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* (did) 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 Medick, N. Coner, Nigel Burton, K. James, Graham Tindall, Darrell Buxton, Marcus Shepherd, Gary Dawson, James Dearie, Alan Simpson, Stephen Lewis, P. Sutherland, David Merrick, Bill Walker, Stephen Kirkham, Dave Carson and "The Gore 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 *Shandon* 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 in which we will attempt to solve the various continuity problems that exist between Hammer films but will also, I hope you are not a Hammer fan, stand in their own right as well-produced stories.

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 nerve gas poisoning of the atmosphere. Read them, enjoy the films they discuss but please, for the sake of the future, think about the issues that such films raise. They leave worries about the Bright Bill looking rather
MEDIA MACABRE

Festival based special correspondent Tony Crawley 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 Marilal) to visit the American Film Market and to supply the first in a regular series on the 'B' actors with a look at Rondo 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 Crawley.

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.

TESSER 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
I you wonder where I am the answer is
where else but the Cannes film
festival. It's early days here under the Medi-
terranean 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 inevi-
table 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 in-
terpreter 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 Hopper quickly removed himself from Re-
turn of the Living once the title row erupted.
Tobe is no fan of trouble. He's happier 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 Graymark 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, once the scream queen, helps this space jocks with the mystery up yonder. He’s backed up by Peter Firth, Frank Finlay and French nude 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 Disneylandish leisure park in America – the location of which, thus far, remains a top secret. The place will be known as Millenium. All the rides are science fictionish and from the real folk paying to get in, and the staff tending them, all other creatures wandering about the place will be Westworldian mechanica by 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. According to the hyper-critical moves of the video nasty brigade. In the marketplace at the Cannes festival in May, the story was much the same as the 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’t fill voids with just ‘droids, either. It takes more, a whole lot more. That’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 60’s rubbish is about to be unpeeled upon us, bristling with bustling hype designed to convince us these are good films – hot, 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 were required – of how the money-grabbing companies think of us, the filmmakers, the ticket-buyers, the punters and suckers in their lingo. They don’t care much of a damn, unless there’s a dollar in it. Anny.

For instance, around Cannes I noticed that Sam Arkoff’s first film since selling up his legend-
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 (he 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, The 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 hard), and if it isn’t, Winner will just make his next million from Death Wish III. The word was also good on Tony Kramreither’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 grizzly hype, ‘the school colours are blood red’ and you can ‘earn a higher degree in terror.’
Ho dumb!

NEW WORLD WINNER
The company that was Corman’s – New World – has hit 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 onscreen these days, though. And so, King’s story has been steamrollered out to fill that annoying 93 minutes’ gap between ice-cream/popcorn 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 supernaturalism 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 Corny 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 Corman’s potential. Jolly Roger has got stuck in the word ‘n’ sorcery (particularly, the sorcery) groove. It’s difficult to tell his latest opuses, one from the 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 Barbi 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 undreamed 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 Cruza’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 goes on.) Among Image’s pick-ups from France and one collapsed Canadian company (well, it wasn’t called New anything, you see), is Silent Madness, toplining Creepshow’s creepy old Swede, Viveca Lindfors, up to all kinds of 3-D mayhem – and The Dorm That Dripped Blood, of which more anon.

Both pictures tend to signal New Image’s corporate image, right enough. Ed Cruza 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-scriptor, 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 Imagers, as The Dorm That Dripped Blood. ‘Nuff said? It’s a kind of indoor Friday The 13th with Lauri Lapinski 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 rapacious, 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, but 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 pinched George Pal's 1868 title, but not, naturally, its artistry, and became The 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-then-a-old-lady type, didn't have that power. And the Obrow has even less.

More students are on call. But this time they're high school types. And it's the little, green-eyed idol from, not the North of Katmandu, but Aztec height, causing all the not incomparable body count.

Both films are, well, exceedingly Obrow; very easy to mock, but I should remember what I said when people used to mock Michael Winner ten years ago. Chris York, a name to look for genre scores and Matthew Mungle's effects show similar potential. One day, at all events they will really gell, perhaps. For the moment, well, they sort of... congeal.

OF GREEK ORIGIN
Canada came up with a decent enough movie in Of Greek Origin, a first film from Greek director George P. Cosmatos, who has emigrated to the Dominion. (That's why he's now George P. and not as in the old days of stuff like The Cassandra Crossing, Massacre in Rome and Escape to Athena, George Pan Cosmatos.) He was, once upon a time, the assistant director for both Otto Preminger (Exodus) and Michael Cacoyannis (Zorba The Greek). "I was beginning to think I could be an assistant all my life. I worked my ass off," he says. He got his main breaks from Lord Lew Grade. His Canadian work is better.

Origin is quite a visual tour de force at times and provides what so many genre films lack – genuine jumps, not the heart-stopping variety, Peter Petre, forced into mortal combat with... well, not wanting to give the whole game away, let's say... with a natural terror. The film comes from Chuch G. Parker III's book, The Visor, scripted by Brian Taggart, and features a gorgeously Canadian cast, people like the delectable Jennifer Dale and veteran Lawrence Dane and introduces a recent Playmate of one year or another, Shannon Tweed. This Tweed suits me down to the ground. Her inside leg ain't bad, either.

P. J. TIME
It used to be that Canadian films at Cannes were full of American actors, while Australian films had British stars. Now the Aussies have fallen for Hollywood. And here's Harry Harrison, va va Razorback (see later paragraph) and the luscious P.J. Soles in the title role of Innocent Prey, from director Colin Eggleston – the man who made the brilliant Long Weekend.(
Phew!)

leads, Ilona Staller, Aka. Camilla Jane is hiding down-under from yet another crazed killer. Her hubby. And she knows he's no good, 'cos she's seen him do a Norman Bates on a hooker in a shower. She tells all to the sheriff (who's Martin Balsam, the Psycho private eye) and once hubby's incarcerated she flees to Australia. But he gets out, you see, picks up a Guantas and the rest of the blood and accents are pure Australian.

WHO'S WHO?
And there is one other new horror film out of America again, or more. Robert Findlay made The Oracle in New York with an inevitable bunch of unknown (i.e. cheap) actors. Actually, some of their faces or figures may not be as unknown as all that as Roberta, like so many horrors around today, is an ex-porno-donor. And they're visually as attention-seeking to one another as Chuck Vincent starring Paul Satter (aka. Jerry Butler) in his Preppies funster, Roberta. 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-order rival to Grem- lins called Ghoulies. John Buechler e.s. and them the 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 film is in the area of $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 profiteers anymore, unless like all other winners, they're in the mega-hit category, like Pottegeist.

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, for wait, it's, $1,800,000,000... Yeah, billion! And to think, His Dezhou still quibbles with my expenses.

STRIP HEROES
Among the movies arriving 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 Dick Tracy. Apparently, last director after 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 lead, after all, 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 splash. (Nancy Du Pellcy 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. Cast includes one of The Three Stooge's 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 days, he's now headlining as 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 supervises... The Act is back toプラス格 as The Exterminator II... his old directing mentor, James Glickenhaus, is switching to Conan country, I gather, for Road of the Dungeon- spoor. Cast includes one of The Rome studio, Dinocitta, for a female Conan called Red Sonja... while (and to think this skink started with Ginty!) British director James Cameron turns Arnold Schwarzenegger into an alien Terminator...

Remains even has a song – Peter Gabriel's Dario Argento's Tenebrae. free-unfurled in America as Insane. Not only can't U.S. distributors sell, they have absolutely no grammar! As his wife, Nancy Allen, was tied up with Carpenter's production of The Philadelphia Experiment, Bill Paxton played Bercovici's daughter, Melanie Griffith, as his Body Double, opposite Ghost Story's Craig Wasson... Brother and sister film-makers Mark and Pam Chrovinsky made a fantasy, called the Kingdom of Targents. It lasts 24 minutes and has – count 'em – 128 special effects... Batman Adam West and Sybil Danning among the pursuits 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 flicker. Meantime, Vic's old Combat TV war series (1962-6) is back on the American box. It never came here, so how about it Channel Four? Great gung-ho stuff. Mrs. Thatcher would adore it... Ken Russell going to work for Corman's old company, New World... Hanging away from composers for Crimes of Passion... often goes to trial on their supposed... (And that's just from the first few days in Cannes. More next issue.)

