any good at all, something called The Power has to have some. Pal’s movie, not exactly helped by being saddled with George who’s-a-pretty-boy-they-usually-give-an-acting-brick-to one of their ilk like Chuck Vincent starring Paul Sutton (aka. Jerry Butler) in his Preppies funster. Roberto, I might add, is the lady responsible for the sex film which brought the term snuff-movie into modern parlance.

BAND CALL
Making his usual Cannes splash, Charlie Band had films or promo-reels galore to show off his ‘84 product ranging from stop-motion ace David Allen’s Primevals to a rapid-rider rival to Grem- lions called Goul’n. John Buechler and their not-quite-Rambaldi ghouls which do their best to steal the limelight from director Luca Bercovici’s cast which includes Eraserhead star Jack Nance and Jayne Mansfield’s lookalike daughter, Mariska Hargitay.

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

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

STRIP HEROES
Among the movies awaiting production dates — not to mention fully itemised and agreed budgets are Batman, Mandrake, Spiderman ... and even Sgt. Bilko! But I think you can forget the man in the green leather visor, Dick Tracy. He was lost and director another — John Landis, Walter Hill, Richard Benjamin — the movie has been cancelled. Too expensive, you see, at $14 million. Unless, of course, Warren Beatty changes his mind and takes the title role, after all, he is the director and the director’s chair? That could happen.

He’s free at the moment. He can’t do his mermaid comedy now that Splash has made such a splash! (Fanciful Disney beating Beatty to the box-office — draw). What he could do is cut in bits from his last winner and call it Dick Tracy vs. Reds.

CANNES CHAT
Sam Raimi shouldn’t have any Evil Dead hassle with the nasty anti-nasties with his new movie. Crime Wave (ex-XYZ Murders) is a murder spoof. Clavinas one of The Three Stooges’ gang ... John Badham taking over American Flyer from Peter Yates. John always inherits his movies, Blue Thunder, War Games, etc., from others ... Vera Miles, a Name again since Psycho has been released, is heading The Initiation ... And her screen daughter, Meg Tilly, is having a bit of an Impulse with Tim Matheson for the last Omen director, Graham Baker ... Robert Ginty, surprisingly straight in The Act is back to playing the0 goon in The Exterminator and then as The Exterminator II ... His old directing mentor, James Glickenhaus, is switching to Conan country, I gather, for Road of the Dungeon- master ... while Orco De Laurentis re-opens his Rome studio, Dimotta, for a female Conan called Red Sonja ... while (and to think this skien started with Ginty) British director James Cameron turns Arnold Schwarzenegger into an alien Terminator.

Gremlia even has a song — from Peter Gabriel’s ‘Dario’ / ‘Tenebris’/ ‘Futuro’/ ‘Pversun’/ ‘Tenebris’/ ‘Futuro’. In America as Unsafe. Not only can’t U.S. distributors steel, they have absolutely no grammar ... As his wife, Nancy Allen, was tied up with the Carpenter production of The Philadelphia Experiment, blonde Pat and John’s daughter, Melanie Griffith, as his Body Double, opposite Ghost Story’s Craig Wasson ... Brother and sister film-makers Mark and Pam Savarin made a feature called Orange Tangents. It lasts 24 minutes and has — count ’em — 128 special effects ... Batman Adam West and Sybil Danning among the pursuit of Young Lady Chatterley II with Harlee McBride again. Not that young. She made the first one in 1976 ... The late Vic Morrow’s daughter, Jennifer Jason-Leigh, takes a Death Ride to Osaka in Jonathan Kaplan’s new flier. Meantime, Vic’s old Combat TV war series (1962-6) is back on the American box. It never came home, so how about it Channel Four? Great gung-ho stuff. Mrs. Thatcher would adore it ... Ken Russell going to work for General’s old company, New World. He’s turning away from composers for Crimes of Passion. He often used to suppose ... and that’s just from the first few days in Cannes. More next issue.

THE CLIPPER-COMETH
Durran Durran could be in trouble soon ... How are they going to keep that Australian Russell Mulcahy down on the video-clip farm now that he’s seen feature films! Mulcahy made the clips that made the Durran group around the world — everything from Hungry Like The Wolf to Union of the Spheres. He shot the theme for Spandau Ballet, the Stones, Rod Stewart, Spurtvamp, the best of Billy Joel (Pressure) and Elton John’s still standing because Russell is the profile-exponent of the vivid now art-form, even if he has’t directed M. Jackson yet. And he’ll still be making a few, although he’s now back home and finished his first feature — a down-under Jaws number already a ferociously wild boar of the Razorback family.

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

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

THE AMERICO-AUSSIE
Scripter of Razorback is Everett de Roche who is a good friend to the collection of down-under genre items like Patric’s The Long Weekend, Snapshot, the Rasputinesque Har- lequin, The Survivor and Jamie Lee Curtis’ Road Games. Despite his long association with the Aussie industry — not in as great a shape as it was a few years back — de Roche is American. He often takes a bit role in his movies, more to have a reason to be handy on the set (or re-writes) rather than any great wish to be an actor. He much prefers the solitary art of writing. "Most of
BEFORE YOUR FUNERAL...
BEFORE YOU ARE BURIED...
BEFORE YOU ARE COVERED WITH THE LAST SHOVELFUL OF DIRT...
BE SURE YOU ARE REALLY DEAD!

MORTUARY
...WHERE NOBODY RESTS IN PEACE

ARISTA FILMS and HICKMAR PRODUCTIONS, INC. present A HOWARD AVEDIS film
"MORTUARY" Starring MARY MCDONOUGH DAVID WALLACE BILL PAXTON
[LYNDA DAY GEORGE CHRISTOPHER GEORGE] Music by JOHN CACAVAS
Written and Produced by HOWARD AVEDIS and MARLENE SCHMIDT
Directed by HOWARD AVEDIS An ARISTA FILMS INC. Release

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

the time," he says, "a story writes itself. I can't say I have a lot of control over it.
"I don't wish to be locked into any particular style. The suspense-thriller (how's that for a genre euphemism?) just happens to be a popular type of film at present. I like putting comedy into drama. But I'm scared of doing straight comedy. I'm certainly more comfortable with black comedy. Essentially, I'm a cynic."

GUEST STAR(S)
Talking of film-makers coming out from behind the camera, I hear that Steven Spielberg is acting again in his production of Joe Dante's troubled Gremlins. Composer Jerry Goldsmith has a bit-role in it, too. Spielberg was last seen on-screen at the very end of John Landis' The Blues Brothers (1980).
The Gremlins trouble? Not funny enough was His Spielbergship's verdict after the first sneak previews in America. He's having the film re-cut, putting back in much of the comedy Dante originally sliced out.

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

STEVEN'S CLAN
And to further celebrate the publication in French - Japanese and German to follow - of my book on Steven Spielberg, let's check what his mates are up to... Poltergeist writers Mark Victor and Michael Grais are elevated to producer status for their next scenario, The Thin Line, being backed by the brothers Unger, Anthony B. and Stephen A. The Used Cars and I Wanna Hold Your Hand director, Robert Zemeckis has a biggh Indiana Jones-like hit out called Romancing The Stone, produced by and starring Michael (son of Kirk) Douglas.

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

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

Also stalking the City Limits scenery are James Earl Jones, the voice of you-know-who, and Paul Newman's son (and everybody else's from Ben Gazzara's to Jack Lemmon's), Robby Benson.
MAGNUM OPUS
First affect a Michael Caine voice and then say after me: Not a lotta people know that Tom Selleck's first movie was not High Road To China but 1972's Daughters of Satan ... He got such a fright in that, his moustache grew and helped make him more magnanimous.