THE CLIPPER COMETH
Durian could be in trouble soon... How are we gonna keep our villainous Russell Mulcahy down on the video-clip farm now that he's seen feature films! Mulcahy made the clips that made the Durian group around the world – everything goes Hungry Like The Wolf to Unixon of the Snake, is shot with his most extreme clipper Lilly... 21 Jump Street, The Exterminator, Judo... Bette Davis Eyes, Spandau Ballet, the Stones, Rod Stewart, Supertramp, the best of Billy Joel (Pressure) and Elton John's still standing because Russell so completely pre-eminent of the vivid new art-form, even if he hasn'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... Should be hilariously ridiculous. white marching band 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 grandson is taken off by a shark and the mad dentist and his wife, Elton John is back. The Exterminator, Judo: So, hubby flies in from the States to look for her, Hungry is Gregory Harrison, star of the Trapper John TV series.

The rotten old (and far from Miss) piggies is a terrific mechanical monster, designed and constructed by Bob McCarron and the film – tops in the suspense department, with help from the editor behind the Mad Max II camera, Dean Semler. So George Miller's laurels are in trouble with Mulcahy's cinematic arrival, just as much as 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 handily on the set (for write-up) rather than any great wish to be an actor. He much prefers the solitary art of writing. "Most of
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 biggish 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 Oppen, 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 *Beet Street* in time for a ritzey 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 dat 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 Everetti de Roches's Harlequin and Survivor, is the good/bad doctor with David Warner, in a busy 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 should 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' roller 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 '50/60s. 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 his, er, schmoll of a schnozz, anyway.

THRILLING
The real Monster of '84 remains Michael Jackson. But his and John Landis's Thriller vid-clip 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 outsstriping 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 3-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 insted 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 Momma.

DAY AFTER DAZE
Four Minute Warning time...Britain's reply to The Day After - the most financially successful telefilm ever released to cinemas - is the Bee's Threads. Australia has a teenage version called One Night Stand, which features the cracking Midnight Oil group among the kids facing in Europe 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 Alkal. He got moving on Special Effects. Casts of both ventures are unknowns for now. Crad 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 Jessel) Jackson ghost trip. It ain't - despite the casts 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 Morgue, From A View To A Kill, looks like being the first 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"... Conner-Bond promises to bring Alfred Hitchcock'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 Mcclory, who owned the Thunderball rights and got Never Say Never Again off the ground is at it again, preparing another Bond film, 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 Rustman (his own producer, director and scripter) has turned Los Angeles into Evil Town (not hard, believe me) with a cast of hopefuls... Now that Duke is busting out all over, Police-man Sting is making The Bride, from Mary Frankenstein's Shelley's novel, directed by the guy who first stung him into movies with Quodrophania.
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—no 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 goofy, 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 he had his death. El Santos (Samson in US dubbed prints), made his big screen debut in 1982 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 monster, 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 STRIKES BACK
A couple of issues back I told you about Fred Olen-Ray, low budget film maker extraordinaire. 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 over the deal and I've had virtually no money from them. Scalps, 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 next 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: Jittov's new movie: The Wizard of Speed and Time, a homage to his classic short to the tune of two million dollars."

More news soon on Dinosaur Girl...

THE ACTIVE ACKER-MONSTER
One familiar face in Jittov'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 Cormann'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. Arranged by 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 in London) Naughton. His first since the delightful Eating Raoul, it tells the story of a group of rich society women who live a double life; by day wealthy playgrils, by night scandal sheet journalists. He's taking his show 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—a fantasy 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, entitled Bland Ambition...

SHORT TAKE 2
Vincent Price may soon be back on the screen as Dr Phibes. He has a 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-epised 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 a group of bikers who hold up 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 Michael (Walt) D. Moore'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 screens 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 summer release. In the meantime, though, we will see more pictures of the calibre of Never Cry Wolf but, after all, a Disney picture is still a Disney by any name...

SHORT TAKE 3
More than 14 months after I first saw its preview, House of the Long Shadows is still awaiting US release. Although MGM were planning to show it for Halloween last year, it is still (along with lesser pictures like Sword of the Barbarians), was baking 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 Tobe 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: Frankensteins'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 villainess 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, Scalps, 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 promos for The Philadelphia Experiment, Ghoulies, Ragewar and Swordkill amongst others. 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 bruiser 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 Hagers Town, Maryland. Contrary to popular belief he was not the handsome young man who turned into a monster in later life. In his past, P.T. Barnum's "rare animal" was a man. 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 1930's 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 1938.

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 starved at in the street and reacted to with surprise and 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 menace for the Baker Street sleuth, a horrifying, bone-crushing giant of a man called The Hoxton Creeper. Rondo was a 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 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.

---

**Heroes of the 'B' MOVIES**

by ANTHONY TATE

---

**Film Credits**

1930 Hell's Harbour
1938 In Old Chicago
1939 Alexander's Ragtime Band
1939 Captain Fury
1940 Chad Hanna
1940 Moon Over Burma
1942 Cyclone Kid
1943 Sleepy Lagoon
1944 Oxbow Incident
1944 The Pearl of Death
1944 Raiders of Ghost City (serial)
1944 Princess and the Pirate
1944 Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore
1945 Jungle Captive
1945 Royal Mounties Ride Again
1946 House of Horrors
1946 Spider Woman Strikes Back
1946 The Brute Man
BOOK COLUMN

The usual difficulty with a book column in a fantasy film magazine is the general lack of suitable material to review – witness our competitor's reviews of science fiction titles – but this time there is so much available I must apologise for the brevity of the comments. The range of titles too is a hopeful sign of the growing acceptance, despite judicial evidence to the contrary, of the horror/fantasy genre in cultural circles.

Our first tip, for example, is the sort of project that would have seemed undreamable only a few years ago. Robert W. Pohle Jr and Douglas C. Hart's The Films of Christopher Lee (Scarecrow Press/Bailey Bros & Swinfen, £32.50) is a wonder of a book: a complete filmography of Christopher Lee together with his comments and recollections of the films in question. Although perhaps a little reticent about his Hammer years, Lee reveals himself as a thoughtful and perceptive critic of his own work and this title can only confirm Lee's frequently expressed insistence that he is not a horror star. It also reveals just how many low budget European films he has wasted his talent in, but that's another story perhaps.An excellent volume and fairly indispensable one would think for the Lee fan, even at that horrendous price.

Rabid and the recent Videodrome and superb The Dead Zone I think this book is worth your money. Serious standards of film criticism are infrequent in our field and this title shows how successful they can be when applied to a film-maker of Cronenberg's vision.

Which brings us neatly to Pascal Martinet's Mario Bava (Edilig, 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 word and sang the praises of great horror directors, science fiction, thriller, and comic strip heroes. 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 and Eagle Lion films) but Italy is still the home of the quick exploitation film (Mad Max clones, Raiders rip-offs, cannibal movies, etc) and this book gives a useful insight into that tradition. You'll have to send to France for this but, if you can read French and appreciate Italian fantasy, I'm sure you'll find it worth the trouble.

Martin Barker's A Haunt of Fears (Pluto Press, £4.95) you can find even in W.H.Smiths, on the other hand, and even though it is not about fantasy films I urge you to do so. Basically, it is a study of the concert film campaign in the 1950s which led to the banning in the UK of American horror comics (most notably the influential E.C. line) and that campaign is of direct relevance to all of us faced in 1984 with a similarly misguided and intellectually dishonest campaign against horror in general and horror videos in particular. Just as now the "research methods" of anti-video campaigners is shown to be academically bankrupt (a recent study showed an equal percentage of children enthusiastically recalling non-existent films as had recalled the "nasties" to universal press revulsion) so too in those far-off days did the campaigners twist evidence to show the pernicious power of horror comics. An essential read – if only to reveal the wonderful comic strips reprinted here. An essential warning too: nothing changes and despite the liberation of artistic freedoms over the last couple of decades there are those working away to deny us the right to see what we want to and they will win unless we put an equal effort into ensuring that the arts should be as capable of showing horror if required as they are of showing love.