FRANKENSTEIN '84
Two new Baron Frankenstein are brushing down their best suits for parties later in the year. One from France. One from Britain. Our one, aimed mainly at the big bucks of American television, is a version of the short-lived 1981 Broadway play. It was shot in Leeds (of all places) in April. Robert Powell, formerly Everett de Rochefort's Harlequin and Survivor, is the good/bad doctor with David Warner, as busy as back home as he was in Hollywood for the last few years, as the monster. Also cast: 80-year-young Sir John Gielgud (not, I fancy as the butler) and Mrs. Paul Simon, aka. Carrie Fisher. The frog version — just think if they tackled Dracula they’d have no trouble with all the garlic breath on the set — is a bit of a comedy called Frankenstein 90, directed by the dependable Alain Jessua. His good doc is Jean Rochefort, which could cause instant giggles outside France, as he's a veritable clone of Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau. Rochefort's monster is Eddy Mitchell, a veteran rock 'n' roll now doing very well in movies — a move he plainly adores as he's also a renowned film buff. He also hosts a show on the third French TV network that is designed like a night out at the pictures back in the '50s/60s. He shoots all the linking stuff in a real cinema, packed with folk in '50s/60s gear and tells them inside secrets about the evening's entertainment — always a double bill of old American movies, plus newsreel, cartoon and the commercials of the time and next month's trailers! Great idea, huh?
Without wishing to be unkind to Eddy Mitchell (real name: Schmoll), he won't require too much make-up for his new role. Not on him, er, schmoll of a schnoz, anyway.

THRILLING
The real Monster of '84 remains Michael Jackson. But his and John Landis's Thriller video didn't get on the short list of the best short film Oscar nominations (and how he tried to!). No matter. The clip is making a mint. Indeed, in Britain it's fast outstripping the previous best-seller on cassette, Raiders of the Lost Ark. Last score I heard was: Jackson 100,000 copies; Indy, 80,000. In loot that adds up to £2 million. From little Britain alone.
You'll be able to get a 3-D version of Thriller soon — seven D-stills of prancing Mike, the American werewolf in Los Angeles. It's part of the latest View-master picture set and comes complete with sound.

DEATH HOUSE
Alan Beattie reverted to Gothics for his own shiver tale, Delusion, in 1980. A company with the grandiloquent name of The International Picture Show Company picked it up for release and then, immediately, went out of business. Hence the delay until a New York group, New American Films, moved in on the property with its eyes on the main chance of pay-TV.
The title was changed and Beattie’s flick is now The House Where Death Lives. That’s a fair comment. There’s very little life in this deadly dullard account of the deaths happening in the mansion of the Fairlawn Estate.
For once, the actors can be said to be much better than their given lines and circumstances. Particularly, redheaded nurse Patricia Pearcy and her crippled patient, the invariably competent Joseph Cotton. For a change from chainsaws, knives flashing in the moonlight and/or ancient Egyptian or Aztec swords and other relics, the murder(s) weapon is very ordinary, quite domestic and Agatha Christie-like — a table leg.
The cause of all the blood-letting, though, remains that tired old standby of incest past. This is being utilised so often of late that I’m beginning to have second thoughts about the life style of our own dear Norman Bates and his Mamma.

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

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

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

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

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

New World productions generally are ignored by the serious student of horror films. With films such as Galaxy of Terror and the awful Stryker, they have brought their bad name upon themselves — not that they could really take all the blame with Roger Corman heading the studio. But all that has changed with Roger’s recent departure from the studio and better, more well-tailored productions are promised for the future.

The new spearhead is headed by an adaptation of Stephen King’s short story, Children of the Corn, which first appeared in his collection Night Shift. A sort of cross between The Wicker Man and Friday the 13th, the story is low gear King. The fact that the movie is far from good misses the point — by New World’s standards it is a quality feature. The real judgement will come soon when John Carpenter’s pet project, The Philadelphia Experiment, hits the screens. First reports indicate a goody, but only time shall tell:

FRIDAY THE 13TH — PART BORE

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

SANTOS — THE LAST ROUND

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

SHORT TAKE 1

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

OLEN-RAY BACK STRIKES

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

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

“But I’ve struck a deal with Wizard Pictures to handle my new film, which has a good size budget. It’s called Dinosaur Girl and is being financed by Wizard, who are also backing Mike (Wizard of Hollywood) Jittlov’s new movie: The Release of Rose (Harry Dave) Howard’s new film version of his classic short to the tune of two million dollars.”

More news soon on Dinosaur Girl...

THE ACTIVE ACKER-MONSTER

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

VICIOUS VINYL

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

HERSCHELL DAY, USA

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

PAUL BARTELL LATEST

Paul Bartell is back with a new movie. Not For Publication, starring Nancy (Strange Invaders) Allen and David (American Werewolf) Naughton. His first since the deligent Eating Raoul, it tells the story of a group of rich society women who live a double life: by day wealthy playgirls, by night scandal sheet journalists looking for a rag similar to LA’s very own National Inquirer. Described as a screwball comedy by Bartell, it should be a worthy follow-up to Eating Raoul. Sadly, though, his planned project at Universal - an anthology movie based on the 1960s TV show One Step Beyond - has been cancelled due to the relative financial failure of Twilight Zone - The Movie. The good news is that by now Paul should have begun shooting the sequel to Eating Raoul, entitling Bland Ambition...

SHORT TAKE 2

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

PLUTO LIVES

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

WHO’S WALT TOUCHSTONE?

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

SHORT TAKE 3

More than 14 months after I first saw its preview, the US release of The Long Goodbye is still awaited. So if we are to believe MCM planning to show it for Halloween last year, it is still along with lesser pictures like Sword of the Barbarians, being wasted on a shelf...
SPACE VAMPIRES LIFT OFF
At last Space Vampires exists after years of "coming soon" ads in Variety! Under the wing of director Tohe Hooper, this tale of galactic necking promises well with effects by John Dykstra. The plot in case you never read Colin Wilson's fine novel, concerns life energy draining aliens set loose in London after being brought back from their hibernation in space by an unfortunate crew of explorers. A global holocaust is, quite naturally, anticipated if the vampires are not caught and destroyed. A good film might help comfort Wilson who received an exceptional offer for the film rights the day after his agent accepted a more modest one.

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

SHORT TAKE 4
One film to steer clear of at any cost is the turkey of the Film Market: Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tilly. I have never seen a worse fantasy film and, indeed, it is the only movie in my life I have ever walked out of -- the sheer physical pain of watching it was too much! You have been warned...

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

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

SHORT TAKE 5
Hottest film of the market appeared to be Romancing the Stone. Reckon you'll hear a lot more about this one so I'll just sign off with my usual warped wishes from the land of dreams and deals...
Rondo Hatton is best remembered for his chilling portrayal of the "Creeper", a deformed brutal killer who menaced his way through the mid 1940's at Universal Pictures. But off screen, Rondo was anything but the menace that he showed in his films.

Rondo Hatton (his real name) was born April 29th, 1894 in Rogers Town, Maryland. Contrary to popular belief he was not the handsome young man who turned into a monster in later life that he appeared on in his films. He started his career in movies by joining the Aubrey Kennedy studios in Key West, Florida as a writer and then moved to Hollywood in the early 1930s to become a press release writer in a local press agency. His first acting break came in late 1930 when Henry King spotted him and cast him in a small role in Hell's Harbour. But it was a false start and Rondo wasn't to make another film until 1936.

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

1944 was a busy year at Universal's fright factory, with even the Sherlock Holmes series heading into chill-country with The Scarlet Claw and The Pearl of Death. The latter picture called for a different kind of nemesis for the Baker Street sleuth, a horrifying, bone-crushing giant of a man called The Hoxton Creeper. Rondo was natural for the part! Although he had to be built up in height (he was not an especially tall man) and build, he made the role his own and injected feeling into an otherwise "faceless" role. At the end of the picture he is killed, but Universal (being Universal) would not let the Creeper die ... yet.

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

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

Times changed in the pre-war years of film and Rondo was very much a product screen-wise of the 1940s. He died and left us with a shadowy hint of stardom, the kind that could only have been in the golden age of Hollywood and he remains a one of a kind screen villain.
Rabid and the recent Videodrome are superb The Dead Zone I think this book is worth your attention. Serious standards of film criticism are infrequent in our field but this title shows how successful they can be when applied to a filmmaker of Cronenberg's vision.

Which brings us neatly to Pascal Martinet's Mario Bava (Edillog, 3 rue Recamier, Paris 75341, France; 48 Francs). Bava's name conjures up a nostalgic vision for old-time horror fans but this book shows how much wider he cast his net than simply the horror film; sword and sandal, science fiction, thriller, viking and comic strip heroics. The changing face of world cinema has meant the demise of many of the low-budget areas which threw up so many interesting directors (the Roger Corman, 740 Village Drive, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208) which immediately returns this title to the small pantheon of exceptional fantasy film fanzines (like Little Shoppe of Horror, Photo of Midnight Marquee) after too many years away. This issue reviews some of the latest big movies but also, more usefully, takes an overview on 3D movies and splatter films. Excellent design, glossy paper, nice stills and an obvious love of the genre all add to the meagre for the next issue which will appear only if this one gets enough response. Go to it!

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

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

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

I've also had a few letters asking where titles reviewed in the column can be obtained. Well, when I'm not aware of a UK publisher or retailer I will try to find the additional information required but if there is no publisher or retailer then I cannot help, although if you have any information or copies then I am sure my letter to you. Okay?
I have in my possession a copy of Halls of Horror 21 featuring a Shandor comic strip. Can you please tell me which issue contains the continuation of this storyline, and do you stock copies in your mail order department.

V. Irving, Goring by Sea, Sussex.

Dear Skinn replies: Dave has passed your question over to me for answering, V, as I’m the one to blame for the following somewhat confusing continuity. Shandor appeared in HoH 6, 8, 16, 21 and the upcoming issue 30. He has also appeared in Warrior 11 to 10, 13 to 16, 18 onwards. However, chronologically, HoH 8 introduced the character as a demon fighting priest, issues 16 and 23 lead up to his meeting with Van Helsing (scheduled for issue 30), which precedes his meeting with Dracula, told in our adaptation of Dracula, Prince of Darkness in HoH 6. Warrior 1, 2 and 3 reprint the solo stories from HoH 8, 16 and 21, but with issue 4, Warrior takes up Shandor’s struggles after his encounter with Dracula, and will culminate in Warrior 23.

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

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

I think Tise’s comments in Answer Desk HoH 26 are wrong when he credits Harlan Ellison with Hugo Awards for his two Outer Limits scripts.

Terry Doyle, Runcorn.

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

Can you help me with fan club addresses for Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing? And whatever happened to Famous Monsters of Filmland?

Julie C. Smith, Bournemouth.

I’m sure I’ve seen these lying around somewhere but just can’t put my hands on them at present.

Sorry, Julie, but for now I think your best bet is to drop a line (with SAE) to Colin Cowie and ask him the answer as well as for details of the interesting Hammer International Fan Club, 288 Lansford Lane, Larfield, Maidstone, Kent. Oh, and do say we sent you.

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

I’ve recently come across mention of the Inner Sanctum films in an article on Lon Chaney Jr. What can you tell me about them?

Gary Hepworth, Huddersfield.

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

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

P. West, Sutton.

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

Were you really serious when you said Elia Lancaster’s only genre film was The Bride of Frankenstein, in the book column of HoH 27?

Trevor Roberts, Bangor, N. Ireland.

I’m ashamed to admit I was. Apologies to Miss Lancaster who, of course, later appeared in The Ghost Goes West (1936), Bell, Book and Candle (1958), Mary Poppins (1964), Blackbeard’s Ghost (1967), Willard (1971), Arnold (1971), Terror in the Wax Museum (1971) and Die Laughing (1960). Shame, shame ...

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

V. Longland, Bakewell.

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

ANSWER DESK welcomes your queries on film, TV or written horror! Send your questions (or oddments of information you might like to share with other HoH readers) to – Answer Desk, Halls of Horror, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP.
Sounds a reasonable theory to me. Any of our readers care to imagine what kinds of horror films might start a new cycle in the way that Halloween did? Or even any thoughts on the old question of why we enjoy horror films...? Dave

Stephen Bailey, Harden Walsall, West Midlands

How dare you talk about dropping the comic adaptations in HoH. That's what makes it different from other 80s masters! However, after waiting so long for Brides of Dracula, I was quite let down by it as I don't think it captured the atmosphere of the film.

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

Bill Walker, London SE21

Thanks for bringing back HoH. My only worry is that after this summer we will only be able to talk and write about most of this material - apart from stills, of course. It would be great to see a complete series of all the stills issued in Hannay's own colour, and then a book containing them. The idea is that the images will be on the pages of the book, and the text will be a commentary on each image. This would be a great way to bring the material together and make it accessible to a wider audience.

As most of your correspondents (in HoH 27) point out, please come out every month if possible. I'm dead certain that there's a vast readership for both HoH and A Starburst and I'm sure I'm not the only one that I've read through in a couple of hours. In those times before I could enjoy the delight of opening the front pages of the next one. The second personal request I'd love to now increase the space presently allocated for the strip adaptations. No doubt I'm at odds with many but you did ask for our views on it.

Thanks for an interesting letter, George. I'm glad you enjoy at least part of each issue of HoH. And that is what it is all about, isn't it? And you might as well buy Fangoria which is a shame because it ought to be able to come up with the best horror journal. Lastly, might not the encouragement of advertising video companies help to improve the colour in HoH, which is presently wistfully absent?

Never be afraid to be critical of us - especially when you've sat down and written a book like this. It is my reasoned argument. Even if I dispute what you say, I still appreciate that you thought HoH worthwhile. I have a private and a public duty to my readers, and I think it is important to tell them what I believe to be true.

Mike Wathen, Morden, Surrey

HoH 27 is to hand - best issue so far of the new run.

Simon Green (M. Simon) may well be right in your letter that 'splatzer'. Some movies do seem to have run their course, but the horror film in general seems to be going through one of its periodic lulls, something which happens when the public tides of a flood of cheap, derivative junk. That's why Hammer ran out of steam and the various Universal cycles before them. In a year or two, a new audience might appear ready to be interested in a new crop of horror films, in all probability far faster than anything we've seen so far in order to try and outdo the present stuff. The Whitehouse lobby will be seized to have helped propagate the very thing it is now trying to suppress.

Sinding by issue 27. Having given up buying Starburst due to its format changes, I thought that HoH would fill the gap. You ask what readers want, well I'll be frank and tell you what at least one reader would like. As I said, I gave up Starburst partly due to its format changes but also because it became full of lengthy interviews and articles about forthcoming films that eventually turned out to be a let down - a good example being Jaws 3D. Having read a few pages of an article on the making of this tedious film I went to see it and was thoroughly bishoped. Now, in issue 27 of HoH, something like this is again promised - a review of a new (even an old film) since the review of issue 25. Readers want to know what your staff think of current releases, etc. However, I must compliment you on information - Media Macabre is excellent and could well be expanded. Campbell's Column provides a little intellectualism and is definitely a worthwhile feature - may I just say I agree with his comments and deplore the current attitude towards video nasties? Your video listing is a good idea but I would have preferred a full synopsis of each movie and a small review rather than a checklist. But what really makes me dissatisfied with HoH is the articles. Why does HoH not go for a comic strip adaptation? Why not just watch the film? I've nothing against comics - I used to enjoy them on a Saturday morning! If you want to be a serious and respected fantasy journal then I suggest you drop the comic strips or print them in a separate section.

I'm sorry to have been so critical but I hope that I've been constructive rather than just critical. I love to see your magazine bloom and flourish because at the moment I'm sorry to say that I have taken to expecting the worst. I hope that all the rest of it is of more help than it is of less help than it is of most help to all of us.

Bob Sheridan, New York

Thanks for sending me the new look HoH issues. I like the way that they tend to be organised thematically with articles making reference to other articles in the same issues. Best of all, though, was your editorial in 26.

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

A. Smith, Manchester

Having been initially delighted with issue 25 of your magazine, I am sorry to admit to being already disli-
read in Fangoria that the US print is about half an hour longer than ours; if this is true it would be great to see it in comic form, as this would be the nearest thing to seeing it uncut. Maybe you could even start a whole series of comic strips based on badly censored films and banned films but show them all uncut!

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

A. Stephenson, Plymouth

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

How about some appreciation of horror/fantasy series on TV? and some fanzine reviews?