The films of the 1950s were not as culturally suspect as the comics of course but Peter Biskind's Seeing Is Believing (Pluto Press, £6.95) usefully reminds us how even the most main-stream examples of American cinema managed to reflect the tensions and conflicts of a society in transition. Although only a portion of the book deals with fantasy films, there is enough here to provide a very thoughtful read and it is an excellent example of how film criticism can open up to us whole new ways in which to see even again the most low-budget and seemingly naïve movie.

I've had a couple of letters in asking why Stuart Samuels' Midnight Movies (reviewed in HoT 27) has been released over here with new authors: J. Hobman and Jonathan Rosenbaum's Midnight Movies (Harpur & Row, £9.95). The answer is quite simple: despite an identical title and subject matter (cult movies that are shown on the midnight circuit like Rocky Horror Picture Show), this isn't a completely different book. But whilst the earlier title is a leisurely stroll through some cinematic oddities, the new book is a descent into a kind of celluloid hell with an unfortunate emphasis on the works of John Walters and even more alarming underground film characters. Of the two books, I would guess that this may be of more value but be prepared to be shocked - thoughtful it may be, subtle it isn't.

Danny Peary's Cult Movies 2 (Vermilion, £6.95), however, is the kind of film book which you could give to your mother. If you saw the first Cult Movies you'll know what to expect, if not then let me just say it is a useful survey of a whole host of films which Peary reckons are cult favourites: Barbarella, A Clockwork Orange, The First Nudie Musical, Godzilla, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Sullivan's Travels, The Exorcist, etc. An interesting selection and certainly his comments often enliven your own viewing of a film but it is debatable how many of his fifty films are actually cult items; I mean, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory?

Moving quickly to fanzines, we have the newly revived Children of the Night (£2.95 plus postage from Derek Jensen, 7450 Village Drive, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208) which immediately returns this title to the small pantheon of exceptional fantasy film fanzines (like Little Shoppe of Horrors, Photo Finish, Midnight Marquee, etc). An excellent design, glossy paper, nice stories and an obvious love of the genre all make it easier 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, Clithall, Ilford, Essex) with a special Edgar Allan Poe issue. Although comic fanzines are not too thick on the ground there don't seem to be many film ones and it is the sort of venture we ought to encourage; most of Hasted'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 from out of the current fanzines that the next generation of HoT and Starburst writers will come. That said, Creature is not an outstanding piece of work and its reliance on horror stories to fill the pages is unusual 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. 38501). I have the first three issues to hand and am amazed at how professionally produced and interesting they are. Unlike similar US titles like Gore Gazette or Sleazyoid Express, this is tabloid newspaper size with twelve 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 Temporal movies and much more. We are currently attempting to act as UK distributor for this title but, until then, rush your international money orders for a set – you won't regret it if your tastes run more to gore and unusual horror films.

I'm happy to give you an update to my comments about Dave Rogers' The Avengers (HoT 26) which, as you may recall, did not include any material on The New Avengers. Apparently this omission was due solely to the copyright difficulties between the two shows 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 forward you the address to but anything where merely a publisher's name is given should be available through any bookshop by ordering or, at least, from those good folk at Forbidden Planet 2, 58 St. Giles High Street, London WC2 (tel: 01 378 6042). Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope, your enquiry and tell them I sent 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.

Dez Skinn replies: Dave has passed your question over to me for answering. Yes, I am 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 1 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 troubles 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 21 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 Hugo for the show. I guarantee you 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 what ever 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 Lunsford 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 (1944), The Frozen Ghost (1944), Weird 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 as a Columbia serial, Batman, in 1943 with Lewis Wilson as the caped crusader and then, after some guest spots on the mid-1940s Superman daily radio show, he reappeared in another Columbia serial, Batman and Robin, in 1949, known on rerelease as The New Adventures of Batman and Robin, played by Robert Lowery. There was the famous 120 episode TV series from 1965–7 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 Elsa Lancaster's only genre film was The Bride of Frankiestein in the book column of HoH 27?

Trevor Roberts, Bangor, N. Ireland.

I'm ashamed to admit I was. Apologies to Ms 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 (1980). 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 Lewesham Way, London SE14 6PP.
George Turner, Sunderland

Hoth 27 was, in my opinion, a big improvement on the previous two issues. It was nice to see the return of the Hammer comic strips and the excellent History of Hammer series. Campbell’s Column was as good as ever and the video listing was a good idea and should come in useful for those of us lucky enough to own video machines. Sadly, I didn’t really like the Kolchak article as I’ve never actually considered this true horror material and the Jaws 3D piece wasn’t too exciting either. Personally, I think the magazine is sliding too far from its roots (in Hammer Films) in an effort to remain commercial. As such it may end up pleasing less and less of its various specialist reader sections, although I do look forward to the articles on Price and Pitt in the next issue (Hoth 28). As a constructive criticism: perhaps a little less selfpromotion and I’m sure we’d see many of them have already been seen countless times.

Thanks for an interesting letter, George – I’m glad you enjoy at least part of each issue of Hoth. And that is what it is all about surely? No magazine could attempt to please all of its readers all of the time but, by concerning ourselves with the whole of the horror genre: we stand a better chance than general film magazines of pleasing horror fans. Oh, by the way, how are we supposed to stay in production if we don’t make that effort to “remain commercial” I do take your point about the stilts though – hope you’ve seen some improvement lately... Dave Reeder, Editor.

Mike Watthen, Morden, Surrey

Hoth 27 is to hand – best issue so far of the new run. Simon Green (Hi, Simon) may well be right in his letters column that splatter movies seem to have run their course, but the horror film in general seems to be going through one of its periodic tills; something which happens when the public tires of a flood of cheap, derivative junk. That’s why Hammer ran out of steam and the various Universal cycles before them, after a year or two, a new adolescent audience will appear wanting the same rite of passage that Ramsey Campbell discusses his column. This will result in a new crop of horror films, in all probability far nastier than anything we’ve seen so far in order to try and outdo the present stuff! The Whitehouse lobby will be used to have helped propagate the very thing it is now trying to suppress.

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, Haden Walsall, West Midlands

How dare you talk about dropping the comic adaptations in Hoth. That’s what most of us have been looking forward to for ages and ages! Of course, there are different perceptions of a film and an adaptation, however, you must invariably disappoint some readers. See my Editorial and also first answer in Answer Desk for our latest plans to keep Hammer and comic fans happy... Dave

Bill Walker, London SE21

Thanks for bringing back Hoth. My sole 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. Some pessimist suggested that the big screen material would be on the receiving end of far more censorship cuts due to the general video clamp down. I have two requests and one plea. As most of your correspondents said in Hoth 27, please come out every month if possible. I’m dead certain that there’s a vast readership for both Hoth and Starburst and in my opinion I’m sure that I’ve read through it in a couple of hours. It then seems ages before I can enjoy the delight in opening the front pages of the next one. The second personal request is to raise the price to allow colour and, lastly, I beg you not to increase the space presently allocated for the strip adaptations. No doubt ‘m at odds with most other readers but you did ask for our views...