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

Graham Williams, Swansea

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

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

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

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

It is easy to poke fun at the blue-rinsed puritans, the high-minded Mrs Whitehouse of this world, but let's be completely honest. I want to see anything, go ways' brigade aren't above a bit of healthy ridicule either. I mean, come on – have any of you thought seriously about the kind of stuff you're defending? Carnal Apocalypsis? Driller Killer? SS Experiment Camp? It's not exactly Dostoevsky, is it?

Frankly, I don't understand the reluctance of many horror enthusiasts to separate the wheat from the chaff – they lap up any puerile garbage available. The people responsible for peddling this crap are well aware of that, and there's so much of it floating around. Video shops are full to the brim of unbelievably tacky films produced, directed and acted by people who are so devoid of artistic flair that they shouldn't be allowed within five miles of a film studio. My argument against the proliferation of such rotten films is not – as you will now have gathered – rooted in any sort of social concern for the psychological well-being of the audience. I don't believe for one moment that violent images on the screen produce a generation of screaming, axe-wielding loners or cause social unrest. There is a strong sense however, in which these films encourage people to become undisciplined and tasteless – in short, they teach people to appreciate the talents of thesecreterc!

Okay, so seizing topees and bringing in nasty new repressive laws infringes 'personal freedom' – but freedom to do what? If God created freedom to sit glued to the gobble-box for hours on end watching some unconvincing bug-eyed nutter slaughter yet another mother screaming, violence with chainsaw/plain knife/axle shotgun? Freedom to sit munching a bag of Cheesy Wotsits while gallons of fake blood spurts from a fake wound? If that's freedom, I'd trade places with Patrick McGoohan any day of the week.

Whatever happened to style, eh? What became of subtlety, artistry, restraint? Are Spielberg or Carpenter the only directors around who know how to manipulate the emotions of their audience in the same way that, say, Visconti could? Is the horror of a dozen times once dead? Have we all become so moronic that we can only respond to cinematic images if they're decorated with flying entrails and buckets of blood?

And even if directors do brave the realms of gore and mutilation, why can't they do it with more finesse? Horror can sometimes be positively beautiful, esoteric, even poetic; the artistic – or even the beautiful Theatre of Blood: a stylish soundtrack, a distinguished theatrical cast, and more tongue-in- cheek humour than an episode of The Avengers.

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

"LET'S GET THE SONS OF BITCHES! Before it's too late and they start burning us all in the town!"

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

Graham, I appreciate your feelings and I'm pleased to run such a coherent argument in your favour in Hall of Horror but I honestly believe you're wrong; terribly naively wrong. The argument about censorship is not about SS Experiment Camp (which we would probably all agree is a piece of exploitation garbage) but about the principles at stake. Censorship is not a matter of drawing a line and saying "well, fine, that's good place to stop". The history books show that it always takes one route and one route only – and that's the "narrower and greater censorship". Is it a mistake on the legislators' part that the new video bill will allow censorship of the vast majority of videos, not just the "nasty ones"? Why are we living with the Knockabout Comics currently fighting a legal case for having the temerity to sell, in an underground bookshop, classical titles that you could normally pick up in any branch of Smirnoff? Can you really not see patterns emerging? A closing of the ranks of reaction? Do you really believe that in a year's time you will be able to view the chest-bursting scene from Alien or the murder scene in Halloween or ...? We're not just talking about these here; we're talking about each and every horror film for God's sake. Each and every video film is to be examined on a stricter basis than at present, when we already have the most restrictive cinema censorship in Europe. The British Board of Film Censors is already cutting filming prints in one way or another. Will the new legislation be? Oh, and your candidate for a rubber room, award winning horror actor Dave Lorrimore is probably only one of the budding horror film fans I know and I only see half-crazy. Say hello to 1984 and goodbye from ... Dave

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Mad Max stands alone," writes Danny Peary in his excellent Cult Movies, "the first and only film of a genre that could surely be explored and exploited, with interesting results, by action-oriented filmmakers. It is extremely probable, I believe, that if Australian filmmakers began churning out similar violent, futuristic car-motorcycle films full of spectacular crashes - films in which the stuntmen are the stars - it could be the start of an international craze to equal that caused by Italian westerns and Chinese kung fu movies a few years back.

While the current plague of a cheapo Italian future schlockers proves that Peary was right about the potential popularity of an end-of-the-world action movie genre, he was not entirely accurate in his suggestion that Mad Max's venture into a near future world of anarchy, punk, leather, chrome and violence is without precedent. Quite apart from the film's obvious debt to the Dirty Harry (1971)/Death Wish (1974) rogue cop/vigilante film in its story of an obsessive lawman who tracks down and wipes out the gang of degenerates who raped and killed his wife and child, Mad Max (1979) was merely the breakthrough movie for a genre that had been developing since the birth of the cinema.

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

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

Mel Gibson as the most popular and typical post-apocalyptic hero, Mad Max
...only the beginning

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

The imaginative visions of these atomic exploiters are limited to a variation on the settler-versus-Indian conflicts of old-fashioned westerns, in which purebred, Arizona-looking Good Guys are being threatened by hideously mutated, radioactive, scuzzybag Bad Guys, but are saved when the macho intruder from our world chips in with some old scientific knowhow and a few strong right hook to hairy jaws.

The hero usually finds an unmarked, beautiful, usually dumb, savage woman to settle down with. It is probably not coincidental that these films sprang up when Broken Arrow (1950) and Apache (1954) were forcing real westerners to take a more liberal attitude to real Indians. As yet, no one has made a post-armageddon Soldier Blue (1970) in which peace-loving three-eyed monsters are massacred by intolerant human beings. However, Captive Women (1952), a cheap, lurid, moderately exciting tale of tribal warfare in what is left of New York in the year 3000 does have the novelty of an endir, as it is not-terribly hideous Mute (Ron Randell) marries a hubba-hubba Norma girl and unites humanity, and, in The Last Man on Earth (1964), the stake-brandishing hero (Vincent Price) is captured by the race of vampires who have succeeded humanity and put to death because of the havoc he is wreaking on their usual but functioning new society.

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

Falling between the Serious and Non-Serious strains are Albert Zugsmith's hysterically absurd The World, The Flesh and The Devil (1960) in which Mel Ferrer, Harry Belafonte and Inger Stevens, as the remnants of humanity after a war fought with radioactive gas (7), sort out their racial and sexual prejudices and invent an entirely new kind of family unit. If nothing else, The World, The Flesh and The Devil has the best depopulated city footage, with Belafonte dragging a child's cart full of canned food through the concrete canyons of early morning New York. Unquestionably the worst of the Nuclear Movies is Lary Buchanan's static, rotten remake of The Day the World Ended, in the Year 2889 (1985). Most of these films end with a title reading 'This is Not the End... This is Not the Beginning', and are distinguished by a dismal view of humanity that suggests there is something to be said for the destruction of mankind after all. Let's face it, who wants to live in a world...
How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb

As the world heaved a collective sigh of relief after the Cuba missile crisis, the movies’ attitude to the apocalypse became more flip. In 1962, Ray Milland could seriously suggest in his exploitative Panic in the Year Zero that Mr Average Joe American can survive a nuclear war by taking his family into the hills, drinking bottled water, and shooting any leather jacket types who look like troublemakers. The absurd side of all this was obvious, but it took Stanley Kubrick’s Dr Strangelove; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) to make it work on the screen. After seeing Slim Pickens whooping it up as he rides into oblivion with a hydrogen bomb bucking like a bronco between his legs, it was difficult for a while to take the Big Hot One seriously. “So long, mom, I’m off to drop the Bomb!” sang Tom Lehrer, and CND’s straight-faced followers only had Kennedy’s slightly ironic version of Strangelove, Fail Safe (1964) to tide them over until Peter Watkins’ still-shattering The War Game came along to restore the balance of terror. This was the era of zero-degree conflict memorable in the most tractable form imaginable in Strangelove, Fail Safe and The Bedford Incident (1966) is accidental. In Corman’s Gas-s-s-s-s or: It Became Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It (1970), the U.S. President manfully goes on television after a spilled bioweapon has killed everyone over twenty-five, and admits to “a simple human error that anyone could have made.”

In Gas-s-s-s, Corman gave the hippies the holocaust they were looking for, and proceeded to disappoint them with a hit-and-miss satire on the counterculture values. Reversing the conventions of Panic in the Year Zero, Corman has the Hells Angels become the new upper class, while all-American football teams turn to looting and raping. “Frankly boys,” says a coach in a pep talk, “I don’t know if you’re good enough to sack it.” Gas-s-s-s was much mocked about by its distributors, and Corman was driven to stop directing and set up his own production company, but it remains a funny view of the End of the World than Richard Lester’s goonish, overrated The Bed Sitting Room (1969) and sharper in its look at pop art amid the ruins than Jim McBride’s offbeat, semi-underground, pretty dull Glen and Randa (1971). It is perhaps the first post-holocaust action/adventure fun flick, and Corman would be instrumental in the genre with his productions of Paul Bartel’s Death Race 2000 (1974), a cartoonish, violent, and thrilling tale of gladiatorial combat on Transamericana, and Death Race (1978), the far-future template forbears movies like The New Barbarians (1983), which has lots of bikes blowing up and strongly stupid performances from heroine Claudia Jennings and villain Michael Dante.

In 1968, a kind of worldwide apocalypse seemed likely, as a conventional war in South East Asia escalated in pace with student unrest in the western world. The dawn of the Age of Aquarius was greeted in the cinema by important films, George A. Romero’s Night of the Living Dead and Franklin J. Schaffner’s Planet of the Apes. Like Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda in Easy Rider (1969), Duano Jones in one film and Charlton Heston in the other go in search of America. Unfortunately for them, they find it. Romero’s film is a masterpiece, the most influential horror movie since Frankenstein (1931) and Psycho (1960), but, since it was disguised as a cheap exploitation grindhouse item, it was initially overlooked by critics who praised Planet of the Apes for its obvious, misanthropic satire. The film takes its redneck poxes and burning bodies from Vietnam newsreels, and Romero paints a grim picture of humanity by having his living characters tear at each other in useless argument, while his dead ones yearn to tear at them in ravenous fantasy. Planet of the Apes is a twisted version of the Norms Versus Mutes story with hairy-chested Chuck Heston dumped in a future ruled by stumpy chimps. While its overkill has worn less well than the cruder Romero films, Planet of the Apes finally comes up with the goods with its image of the shattered Statue of Liberty. The film ends with an anti-nuke howl that must now cause staunchly Reaganesque Heston some embarrassment. While Night of the Living Dead and Planet of the Apes are both funnier than they sound, they signalled a return to a more serious approach to the apocalypse.

Innocent victims at the mercy of nature in Day of the Triffids (top) whilst (below) Peter Sellers as Dr Strangelove plans a worse fate for us.
They don't make 'em like that any more...

is what Charlton Heston muttered to himself as The Omega Man (1971) while watching his favourite film, Woodstock (1970), summing up the brainless apocalypse/action movies of the mid-1970s. No Blade of Grass (1971), Logan's Run (1975), Damnation Alley (1977), The Ultimate Warrior (1975), A Boy and His Dog (1975), and a slew of Planet of the Apes sequels made the ravaged post-holocaust landscape familiar to audiences who were more worried about Watergate or the oil crisis. The end of the world was even safe enough for TV, as demonstrated by Survivors, the Logan's Run spinoff, and Gene Roddenberry's pitiful attempts to get a post-Trek series on the air (Genesis II, 1973, Planet Earth, 1974, Strange New World, 1975). The films had decent budgets, and so they could afford to come up with impressively devastated cities (the submarine stock exchange of 1970's Beneath the Planet of the Apes, the corpse-littered L.A. of The Omega Man, the ivy-covered Washington monuments of Logan's Run), but they all cheapen interesting source novels into wars between ecology-conscious hippie communes and contaminated violence freaks. Roger Zelazny's Damnation Alley has a Hells' Angel hero who "looks at the world through crap-coloured glasses" and reads like a badass holdover from a biker movie, but, in Jack Smight's drippy film, he becomes Jan-Michael Vincent, a blue-eyed, clean-cut air force officer whose blow-dried hair is unaffected by fallout. The Omega Man is a vampire-less remake of Richard Matheson's I Am Legend (which had been The Last Man in the World) that has a great opening with Heston machine-gunning caped mutants and holding out against the world in his luxury penthouse, but goes bad with the introduction of a multi-racial créche for whom Heston finally sacrifices himself. The Ultimate Warrior and A Boy and His Dog are tougher, in the first, survivalist Max Von Sydow tells hero-for-hire Yul Brynner that if he has the choice between saving the girl or a packet of seeds, he should stick with the seeds, and in the second, the hero feeds his girlfriend to a telepathic dog who sticks by him as he wanders through America buried under twenty feet of sludge. Even these ratty epics, which borrow their ethics from spaghetti westerns and cycle crazy movies like Angles Hard As They Come (1972), are not free from peace and love platitudes that clog the rest of the mainstream end of the world movies. The Bomb wipes out the straightt, radioactive rednecks get creamed in the aftermath, and the future belongs to the Beautiful People. If there was any vitality left in the genre, it would have to come not from Hollywood glossies but from ragtag stickies like The Hills Have Eyes (1977), which would have been the first post-apocalypse western only Wes Craven couldn't afford to depict the breakdown of society; so it stands as the wildest of the backwoods massacre movies, with a bunch of Norms fighting back when the desert-dwelling Mutes attack them, With The Hills Have Eyes and Romero's Dawn of the Dead (1979), the horror movie took the apocalypse about as far as it could, and the world was ready for an avenger in black leather to put it to rights.

(Top) Pre-production art for Beneath the Planet of the Apes; typical post-apocalypse travelling (centre) from Damnation Alley; (below) Claudia Jennings offers her own welcome to the holocaust in Deathsport.
We're going to give them back their heroes

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

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

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

Searchers (1956) and The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, the man of action who is prevailed upon to help lesser mortals destroy the only world he is capable of living in. Like Wayne, Mad Max finally disappears into desert obscurity. The sequel is actually a ninety-minute action sequence, which rather cramps the style of several intriguing supporting characters who are introduced and then brushed off, but Miller handles the whole thing with the verve of the first twenty minutes of Mad Max. Mad Max 2 was retitled The Road Warrior in the United States (the one territory where the first film flopped), and served to establish Miller as a director of note (his segment of The Twilight Zone, 1983, is worth the rest of the movie put together), Gibson as an international star, and the futuristic action/adventure as the genre flavour-of-the-month.

On the streets

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

The most common kind of future society in the cinema is a variation on ancient Rome, in which the bloodlust of the masses is slaked by state-sponsored gladiatorial sports. In Le Decima Vittima/The Tenth Victim (1969), private citizens are licensed to join the Hunt, and Ursula Andress swans around a pop art Rome in search of Marcello Mastroianni, the tenth victim, who will win her untold wealth and fame and the star role in a television commercial for Ming tea. Elio Petri's film has a funny premise (from a Robert Sheckley short story), and plenty of bizarre bits of 1960s futurism (an 'antique' pinball table, a first edition Flash Gordon, and Andress' bullet-firing brassiere), but falls apart in the finale, which has all the characters jaunt around the countryside popping off harmless shots at each other in lieu of an actual ending. Rollerball (1975) does much to popularise the black-leather-and-chrome-studs outfits that have become essential dress for future heroes, but its condemnation of a colourless world where the only excitement comes from an extremely violent motorcycle/roller derby/roulette/hockey/football sport is somewhat compromised by the fact that it is a colourless film whose only excitement comes

Droog of the future, Malcolm McDowell, in Kubrick's bleak vision of the anarchic Clockwork Orange.
from the Rollerball sequences. Recently, Le Prix du Danger/The Prize of Peril (1963), from another Shekley story, proposes a TV game show in which the contestant has to stay alive for four hours while killers track him down. Despite Michel Piccoli's enthusiastically ghostly incarnation of a Bruce Forsyth-type game show host ("and you have an unusual hobby?" he asks one of the psychos who has volunteered to kill the hero), the film suffers from the fact that its action sequences are so ordinary that any sadistic audience would prefer to switch over to some old Hanna-Barbera cartoons instead. French television has a worldwide reputation for its dull respectability, so the makers of Le Prix du Danger, unfamiliar with the horrors of American and British quiz shows, can perhaps be excused from missing Shekley's satirical point and making a dead straight, dead boring film of his witty, pointed story.