And most welcome they are, Bill. To answer your letter and those of many other readers, I may give you a quick lesson in magazine economics. It is now the beginning of May – Hoth 28 is out in three weeks or so and this issue will not be in the shops until mid-July. We want to make sure that our financial position is secure before we venture into pastures new so that first involves knocking everything on to the first ‘regular’ issue Hoth 27. The way a distributor sees presents sales figures to us means that it won’t be until the end of June that we have a fair idea of how much that issue sold and it won’t even speculate that we will have read through it in a couple of hours. It then seems ages before I can enjoy the delight in opening the front pages of the next one. The second personal request is to raise the price to allow colour and, lastly, I beg you not to increase the space presently allocated for the strip adaptations. No doubt ‘m at odds with most other readers but you did ask for our views...

Bob Sheridan, New York

Thanks for sending me the new look Hoth 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 25.

Although Bob is a regular contributor with his Hammer series, he wasn’t really a part of the new team as all Hoth planners have come to this issue were written a few years back in our issue written 2003 (Hoth 19). Frankly, we thought he had vanished and were making arrangements to find someone else as competent to continue his contributions. As it turns out, we’ve 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 disillusioned by issue 27. Having given up buying Starburst due to its format changes, I thought that Hoth would fill the gap. You ask what readers want, well, I am a fan and tell you what at least one reader would like. As I said, I gave up Starburst partly for its format changes but also because it became full of lengthy interviews and articles about forthcoming films that eventually turned to be a let down. Additionally, a good example being Jaws 3D. Having read their article on the making of this tedious film I went to see it and was thoroughly bored. Now, in issue 27 of Hoth, somewhat to my annoyance, we what is linguistically called a review of the same film which is a rehash of the Starburst technical side of the movie approach. The technical side is unimportant if the film itself is a failure. You’ve not had a review of a current (or even an old film) since the reprints of issue 25. Readers want to know what your staff think of the current releases, etc. Having read your compliments on your opinion – Media Macabre is excellent and could well be expanded. Campbell’s Column provides a little intellectualism and is definitely a worthwhile feature. I may just say I agree with his comments and explore the current attitude towards video nasties! Your video listing is a good idea but I would have preferred a full listing of each movie and a small review rather than a checklist. But what really makes me disillusioned with Hoth is the format. Why does it have to become another comic strip adaptation? Why not just watch the film? I’ve nothing against comics – I used to enjoy them as a child. 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 deploring. I would love to see your magazine blossom and flourish because at the moment I’m sorry to say that I have taken to flicking through the pages as it is a shame because Britain ought to be able to come up with the best horror journal. Lastly, might not the encouragement of advertising to video companies help to improve the content in Hoth, which is presently woefully absent?

Never be afraid to be critical of us – especially when we’ve sat down and written the above. I’ve just had a few reasons to be sceptical. Even if I dispute what you say, I still appreciate that you thought Hoth worthwhile and devoted time and effort! Part of the reason why we don’t carry reviews is that it is long time lag between writing an issue and seeing it on the newsagent’s rack. Believe me, one of the reasons of it is that everyone else reviews films. Do you really think that everyone else reviews films? Our experience with the Jaws 3D review which should have originally have been on sale in December 1983 to catch the film’s release, has, I think, made us realises that with the exception of a few tester reviews which is a shame because Britain ought to be able to come up with the best horror journal. Lastly, might not the encouragement of advertising to video companies help to improve the content in Hoth, which is presently woefully absent?

Alan Simpson, East Kilbride

I was just about to write this morning asking where my subscription copy of Hoth 27 was when it dropped through my letterbox. I spent the next three hours reading every word of it and enjoyed it all. I was fascinated with the Wenceslas and am sure that it will be a great help when I’m picking videos in the future.

Sometimes the covers make you think the film is great when it is really a total hummer. I thought the list was so good that I thought I’d contribute some horror videos for your list.

Thanks, Alan, and thank you ALL who wrote in to say how much the Video Index meant to you. We have, quite literally, been swamped with responses from you with hundreds (if not thousands) of pieces of info you’ve contributed to this project. There’s been an awful lot of good people out there and we at Hoth are sure that all of your ideas have helped us to evolve the quality and the spirit in which you have submitted them.

The pieces of the larger jigsaw are coming together as we see from last month’s premier issue of Video Fantasy and, although his letter is well written and I have no doubt that he will impress us with his knowledge and expertise, we have received a couple of letters for the mistakes, we feel we’ve taken a step into an area far so uncharted except by a lot of people hunched over their video! We thank you... Dave

D Price, Wirral

I saw Dawn of the Dead is the cinema and on video and both versions are the same – censorship has no head exploding, no sword in the face, etc etc. I now
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 we seeing it uncet. Maybe you could even start a whole series of comic strips based on badly censored films and banned films but show them all uncet.

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 Halls of Horror when I received them both that I felt I just had to say something by way of encouragement. Hott is currently my favorite magazine in the world. I felt so pleased when it returned to the newstands - like scoring a goal in schoolfie (that all over again). After three issues it seems to be 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 magazine Video Fantasy, where they seem more 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 Hoff 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 Hoff stand out from the crowd.

And now - the controversial bit. You seem to have a bee in your bonnet about the censorship and seizure of horror films, and I have to say I'm getting pretty cheesed off with it.

Isn't all this paranoia about the infringement of freedom and sinister Government interference getting just a little clichéd and tressive by now? Even Bambos Georgiou - who usually seems like a perfectly reasonable and intelligent person - says in his letter in Hoff 27: 'the 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's easy to poke fun at the blue-rinsed puritans, the high-minded Mrs Whitehouses of this world, but let's be completely honest - anything that goes on anywhere isn'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? Cannibal Apocalypse? 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 lump up any puerile garbage available. The people responsible for peddling this crap are well aware of their relationship to the chaff - they lay up 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 by 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 loonies or cause social unrest. There is a strong sense however, in which these films encourage people to become unthinking and tasteless - in short, they teach people to appreciate the talentless crap.

Okay, so seizing tapes and bringing in nasty new repressive laws infringes 'personal freedom' - but I think that freedom to do what, for God's sake? Freedom to glue to the gob-box for hours on end watching some unconvincing bug-eyed nutter slaughter yet another person on screen for the thrill of horri-ble? Freedom to chuck a box of Cheesy Wotsits while galloons of fake blood spurt from a fake wound? If that's freedom, I'd trade places with Patrick McGoohan any day.

Whatever happened to style, eh? What became of subtlety, atmosphere and restraint? Are Spielberg and Carpenter the only directors around who know how to manipulate the emotions of their audience in the same way? Or is the future of film in the sleaze/black/white era, or even the 'sloppy' sledgehammer of 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 Grimsley on his latest column - gore is boring. Quatermass and the Pit is one of my favourites too, as it happens. It's typical of the sort of thing I'd like to see covered in Hoff. How about getting Mick Austin or Dave Lloyd or anybody else to do a strip adaptation? If there are people who genuinely want to see space devoted to the gore/apalather scene, there is plenty of room for rag around the main. The 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 Hoff feature that kind of stuff 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 books again...

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

Graham. I appreciate your feelings and I'm pleased to run such a coherent argument in their favour in Hoff but I honestly believe you're wrong, terribly naively wrong. The argument about censorship is not about SS Experiment Camp (which we probably all agree is a piece of exploitation garbage) but about the principles at stake. Censorship is never a matter of drawing a line and saying "well, fine, that's a good place to stop". The history books show that it always takes one route and one route only - and that is greater 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 "harmful" or "violent"? Why are Knockabout Comics currently fighting a legal case for having the fumery to sell, in an underground bookshop, classic titles that you could normally pick up in any branch of Smith's? 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 see the chest-burster scene from Alien or the murders in Halloween or... We're not just talking about sleaze here, we're talking about each and every horror film for God's sake, each film to stop being examined on a stricter basis than at present, when we already have the most restrictive cinematic censorship in Europe. The British Board of Film Censors is already making banned films print in line with that they perceive the new legislation will be. Oh, and your candidate for a rubber room, award winning horror artist Dave Lloyd, who probably one of the very last horror film fans I know and only about half-crazy. Say hello to 1984 and goodbye from... 

Dave
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 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 millenialism that always comes about with the imminence of a new century. Despite the complete arbitrariness of the convenient graduations 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 megaphone-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.
goings-on that brought down the ire of Jehovah in the first place. When Abel Gance came to film Flammarión's Fin du monde in 1930, the comet was explicitly linked to the Judgement of God, and the audience was on the ribald express of doomed humanity in the shadow of doom. For this reason, the film was drastically shortened for release outside traditionally libertarian France, and most extant versions have been disowned by the director. The more moral Americans, reeling under the Judgements of Wall Street Crash, Prohibition and the Depression, replied with a modern Flood, Deluge (1933), in which New York is swept away by a tidal wave to make way for a particularly wet three-way love affair.

The first obvious ancestor of the modern post-apocalypse movie is the middle section of William Cameron's Things to Come (1936). In Hollywood, economy-conscious producers took heed of the failure of Deluge and vented their urge to destroy the world through the rampages of machine-gun-toting mobsters or back-from-the-dead monsters, but H.G.Wells had devastated the planet in print so many times that he was used to it, and itched to put his vision of the End of the Old World on the big screen. The first part of Things to Come uses a worldwide war to reduce civilisation to the ruins out of which the utopian technological city of the future will rise. Set in 1970, the central scenes of the film find Everything, smashed by aerial bombardment, and populated by plague-ridden savages perpetually at war with the hill tribes of the home counties. The ruler is Ralph Richardson as The Boss, a fur-coated militarist barbarian who rides in on his brown limousine, and conducts himself like the ancestor of Isaac Hayes' Duke of New York or Mad Max' gayboy Huron bikers. Instead of Mel Gibson, the film has Roger Livesey and Massey in a black leather outfit, the representative of a scientific community that drives him on Evertown to deliver the first draft of Klaatu's Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) warning - make peace or die. Mad Max Rockatansky is "the only law in a world gone mad", but Massey's John Cabal is the harbinger of a rule of sanity which will displace the Boss' revoler-waving tyranny with a suspiciously fascist but eminently sensible world state.

...only the beginning

With World War Two satisfying anyone's appetite for destruction, the apocalypse movie went like the war's Big Bang finale and provided the science fiction boom of the 1950s with something really scary to worry about. The twin fears of The Bomb and The Committs provide a perfect precursor for many visioned, 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, daydreaming people of 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), Monolith Monsters (1960), and The 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 purebreds. Aryan-looking Good Guys are being threatened by hideously mutated, radioactive, scuzzbag Bad Guys, but are saved when the macho intruder from our world chips in with some good old scientific knowhow and a few strong right hooks 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-armedageddon Soldier Blue (1970) in which peace-loving three-eyed monsters are massacred by innocent human beings. However, Captive Women (1952) is 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 g in which it is not terribly hideous Mute (Ron Randell) marries a hubba-hubba Norm 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 unusual but functioning new society.

The first serious treatment of nuclear warfare in the cinema was Alain Robbe-Grillet's taut 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 America which Adams and Eve to settle down at the last out para pass 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-littered streets have a momentary buzz of horror. With Five the World Ended (1956), Roger Corman made 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 looked 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-Moreland.

Failing between the Serious and Non-Serious strains are Albert Zugsmith's hysterically awful Communist distate Invasion U.S.A. (1953), which had the distinction of scaring the pants of Louella Parsons, and Ronald MacDougall's oddly unforgettable The World, The Flesh and The Devil (1960) in which Mel Ferrer, Harry Belafonte and Larry Stevens, as the remnants of humanity after a war fought with radioactive gas (!), 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 Nuke 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 Only 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
populated by descendants of Richard Denning and Lori Nelson?

More expensive science fiction found the prospect of World War Three so unbearable (or uncommercial) that they substituted a world-destroying natural disaster or an alien invasion for the mushroom cloud in order to present images of the destruction of civilisation. In When Worlds Collide (1951), War of the Worlds (1953), Earth Versus the Flying Saucers (1956), The Mysterians (1958), The Day The Earth Caught Fire (1962) and Day of the Triffids (1963), the skyscrapers came tumbling down, tidal waves surge through New York, alien aardvarks rampage in Tokyo, London fires, and humanity descends into savagery with an almost monotonous regularity. These films present a particularly bleak picture of our civil defence measures which are not only unable to deal with the Martian war machines but handle the rioting survivors very badly – in War of the Worlds, desperately needed medical supplies are trumped by a mob, and in The Day The Earth Caught Fire, Chelsea beatniks greet the end of the world with a jazz party that gets out of hand. “You know, I'mbeginning to think that these disasters only bring out the worst in people,” says a minor character in Earthquake (1974) when National Guardsman Marjoe Gortner uses his badge to get local punks to used to hassle him summarily executed, and even attempts to force himself on Victoria Principal. The film may be silly, but the point is well made.

As usual, the most affecting images of desolation come from the cheapest, lousiest movies. War of the Worlds and The Mysterians may be fine when it comes to noisy battles, but cheesemap quickly like Target: Earth (1954), The Earth Dies Screaming (1964), Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150 AD (1966), and Where Have All the People Gone? (1974), unable to afford explosive special effects, have a few unsettling moments of quiet despair amid the boring B-movie dialogue. The second Dr Who film, if not quite as effeminate or depressing as the original TV serial, makes particularly good use of blitzen London locations to suggest a decaying city of the future. By now, the central purpose of the holocaust in these films was evident. For all the anti-nuke platitudes, the catastrophes of these movies were designed not to put over a message, but to get rid of all the boring people in the world. With heroes and villains alike removed, from the constraints of civilisation, there are no legal niceties to get in the way of entertain crap, no-holds-barred, shoot-'em-ups. After the apoc- lypse, the world becomes the large scale equivalent of those ‘wide open’ lawless frontier towns that need a Wyatt Earp to clean up and make safe for the womenfolk.

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 tolerant. 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 whipping it up as he rides into oblivion with a hydrogen bomb bucking like a bronc 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 Savoy Lumsden'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 cool and radical chic, and the very idea of conflict imaginable in Strangelove, Fail Safe and The Bedford Incident (1965) 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-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 Hells' Angels become the new middle 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 kick El Paisa” 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 funnier view of the End of the World than Richard Lester's goonish, overrated The Bed Sitting Room (1960) and sharper in its look at pop art amid the ruins than Jim McBride's offsets, semi-underground, prettily dull Glen and Randa (1971). It is perhaps the first post-holocaust adventure/adventure fun flick, and Corman would be instrumental in furthering the genre with his productions of Paul Bartel's Death Race 2000 (1974), a cartoonish, violent, and thrilling tale of gladiatorial combat on Transamericana freeways, and Deathst甫t (1978), the far-future template for lousy movies like The New Barbarians (1982), which has lots of bikes blowing up and strongly stupid performances from heroines Claudia Jennings and villain Richard Lynch.

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 dawning of the Age of Aquarius was greeted in the cinema by two 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), Duane 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 poses 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 feasting. 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 stuffy 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.
They don't make 'em like that any more...