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

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

In America, the urban decay horror movie grew out of the Charles Bronson/Clint Eastwood action film; both authors were considered by John Carpenter for the role of Snake Plissken in Escape From New York before he settled on his cheaper frieze, Kurt Russell. In 1987, Manhattan is walled off as a maximum security prison, and police chief Lee Van Cleef has to recruit bankrobber WW III hero Plissken to haul out President Donald Pleasence, who has crashed in the middle of the line as a result of the prison established his plot with brisk, economical strokes that promise a high-energy, satirical adventure, but only for the rest of the characters (Ernest Borgnine as a molotov-cocktail-throwing cabbie, Harry Dean Stanton as the owner of an oil well in the public library, and Isaac Hayes as the Duke of New York) have been introduced and various races against time set in motion, the film runs out of gas and degenerates into a listless series of battles. Nevertheless, the film's scary setting — with seved heads on parking meters, a Chock Full O'Nuts that lives up to its name, and a transvestite revue singing 'Everyone's Going to New York' — is interesting enough to make one regret the lapses in script and direction.

The most elaborate depiction yet of an American city on the skids comes unfortunately in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner (1982), a film that is approving precisely because the minutely-detailed, cluttered background completely obscures the upfront story, which means that the strong plot and stufmum of Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? get lost amid Scott's yellow fog, punk derelicts, Hong Kong with acid rain street scenes, advertising pyramids and irritatingly symbolic fluttering doves. Still, Harrison Ford in a trench coat, Sean Young with dyed hair are at least convincingly artificial inhabitants of Scott's murky vision. A similarly deadbeat New York is found in the 'Harry Canyon' segment of the animated Heavy Metal (1981), a skit on The Maltese Falcon (1941) and Taxi Driver (1976), in which Canyon (the voice of Richard Romanus) drives his cab through a city of Mohawk muggers, the best cops money can buy, and incredibly available women. Recent near-futures include the technological playland of John Badham's Blue Thunder (1982), in which Roy Scheider diverts heatseeking missiles into skyscrapers and to hell with the innocent bystanders, and Francis Coppola's The Rumble Fish (1983), a persuasive, poetic look at the fog end of the gang fighters of his The Outsiders (1983).

Of course it fell to the Italians to make the ultimate ripoff of the genre. Enzo G. Castellari's 9000: I Guerrieri del Adriatico (1982), an unashamed blend of The Warriors and Escape From New York which takes poetic justice to its logical conclusion by stealing all the banal stylistic quirks Walter Hill and Carpenter lifted from spaghetti westerns in the first place — a Viking funeral complete with soaring music and tearful close-ups of the Hells' Angels extras, and a fetishist display of bludgeoning, gouging, slashing, strangling, and mutilating weapons. Castellari (best known as the actor who played Mussolini in Winds of War, 1983) is a pedestrian director, but the assemblage of off-the-wall supporting characters makes 9000 pricier than it promises. In addition to Vic Morrow as a renegade cop with a line in neo-Shakespearean rant ('let the enemy have no survivors this day, horsemen!'), the Bronx is populated by a tap-dancing Broadway chorus with deadly swordcane, 1930s gangsters, samurai, a vampire, and an s/m sister to the Wicked Queen from Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (1936). It was followed up with Castellari's indifferent Bronx Warriors II (1983), Sergio Martino's 2099: After the Fall of New York (1983), Jules Harrison's Barbarians 2000 (1983), and Uncle Lucio Fulci's 2033 AD: Centurions of the Future/2033 AD: Centurions of the Future (1983). These films tend to topline down-on-their-luck Americans like Fred Williamson and Henry Silva, alongside pseudonymous Italian nonentities like Mark Gregory and Timothy Brent.
Hell for leather

The Mad Max films borrow a lot of their hardware, costumes, and attitude, and overload soundtrack engine noise from the perennially popular bike gang/road rebel cycle. The genre got a kick start in 1974 with Marlon Brando as a leather-jacketed existentialist in The Wild One (when asked "what are you rebelling against?", he replies, "what have you got?") and was responsible for such important works of art as Hot Rod Rumble (1957) and Dragstrip Riot (1958). After a disappointing spell in the early 1960s when Frankie Avalon got teenagers a bad name by being polite, looking neat, and having beach parties, and sighing over Annette Funicello, Roger Corman revived the cycle thug picture with The Wild Angels, a memorable bit of gas-burning, nihilism with an all-time great cast that includes Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra, Gayle Hunnicutt, Michael J. Pollard, Dick Miller, and Bruce Dern as 'Loser'. As in Gas-s-s-s, Corman shows a gang of drop-outs who set up a society more rigid and repressive (Fonda is addressed as 'My President' by his followers) than the one they are escaping from. The real-life Hell's Angels chapter who appeared as extras in the film were unsure whether to sue Corman or kill him, but nothing came of either threat, and his New World company later produced similar bike spectacular epics, Angels Die Hard (1971), Bury Me an Angel (1972) and Angels Hard As They Come (1972).

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

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

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

The End

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

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

Images recur from the new wave of apocalypse movies: 1990, 2019, Rome 2033 and (below) Metalstorm.
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Earlier this year I received a letter in the mail which read, in part:

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

It was signed, Jackie Blaisdell.
I was shocked and disturbed to learn of Paul Blaisdell’s death. I had first communicated with Blaisdell in 1964, and for nearly twenty years we maintained a pretty steady exchange of correspondence. To know that he wasn’t there anymore, out in Topanga Canyon, California, was, as I said, disturbing.
But what disturbs me most, when I think of it, is that so many fans of the fantasy film field have no idea who Paul was, or what his contributions were to our genre.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Top) After the excellent make-up design, it’s a pity the poster artist never saw the film! (Below) A scene never shown from Invasion of the Saucer-Men.
Because the script required actual interaction between the mutant and members of the cast, Paul was required to build big this time. He constructed a full-sized suit to match his own build and played the monstrous role himself.

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

Russoff also scripted the next picture Paul worked on, It Conquered The World. The film starred Peter Graves, Beverly Garland and Lee Van Cleef and was directed by Corman. Russoff's story, about the project Venus was shown to Paul, who suggested the design for the monster be based on what was then (1956) known about the physiology of Venus. The writer wanted some kind of creature that was pretty invulnerable," Paul recalled, "and at that time the belief about Venus was that it was hot, humid, and not conducive to animal life. But since plant life might arise there, I felt the design should be based around that. I chose a mushroom as a starting point because some mushrooms are poisonous right here on Earth. Imagine what an alien mushroom would be like!"

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

Roger Corman decided we were going to have to bring the creature out of the cave in order to keep on schedule," Paul told me. "Somebody had forgotten to order generators to power the lights to illuminate the inside of the cave, so there was no choice but to have the Venusian mushroom exit the cave, because it was getting later in the day, the sun was setting, the shadows were falling, and even if the photographer was using T1-X film, he was still going to have difficulty. I became aware of a question of doing the fastest thing you could as quickly as you could. Fortunately, I'd constructed the creature with castors on the underside, and that became her 'walking gear', and that's how she moved! I operated on her back, and she was clumsy, and she looks clumsy in the movie. It was just one of those things on a low-budget moviel"

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

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

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

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

Because Paul had built extra qualities into The She Creature costume, it turned out to be longer-lasting than anything else he had constructed. American International decided, in order to save some money, to re-use the She Creature costume on other occasions. It next appeared in the company's 1957 picture, Voodoo Woman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And such is the premise of Mutant...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bud started aged five in the Our Gang comedies. He had a role alongside John Fonda in The Return of Frank James (1940). At 15, he switched to the rodeo circuit as cowboy and clown alongside Slim Pickens. Bud's affinity with animals, plus his stunting talent, brought him back to Hollywood for the Sergeant Preston of
the Yukon (no kidding) TV series. "I ran dog sleds over cliffs and did horse falls in the snow." As for directing those 5,000 tarantulas in Kingdom of the Spiders -- hell that came mighty easy for a guy that worked with Hitchcock on The Birds (1963).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Tops] Star of Mutant, Wings Hauser, attempts to hold the disintegrating town at bay as (below) the chemical pollution unleashes an orgy of violence.
item: American industry, alone, generated about 250 million tons of hazardous wastes every year. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that over 90% of these wastes are disposed of improperly. Indeed they've listed 15,000 uncontrolled dumping sites all leading to contamination of drinking water supplies and various listed adverse incidents of damage to human health, natural habitats, fish, livestock, crops, sewer systems and soil.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Then didn’t Vincent Price in Poe series in mind to begin with,” said screenwriter Matheson, “but when Usher got such a good reception financially and critically, they just jumped at the idea.”

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

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

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

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

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

Vincent Price, Peter Lorre and Basil Rathbone – a trio of horror stars from AIP’s Tales of Terror (top). (Below) From The Black Cat segment of that film, Lorre exacts a dreadful price from his enemy Vincent.
Price narrated *Naked Terror* (1961), a quick documentary about barbaric Zulu customs, before starring in *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (1962), judiciously retitled *Evils of Chinatown* in Britain. He also turned up as an art-loving author in the prison drama *Convicts 4* (1962, titled *Reprieve* in Britain) before returning to horror once again.

*Tower of London* (1960) was hardly a remake of the 1939 movie that introduced Price to horror films. Directed by Roger Corman and produced by his brother Gene for Admiral Pictures, this Shakespearean historical horror once again had Price overplaying his role – as Richard of Gloucester, surrounded by the ghosts of past victims and some nasty torture devices.

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

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

Price narrated *Chagall* (1963), an Oscar-winning documentary about the artist, before appearing in *Twice Told Tales* (1963), another anthology film, this time based on three tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne. An obvious attempt by Admiral Pictures to repeat the success of AIP's Edgar Allan Poe series, director Sidney Salkow lacked Corman's style. *Dr Heidegger's Experiment* featured Price as the discoverer of an elixir of 'eternal' youth. In the classic *Rappaccini's Daughter* he was the father of a girl who destroyed all she touched. The final episode was a truncated version of *The House of the Seven..."
Gables, which Price had originally appeared in back in 1940—this time, however, he was cast as the villain.

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

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

Price stayed with comedy to make a guest appearance as Big Daddy in AIP’s Beach Party (1963), the first of their ‘sun and surf’ series featuring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. Although credited to another poem by Edgar Allan Poe, American International’s The Haunted Palace (1963) was in fact a fairly faithful adaptation of H.P. Lovecraft’s short novel The Case of Charles Dexter Ward. Price gave an unusually low-key performance as Ward, who returned to his ancestral mansion in the New England village of Arkham and was gradually possessed by the vengeful spirit of his evil forbears, a warlock named Joseph Curwen, also played by Price. Producer/director Roger Corman and improved production values ensured the film looked good (except for a brief shot of a very unconvincing Elder God), and Price was ably supported by such stalwarts as Lon Chaney Jr., Elizabeth Cook Jr., and John Dierkes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Price and Jane Asher meet an unwelcome guest (top) in The Masque of the Red Death (Below) No, not Curve of the Faceless Ones, but a dramatic moment from The Haunted Palace.
poem about a dead woman calling her lover back to the gravestones.

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

Scream and Scream Again (1969), an AIP-Amicus co-production also made in Britain, went one better and added Peter Cushing to the Price/Lee combination (proof that filmmakers never learn that an all-star cast does not necessarily mean a good film). Based on Peter Saxon’s novel The Disoriented Man, this odd mixture of artificially-created humanoids, vampirism and political intrigue grievously wasted its three stars, with Cushing killed off after only one scene and Price and Lee given little screen time between them. “The plot can be twisted as you like, but the horror film must be pure logic, like mathematics,” said Price. The convoluted storyline made Scream and Scream Again an interesting cult film, either loved or hated by critics. With Gordon Hessler’s hectic direction and Alfred Marks’ off-beat performance as a hard-nosed police superintendent, the result is a strangely compulsive blend of science fiction and horror.

Throughout the 1960s, Price managed to keep busy between film assignments with stage work, college tours and lectures on art, cookery and films. He continued to appear regularly on television, and besides numerous quizzes, chat shows and variety specials, he guest-starred in many of the fantasy series that proliferated during the latter part of the decade: As Victor Marton he menaced super-spys Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin The Man From U.N.C.L.E., episode The Foxes and Hounds Affair (1967); between 1966-67 he appeared in five episodes of the popular Batman series as guest villain Egghead, ably assisted by Anne Baxter’s Olga; Admiral Nelson and Commander Crane battled his Professor Multiple, a puppet master from a machine-ruled civilization, in The Deadly Doolittle episode of Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (1967), and as the Transylvanian Count Storza he scared the soldiers of F Troop in the V is for Vampire episode (1966). But by the end of the decade Price’s film career had just about reached its peak. Many old friends and colleagues, including Karloff, Lorre and Rathbone were dead, and the actor himself was approaching 60. Although he would remain consistently busy, in later years the size and number of his screen appearances would be significantly reduced...
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The last Hammer Film of 1968, The Lost Continent marked the end of Hammer's USA distribution arrangement with 20th Century Fox, which had begun with The Nanny in 1965. Warner Brothers-7 Arts replaced Fox as US distributors of Hammer features released in Britain by Warner-Pathe. The Lost Continent was Hammer's second filming of a Dennis Wheatley novel, quickly following the release of The Devil Rides Out. This time however, the film was not based on one of Wheatley's Black Magic novels; instead it was derived from a fantastic adventure entitled Uncharted Seas. Scripted by Michael Nash, The Lost Continent was produced and directed by Michael Carreras.

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

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

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

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

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

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

From Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed with Peter Cushing (top) as Baron "Fenner" Veronica Carlson's best performance (Centre) as Anna Spengler and (below) Freddie Jones' sympathetic monster.
Brandt is mortally injured during the escape, and so Frankenstein transfers Brandt’s brain into the body of Professor Richter, a doctor at this hospital. When Brandt/Richter awakens after the insanity-curbing operation, he is driven mad again, by the realisation that, as he puts it, “I have become the victim of everything Frankenstein and I ever advocated”. Rejected by even his (Brandt’s) own wife (Maxine Audley), he sets a fiery trap for Frankenstein and, by the film’s conclusion, all of the major characters are dead or dying.

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

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

After filming *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*, Terence Fisher suffered a second leg injury (see Hoh 29). This, coupled with the director’s increasing inactivity throughout the 1960’s, led to speculation that the Hammer Frankenstein series, as filmgoers had come to know it, was over. Further evidence to support this notion was forthcoming shortly.

Hammer’s next release, *Moon Zero Two*, was a high-budget science-fiction adventure directed by Roy Ward Baker, from a Michael Carreras script which in turn was from a story by Gavin Lyall, Frank Hardin Dr and Martin Davison. Instead of being straight science-fiction, *Moon Zero Two* is a rather tongue-in-cheek ‘space western’. The film’s locations include a futuristic spaceport bar, which is strongly reminiscent of the standard western saloon scene (some eight years later, an outer space cantina would be the setting for one of the most famous sequences in *George Lucas’ Star Wars*). As its main plot element, *Moon Zero Two* offers the premise of a space juggernaut which leads to thrilling shootouts and chases involving a vengeful hero (James Olson and his sidekick against extremely nasty villains. The western motif is even carried over into the film’s dialogue, which includes a number of amusing reworkings of stock western lines. Even on the level of music, *Moon Zero Two* is considerably over the top, featuring a score by jazz/rock singer Julie Driscoll.