is what Charlton Heston mutters 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-Trekkin 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 subterranean 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 creche 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 straights, 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 Wex 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 apocolypse 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-apocalyptic 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 Heston, 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 Frankenheimer's lurid 99 and 44/100 Dead, the fixer 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 Plissken 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 Nightrider 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 Nightrider, 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 Nightrider'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 saw 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 redub 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, Richtofen helmet, and sunflower button-niere). An old-timer narrates the legend of the Road Warrior who threw in with the hippie good 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 droog 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 (1986) or Class of 1984 get their way and drive the scum off our streets with flamethrowers and meat grinders. 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 (1965), 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. Elia 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-andchrome-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 (1983), from another Centurioni 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 Forsythe-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 Sheckley'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, who, with world war replaced by a single combat in The Peace Game/The Gladiators (1969), and the National Guard hunting down hippies radicals for the practise in Punishment Park (1970). Watkins' fake documentaries overstated 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 exploitation with camp commandants hunting political prisoners Steve Railsback and Olivia Hussey through the outback. Explosive crossbow bolts, 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-hoppers and, of course, weird costumes and ultra-violence was already with us. There were a few punkplodination hip, 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 sidekick, Dr Dee (Richard O'Brien) take a trip of post-breakdown London, encountering many oddball characters, and lots of horrific, grim burning, barbed 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, Llittle Nell, and Orlando to make up for embarasingly 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 Piers Haggard's The Guernness Masscon (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 actors were considered by John Carpenter for the the role of Snake Plissken in Escape From New York before he settled on his cheaper friend, Kurt Russell. In 1997, Manhattan is walled off as a maximum security prison, and police chief Lee Van Cleef has to recruit bank-robbing WW III hero Plissken to haul out President Donald Pleasence, who has crashed in the middle of the Algo. Carpenter established his plot with brisk, economical strokes that promise a high-energy, satirical adventure, but once all the fun 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 severed heads on parking meters, a Chuck 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 annoying precisely because the minutely-detailed, cluttered background completely obscures the upfront story, which means that the strong plot and sly humour 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 in a catsuit, and Rutger Hauer as a tough priest who 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 playground of John Badham's Blue Thunder (1982), in which Roy Scheider diverts heatseeking missiles into skycrapers and to hell with the innocent bystanders, and Francis Coppola's Rumble Fish (1983), a persuasive, poetic look at the rag 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 1990: I Guerrieri dei Posti Morti (1980), an unashamed blend of The Warriors and Escape From New York which takes poetic justice to its logical conclusion by stealing all the biker-queasy 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 fascist hit of bludgeoneering, 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 Bronx Warriors value for money. In addition to Vic Morrow as a renegade cop with a line in neo-Shakespearean rant ("Ist the enemy have no survivors this day, horsemen!")), the Bronx is populated by a tap-dancing Broadway chorus with deadly swordcane, 1950s 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 (1987), Sergio Martino's 2099: Dopo la Capita di New York/2099: After the Fall of New York (1983), Jules Harrison's Barbarians 2000 (1983), and Uncle Lucio Fulci's 2033 AD: I Centurioni del Futuro/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, costuming, cynical attitude, and over loud soundtrack engine noise from the perennially popular bike gang/hot rod rebel cycle. The genre got a kick start in 1954 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 Hotrod 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, having beach parties, and singing over Annette Funicello, Roger Corman revived the cycle through picture with The Wild Angels, a memorable bit of gas-burn, 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 'Mr President' by his followers) than the one they are escaping from. The real-life Hell's Angels chapter that 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 bikersploitation 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 Deathsport (where the perfectly ordinary bikes 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 titles. 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 Knightriders (1981), in which a cycle gang resurrect 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 Cokliss' Battlettruck (1981) deals with the lust for gas and the overthrow of a tyrant who rules the road with his lorry levithan. One gets the feeling that there will be a lot of similar tales, as witness the Filipine 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 highspot of which is its ad line, "once you've survived the holocaust, you've got to be tough!" In 1999, the survivors are reduced to dressing up in stupid leather coppieces and driving their battered dune buggies around the Cinecitta rubbish dump. The baddies are a group of fanatic gay libbers 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 sneering "Books? That's what started this whole apocalypsis!"

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 hackneyed stories up with heady tritvad effects, more or less imaginative mutant characters, and garbage-heap sculpture vehicles, and are differentiated only by the fact that Lammot 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 Maxish 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 hi-jinx of callous films like Damnation Alley 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 War Games (1983) is a Disneyish fable about technological innocence, but its view of a Deterrent machine that might or might not be built is still unsettling. But the most uptight and disturbing of the minute nuke 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 a chilling seriousness. Neither film is far 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 recognisable 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 insidiously 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 the supplied 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 petrol monoxide poisoning.

Movie poster mags — each one in full colour throughout, featuring eight fact and photo-packed pages of information on the film plus a giant (almost 2ft x 3ft) full-colour poster. Thirteen official film poster mags to choose from. Bracketed details give poster subject, which is often a full reproduction of the UK film release poster.

P1 Raiders of the Lost Ark
(Amsell film poster)
P2 For Your Eyes Only
(Film poster)
P3 Heavy Metal
(Achilleos film poster)
P4 Popeye
(Popeye/Olive/Sweetpea)
P5 Clash of the Titans
(Cutting sword film poster)
P6 Superman II
(Flying villains film poster)
P7 Flash Gordon
(Film poster — no text)
P8 Kung Fu (few only)
(Carradine action poster)
P9 Mommie Dearest
(Film poster)
P10 The Blue Lagoon
(Atkins/Shields)
P11 Legend of the Lone Ranger
(Film poster)
P12 Clash of the Titans
(Sweetpea)
P13 Doc Savage (few only)
(Ron Ely poster)

All above poster mags at 75p each (includes post & packing) or any five for £3; the full set at a special price of £7.50 (the equivalent of paying for ten, and 3 at no cost).

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR BROCHURES

B1 Shogun: 27 full colour illustrations, including pre-production visuals. Story synopsis, biographies and film facts.


Souvenir brochures at 95p each (includes post and packing) or the pair for £1.50

Make all postal orders/cheques (sorry, no cash) payable to QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and write to us at:

QUALITY MAIL SALE, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP

Shops and dealers: Please enquire about our generous bulk discounts.

Orders outside UK: Seamail, add £1 ($2.00 US); Airmail, add full cost of magazines.
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 any more, 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 hard work.

Paul Blaisdell made monsters for the movies. His Beast was his first (but certainly not his best). 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 Saucermen (known as Invasion of the Hell Creatures in Britain). But such was the climate of film production in the 1950's. 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 this 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 Lor 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.

by RANDY PALMER
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 monster's 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 Cormen. Russoff's concept for the picture Venus was shown to Paul, who suggested the design for the monster be based on what was then (1956) known about the physiognomy of Venus.

"The creature was to be 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 do anything 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 Cormen decided we were going to have to bring the creature out of the cave in order to keep on schedule," Paul told me. "Someone 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 Tri-X film, he was still going to have difficulty. I became a question of doing the last 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 her the best way I could but she was clumsy, and she looks clumsy in the movie. It was just one of those things on a low-budget movie!"

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 creature I've ever created for American 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 pluck 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 slumped and slumbered around, but when you see it on film it's just droopy. 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 producers 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 revamp 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 created 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, as 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 crawled across the pavement and punctures 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 Million Fans. 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.
Forget the shear 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-reads, 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, Mumsy’s in charge; or more like the Grandads in the White House and the Kremlin.

Doesn’t our war minister realise that a nuclear strike will simply melt our brains, fry our balls and separate flesh from bone, slower 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 stores. 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. Kruize 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 delivery days and almost every night, we collaborated on a movie idea based on newspaper stories we kept reading.”

“We peddled the script intensively 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, Synchrofilm, 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 Working starring Jerry Lewis (who should be nameless in any magazine).

In case you’re losing interest and thinking Igo sounds like a sissy, less than genre man, forget it. He should mention his films with editor 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. (Naturally, 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 Tobe 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 scripter – 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 film, it has an important message. It’s gratifying 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 identity 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 there- fore, 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, they had to shelve an improved script, and brushing up their own idealism – as if none of them were in it for the money – the rest of the crew 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 damn 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 effect- chian. 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 Henry 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 schoolteacher, 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 Citizens' 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."

(Top) 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 CHW 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 Burning Offerings. Young Lee Montgomery as the missing Mike.

Also in the cast, as one of Jody's schmucks, 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 Cardos 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.

Before even the day after of nuclear holocaust, there is the polluted night before of Mutant.
Three stations from Charing Cross you can meet your favourite heroes at

QUALITY COMICS

South London's top fantasy bookshop · 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 Tel: (01) 691-7327

* American comics from the 1940s to the 1980s. Prices: 10p up

* American & British fantasy film magazines from 30p

* Original comicbook art from £5

* SF paperbacks at 50p - Ace, Bantam, Del Ray, etc.