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

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

The film’s plot is constructed around the sort of revenge/retribution theme which Hinds seemingly favored during this period in Hammer’s history. As usual, it is the details and variations on that theme, particularly on the human side of the story. The hypocrical perversion of Dracula’s victims is matched – and surpassed – by the perversity of the victim’s fate. The victims, a trio of well-educated members of polite British society, are shown to be shockingly strict and cruel in their treatment of their teenaged children. Meanwhile, the three gather by night to seek illicit thrills in the seamiest section of London’s East End. Their increasing dissatisfaction leads them to a chance meeting with Lord Courtley, who persuades them to purchase the remains and artifacts of Count Dracula – some red powder, a ring, and a cape. These are in the possession of a small-time gambler, Roy Owler, who witnesses Dracula’s demise on a golden cross (via some nice editing employing footage from *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*) and collected them in a cave. In a desecrated church, they begin an unholy ritual to revive the vampire king. Courtley cuts himself and mixes his blood with the red powder. When the others refuse to drink this vile brew, Courtley himself does and promptly dies, wearing Dracula’s ring. After the others flee in fear, Courtley’s corpse transforms into Count Dracula – alive, or at least actively undead. Enraged by the death of such a dedicated disciple as Courtley, Dracula vows to destroy the young Owler and his accomplices. He does so by vampirising their children and then willing them to kill their fathers in varied but consistently grisly ways. It is a credit to director Sadsy that these despicable characters become clearly sympathetic figures before their respective dooms overtake them. Dracula himself is
destroyed when the church, which he is using as his base of operations, is reconsecrated.

*Taste The Blood Of Dracula* showed off the classic Hammer advantages to a greater extent than usual. The scenery, sets, and costuming are all well-integrated and shot to great atmospheric effect. James Bernard's score, which he has named as his personal favourite, is indeed particularly fine, from the moody and sensitive opening themes to the anticipated reworkings of the major theme which Bernard originally composed for Hammer's first Dracula (see part two in *HoH 18*). However, *Taste The Blood Of Dracula* did have one flaw that particularly irritated Christopher Lee — his dialogue was consistently awful, to the extent that Lee personally eliminated much of it, refusing to do the film otherwise. Further Lee publicly announced that he would not portray Dracula in any more Hammer series entries. However, his performance in *Taste The Blood Of Dracula* still contains moments of the old magic, implying that Lee was unable to resist the lure of the character.

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

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

Instead of continuing the Frankenstein series which Hammer had been unfolding for well over a decade, Sangster chose to take his younger cast through a remake of the first film in the series, *The Curse Of Frankenstein* (see part two in *HoH 18*). This time, though, Sangster was without the balancing effect provided by Fisher and Cushing the first time out. Thus, the film went totally overboard in its sarcastic humour and unpleasant tone. Frankenstein is depicted as an overgrown spoiled brat, with every other character appearing to be either pompous, greedy, or, in most cases, merely stupid. The only moments of any warmth come out of the relationship between a gravedigger (Dennis Price, doing Hammer horror for the first time) and his wife (Joan Rice). As for the monster, he has no personality whatsoever and functions as a plot device rather than a character. In conclusion, suffice to say that *Horror Of Frankenstein*, unlike *The Curse Of Frankenstein* never spawned a sequel, much less a series.

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

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

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

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

Together! Two NEW Hammer Super-Thrillers!

Scars Of Dracula (1970) Christopher Lee (as Count Dracula), Dennis Waterman (Simon), Jimmy Hanley (Sarah Fransen), Christopher Matthews (Paul), Patrick Troughton (Alice), Michael Gwyer (Priest).


Lee as the poignantly cold host to a party of visitors who are after revenge for a dead brother. Cinematography is blended with the burning body of Dracula plunging from the turret of his castle.

1968-70

The Lost Continent (Rel: 1968)


Moon Zero Two (Rel: 1969)


Taste the Blood of Dracula (Rel: 1970)


Fourth Hammer Dracula with the vampire count attempting revenge on a set of rich thrill seekers – DraculaRather wasted in a castle.

Crescendo (Rel: 1970)


A Hammer psychological thriller. Powers is faced with dealing with the insane widow of a great composer, intent on marrying off her sons.

Horrorm of Frankenstein (Rel: 1970)


 Basically a retelling of Hammer’s first Frankenstein feature, but this time played for some maudlin laughs.

Scars Of Dracula (Rel: 1970)

Christopher Lee (as Count Dracula), Dennis Waterman (Simon), Jimmy Hanley (Sarah Fransen), Christopher Matthews (Paul), Patrick Troughton (Alice), Michael Gwyer (Priest).

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

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

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

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

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

It's also a measure of the difficulty of the theme he is addressing: the child as victim and / or monster. Robin Wood and Tony Williams have analyzed at length the numerous horror films in which the 'monster' is the product of a family (Psycho being the prototype for the 'seventies') but as far as I know, nobody has analyzed the possibility that some of these films may appeal to a hatred of children. I suspect Max von Sydow, who played the exorcist in The Exorcist, was right to fear that audiences were being invited to enjoy the sufferings of possessed Linda Blair (especially since everything she does in her possessed state can be responded to as a caricature of adolescent rebellion, which the film ascribes to the influence of the devil. In case I seem to be exaggerating, consider this: "I think we - that is, in Western society - feel that children are darling little angels who do nothing wrong, and we have to be nice to them no matter what they do ... We like to think that underneath any bad behavior is a heart of gold, when actually we know that underneath that vicious behavior is a black heart, a little demon. People can cope with their children all day long, put them to bed, kiss them goodnight, and then pick up one of my books and read about how these kids really are!"

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

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

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

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NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE OCT 19th!
DURING THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY MATTHEW HOPKINS WAS THE MOST RUTHLESS OF WITCHFINDERS.

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

THE NIGHT HOLDS TERROR

... HIS METHOD: THE MOST CRUEL AND INHUMAN!

THE VILLAGERS ARE ECSTATIC...

THE WITCHFINDER IS appeased...

AND SO IS BELASCO!

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

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

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

SCRIPT: TISE VANIMAGI
ART: BRIAN LEWIS
AND SO, EVENTUALLY, NIGHT FALLS
AND WITH IT COMES A NEW DREAM
FOR BELASCO...

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

AAVREEEEE!

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

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

SO END ALL
ENEMIES OF
VLAD THE
IMPALEOR...

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

...ALMOST TOO REAL!

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

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

NO! NO! IT
CAN'T BE... I
WON'T LET IT!
IT'S ONLY A
DREAM!
ONCE ASLEEP, BELASCO HAD NO CONTROL OVER HIS DREAMS. AND SO WHEN NIGHT CAME...

THE MUSTY STREETS OF LATE 19TH CENTURY EDINBURGH WERE A BREEDING GROUND FOR ONE OF THE MOST UNWYLY OF NEFARIOUS TRAJECT... BODY SNATCHING!

RIGHT BURKE! 'OLD 'ER STEADY...

'C'MON HARE, URARY UP! COSH 'ER...

...TORE SHE WAKES THE WHOLE CITY!

NAEEEHH!

THE EARLY GOODS ARE DELIVERED...

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

AND WHEN A NERVOUS BELASCO AWAKENED...

FARESH ALRIGHT, GUV! SHE'S STILL WARM!

WHY WHERE... WHERE AM I...?!

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

BELASCO TRIES TO ESCAPE VIA EXCESS ALCOHOL... DEEP IN A DRUNKEN SLUMBER, BELASCO IS NOW EVEN MORE VULNERABLE TO WHAT OTHER HORRORS THE NIGHT HAD IN STORE FOR HIM...

NO... MORE... DREAMS! NOW TOO DRUNK... TO... DREAM...
A lone figure made its way through the foggy avenues of 1888 London...

What's this... Wha...?!?

After 'im... It's Jack the Ripper!

Belasco was awakened by a summons at the door...

An unbelievable sight met his eyes when he opened the door...

Kill 'im! Kill the Ripper!

And, back in Belasco's real modern day world...

Where do dreams end and reality begin? Belasco took his dreams far too seriously... until they finally took him? You could almost say he died in his sleep!

Uuuhh! What's happen...?