* Over 50,000 items currently in stock

QUALITY COMICS

Open Monday-Saturday 10-6.00

Comics bought sold & exchanged

Opposite Goldsmith College

Buses: 21, 36, 53, 141, 171, 177

Train or Underground to:

New Cross or New Cross Gate
THE POETRY OF EVIL
by Stephen Jones
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 kinds of films 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 (dis)appeared 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 Matheson (The Incredible Shrinking Man). 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 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 (largely by previous AIP standards — was used to full advantage (the fiery climax was still being revived as stock footage years later)! Price gave a subtle 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.

"They didn't have a whole lot of money 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 in 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 utilized 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 Hall's imaginative set designs and Les Baxter's zany 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 Nefertite Regina Del Nilo (1961, Queen of the Nile), a white-slaver pitted against Ricardo Montalban's swashbuckling hero in Gordon, II Pirata Nero (1961, The Black Buccaneer or also known as The Rage of the Black 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 Sydney 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 absurd... Price, whom I like as 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 (1962) 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 Shakespearian 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 mumified 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 humourous 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 duel 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

Price meets his “lost Lenore” in the Corman classic The Raven whilst a young Jack Nicholson looks on (top). As a lawman obsessed with homicidal urges, Price gave a compelling performance in Diary of a Madman (below).
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 Horla, by French writer Guy de Maupassant. Reginald Le Borg directed Diary of a Madman (1963), in which Price gave a good performance as a monster, 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 director 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 business by murdering their clients. However, it was left to Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone and comedy team 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 forebear, 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., Elisha 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 B. Wright Campbell and combined the film story with another Poe tale, Hop Toad. Price gave an outstanding performance as the Devil-worshippers Prospero, an enigmatic 12th-century Italian prince attempting to hold his castle and its revellers against the onslaught of the red death, ravaging the country outside. Price allowed his character some fine touches of sardonic humour. Nicholas Roeg’s colour 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, hypnolism, Egyptian magic and hints of necrophilia made this one of the best, and most understated, movies of Price’s career. The prowling photography atmospherically captured the 300-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 Lyrinnes. 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 diabolically brilliant scientist of the title of Norman Taurog’s science fiction spoof Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine (1965). This hit-and-miss comedy parodied 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 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 Cicco, 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 Conqueror Worm to give the false impression that it was a continuation of the AIP series. In a powerful performance, Price played Matthew Hopkins, an opportunistic 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 and filmed in real 17th-century English 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 Chatauga (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 Moler 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 Curse of the Faceless Ones, but a dramatic moment from The Haunted Palace.)
poem about a dead woman calling her lover back to the graveside.

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 lachklustre 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 — but 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 film-makers.

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 Dolly 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...

**TONY TENSER presents**

**VINCENT PRICE**

**RUPERT DAVIES**

**HILARY DWYER**

Directed by MICHAEL REEVES  Producers ARNOLD MILLER-PHILIP WADDILOVE-LOUIS M. HEYWARD

REleased by TIGON PICTURES LTD.  A TIGON BRITISH - AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION
| ISSUE ONE   | £1.00($) | Marvelman, Legend of Presto John, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton. Special features: "True Story" by Moore & Gibbons, Marvelman article. |
| ISSUE NINE | 75p($)   | Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Warpsmith by Alan Moore & Garry Leach. |
| ISSUE THIRTEEN | 75p($) | Marvelman, Bojeffries Saga, Shandor, V for Vendetta, Dispatches. Special features: Zirk by Henry & Leach, Twilight World preview; Parkhouse/Ridgway SF short story; Zirk pin-up. |
| ISSUE SEVENTEEN | 75p($) | V for Vendetta, Twilight World conclusion; The Marvelman Family 12 page complete strip. Special features: Jaramsheela solo strip + colour pin-up; Alan Moore on creating V for Vendetta. |
| ISSUE TEN   | 75p($)   | Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special features: Warpsmith conclusion + Warpsmith colour pin-up. |
| ISSUE FOURTEEN | 75p($) | Marvelman, Twilight World, V for Vendetta, Father Shandor Demon Stalker, Dispatches. Special features: Ektryn by Cam Kennedy + Future History article. |

**QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS,**
3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND

Wholesale enquiries to: Titan Distributors, P.O. Box 250, London EN1.
NO, MINUTES LATE*, if

SHAN DOR STUDY.

S'I-Ite

S^I-Ite

'S'Ve

1'S'1

™

I'S'

F

T00

P00

A 21 page adaptation
by
DEZ SKINN & PAUL NEARY

DRACULA PRINCE OF DARKNESS
A 16 page adaptation by
DONNE (AXA) AVENELL &
JOHN BOLTON

plus...

JOHN BOLTON'S DRACULA Sketchbook
20 pencil sketches previously unpublished

A QUALITY SPECIAL on sale now 70P/$2
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 titles 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 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 seafloor world that time forgot.

A startling pre-credits decapitation sequence sets the tone for Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed. Hammer's first release of 1969. By far the grimmiest 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, under the name Fenner, hiding from the police at a boarding house run by pretty, young Anna Spengler (Veronica Carlson). Her fiance, Karl (Simon Ward), is an 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 Ibelowi 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 wakes after the insanity-curing 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. Freddie Jones, as the film's 'monster', is heart-wrendingly pathic 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 Hoth 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 Hoth 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 conscienceless than ever this time. Lacking any genuinely monstrous 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 which 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 the 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 Hoth 25). This coupled with the director's increasing inactivity without the support of Hammer in the 1960's, led to speculation that the Hammer Frankenstein series, as filmmakers 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 based on a story by Gavin Lyall, Frank Hordern and Martin Davidson. Instead of being straight science-fiction, Moon Zero Two is a rather tongue-in-cheek space western. The film's locations include a futuristic spaceship bar, which is strongly reminiscent of the standard western film saloon (one 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 'claim jumping' in outer space. Naturally, this leads to thrilling shootouts and chases involving a vengeful hero (James Olson and his sidekick against extremely nasty villains. The western model 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 decidedly offbeat, featuring a score by jazzman Don Ellis and title song performed 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 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 Christopher Lee's starring appearance in a Hammer horror since 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 fresh from British television. The revival of Dracula, in the familiar person of Lee, is held off until mid-film. Up until the entrance of Dracula, the film's central character is a decadent young Lord Courtley, played in his feature film debut by Ralph Bates. And Hinds' script was filmed by Hungarian-born director Peter Saddy 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 presented on that matter, and this time they are particularly strong and nasty. The hypocritical perversion of Dracula's victims is matched - and surpassed - by the perversely ironic of their fates. The victims, a trio of well-to-do upper-middle class 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 seamy section of London's East End. Further 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 female garage owner, and these particular items suggest that 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 city church and, under the 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, leaving the group of amoral young people. 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 man. Courtley does this by vapourising their children and then willing them to kill their fathers in varied but consistently grisly ways. It is a credit to director Saddy that these despicable characters become nearly sympathetic figures before their sadistic 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 costume 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 19). 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 mystifying 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 19). 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 graverobber (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, surpris-ingly 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 revived and claiming his first new victim prior to the opening credits. Directed by Roy Ward Baker, Scars Of Dracula is a violent, gory 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 grotesque watchdog.

Much of Scars Of Dracula's bleak atmosphere is developed after the local villagers decide, after all these years (annod films) to destroy Dracula themselves, by setting fire to his castle. The count, resting in a remote area of the castle, survives and takes his 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 symbol of the spiritual corruption of the count himself. Arranging for potential victims to be brought to him, he nonchalantly drains their blood. For greater thrills, he delights in torturing Klove for an act of disobedience and slashes 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 effect-ive shot, he rapidley scales the sheer outer wall of the castle, he moves now like a giant lizard than a man. By the end of Scars Of Dracula, Dracula had taken their saga to the point where Dracula had become so powerful and depraved that it is difficult to imagine the stories 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 Frankensteins 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), Jenny Hanley (Sarah Frankenstein), Christopher Matthews (Paul), Patrick Troughton (Klove), Michael Gwynn (Priest).


Scars of Dracula (1970) - Christopher Lee as Count Dracula, Dennis Waterman (Simon), Jenny Hanley (Sarah Frankenstein), Christopher Matthews (Paul), Patrick Troughton (Klove), Michael Gwynn (Priest).


**FILMS**


**1968-70**


Available at last...

In answer to your demands, Quality Communications is proud to present its custom-made volume binders.

There's no further need for your copies of Warrior and Halls of Horror to be damaged, lost or permanently borrowed, when they can be easily kept in mint condition in presentation volume binders.

Not only are the binders beautiful display pieces, in deep textured blue with gold spine lettering, but they are functional too. Each new issue can be easily slotted into the binder, with no need to remove the covers or damage the staples, and the issues can be referred back to at a glance, transforming loose magazines into top quality hardbound volumes.

All binders are despatched in purpose-built packages to remove the risk of damage in transit, and can make ideal gifts...for a friend or for yourself.

While ordering, why not take an extra volume for the upcoming issues, and transform your favourite magazine into perfect part-work!

As well as Warrior and Halls of Horror binders, we also have available a limited number of binders without spine lettering, which are ideal for any other magazines you collect and wish to preserve. Just to be sure the magazine is no more than 11½" deep.

As a bonus, all volume binders come with sufficient dry-transfer gold-coloured lettering to enable you to mark the volume number and the year as your collection grows.

All binders are £3.75 each within the British Isles (post included). Overseas: $12.00 (U.S.) or equivalent. Airmail: add $4.00.

Make all postal orders/cheques (sorry, no cash) payable to QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and write to us at:

QUALITY MAIL SALE, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP
T here are depths of darkness in any
human mind to which the logic of story-telling 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
does 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. Never-
theless I tend to agree with Stamm that *Pet
Sematary* ultimately fails, 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
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 damming 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 this 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 intro-
duces by contradicting Lovecraft thus: “It’s
probably wrong to believe there can be any limit
to the horror which the human mind can experi-
ence” – 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 his nerve fails him.

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 carica-
ture 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 it is a heart of
gold, when actually we know that underneath
that vicious behavior it 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 valu-
able 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 *Claw,* the first published work of
Norfolk horror novelist Jay Ramsay, 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
could reason 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, it 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 obscure
horrible 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 wrote the
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 truly
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.

**Copyright © 1984 Ramsey Campbell**
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... "BUT TONIGHT I WILL DREAM OF EVEN GREATER THINGS... HAVE TO WAIT FOR... TONIGHT!"

HIS MIND RECALLS THE DREAM WITH REIGN...

THE NIGHT HOLDS TERROR

THE VILLAGERS ARE ECSTATIC...

THE WITCHFINDER IS APPREHEND...
AND SO, EVENTUALLY, NIGHT FALLS AND WITH IT COMES A NEW DREAM FOR BELASCO...

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

AHHHEE!

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

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

SO END ALL ENEMIES OF VLAD THE IMPALEER...

AND WHEN BELASCO WOKE 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?

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE... I WON'T LET IT! IT'S ONLY A DREAM!

WHAAAT? M- MY HANDS — THEY'RE COVERED... IN BLOOD!
ONCE ASLEEP, BELASCO HAD NO CONTROL OVER HIS DREAMS. AND SO WHEN NIGHT CAME...

THE MUDSY STREETS OF LATE 19TH CENTURY EDINBURGH WERE A BREEDING GROUND FOR ONE OF THE MOST UNNO NLY OF NEFARIOUS TRICKS... BODY SNATCHING.

RIGHT BURKE! 'OLD 'ER STEADY...

THE PARTNERSHIP OF BURKE AND HARE WERE ABOUT TO CLAIM ANOTHER VICTIM...

'EMON HARE, URRY UP! COSH 'ER ... TORE SHE WAKES THE WHOLE CITY!

NAIIIEEE!!

C'MON, HARE, URRY UP! COSH 'ER! COSH 'ER!

THE GRISLY GOO DS ARE DELIVERED...

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

AND WHEN A NERVOUS BELASCO AWAKENED...

FARESH ALRIGHT, GUV; SHE'S STILL WARM!

AND WHEN A NERVOUS BELASCO AWAKENED...

WHAA... WHERE IS... WHERE AM...?

B. ELASCO TRIES TO ESCAPE VIA EXCESS ALCOHOL...

DEEP IN A DRUNKEN SLUMBER, BELASCO IS NOW EVEN MORE VULNERABLE TO WHAT EVER 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 1896 London...

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

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

What's this...? What's happening...?

Kill 'im! Kill the Ripper!

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.

And, back in Belasco's real, modern day world...
HoH7 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Twins of Evil strip, The Omen, Karloff, The Werewolf, Female Vampires, Devil's Men, Wonder Woman, etc.

HoH8 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Quatermass strip, King Kong, Jekyll & Hyde, Hammer Science Fiction films, Lee's NEW Dracula, etc....

HoH9 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Quatermass Pt 2: Carrie, Kong (1931), Seizure, Squirm, De Palma, Living Dead At Manchester.

HoH10 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Curse of the Werewolf strip, Close Encounters, Sentinel, Fu Manchu, Son of Kong, Shadowman.

HoH11 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Gorgon strip Part 1, Harryhausen speaks, Cushing AS, Dracula, Wizards, Sinbad, Zoltan, Burnt Offerings.

HoH12 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Gorgon strip Part 2, Heretic, Blood City, Witchfinder General, 1933 Invisible Man, Face of Frankenstein, etc...

HoH13 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Plague of Zombies strip; Star Wars; Uncanny; Paris Festival; People That Time Forgot; Godzilla; Zombies.

HoH14 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Million Years BC strip; John Carradine; Romero on Martin + review: Dinosaur films; Paris Festival Films.

HoH15 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Mummy's Shroud strip, Dr. Moreau, Audrey Rose, Blue sunshine, Fanatic, Mummy's feature, Frankenstein etc.

HoH16 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Special Star Wars issue, Rabid, Psycho storyboards, Homebodies, Carreras interview; New Shandor strip.

HoH17 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Vampire Circus strip, Carreras 2, Harryhausen storyboards, Cathy's Curse, Child, Fairgrounds of Horror.

HoH18 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Frankenstein, Dracula and Werewolf strip, Cushing interview, History of Hammer I, Rattlers, Deep Red.

HoH19 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p

HoH20 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Kronos strip, Incredible Meltng Man and Savage Bees reviews, Vampire Hunters feature, Hammer III

HoH21 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p

HoH22 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
The Mummy strip, Sorcerers, Black Sunday, Roger Dicken FX, Hammer mummy films.

HoH23 . . . . . . . . . . . . 45p
Quatermass 2 strip, Last Wave, Argento interview, 3-D films, Rosemary's Baby, The Shout.

HoH24 . . . . . . . . . . . . 50p
Special all comic strip issue: Seven Golden Vampires, Quatermass Xperiment ... 7 stories

HoH25 . . . . . . . . . . . . 75p
Monster Club Pt 1: Bolton strip + 2pg colour poster; Slash Movies, Hammer, Video horror, classic goze, Bloch on Psycho 2.

HoH26 . . . . . . . . . . . . 75p
Monster Club Pt 2; Barbara Steele; Lon Chaney by FJA; Lorre, Lugosi, Pleasence, Karloff, Carra- dine, Critics & censors.

HoH27 . . . . . . . . . . . . 75p

S81 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 55p

S82 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 55p
C-3PO Interview, Spider-Man Movie, Ray Bradbury on Close Encounters, Wizards, The Prisoner, Space Cruiser, Jeff Hawke.

S83 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 55p
Han Solo interview, Quark, Star Trek the movie, Superman, Logan's run, Close Encounters Superman poster, SF films.

Make all cheques/postal orders payable to QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and send to:
QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND