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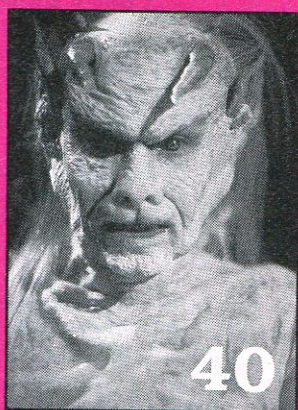
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September 1991

GUTS

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THANK YOU: Mike Accomando, Tony Angelotti, Charles Band, Chris Biggs, Steve Bisette, Reiko Bradley, *Child's Play 3's* cast and crew, Les Daniels, Carl Del Vecchio, Cary Drew, Kevin Eastman, Bill George, Stuart Gordon, Susan Isaacs, Jack Jackson, *Lovecraft's* cast and crew, Leslie Lytel, Lori Marshak, Linda Moore, Cathy Mortenson, Jackie Norris, Philip Nutman, Jean-Paul Ouellette, Tom Phillips, Erica Potter, *The Resurrected's* cast and crew, Maggie Schmidt, John Skipp, Janna Silverstein, Juan Piquer Simon, Gordon Smith, Craig Spector and Berni Wrightson, and no thanks to the producers and star of...but hey, they know who they are. Stop with the phony letters, OK?

Dedicated to H.P. Lovecraft

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ELEGY

Lovecraft Lore

Theme issues can be a refreshing change of pace here in Fango-land. Since I've been on the masthead, we've run multiple-article salutes to *The Exorcist*, *Women of Horror*, Edgar Allan Poe flicks, *Friday the 13th* and Stephen King. Most of these specials succeeded, except perhaps for that Poe edition, in which we devoted several features to a miniboom that went bust faster than the lambada. (My sympathies to all those who suffered through schlockster Harry Alan Towers' awful Poe bastardizations based on our previews in FANGORIA #89.)

And it's that time again, when someone in Hollywood uncovers a hot property and before you know it, a bunch of other filmmakers jump on the bandwagon and a major trend is upon us. Now H.P. Lovecraft is posthumously stepping up to bat, as producers are scrambling to bring the late Rhode Island writer's weird tales to the screen. Three HPL films are already in the can (Dan O'Bannon's *The Resurrected*, J.P. Simon's *Cthulhu Mansion* and HBO's cable chiller *Cast a Deadly Spell*), and at least six more are in development.

This latest Lovecraft wave looks to fare better than the Poe stiff, at least based on the talent behind the scenes. Like Dan O'Bannon. It's been too long (six years!) since he helmed a feature film, and *The Resurrected* displays much of the gruesome promise he delivered on in 1985's *Return of the Living Dead*. FX creator Todd Masters also comes through with a bunch of gruesome monsters, but you couldn't tell from the pix the studio provided. Same old story: They want to keep the creatures under wraps and not ruin it for you readers. Ho hum. Happily, my nagging eventually loosened one photo from their clenched claws. The other HPL movie adapters were far from secretive, flooding us with lots of groovy creature shots from *Cast a Deadly Spell* (that's a Tony Gardner critter on the cover) and the bloody Spanish production *Cthulhu Mansion*, as well as preproduction art from the yet-to-be-filmed projects.

With this trend, however, Lovecraft's influence is stretching beyond celluloid and videotape (where *Bride of Re-Animator* has finally found an eager audience) to other markets. Sandy Petersen's *The Call of Cthulhu* (Chaosium Inc.) remains one of the most popular role-playing games ever created, while the eldritch author's mythos is being rediscovered in comic books. Due later this year is the gargantuan *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft* (Tundra), a collection of old and new adaptations pulled together by GOREZONE columnist Stephen R. Bisette. In addition, from Millennium Publishing comes *H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu*, a new ongoing series adapting and sequelizing many of the master's short stories, including "The Whisperer in Darkness." Adventure Comics should have its *Re-Animator* series out now too. In addition, Lovecraft is still the darling of the small-press field, where his roots appropriately reside.

I grew up reading Poe, Robert Bloch and H.P. Lovecraft, but the latter was always a personal favorite because of the incredible monsters he routinely described and fearfully hinted at. As a kid, I collected the various comic book versions from Warren and Marvel, and hid under the car seat during a drive-in showing of *The Dunwich Horror* (remember Sandy Dvore's great animated title sequence and Les Baxter's cool score?). It's comforting to note that HPL's influence continues to be felt today and has not been completely overshadowed by the literary genre's current megabuck brand names. His works are endlessly reprinted—a Toronto bookstore I visited in June featured nearly a whole shelf of his classics, and the same city boasts an adult boutique named Lovecraft! So it's with fondness and nostalgia that Fango can present a special tribute issue to HPL, who would have been 101 years old this month. Happy birthday, father of Old Ones.

—Anthony Timpone, Editor

The Postal Zone

"Mutant" Mitchell Memories

...I was pleased to see your interview with Cameron Mitchell in Fango #103. However, I must confess I was a touch disappointed that he didn't remember making *Mutant War*. After all, he told me on the set that in 40 years as an actor, it was the worst location he'd ever been on; you'd think something like that would stick in his mind.

Brett Piper
5 Elm Street
Derry, NH 03038

Bothered of the "Bride"

...I recently needed a fix of horror, so I rushed to a midnight showing of *Bride of Re-Animator*. I was ready for another rollercoaster ride like the first film, and wanted to probe deeper into the mysteries of the green serum.

With an open mind, I eagerly watched...but after about 20 minutes, I kept having the weird feeling I'd seen it all before. Sure, the FX are horrific, but what about a new story? Where were all the new revelations? Or am I digging in the wrong grave?

Thanks do go to Bruce Abbott for another outstanding performance, one which carries the film. With his great acting and presence, he has to be one of the best actors in the genre, and hopefully he will go on to bigger and better projects. Let's also hope they decide not to make a third installment—*Bored of Re-Animator!*

"Sacred Boy"
359 Bleecker #2
New York, NY 10014

Viva Les Femmes Horrificue!

...Just a quick note to let you know how much I liked your issue on women and horror. I am female, 24 years old and considered quite intelligent, yet some of my friends don't understand my interest in the genre. It's refreshing to read about females such as Lisa Tuttle and Edith Swensen.

Just the other day I was

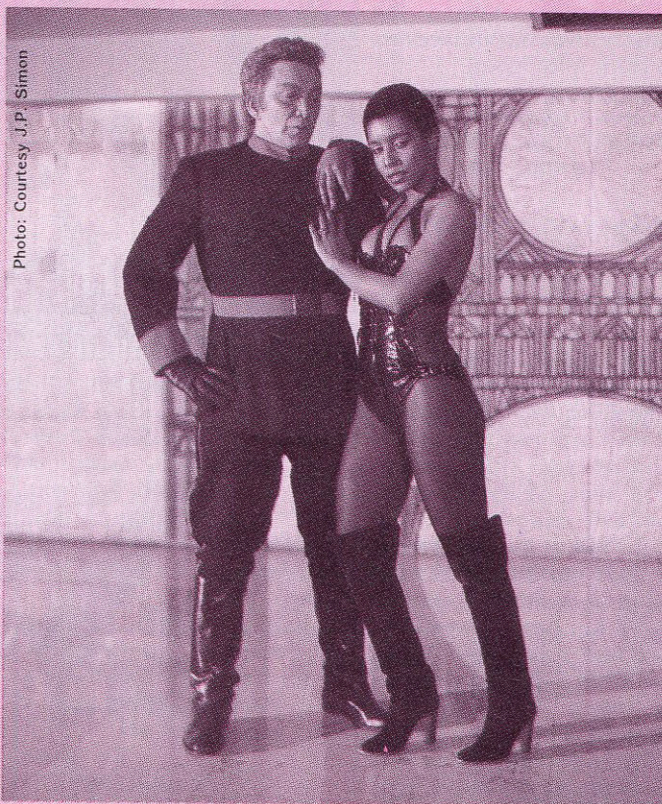


Photo: Courtesy J.P. Simon

Cameron Mitchell parties on in Juan Piquer Simon's *Supersonic Man*. *Mutant War* was another story.

watching a triple feature of *Gates of Hell*, *Hardware* and *Bride of Re-Animator*, and my male cousin was unable to even sit through *Bride*. Being an aspiring writer of horror and a hardcore fan, I wanted to thank you for spotlighting the women in the field.

Shannon
760 Hidden Valley Drive
Richmond, IN 47374

"Psycho" Paths

...I have recently seen many reviewers, not including your own Linda Marotta, put down the book *American Psycho*. I find this extremely offensive, for the simple reason that half the critics who verbally destroy *American Psycho* have the foresight of a maggot, as they can only see the graphic violence Bret

Easton Ellis uses in the book. They don't even try to see past the blood and ask the question of what Ellis is actually trying to convey: an age-old theme, but one that has been restated eloquently in the novel. The theme is that the true monsters of society hide behind the empty facades of the yuppie culture. The book illustrates where evil lurks, and how it preys upon the weak to feed its own sadistic hunger.

And the notion of most critics who suggest the book is nothing but a vehicle for gratuitous violence against women is "dead" wrong. Women are often depicted as murderers in novels, and sometimes are worse than the so-called vicious males. Sometimes I ask myself why it is that all of America rises up to protect its women when they are used in a piece of literature that the females do not like or understand, while we don't protect our most common creature, the man.

Eren Celeboglu
609 Little Street
Streator, IL 61364

...I must take exception to Linda Marotta's lack of venom in her review of *American Psycho*. As soon as it came out, I bought a copy—I'd be damned if I let anyone tell me what I should and shouldn't read. Well, I read it...and found it to be



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beyond worthless. The book is slow-moving and unrelentingly sadistic, and its pretensions toward being an indictment of certain pervasive male attitudes seem superficial and only an attempt by Ellis to justify its existence. Don't get me wrong, I love graphic horror—*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is a personal favorite, and as far as books go, I really liked *Off Season*.

But *American Psycho* just seems pointless, linking page after page of dull scenes of the psycho's life with scenes of his extreme cruelty; the overall effect is maddening in its tedium. Perhaps the story's message would have seemed less anemic had it all been condensed into a short story—and it *would* have been one had Ellis left out the in-depth description of every trendy thing his characters are wearing, eating, drinking, etc. Ellis is putting down his characters' excesses while indulging in a bit of literary excess of his own.

As far as Ms. Marotta's review is concerned, I get the impression that perhaps she was afraid of being perceived as too reactionary or feminist had she really come out against the book, in light of its main character's degradation and mutilation of women. If I'm wrong, I apologize. But in the final analysis, it is not *American Psycho's* offensiveness which sinks it. Its final deadly sin is: this *Psycho* BORES.

Andrew Denning
Glen Oaks, NY

Model Coverage

...On behalf of my partners at GEOmetric Design and my fellow garage kit companies, thank you for the great and positive article on monster models in *Fango* #103. The number of letters I have received from your readers is indicative of the great possibilities of this fast-growing hobby. However, as a point of clarification, the reason for the term "garage kit" is that the producers of resin models in the early to mid-'80s worked in garages or some other location to avoid odorizing their homes with resin fumes and driving their families and friends away.

My sincerest compliments to *Fango* and John Wooley for a flattering piece. With your assistance, perhaps the hobby will continue to expand and some of the major studios will make purchasing the rights to their movie characters more affordable.

George T. Stephenson
GEOmetric Design
400 Selby Avenue, Suite 403
St. Paul, MN 55102

Desperately Seeking Scores

...This is an important message for the young filmmakers out in Hollywood: MAKE MORE HORROR MOVIES! For years you've been complaining about the ratings system, and now that it has changed you stop making genre films. When *Henry & June* was released with the NC-17 rating, people were a little worried, but the film still managed to make it into the top 10 its opening weekend. Since then only a few movies have been released with the new rating, and those were only on video.

This weekend I saw that *Bride of Re-Animator* was



Fangs for the model coverage.

Photo: Courtesy GEOmetric Design

playing at a theater in New York. I've already seen it at its U.S. premiere, but why hasn't it been released here in Ohio, especially if it had an R rating? If the profits from *Total Recall*, *Misery*, *Flatliners*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Darkman* and *Silence of the Lambs* haven't proven there is an audience for genre films, I don't know what will.

Jim Turner
Pickerington, OH

...The state of the horror industry today is pitiful indeed. But if you think about it, the industry has been stuck in a rut for the last few years. Your article "State of the Horror Nation" missed a few things, the most overlooked factor being that movies have become nothing more than product to be marketed to the masses. No one cares if the film is good, well-written or breaks new ground; it's all sell, sell, sell. There are few risk-takers left in this country, and the only ones willing to take risks are pushed down in the dirt so the status quo isn't shaken (look what happened to *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*). Beyond that, there is a complete ignorance of the basics. The script is no longer important, just how many people die and what kind of FX can be done. Without a good script (you know, plot, characterization, good dialogue with maybe a dash of wit), you've got no movie. I don't care what gimmicks they contain, today's films lack the human element.

Hart D. Fisher
51 E. Chalmers, #1
Champaign, IL 61820



Cthulhu Art: K.S. Kalkhoven

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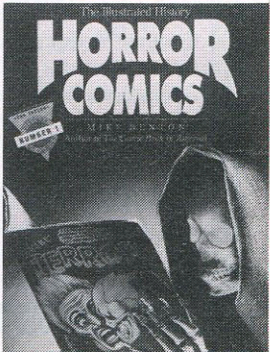
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NOTLD INVASION

The FANGORIA Fright File of up-to-the-minute newsbreaks
and other horrible happenings!



Photo: Dennis Daniel

Zombie extras Marianne Walter and Gahan Wilson joined Skipp and Spector (left and right, respectively) on the *NOTLD* 1990 set.

SKIPP & SPECTOR'S "THE BRIDGE": "For years we've been dumping our garbage over our shoulders," says Craig Spector. "Well, *The Bridge* is about the day our garbage wakes up and bites off our asses."

Skipp & Spector's first novel in two and a half years is more than just a return to form for the pioneering splat-terpunk duo. Sure, there's plenty of "that sick stuff" packed into the novel's pages. And *The Bridge* (due from Bantam next month) also features a monster, which John Skipp calls their most intense yet: "It makes all the other monsters we've written about look like something out of *The Care Bears*." But *The Bridge* also carries within it a serious theme, addressing the fact that we are changing the natural

scheme of things by not disposing of our waste properly—toxic waste in particular. "We did tons of research for this book," comments Skipp. "And in the course of that research we found out that there are people being paid \$30 and \$40 a barrel to illegally dispose of toxic waste on their property. And that at night, on quiet country roads, tanker trucks full of toxic waste are driving along with their valves open. This happens all over. *The Bridge* isn't like *Prophecy*, where the pollution was limited to one river and a mutant bear. And that, we hope, is what makes our book scarier."

Adds Spector: "The premise is loosely based on a book we read, *The End of Nature* by Bill McKibben. Basically it's about how in the brief period of time since the Industrial

Revolution, we have permanently altered the face of nature, the actual atomic substructure itself. And the primordial stew from which we sprang millions of years ago has been changed by us. In its place we have inadvertently created a toxic primordial stew, and it's only a matter of time before something else wakes up and a new form of life comes out of it."

The Bridge tells the story of what happens to a small town in eastern Pennsylvania when the monster comes to Maple Street. "The monster is a kind of sentient toxicity," reveals Spector. "Its medium is liquid, and it can access the toxicity in just about anything else. And at this point just about everything you encounter in the environment—from the food you eat to the air you breathe to your own body—has got some kind of toxin in it."

The duo took more than a year to write the first 100 pages, then ripped them up. "It sucked," comments Skipp. "We didn't have the monster nailed down; we didn't have the novel pegged."

But once they did, *The Bridge* took off. "The writing was intense," judges Spector. "We papered the whole third floor in my room with a storyboard for the novel. And we had the novel divided into scenes, like a film production schedule. John was one camera, and I was another. And we each had certain scenes to shoot on certain days. We literally sat back to back at computers, and when we'd fin-

ish a scene we'd hand it over our shoulder to the other so that he could check it out. The first draft was done in three months; the complete novel, in eight. *Light at the End*, for comparison, took two years."

Spector says their writing has improved and evolved. "We have a much cleaner style," he asserts. "Fewer asides. Not so much stripped down as leaner. The power in this book comes from the story; that's one of the things we've learned from working in film."

Currently, the team is working on a werewolf novel called *Animals*. "It will do for werewolves what *Light at the End* did for vampires," they promise. And they're also busy developing both *Deadlines* and *The Bridge* for the big screen.

In addition, Skipp and Spector have written and recorded a soundtrack to the book version of *The Bridge*. "You can listen to it while you're reading the novel," explains Skipp. And the tome will also include a 15-page environmental concerns index at the back. It includes everything from how to properly dispose of batteries to how to write your congressman.

"The index says essentially: *If this book scared you as much as we hope it did, here's what you can do*," offers Skipp. Concludes Spector: "The scary part of it is that we write these horror novels, and yet we can barely keep up with the horrors of reality."

—David Kuehls

THE TERROR

TELETYPE: *Terror of Manhattan*, the Robert Englund vehicle originally conceived as a sequel to his *Phantom of the Opera* remake, has begun production in Leningrad (?!). Directed by Greydon Clark from a script he wrote with Michael J. Murray, it features FX by Louis (*Freddy's Dead*) Lazzara...A new Clive Barker project in the offing is *The Forbidden*, from his *Books of Blood* story. Bernard (*Paperhouse*) Rose is set to direct...Dennis Hopper's next directorial project is *Spirit Moves*, a psychic thriller scripted by Larry B. Williams, from Electric Pictures. Hopper will co-star in the film as well, and also appears in Jack Sholder's vampire pic *Innocent Blood*...Stuart Gordon will direct *Tor*, a forthcoming '50s-style monster flick about a giant snapping turtle co-scripted by his frequent collaborator Dennis Paoli. Paul Maslansky and Benni Korzen are the producers...Word has it that Paramount has been seeking

to relaunch the *Friday the 13th* movie series; one rumor says that Sean Cunningham was approached to produce, but turned the studio down...*Lost Soul*, a supernatural tale about the haunting of a young widow, will be directed by Jonathan Kaplan for Columbia. Stephen (*The Guardian*) Volk and Jeffrey Bell are the writers...*Beauty and the Beast* star Ron Perlman joins the cast of *Sleepwalkers*, while genre faves Robert Z'Dar and Brion James, along with Lou Ferrigno, Charles Napier and Don Stroud, star in *Hell Comes to Frogtown II*. And Stephen King is said to be pushing Marshall Crenshaw for the lead in the upcoming film of *The Stand*! As for castings that weren't, Angus Scrimm and Traci Lords aren't in *976-EVIL II* after all; Patrick O'Bryan, returning from the first, co-stars with Brigitte Nielsen. And Herbert Lom has dropped out of *Puppetmaster III*, which has instead signed Richard Lynch and Walter Gotell. Other Full Moon projects to look

forward to include *Doctor Mordrid*, to be directed by Charles Band with Jeffrey Combs starring as another mad scientist, and *Seedpeople*, an *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* knockoff scripted by Jackson Barr...The team behind *Death Warmred Up* (director David Blyth,

scripter Michael Heath and producer Murray Newey) next bring us *Moonrise*, a vampire comedy starring Al Lewis...Tim Burton's long-lost shorts *Vincent* and *Frankenweenie* will finally see the light of the TV screen via Buena Vista Home Video this fall.




Photo: Courtesy Maitland McDonagh







Rare theatrical screenings of Argento's *Suspiria* and *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* are just two highlights of NYC's 5th Annual Summer Festival of Fantasy, Horror and SF, playing August 9-September 19 at the Film Forum 2. Other favorites on tap include *Horror of Dracula*, *Black Sunday*, *A Bucket of Blood* and *Horror Hotel*. Call (212) 727-8110 for info.





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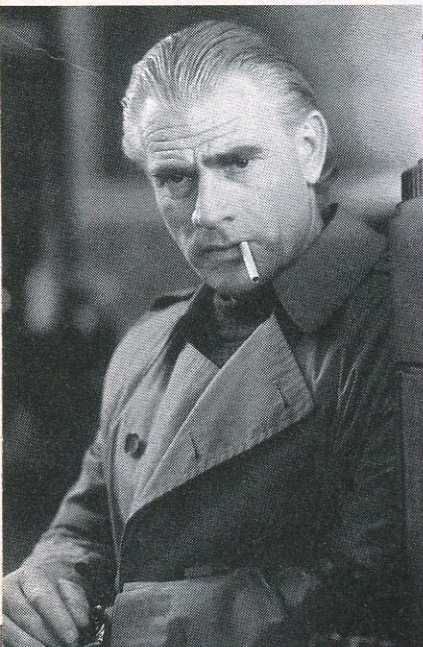
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If it's the future, it must be Deth. Tim Thomerson returns in Charles Band's latest video production *Trancers II*.

VIDEO CHOPPING LIST

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- ❑ **BLOOD MOON (LIVE, 1991):** Sexy students get chopped up Down Under as a madman runs amok at a girls' school in this Australian-made psycho chiller. Originally included a "Fright Break"-style interruption not present on the video.
- ❑ **THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (REPUBLIC, 1919):** Finally available, this silent, expressionistic German masterpiece set the mood and madness for generations of filmmakers. This and three other silent greats from Republic are now up for grabs at \$19.98 apiece.
- ❑ **DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (REPUBLIC, 1920):** This is the John Barrymore silent version; his performance is a must-see in this tale of the ongoing odyssey to find man's evil alter ego.

- ❑ **EVE OF DESTRUCTION (NELSON, 1991):** A beautiful scientist creates an equally beautiful but lethal robot in her own image—and with a similarly flawed psyche. And yes, it winds up going murderously out of control. With Gregory Hines and Renee Soutendijk.
- ❑ **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (REPUBLIC, 1923):** Lon Chaney did his own makeup and wardrobe and startled an unsuspecting cinematic world in this outstanding silent original that still manages to amaze.
- ❑ **INNOCENT PREY (SVS, 1991):** Eight-year-old slasher film finally hits the home screen, starring two veterans of the subgenre: *Halloween* cutie P.J. Soles and *Psycho*'s Martin Balsam. Made in Australia.
- ❑ **NOSFERATU (REPUBLIC, 1922):** F.W. Murnau's camera captured an atmospheric eeriness in Max Schreck's insectoid vampire that has never been equaled but is still copied to this day.
- ❑ **PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING (MCA, 1991):** One of the more entertaining sequels to Hitch's classic traces Norman's depravity to a twisted childhood. Mick Garris' made-for-cable thriller stars the terminally bizarre Anthony Perkins.
- ❑ **ROBOT JOX (RCA/COLUMBIA, 1990):** Stuart Gordon's futuristic epic of giant-robot riders battling for earthly domination in a world gone awry. With FX by the amazing and prolific David Allen.
- ❑ **TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE (WORLD-VISION, 1984-88):** Five fables from the famous TV series: "Word Processor of the Gods" (from Stephen King story);

"Season of Belief" (story by Michael McDowell); "Everybody Needs a Little Love" (Robert Bloch story); "Do Not Open This Box" (directed by Jodie Foster); and "Distant Signals."

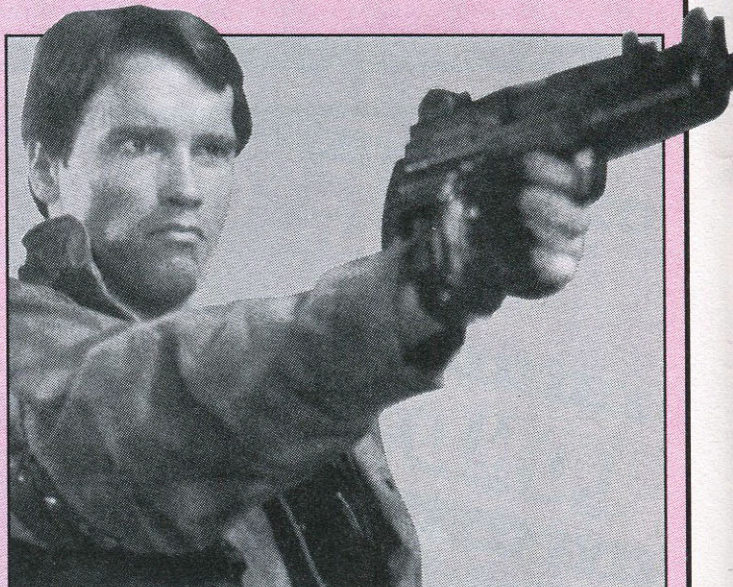
and '60s scream queen Martine Beswick.

—Compiled by Larry Barsky and Michael Gingold

You think it's easy getting our critics to sit through all the new video releases each month? (From *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*)



Photo: Courtesy Eric Caidin



WIN THE TERMINATOR!

You've witnessed the awesome futuristic action of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. Now take another journey through time—back to 1984, the year the original *Terminator* blasted onto movie screens. In association with Hemdale Home Video, we're offering readers a chance to relive the thrills with their own copy of *The Terminator*. Twenty-five winning names will be drawn at random to receive a VHS cassette of the film; 25 more will receive *Terminator* collector posters, and another 15 will win *Terminator* T-shirts. Send your name and address on a postcard to FANGORIA Terminator Contest, 475 Park Avenue South, NY, NY 10016. Hurry! The deadline is September 23, 1991! (*The Terminator* is also available for \$14.95, wherever videos are sold.)



H. P. Lovecraft: THE UNADAPTABLE?

**Boris Karloff
goes to pieces at
the end of *Die,
Monster, Die!***

Many people have tried to bring the visionary writer's words to the silver screen. Only a few have come close to succeeding.

Photo: Courtesy Carl Del Vecchio



Wouldn't it be great if we could dig up H.P. Lovecraft and give him a good shot of Herbert West's day-glo elixir? Think of the possibilities. We could get him to write more stories. Insist he tell us how to pronounce "Cthulhu." And then, after we'd sucked him dry of every drop of eldritch lore, treat him to a marathon Lovecraft film festival just to see the look on his face when he discovers how a generation of filmmakers have adapted his stories.

In the absence of a way to reanimate HPL, we'll have to settle for what he left us. And we can only guess what he might have made of the flood of film adaptations of his works that have spewed forth over the last few years. Certainly he'd be shocked by their sheer number, if not numbed by the incredible liberties taken.

After all, this is the man who walked out in the middle of Tod Browning's *Dracula* back in 1931, and a year later forced himself to sit through the classic James Whale *Frankenstein*, only to pronounce it

By WILL MURRAY



Lives!

disappointing. Lovecraft's idea of a great movie was *Winterset* or *Berkeley Square*, hard as that may be for us, his late 20th-century fans, to imagine.

During his lifetime, Lovecraft had only one known brush with the specter of adaptation. His *Weird Tales* editor, Farnsworth Wright, expressed interest in buying from Lovecraft the radio adaptation rights to his "Dreams in the Witch-House" when he first bought the story in 1933. Despite needing the money, Lovecraft turned down the offer cold.

"It is not likely," the author told Wright, "that *any* really finely wrought weird story—where so much depends upon mood, and on nuances of description—could be changed to a drama without irreparable cheapening and the loss of all that gave it power."

He later confided to a correspondent, "I shall never permit anything bearing my signature to be banalized and vulgarized into the kind of flat infantile twaddle which passes for 'horror tales' amongst radio and cinema audiences!"

Gig Young practices his ventriloquism act in the not-really-Lovecraft adaptation *The Shattered Room*.



Note the familiar name on that tombstone Vincent Price is digging up. (From *The Haunted Palace*)

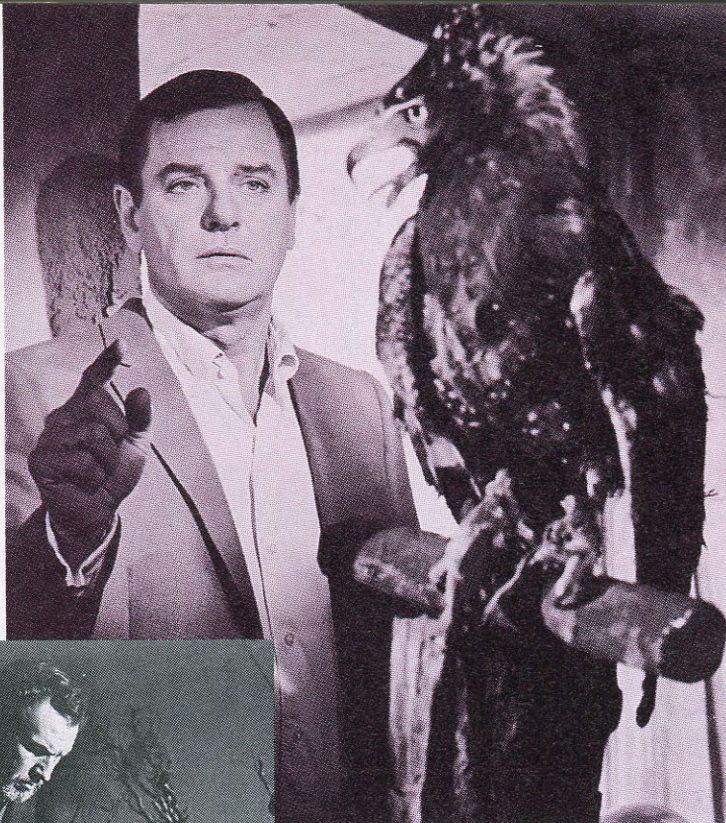


Photo: Courtesy Mike Accomando



Photo: Courtesy Carl Del Vecchio

Of course, H.P. Lovecraft died in 1937, at age 46. If he *were* alive today, he would be 101 on August 20—and probably a hell of a lot crankier than he was in his prime.

The awful truth is the Old Gentleman would never have let his stories reach the screen in the first place. And if any had slipped through the copyright cracks, he might have found little to praise. Certainly he would have had no kind words for the trio of American International Pictures productions which were the first big-screen treatments of his classic stories.

Lovecraft would have been flabbergasted had he lived to see AIP's 1963 movie *The Haunted Palace*. Based upon his only novel, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, it was released as part of AIP's Edgar Allan Poe series. The title is taken from a Poe poem which star Vincent Price

recites just before the action begins.

Whether Lovecraft would have been flattered by being linked with Poe long enough to sit through *The Haunted Palace* makes for fascinating speculation. What he would have found bears only a passing resemblance to his original tale of Charles Dexter Ward, doomed to be possessed by his evil warlock ancestor, Joseph Curwen. The locale is shifted from Lovecraft's beloved home town of Providence to the mythical Arkham, Massachusetts—on the theory, no doubt, that Arkham is more Lovecraftian. All the great stuff about calling up the dead through their "essential salts" is reduced to drive-in movie black magic. Ho hum.

OK, so they kept the character names and threw out virtually everything else. At least they cast Vincent Price as Curwen/Ward and hired *Twilight Zone*'s Charles Beaumont to script the film—although rumor has it that Beaumont wasn't much of a Lovecraft fan. Any movie that stars Vincent Price is worth watching on its own merits, and *The Haunted Palace* is no exception.

AIP's next Lovecraft outing was also set in Arkham—Arkham, England, that is. *Die, Monster, Die!* (1965) was titled *Monster of Terror* in Great Britain, where it was filmed. Based upon one of Lovecraft's greatest stories, "The Colour Out of Space," *Die, Monster, Die!* featured Nick Adams, Suzan Farmer, and a failing Boris Karloff trapped in a slow mix of mad-scientist madness that had more in common with "The Fall of the House of Usher" than it

had with Lovecraft. The author's blight-causing meteorite which houses a gaseous creature of no known color may not be easily filmable, but here it's reduced to a mere radioactive rock that triggers low-budget mutations.

Roger Corman produced the final AIP effort, *The Dunwich Horror* (1970), directed by Daniel (Die, Monster, Die!) Haller. It's closer to its roots than the previous films, and more experimental. "The Dunwich Horror" is possibly the most adaptable of all Lovecraft stories because it has a protagonist and a good-wins-over-evil ending. In fact, the radio show *Suspense* did an excellent Orson Wellesian adaptation of it back in 1945.

In *The Curse*, Lovecraft's evocative masterpiece became nothing more than a vehicle for redneck angst run amuck.

Corman does not. Despite some interesting casting—Dean Stockwell as the strange Wilbur Whateley, Ed Begley as old Wizard Whateley and Sandra Dee as the obligatory pretty young thing Lovecraft scrupulously kept out of his stories—the action simply flounders around until popping like a burst soap bubble when the most malign entity in Lovecraft's repertoire, Yog-Sothoth, finally appears. He looks suspiciously like a giant sea anemone. Corman also changed the ending, so that the bad guys win! Only he could have made the story more Lovecraftian than even Lovecraft had written it.

After *Dunwich*, Lovecraftian film adaptations ceased. The 1967 Warner Bros. Gothic, *The Shattered Room*, was advertised as written by "H.P. Lovecraft and August Derleth." Derleth was Lovecraft's posthumous publisher, the founder of Arkham House, who liked to turn old Lovecraft ideas into new stories and call them collaborations. Lovecraft had as much to do with Derleth's story as you or I—and I don't know about you, but I didn't add a word.

One of Boris Karloff's final films, *The Crimson Cult* (1970), is sometimes said to be based on Lovecraft because it is set in Arkham. Despite suspicious resemblance to "The Dreams in the Witch-House," it is not an adaptation, nor is it worth discussing.

H.P. Lovecraft: A Life Bizarre

Photo: Courtesy Will Murray



The man behind the Mythos—H.P. Lovecraft.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) was simply the greatest horror writer who ever lived.

Edgar Allan Poe may have been the visionary who blazed the primordial path, Stephen King may be the most successful and Clive Barker may be the furthest out on the ever-sharpening cutting edge. But Lovecraft's cosmically original conceptions of Great Cthulhu slumbering in the sunken city of R'lyeth, the dreaded *Necronomicon* and his underlying theme of man's utter insignificance in a cold, remorseless cosmos reverberate in ways that more sophisticated genre writers cannot—or are afraid to—approach.

Lovecraft was the product of a tragic marriage—his father died insane when Lovecraft was only 8 and his unstable mother mentally wasted away over many long years. He grew up in a house filled with 18th-century books, and reading them helped form his early fantasy of being trapped in the wrong time period. He got his love of the fantastic from reading Poe and *The Arabian Nights*.

Lovecraft might not be the icon he is today if *Weird Tales* had not come into existence in 1923. The first pulp bizarre fiction magazine, it showcased his early writings during its first year, giving the obscure writer national exposure. Before, he had

been writing for the amateur press—the fanzines of his day.

Like many geniuses who are ahead of their time, the more Lovecraft grew as a writer, the fewer editors were willing to publish his work. His now-classic "Call of Cthulhu" was twice rejected before *Weird Tales* reluctantly published it. In fact, the majority of his short stories met with cold rejections.

Many misconceptions surround

H.P. Lovecraft: that he was a hermit; that his claims to have invented the *Necronomicon* were a cover story he put forth to conceal the dreaded truth; that he was crazy, or a misanthrope, or a satanist, or a strident xenophobe.

What H.P. Lovecraft was was a brilliant but eccentric dreamer who crossbred horror, science fiction and myth in an amalgam so revolutionary that 21st-century writers of horror will no doubt look to him for inspiration. He did *not* invent the Cthulhu Mythos; other writers attempted to systematize Lovecraft's themes into a cosmic pantheon after his death, and they coined the term. Whether Lovecraft would have approved will never be known.

Lovecraft himself did *not* believe in his fantastic deities, or in God, the devil or the supernatural. He considered himself an atheistic, scientific materialist. Yet images of horror and fantasy fascinated him and fueled his creative life. Many of Lovecraft's stories were inspired by his own dreams.

As a young child, he used to have a recurring nightmare of faceless, devil-like, winged black creatures he called Night-Gaunts which would seize him by his stomach and carry him over horrific, nocturnal abysses and ruined dream cities. In light of the fact that H.P. Lovecraft ultimately died in 1937 from stomach cancer, that image is a chilling if not precognitive foreshadowing of his tragic end.

—Will Murray

There were two Lovecraft adaptations on Rod Serling's classic *Night Gallery* TV series: a good version of a lame story ("Cool Air") and a bad version of a good story ("Pickman's Model"). The problem with "Pickman's Model" is that they showed the monster; Lovecraft's

monsters are generally too horrific to show on film. And when they are presented as stuntmen in latex suits, they look silly.

Ironically, while Lovecraft's work only began to achieve widespread paperback exposure in the early 1970s, Lovecraft films simply didn't

get made for most of the '70s and '80s. That all changed when Charles Band's Empire Pictures brought out *Re-Animator* in 1985.

It's not hard to imagine Lovecraft's reaction to this film: He would have run screaming from the theater in horror. First, it was based on a serial he penned in 1921 for *Home Brew*, a humor magazine on the same level as *Mad*. Lovecraft hated writing "Grewsome Tales," as "Herbert West—Reanimator" was originally titled, even though it was obviously a deadpan satire of *Frankenstein*, and later struck it from his list of acknowledged stories. Secondly, the extremely graphic sex and violence would have repelled the Old Gent worse than a calamari calzone. He detested sex, violence and seafood. Possibly in that order.

If Lovecraft had lasted till 1985, he would have sued the pants off director Stuart Gordon before letting *Re-Animator* get into the theaters. But he would have lost, because "Herbert West—Reanimator" was by



One for the film flubs file: Set visitor Dan Quayle wound up in the background of this *Crimson* Cult scene.

Photo: Courtesy Bill George



Nobody panned David Gale's performance when he brought one of the author's most bizarre creations to cinematic life.

then in the public domain, not to mention a treasure. The strange truth is that *Re-Animator* remains the most faithful to the spirit of the original of all Lovecraftian films to date. Many of the best scenes—such as Dr. Hill's use of a wax head to get past the morgue guard—are taken directly from the story, although reshuffled like so many Tarot cards. The original, by the way, was not a short story, but a collection of episodic tales featuring Herbert West, whom Lovecraft dubbed "that languid Elagabalus of the tombs," and sometimes denigrated as "that cursed little towhead fiend."

Everyone knows what happened after *Re-Animator* took audiences and critics by storm. Anyone who could lay hands on a Lovecraft story tried to bring it to the screen. Empire announced *The Lurking Fear*, predictably Lovecraft's only other *Home Brew* story. They also filmed "The Evil Clergyman" as one of three segments for the planned anthology film *Pulse Pounders*. Then they went belly-up—but not before they released *From Beyond*.

Another Stuart Gordon project, *From Beyond* (1986) was an FX-heavy extravaganza that was almost a literal adaptation of the Lovecraft story of the same name. The problem was the original story was only 10 pages long, and Gordon dispensed with the entire thing before the opening credits started to roll. The footage after the credits was actually a kind of sequel to the pre-credit sequence.

"I know always that I am an Outsider; a stranger in this century and among those who are still men."

—H.P. Lovecraft

The main story had the disconcerting feel of a *Re-Animator* reunion on downers, with Jeffrey Combs playing the too-solemn Dr. Crawford Tillinghast and Barbara Crampton as a too-prim love interest, Dr. Katherine McMichaels. Everyone involved seemed to be taking all the psychosexual weirdness too seriously to pull it off. After the hilarity of *Re-Animator*, some audiences found *From Beyond* turgid and disappointing. But that didn't stop other filmmakers from bringing out new Lovecraft films.

Trans World's *The Curse* (1987)



Sandra Dee finds that maybe sleeping outdoors isn't such a good idea in *The Dunwich Horror*.

6920-20

Photo: Courtesy Carl Del Vecchio

was another adaptation of "The Colour Out of Space." This time the setting was transplanted from Arkham to Tennessee's Tellico Plains, and Lovecraft's evocative masterpiece became nothing more than a vehicle for redneck angst run amuck. You couldn't even call it a remake of *Die, Monster, Die!*; star Wil Wheaton played a character not found in either the AIP film or the original story. The best part of *The Curse* was Claude Akins' over-the-top-and-through-the-woods acting—if you like that sort of thing. Lovecraft would have puked tentacles; "Colour" was his favorite

Re-Animator remains the most faithful to the spirit of the original of all Lovecraftian films to date.

story. The same year also witnessed the direct-to-video release *Forever Evil*, which adapted its monster-god's name (Yog Kathoth) and little else from the author's writings.

The Unnamable (1988) was another very short Lovecraft tale that was put on the rack and stretched by a fiendish scriptwriter into a too-long direct-to-video movie. It featured the usual Lovecraftian trappings: Miskatonic University students (Randolph Carter and Charles Dexter Ward, both lifted from completely different Lovecraft stories!) stumbling across the inevitable copy of the *Necronomicon*, blundering into a haunted house and gibbering in horror at What They Find. The only thing to keep one awake through this flick was a clever creature that, unfortunately, didn't have much to do with the original story, which was about a horror so beyond the pale it could neither be described nor named. Lovecraft would have pointed out the sad fact that the monster was merely a harpy out of Greek mythology.

The most recent Lovecraftian entry is the long-awaited *Bride of Re-Animator*, fresh from a two-year stint on the distributor's shelf. Just like the head of Dr. Hill, whose discovery triggers a new investigation into the now-classic Miskatonic Massacre.

Once again, snippets of the original story are woven into a reasonably organic whole. The opening scene, depicting West and Dan Cain having fun with the casualties in a Peruvian civil war, comes from the

printed installment where they performed much the same blasphemies upon World War I wounded. And the climax, featuring a legion of the reanimated dead wreaking vengeance upon West, is just Lovecraft's original ending cranked up a few decibels. But where *Re-Animator* was fresh, it was also hard to top, and *Bride* does not quite succeed. It needed Stuart Gordon. Or maybe Brian Yuzna, looking for an R rating—or any rating at all—simply tamed the twitchy West and company too much to pull off a miracle twice in a row.

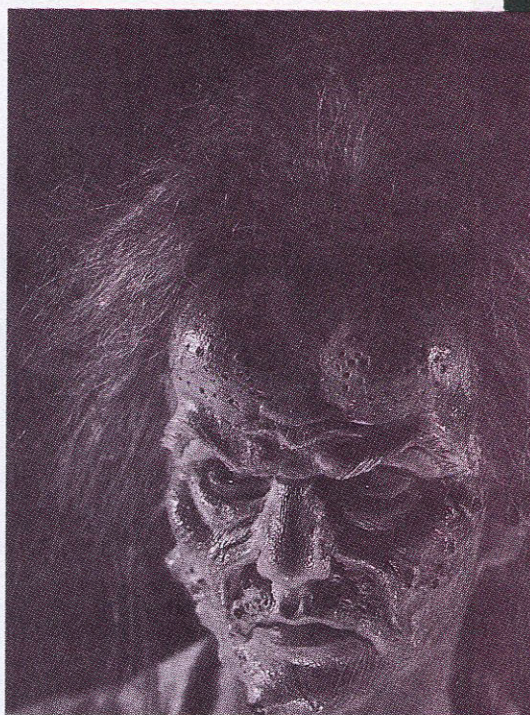
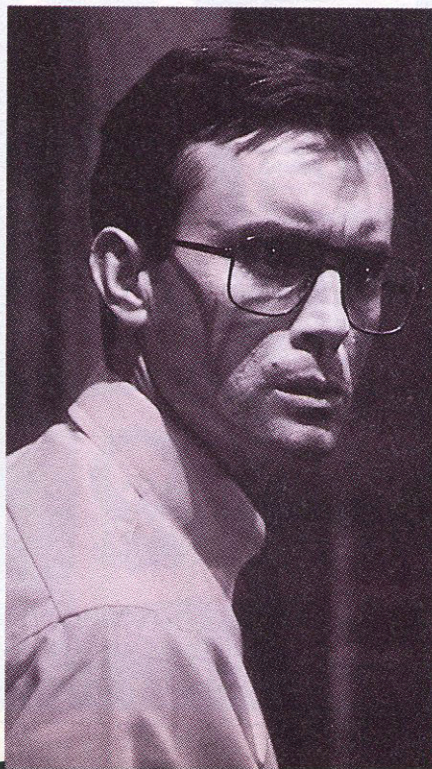
Since it owes as much to Mary Shelley as H.P. Lovecraft—which Yuzna duly acknowledges in the closing credits—*Bride of Re-Animator* is a kind of *Haunted Palace* in reverse. This time, it's Lovecraft's name being used to sell a partial adaptation of another writer's concept. Somehow, one doubts Lovecraft would have been amused.

Still, *Bride of Re-Animator* is the second most faithful Lovecraft adaptation to date. But it isn't the quintessential Lovecraft we're seeing, but Lovecraft the parodist.

Will we ever see the real H.P. Lovecraft up there on the silver screen? Can "The Call of Cthulhu" be filmed? Will *At the Mountains of Madness* or the classic "Shadow Out of Time" be done with the eerie power of the very Lovecraftian *Alien*? Will *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* ever go before the cameras?

At the moment, all that are being

Jeffrey Combs' characterization of Herbert West boosted the Re-Animator movies to the top of the Lovecraft film heap.



After Re-Animator hit, the new boom in schlocky Lovecraft flicks was heralded by The Curse.

promised are the easy-to-film Lovecraft stories. *The Thing on the Doorstep*. *The Unnamable Returns*. Stuff like that. Don't expect the forthcoming *Cthulhu Mansion* to have anything to do with "The Call of Cthulhu." And HBO's cable movie, *Cast a Deadly Spell*, is a period detective story decorated with HPL-inspired beasts. It may work, but it won't be true Lovecraft. There were no private eyes in his world.

Dan O'Bannon's forthcoming *The Resurrected*, a new adaptation of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, is the most promising entry on the horizon. It's not Lovecraft's most representative work. In fact, while he wrote a complete draft, the author never revised it for publication or submitted it anywhere in his lifetime. This may be a case where Lovecraft would have sued to prevent his own story from reaching print, never mind going before the cameras. He considered it unfinished. Still, done faithfully, it could make an excellent film.

The great Lovecraft adaptations have yet to be made. That more films will be made is certain; whether they will live up to their source material remains to be seen. H.P. Lovecraft most often wrote of mood and emotion. He wove his magic not by showing the reader's face into a squirming mass of tentacles, but by letting us glimpse, in the lightning flash of an instant, the tip of the unknown questing into our terrestrial real world, and touching us with the

The Forever Evil monster returns from the dead while Lovecraft turns over in his grave.



mixture of dread awe and delicious anticipation that compelled him to weave his nebulous horrors.

As Lovecraft once explained his literary aims, "My reason for writing stories is to give myself the satisfaction of visualizing more clearly and detailedly and stably the vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy which are conveyed to me by certain sights (scenic, architectural, atmospheric, etc.), ideas, occurrences, and images encountered in art and literature. I choose weird stories because they suit my inclination best—one of my strongest and most persistent wishes being to achieve, momentarily, the illusion of some strange suspension or violation of the galling limitations of time, space and natural law which forever imprison us and frustrate our curiosity about the infinite cosmic spaces beyond the tradition of our sight and analysis."

In other words, Lovecraft considered his work less about monsters and horror than about mood and metaphysics. He was a cosmic visionary. The director who brings the real Lovecraft to the screen will have to be a towering visionary in the same mold. Perhaps he's reading these words even now.



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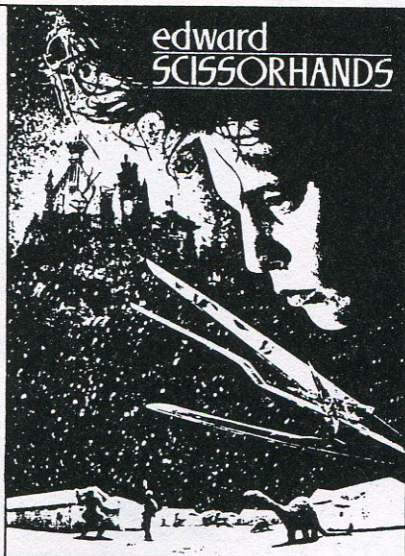
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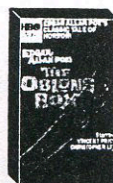
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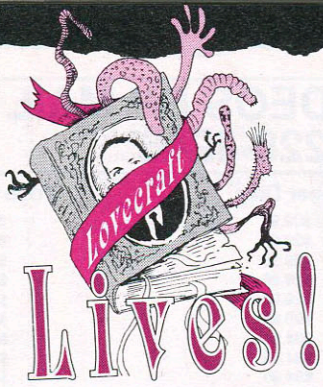


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The Art of Cthulhu Lives!

Lack of explicit description in HPL's stories hasn't stopped comic artists from adapting him, as the upcoming "Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft" proves.

By JOHN WOOLEY

The classic prose of eccentric New Englander H.P. Lovecraft has spun off plenty of adaptations, both classic and eccentric. In the former—and, in some cases, latter—category are the underground comics treatments of Lovecraft stories, done in the late '60s and early '70s by a ragged but supremely talented band of counter-culture artists that included Jack Jackson (Jaxon), Larry Todd and Richard Corben. The latter group includes the AIP film *The Dunwich Horror*, with aging teen queen Sandra Dee fighting the demonic advances of Dean Stockwell, who acts as though he's been getting into some heavy hallucinogens.

In *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft*, an upcoming volume from Tundra Books, an all-star lineup of artists and writers led by editor Stephen Bissette presents not only a collection of the best Lovecraft comics adaptations of all time, but also new treatments of the author's tales and photo-illustrated essays on Lovecraftian films. Tundra is a new outfit, founded by Kevin Eastman, an original creator of the Teenage Mutant—well, you know. Eastman states that the company wants to publish comics material "that advances the medium further, to help it become more accepted as a literary form," and he believes that *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft* is a perfect example of what he's talking about.

"I feel really fortunate that we're able to publish it," he enthuses. "It's something that Steve had been

talking about for a year, and the initial idea really struck me. I get excited about seeing great literature being adapted in graphic narrative form, and I've seen [Lovecraft] done so many times that way, from Corben's 'Rats in the Walls' to Alberto Breccia's 'The Dunwich Horror,' which ran in *Heavy Metal*. Just spectacular stuff.

"Steve said, 'Let's put out a volume, one hardback collection of some of the best that has been done in comic form,'" Eastman continues. "I tripped over myself to say yes, to



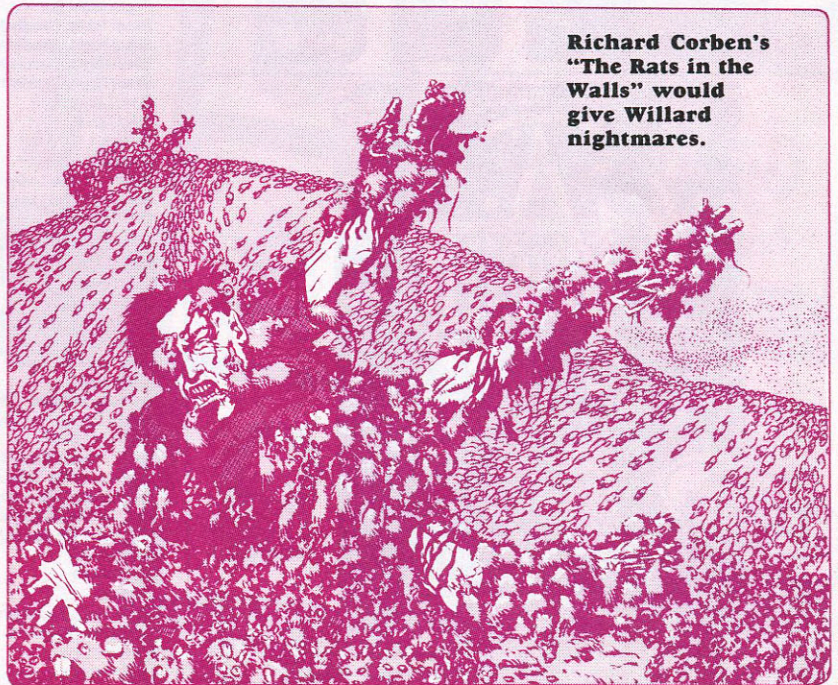
Art: Copyright Jack Jackson

The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft reprints the underground classics of comic legend Jack Jackson. (From "The Hound")

get the project underway. Six months later, we have two hardback versions and possibly a softcover companion. The scope has broadened so beautifully that it now also encompasses some production and painting work Berni Wrightson did for [Stuart Gordon's planned movie] *Shadow Over Innsmouth*."

Eastman notes that his own comic-book education was heavily influenced by "the freedom, creative control and abilities of the people who were doing the underground comics." In fact, Bissette traces the whole Lovecraftian movement in comics back to those same people.

"Really, the backbone of the book is the underground horror comic *Skull Comix*, because of its Lovecraft adaptations," explains Bissette, who



Richard Corben's "The Rats in the Walls" would give Willard nightmares.

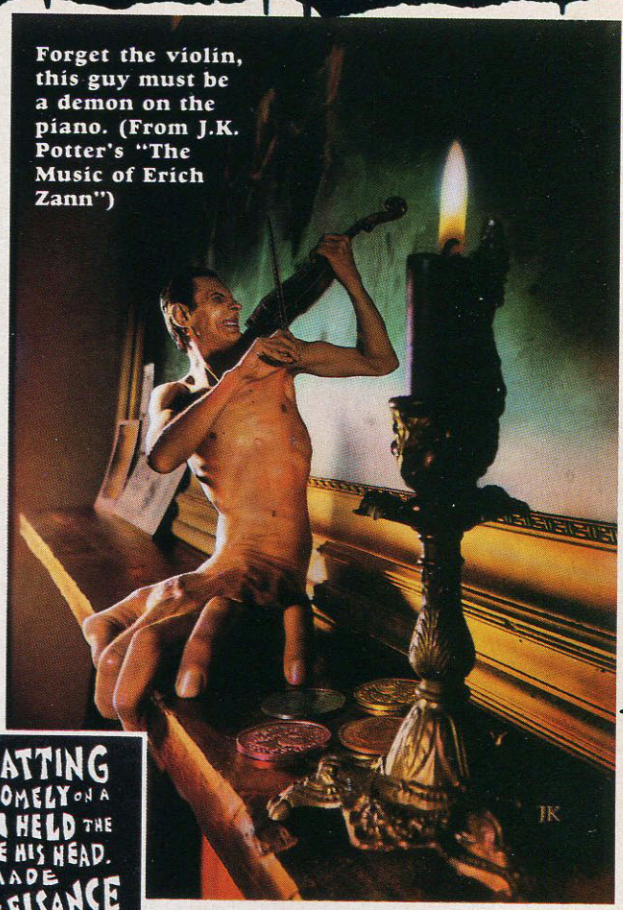
Art: Copyright Richard Corben



Lovecraft's rich myths gave flight to this Michael Zulli illustration.

Art: Copyright Michael Zulli

is contributing his own new adaptation to the book in tandem with Puma Blues artist Michael Zulli. "First and foremost among those was Jack Jackson's 'The Hound,' a cover story for one issue. Also Richard Corben's 'Rats in the Walls,' which to my mind is probably the high point of comic-book adapta-



Forget the violin, this guy must be a demon on the piano. (From J.K. Potter's "The Music of Erich Zann")



Art: Copyright Gahan Wilson

Gahan Wilson brings his macabre, distinctive style to "The Festival."

Schwarzenegger wants to do a movie based on one of Howard's Conan books, when there's a lot of money out there, people can understand it and say, 'OK—where's mine?' But we were not talking about any money, and I think Derleth understood that. His attitude was, 'Be sure and send me a copy. I want to check out what you guys are doing.'

Jackson doesn't remember the late Derleth's reaction to what he and his hippie cohorts at *Skull* came up with. He does remember, however, that he chose to adapt "The Hound" because "it's one of my favorite stories, and a lot of Lovecraft's stuff has to do with weird angles and twisted and convoluted landscapes, and I just didn't think I could do that very well. But 'The Hound' was really appealing to me. I set it on Galveston Island [in Texas]. I just kind of horsed around with it. It wasn't literal, and it wasn't meant to be a formal adaptation. I would have my characters wisecrack and stuff, because that's a neat counterpoint to the seriousness of the story."

The *Skull* stories, with Todd's adaptation now bearing the title of the actual Lovecraft piece it was derived from, will form an important—and fully authorized—part of *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft*. Because of some legal wrangling, it's

**"If you look at writers today, you can trace back to where they read Lovecraft and he made a big impression on them."
—Les Daniels, author**

tions of Lovecraft—until this book. Then there was Larry Todd's 'Shadow Out of Time,' which he called 'The Shadow Out of the Abyss,' because he wasn't sure whether they had the rights or not," Bissette laughs.

"Well, we didn't have any rights," notes underground comics legend Jackson, artist and co-founder of Rip Off Press, which published *Skull*

Comix. "We just had an informal understanding with August Derleth [the executor of Lovecraft's estate and a noted horror writer himself]. This was back before any of those high-powered movie adaptations or anything like that had come out. It's the same way with the Robert E. Howard stories—I'm sure they were much more casual about it than they would be now. When Arnold

not known whether another famous adaptation, Berni Wrightson's "Cool Air," will be included as well. That's the word from Wrightson himself, who did the story for Warren Publications in the '70s. But even if "Cool Air" is held up by Warren's current owners, Wrightson will be handsomely represented by his paintings for the *Shadow Over Innsmouth* movie. "I did a lot of work

"I get excited about seeing great literature being adapted in graphic narrative form."

—Kevin Eastman, publisher

With a mug like that, is it any surprise they call this fellow "The Outsider"? (Art by Kenneth Smith)

on that—60, 70 pieces," notes Wrightson. "It's a huge amount of work, and I don't think they're going to use all of it, so I'm not sure just what or how much is going in. I really can't think of anything else I've done that has to do with Lovecraft, so if 'Cool Air' doesn't make it in, *Innsmouth* will be it."

It was a Fango article featuring some of Wrightson's *Innsmouth* paintings that led Eastman and Bissette to expand *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft* beyond a collection of comics adaptations. "Chas. Balun's Fango article on the unproduced

Shadow Over Innsmouth reproduced some of Berni's paintings," recalls Bissette. "And it was showing Kevin those paintings that convinced him that this shouldn't only be a comics anthology, but also a portfolio of the artists who have illustrated Lovecraft throughout the years. It would be an art book, presenting the imagery that artists, filmmakers and comics artists have brought to Lovecraft's material, presenting it as an art movement, if you will, very specific to the genre and very specific to Lovecraft."

At least two writers are tackling the film section of *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft*. Balun is set to handle a dissection of the Stuart Gordon versions of Lovecraft's writings,

a little satchel. All kinds of stuff."

Daniels will not only deal with the direct Lovecraft adaptations in his portion of the book; he'll also touch on films he feels have been influenced by the Lovecraft approach to horror. And that, he says, covers plenty of territory. "Steve and I both agree that in many ways, the two best Lovecraft movies are *Alien* and Carpenter's *The Thing*, both of which have a tremendous amount of Lovecraft influence. The artist, H.R. Giger, who designed *Alien*, is a tremendous Lovecraft fan—he's even named collections of his work after Lovecraft stories. And the storyline of *The Thing* can be traced back very closely to 'At the Mountains of Madness.' So I think that, while there have been some good Lovecraft movies, the influence that he's had over the field has been significant...his ideas just kind of ooze over into other material."

And, he adds, into other writers as well. "If you look at [horror] writers today, you can usually trace back to a point where they read Lovecraft and he made a big impression on them, or they learned to write from someone who was a Lovecraft fan. In Stephen King's *Danse Macabre*, there's a line about how, when he was a kid, he found a box of books his father had left behind when he left the family. These were mostly Lovecraft books.

"I read Lovecraft when I was a kid," notes Daniels, "and one of the things that affected me was that he was almost a crusader for horror as a legitimate and important art form. If you read not only his stories, but his essays and the letters he wrote, you realize that he felt horror was something very worthwhile, that there was an element of truth and value in it that is worth preserving. And in some sense this is what I got out of Lovecraft, along with the enjoyment of his stories—the idea that this was something worth pursuing. It's not like other fiction, which is always this kind of corny stuff about how you can do it, you can win, everybody's a hero." Daniels laughs again. "Lovecraft said that people don't count for much, keep your head down, don't cause any trouble, a lot of bad things can happen."

At this writing, *The Illustrated H.P. Lovecraft*—which also includes work by Ramsey Campbell, Hannes Bok, Lee Brown Coye, J.K. Potter and British artist John Coulthart, among others—is in production, with no publication date or price scheduled. Bissette doesn't want to speculate on either, but he hopes to have the volume on the stands by year's end.

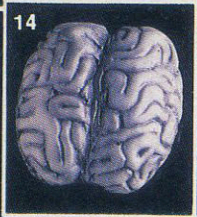
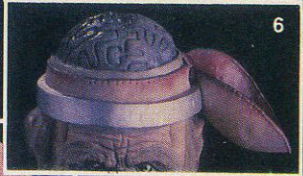
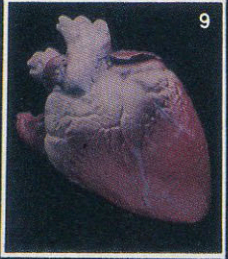
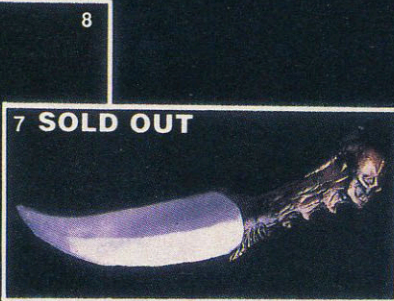
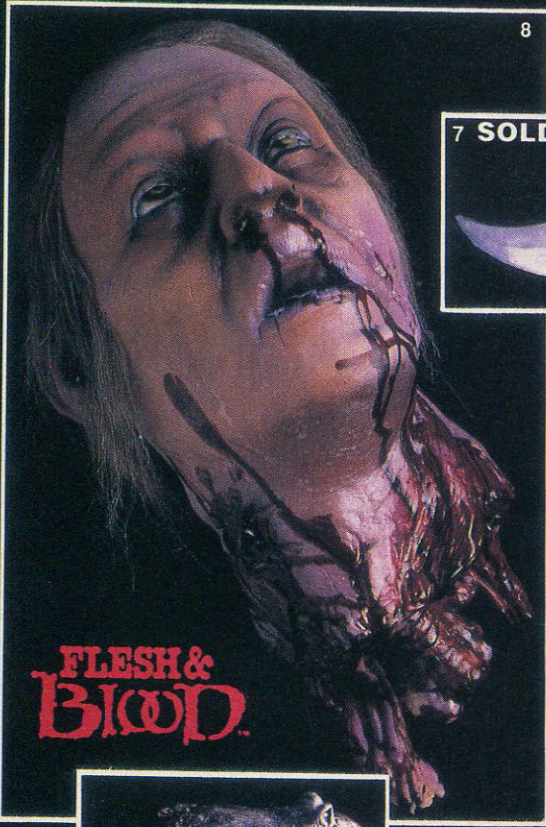
Art: Copyright Kenneth R. Smith

while horror novelist and essayist Les Daniels is composing a history of Lovecraft films. Daniels credits the Gordon movies for beginning the latest Lovecraft cinema cycle. "Those were perfect jobs, although Lovecraft might have been startled by some of the things in them," he laughs. "But nonetheless, when I went back and looked at the Lovecraft stories I hadn't read for a long time, I realized that some of the wackier things in those movies—things you think someone else must've made up—are really present in the originals. Even the business of carrying the head in

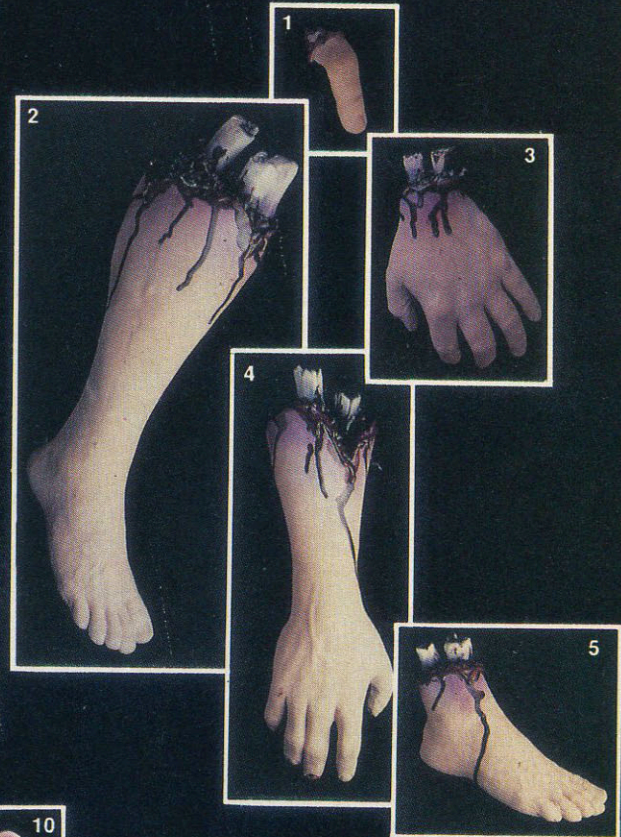
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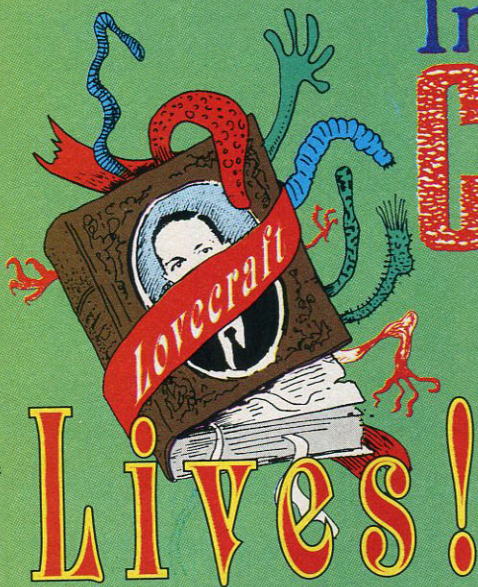
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Inside

CTHULHU MAN



By DAVID SZULKIN

Many filmmakers have tried to express H.P. Lovecraft's unique blend of the sublimely subtle and the flamboyantly imaginative, but there remains a wealth of untapped terrors in the body of his writings. Attempts to draw box office dollars from the Lovecraft label have yet to cease, and one of the most recent such outings is Juan Piquer Simon's *Cthulhu Mansion*.

In this \$3 million Spanish production, Lovecraft's lore provides the impetus for a wild array of occult phenomena, including diabolical body transformations, carnivorous plants, flying knives and a shower stall sequence that gives new meaning to the term "bloodbath." The cast includes noted British thespian Frank (*Lifeforce*) Finlay and William Shatner's daughter Melanie, who has been establishing something of a genre niche for herself with appearances in recent schlockers like *Syngenor* and *The First Power*. *Cthulhu Mansion's* executive producer, Jose G. Maesso, counts Mario Bava's *Lisa and the Devil* among his producing credits.

As Lovecraft devotees may have already guessed, *Cthulhu Mansion* is a far cry from Arkham House. Using the vast Cthulhu mythos as a springboard for its supernatural mayhem, the film owes a great deal more to the original ideas of writer/director Simon than to the stories of the long-deceased writer.

"I took Lovecraft as a point of departure," Simon explains. "In *Cthulhu Mansion*, I tried to penetrate his world of cosmic terror using my own ideas, while assimilating concepts inspired by him. My story could simply be another



Even star Frank Finlay isn't safe from *Cthulhu Mansion's* makeup ravages.

Taking only a cue from Lovecraft, Spanish director Juan Piquer ("Pieces") Simon fashions his own tale of ancient evil.

in the long line of Cthulhu myths."

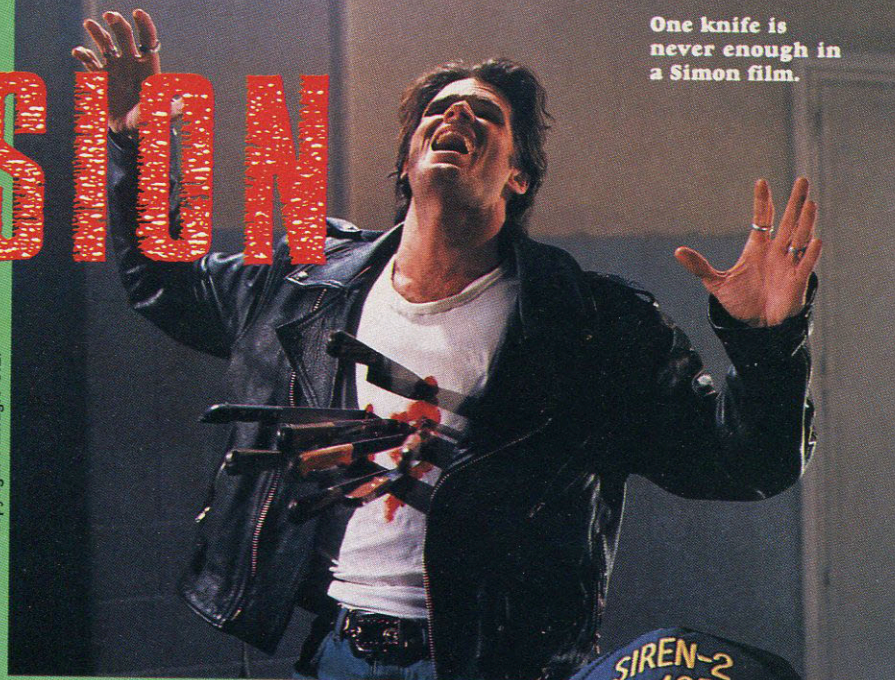
The scenario at hand concerns a magician named Chandu (Finlay), who rediscovers an ancient occult tome bearing the Cthulhu imprint. The *Necronomicon*-like manuscript holds the key to fearsome forces from beyond, and endows its possessor with mystical abilities. While in the midst of his nightly performance at an amusement

park sideshow, Chandu suddenly experiences a hideous premonition of impending murder. Sure enough, the illusionist soon crosses paths with Hawk (Brad Fisher), a lowlife loudmouth whose shabby attempts at a dope deal have gone badly awry. Having murdered two people in the carny already, Hawk orders Chandu to take him and his gang of shady accomplices to the magi-

SIMON

Mansion Photos: Copyright Filmagic S.L.

One knife is never enough in a Simon film.



Director Simon freely admits to having taken liberties with the HPL source material.

cian's home, where the punks can lay low until the heat blows over.

Once inside the confines of Chandu's isolated, foreboding mansion, the gang members must reckon with entities far more sinister than any cocaine candyman, and violent death is quick to ensue. But Chandu soon learns that the ancient emissaries of Cthulhu have not only risen to serve the criminals their just desserts, but to menace the magician and his young daughter Lisa (Marcia Layton) as well. Amidst a chaos of oozing, hissing slime, spewing blood, flashing video screens and all-around havoc, the doomed sorcerer struggles to save his daughter. Sympathetic Chris (Luis Fernando Alves), who has been trapped by circumstance with the would-be dope merchants, emerges as a hero in the supernatural showdown with the Lovecraftian spirits.

"It would be very pretentious on my part to say that *Cthulhu Mansion* truly 'does justice' to Lovecraft's writings," Simon concedes. "Lovecraft is difficult to adapt for the screen without 'betraying' him. He is too subjective and atmospheric to faithfully transfer to a medium as objective as film. I have never seen a screen adaptation of his work that I liked. In *Cthulhu Mansion*, I have tried to visualize Lovecraft's unseen terrors by working with lights, sound, music and by emphasizing the constantly mutating nature of the objects and characters in the story." As far as his proclivity for Lovecraft's works is concerned, Simon adds, "I like savage writers. But my interest lies in the

stories and not the writers themselves, and I don't care if they are classics or modern."

While, as Simon candidly admits, *Cthulhu Mansion* may not satisfy Lovecraft purists, the film will undoubtedly please aficionados of special makeup. The film's copious and elaborate FX sequences demanded the use of two tons of molds for death masks, 300 pounds of polyurethane, 90 gallons of latex, 300 gallons of gelatin slime, 400 gallons of liquid for fog and smoke, over 50 propane gas tanks for explosions...and, of course, more than 2,000 gallons of the red stuff. Extensive pyrotechnics and rain scenes called for the film's FX team to construct a complex system of irrigation lines as well as a special cannon de-

signed to shoot 35-foot-long flames. In many scenes, it took a crew of 15 FX people alone to pull off the abundance of wind, rain, lightning, explosions et al. Actors

"I had serious difficulties in even convincing buyers to keep the name 'Cthulhu' in the title. Nobody knows how to pronounce it!"

Finlay and Alves were subjected to the grueling trials of remaining in makeup for 16 hours, unable to consume any nourishment but liquid through a straw.

Needless to say, delivering such a formidable onslaught of FX on a six-week shooting schedule required considerable creative talent. Expert craftsman Colin (*Never-Ending Story*) Arthur, who previously worked with Simon on the undersea monster mash *Endless Descent* (a.k.a. *The Rift*), masterminded *Cthulhu's* special makeup FX. To create the numerous miniatures and models for the film, Simon enlisted Emilio (*Dune*) Ruiz, who has been a Simon stalwart since the director's 1976 feature debut *Where Time Began*. Opticals and mechanical FX further augment *Cthulhu Mansion's* barrage of macabre illusions.

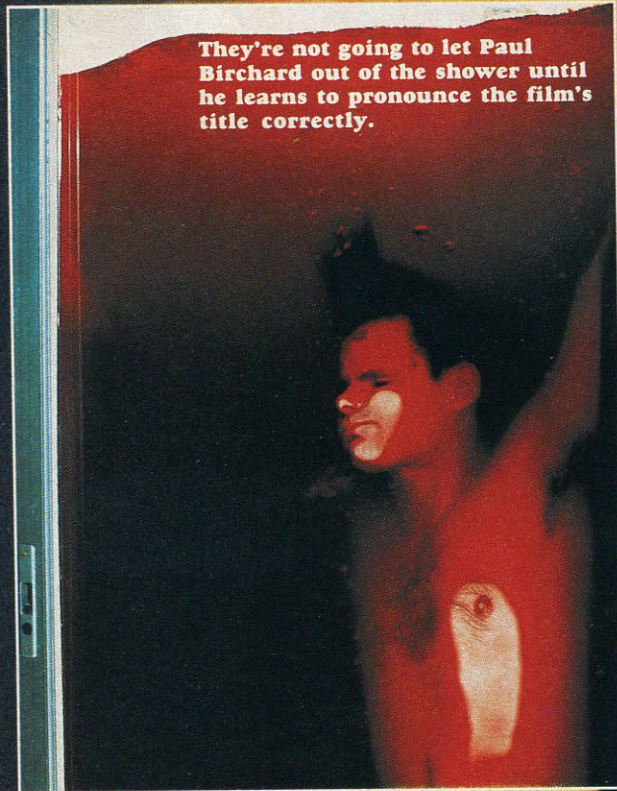
To keep costs low and production values high, Simon shot many of *Cthulhu's* FX sequences in his own studio, C.C.A. Simon was also able to utilize the resources of Arthur's Dream Factory studios in Madrid to help with the burdensome volume of FX. But despite the aid of a controlled environment, *Cthulhu's* production inevitably encountered its share of setbacks.

"Unexpected things are always happening when you're dealing with films with lots of effects," Simon relates. "In *Cthulhu Mansion* there is a scene where Billy, one of the main characters, dies inside a shower, drowning in blood that covers him all the way up to the top of his head. To fill the shower stall, we had to prepare a tank above it with 3,000 liters of fake blood. The pressure was so heavy that when they opened the hose to fill the stall, it exploded and sprayed blood all over the crew,

Cthulhu Mansion mixes the eldritch author's weirdness with more traditional horror imagery.

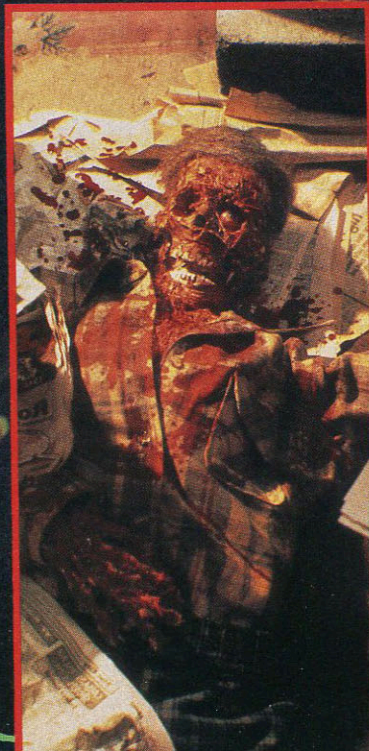


"I told you I was sick," growls a victim of Lovecraft-inspired evil.



They're not going to let Paul Birchard out of the shower until he learns to pronounce the film's title correctly.

Try telling this *Slugs* co-star that all the critters do is ooze slime and hibernate.



the camera, the lights, everything, soaking everybody on the set, while the actor [Paul Burchard] sat in his stall, high and dry, watching the whole scene in amazement!"

After a long cleanup, the gory drowning was finally captured in all its 10 seconds and 500 gallons of glory. How much of that scarlet splendor audiences will ultimately see remains unknown, as at the time of this writing, the film is still in postproduction.

"I've not yet seen the final cut of *Cthulhu Mansion*, but the film has more than 1,200 different shots... and it's difficult to be happy with each and every one of them!" Simon judges. "But the chance to work with a cast of young American actors was really enjoyable, and the film has good possibilities on the market." Although he is optimistic about *Cthulhu*'s potential, Simon does not see Lovecraft adaptations as a growing trend. "I have been surprised to find out how little-known Lovecraft is among young people. And I had serious difficulties in even convincing buyers and agents to keep the name 'Cthulhu' in the title. Nobody knows how to pronounce it!"

In addition to the problematic nature of HPL's bizarre phonetics, *Cthulhu Mansion* faces a dilemma in the marketplace due to the current prevailing attitudes toward genre films. "At present, there seems to be a hypocritical reaction against gore and violence," Simon frowns. "The market in Spain for horror is limited, especially on the theatrical circuit. The European market in general has decreased for B-movies. The critics have turned against us; they are very picky these days. Even specialized magazines in the genre seem to be out to discredit independent horror films. At this point, some of these periodicals seem nothing more than advertising brochures for the majors," Simon pointedly remarks.

"But I am an adamant fan of fantasy, thriller and horror films," he continues. "They are a great purgative, and one of the most visual or cinematographic of all the genres. Of the old classics, I prefer Murnau and the German expressionists in general. Of the current stuff, the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series have been some of the most creative films." *Cthulhu Mansion* would seem to bear testament to Simon's admiration of the Freddy flicks, as Wes Craven's self-described "rubber reality" approach is clearly present in *Cthulhu*'s FX concepts. Simon additionally names *The Terminator*, *RoboCop* and Alan Parker's *Angel Heart* as

recent genre offerings which impressed him. On the subject of splatter, Simon states, "Violence, blood and gore don't shock me... you see more of it on any daily newscast than in most films."

Certainly, Simon is no stranger to splatter. With 1983's *Pieces* (original title: *Mil Gritos Tiene la Noche*, "1,000 Cries Has the Night"), Simon showed audiences the rougher side of a chainsaw, and was largely vilified for his efforts. Critics in and out of the genre cited *Pieces*' stilted dialogue and hokey storyline as unintentionally humorous highlights of low-camp cinema. According to Simon, however, not all of those laughs were unintended. "*Pieces* was conceived as an exaggerated parody of sorts. We had hardly any money [\$300,000], and the only way we could attract a little attention was by making the movie the way we did. We had great fun doing the film, but the critics hated it

"It would be very pretentious on my part to say that *Cthulhu Mansion* truly 'does justice' to Lovecraft's writings."

and attacked us heavily—even FANGORIA." Regardless of any derisive genre criticism, *Pieces* does boast one of the greatest endings in an exploitation film (for this writer's money, anyway), and as Simon points out, the film went on to win the award for best FX at the Paris Film Festival.

However, the U.S. version of *Pieces* suffered from considerable postproduction brutality at the hands of its U.S. producers, Hallmark Releasing expatriates Dick Randall and Steve Minasian, and distributor Film Ventures. "They made a horrible English version of the film," Simon grumbles. "The dubbing was done in Italy, they changed all the music and they even got my name wrong on the credits."

Simon's next horror outing was 1987's *Slugs*, based on the novel by British literary nasty Shaun Hutson. "*Slugs* was a risky dare, but we came out smelling like a rose. We had to finance the film ourselves, since nobody wanted to invest a single dollar in a story about such unpleasant creatures."

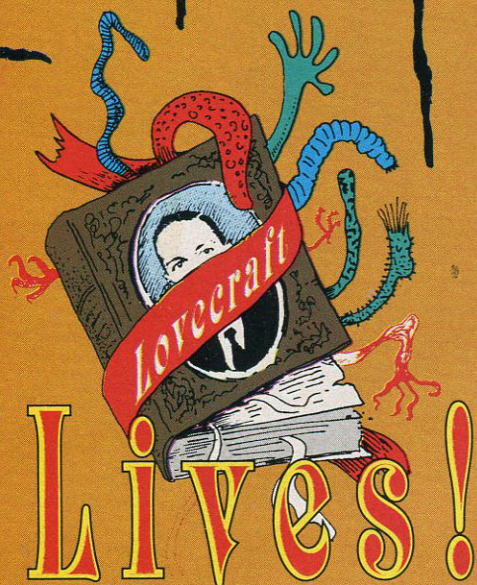
The director's hardships on *Slugs* were by no means confined to the film's financing. "The shoot was long and complicated, because slugs don't do anything! And I mean anything!...unless you want to count oozing slime as an activity. What's more, they only 'work' three hours a day; the other 21 hours are spent coiled up in a hibernating ball. You really can't imagine all the hard work that went into getting *Slugs* on the screen," the director groans.

More unrelenting labor lay in wait for Simon with 1989's *Endless Descent*, a \$4 million undersea extravaganza produced by Dino De Laurentiis' son-in-law José Escrivá. Unfortunately, *Descent* was drowned amid the glut of sea monster flops which flooded theaters at the time of its production. "That's always the problem with independents," Simon sighs. "*Endless Descent* was the first of these submarine films to actually begin shooting. And, at the time, we did not know anything about the others. Then we ran into script problems and were delayed in finishing the film. That's when the big avalanche of sea monster films were released, backed by major distributors who got the product on the market fast. The poor economic results of all of them made us think it was wise to postpone our own release, and let the public forget about submarine stories for a while."

The creator of the original submarine story, Jules Verne, has been a prominent source of inspiration in Simon's feature film career. The director has adapted no less than three Verne yarns, including *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (which became *Where Time Began*), *Mystery of Monster Island* and *Sea Devils*. "Obviously, I was a big Jules Verne fan when I was a kid. Verne is a very entertaining writer, and there is a multitude of his stories, great ones at that, which are still unknown to the American public," Simon opines. While Simon's Verne films may lean a little too heavily towards kiddie fare for Fango tastes, *Mystery of Monster Island* sports performances by horror icons Peter Cushing and Paul Naschy.

"The curious thing is that Peter Cushing wound up doing *Monster Island* purely by coincidence," Simon reminisces. "We had originally contacted James Stewart, and he had accepted the role. But then there was a Screen Actors Guild strike, and at the same time, Stewart suffered beginning symp-

(continued on page 63)

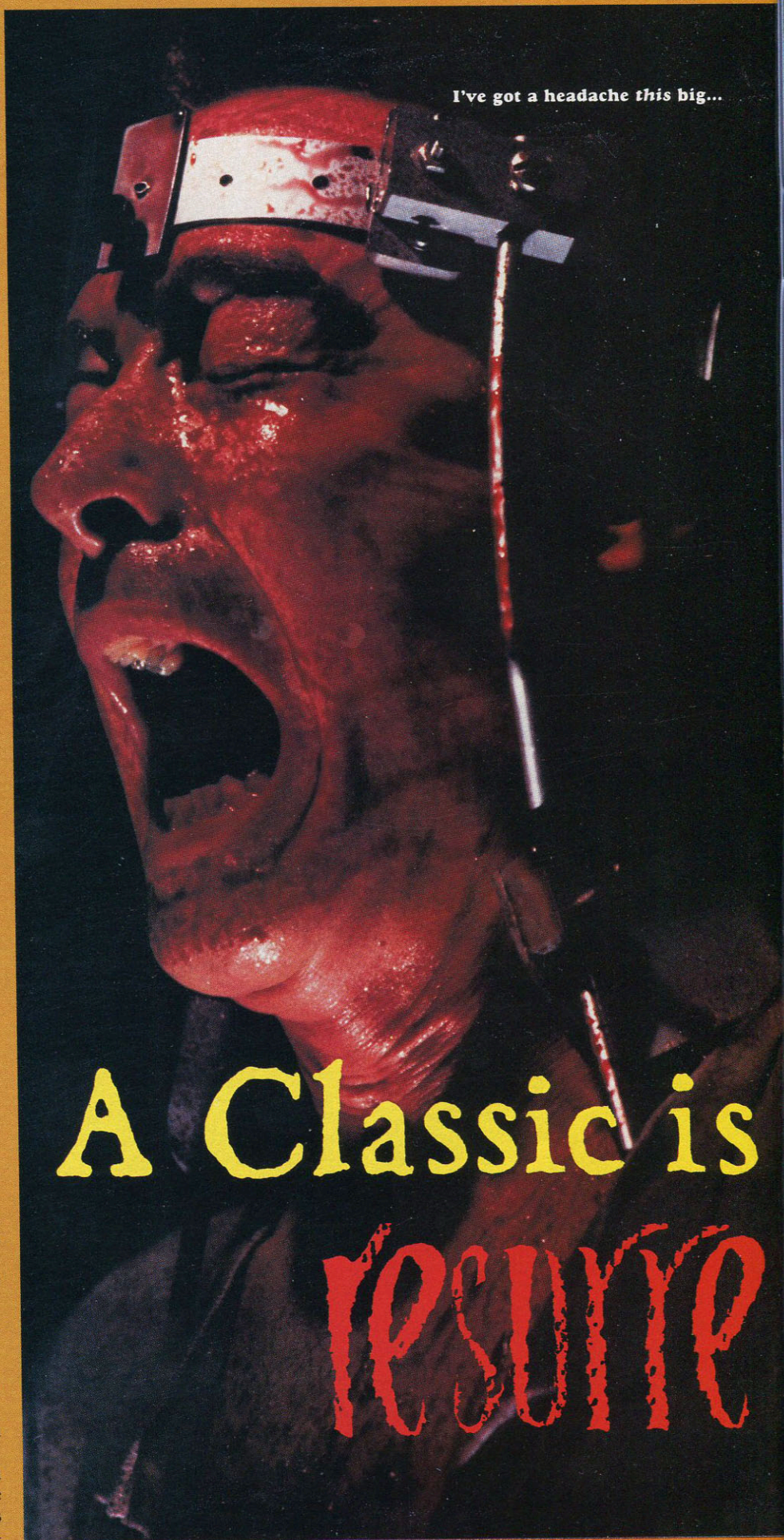


You don't mess with Mother Nature, especially if one of her daughters happens to be British Columbia's mighty Fraser River. That's the hard lesson the makers of *The Resurrected* learned last November while filming a scene from the Lovecraft-based movie on the shore of Western Canada's seething waterway. Several mutilated body-part props, which were being manipulated in the water with cables and lines, were swept away by the rain-gorged force of the river.

The gorily authentic tidbits didn't get too far, though, because three youngsters snagged them while fishing in the nearby suburb of New Westminster. The light was dim when the kids came across the leg, foot and three hands, which—to quote police—were “very realistic parts.” The cops treated the case as a homicide, and a pathologist and coroner were brought to the scene before it was revealed that the parts were definitely not human. It was just the detailed work of those wacky Hollywood horror guys, the makeup FX team.

Although three separate news items on the prop find and its resulting clamor were published in Vancouver-area papers, there was no follow-up on whether the unsuspecting kid fishermen were traumatized by the discovery. But one thing is certain: they saw a lot more of *The Resurrected*'s FX work than FANGORIA did.

Although the main men behind the latest Lovecraft feature—co-producer Ken Raich, director Dan O'Bannon and screenwriter Brent Friedman—were happy to talk with Fango, they made it clear from the outset that not one of the film's monsters or makeups would be re-



I've got a headache *this* big...

A Classic is

resurrected

**Anyone
who's read
"The Case of
Charles Dexter
Ward" knows
the story, so
the producers
of this updated
adaptation are
keeping
the monsters
a surprise.**

vealed to these eyes at the set visit. And makeup FX head Todd (Nightmare 5) Masters was totally out of bounds for an interview. Those sort of restrictions do not make things easy for a reporter whose primary goal is to get the lowdown on the film's creatures. They do, however, make his choice of an opening question very easy: "So what's with all the secrecy?"

"We're going out with some new and different looks, monster-wise," explains Raich. "And we really believe that the exploitation of movies before they're released has taken away the fun of watching a film. People see so much of 'The Making of' and the special effects involved in it, that it takes away from the moviegoing experience."

As frustrating as that opinion might sound to readers of this magazine, Raich does have a point. How many times have you laid out good bucks to see the latest horror flick, only to discover that the only

that came with it. Subsequently, we did the normal amount of research and bought the rest of the rights from the [Lovecraft] estate."

Raich and co-producer Mark Borde's past film productions include sex comedies such as the hugely successful *Hollywood Hot Tubs*, as well as its follow-up *Hollywood Hot Tubs 2: Educating Crystal*, which Friedman also scripted. Although Borde has distributed horror flicks like *Devil Times Five*, *Don't Go in the Woods* and *The Hills Have Eyes*—as well as the Ted Mikels catalog—*The Resurrected* is the first genre film the team has been actively involved in creating. Their snagging of ace writer/director Dan O'Bannon to helm the \$6 million pic was something of a fluke.

"It's funny," says Raich, "because one of the stars in *Educating Crystal*, Jewel Shepard, is a close friend of Dan O'Bannon. She knew that we were going after this H.P. Lovecraft thing, so she came to us and said, 'How about Dan directing?' And we thought, 'Hey...that's a possibility!'"

"It just so happened that Dan was writing a script based on the same novel at the same time," Raich continues, "so he was fascinated by the thought of directing. And I guess he had some problems with tying up some loose ends that Brent had solved in his script. It just happened that it was the right script at the right time."

Although continued prodding doesn't crumble the producers' resolve to keep the film's monsters under wraps, a little snooping around the office's reception area between interviews uncovers a few FX clues. A stack of the day's call sheets are left unattended, and Fango takes a peek. "Finger monster grows," reads one part, ".38 hits on monster," another. "Human part created from ashes"—now we're getting somewhere!

Just as the glorified feeling of having unearthed a fragment of *The Resurrected's* taboo FX starts to fade, Raich himself breaks down a tad, offering to conduct a tightly supervised tour of a couple of the sets that have been constructed at Vancouver's Dominion Bridge Studio. This is the same facility where, just months before, the TV-star cast from *It* did battle with Stephen King's spider monster.

The first room Raich reveals is a padded cell, bare but for a single steel cot and a wall drenched with enough candy-apple-red blood to make the Red Cross cringe. Fifty yards away, another set has been



How about a hand for this Todd Masters FX creation?

cted

By STEVE NEWTON

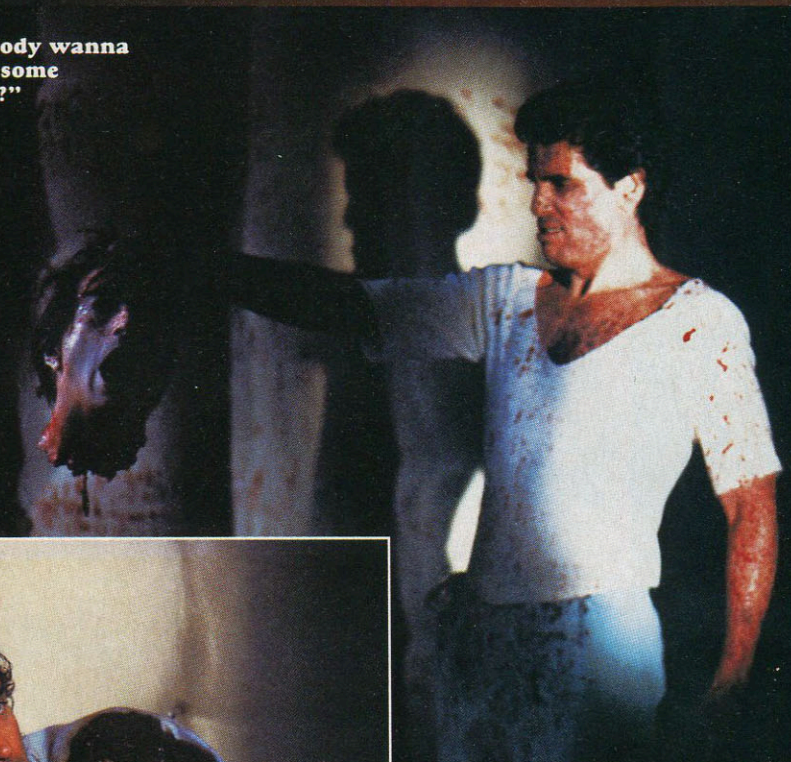
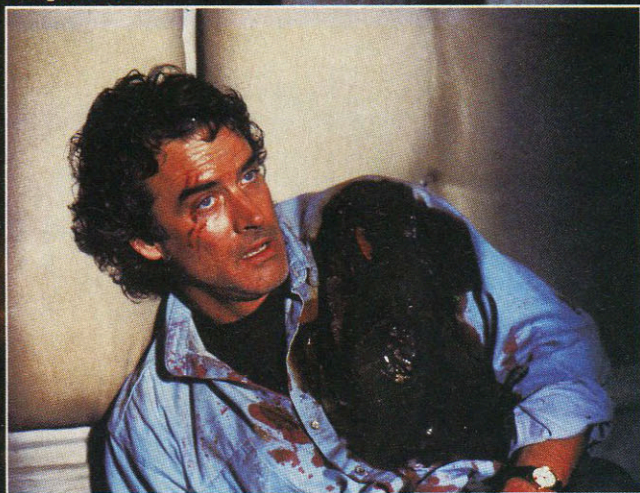
decent part of it was the bit they'd been flashing on TV spots for weeks? Fighting the urge to race on set, plow past Masters and uncover his hidden creations, this disgruntled correspondent resigns himself—for the moment, anyway—to the idea that there'll be no monsters. With a heavy sigh he tosses out a safe, standard question, like how the producers got involved with the project in the first place.

"The film was brought to us by the screenwriter, Brent Friedman," begins Raich. "He had always had an interest in Lovecraft, and this original novel [*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*] was one that he really felt he had a handle on.

"So he approached us with the script, and we liked what we saw, so we bought the screenplay itself along with the underlying rights

"Anybody wanna shoot some hoops?"

John Terry sneaked a look at *The Resurrected's* monsters and suffered the consequences.



carefully made up as an 18th-century living room, complete with antique chair and spinning wheel, quilted rug, an array of glowing candles and a portrait over the mantelpiece of one of the film's integral characters, John Curwen. The actor portraying Curwen in *The Resurrected* is none other than Chris Sarandon, who actually does triple duty in the movie by playing Charles Dexter Ward and the fiendish Dr. Ash as well. Equally adept at playing good guys (*Child's Play*, *Whispers*) and baddies (*Fright Night*, *The Princess Bride*), Sarandon had his hands full this time around.

"I'm a good guy and a villain," he explains, taking a breather in the producers' office. "Charles Ward is basically a well-intentioned, good man who is led astray by a desire to conquer this great scientific problem that his ancestor has posed. It's kind of a parallel to *Frankenstein*: a good man who is consumed with something that he shouldn't be messing with. The big theme here is basically 'Don't screw with death.'"

Ironically enough, Sarandon as

an actor has encountered death many times. As well as getting the old stake-through-the-heart in *Fright Night*, he's been executed in *Forced March*, blown up in *The Osterman Weekend*, crucified in *The Day Christ Died* and guillotined in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Could it be that he's selected for certain roles because he expires so well?

"I haven't thought about that in a long time," muses Sarandon, "because I haven't died in a picture in a while. I think *Fright Night* was my last death... Oh no—I'm sorry! That's not true! I did a TV movie that was just on called *Stranger Within*, and I died in that. Oh boy, I'm gonna add that to my list of unique deaths. Death by drowning under ice."

Sarandon does not disclose whether or not his character(s) survive *The Resurrected*, but one thing he does make clear is his trust in O'Bannon's ability to tell a story—a trait he also found impressive in *Child's Play* director Tom Holland.

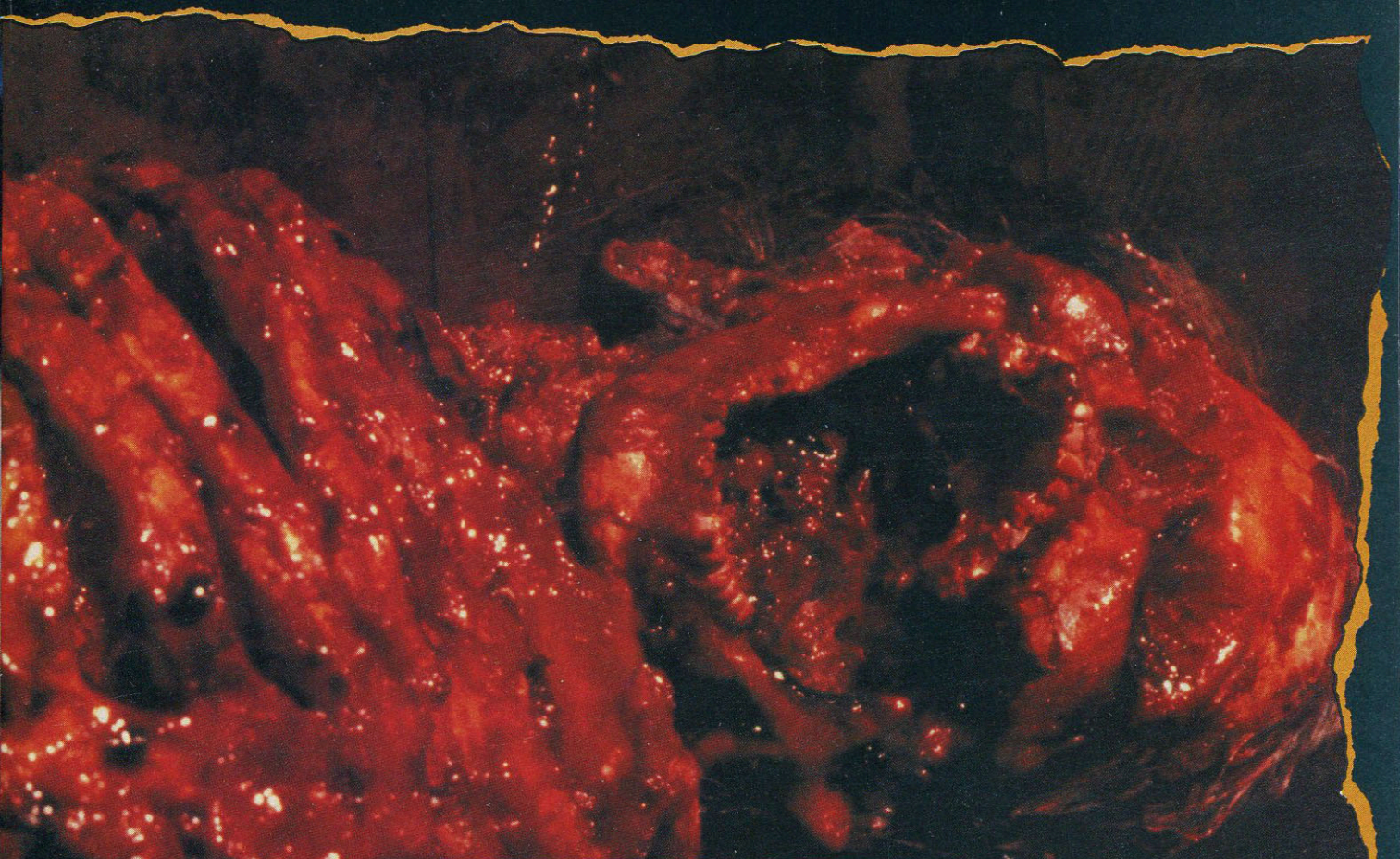
"That's what Dan is," comments Sarandon. "He's a storyteller. And it's always interesting to work with

about making a horror movie that's gonna make a lot of money because kids will go and see it. That's not why he's doing this film."

Before meeting O'Bannon in person, and finding out just why exactly he is doing this movie, a chat with screenwriter Friedman sheds some more light on the weighty influence that O'Bannon carries among his peers.

"I can't even tell you what a thrill it was to find out he was involved with the project," Friedman enthuses. "In just the past six months that I've been working with him, I've probably learned more about writing than in the previous 26 years of my existence. It's almost as if, until that point, I was just winging it."

Before taking on the Lovecraft project, Friedman scripted two other horror flicks—*Evil Altar* and *Syngenor*—but this experience didn't make the challenge of adapting Lovecraft any less daunting. "It was much more difficult than my other scripts, because it



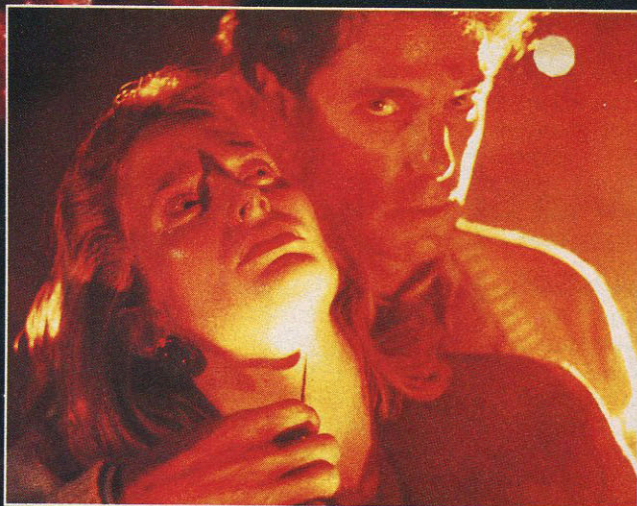
**"The Haunted Palace averred quite widely from Lovecraft's book, and it did not do any of the things I wanted to do here."
—Dan O'Bannon, director**

was adapted from source material," judges Friedman. "You always feel a certain degree of guilt when you start deviating from the story—especially something like Lovecraft, when there are so many people who are such loyal fans.

"And I'm a fan myself," he adds, "but at the same time, when you're trying to adapt his material, you really have to throw some of it out the window. Dan wanted to keep as faithful to the material as possible, so my original script is considerably different from the way that I reworked it to fit Dan's vision. Mine was a little less faithful."

One might wonder where a young screenwriter such as Friedman gets the nerve to tackle someone of Lovecraft's stature. He wasn't even close to being born when the acknowledged Master of the Macabre passed on in 1937.

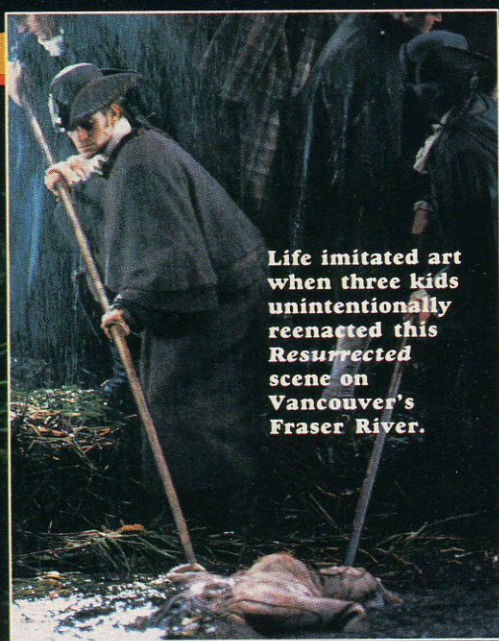
"Well, I'm 27 years old, so I didn't grow up with Lovecraft," he reasons. "I grew up with Stephen King, who would always talk about



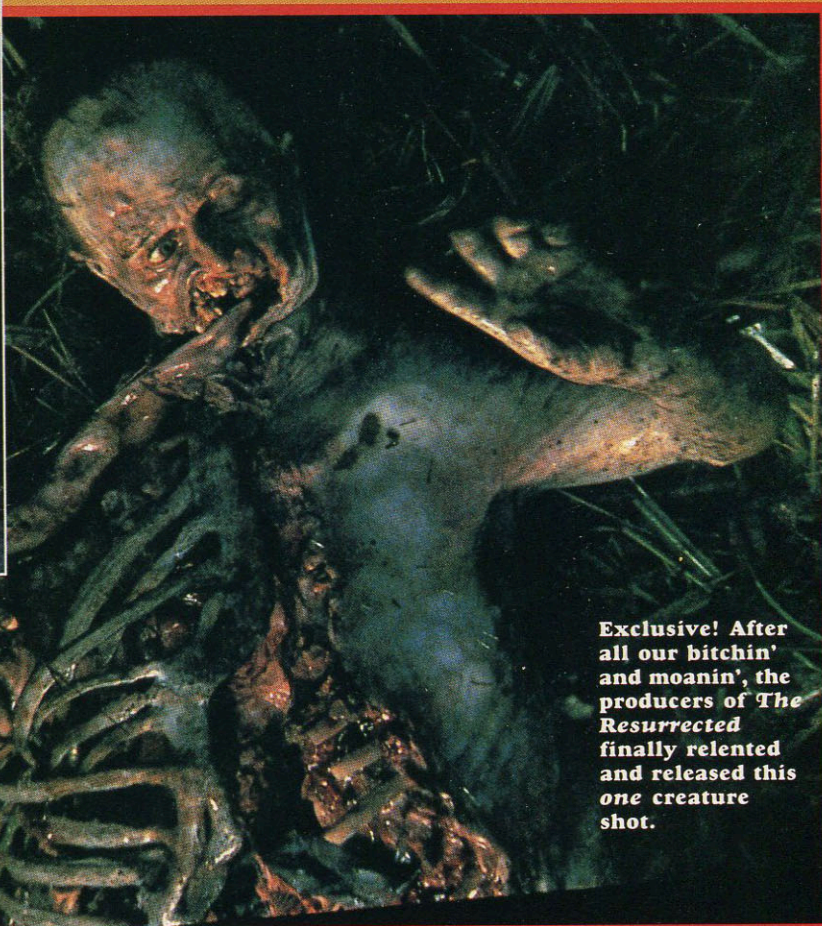
Chris Sarandon has had enough of being killed in his films; now it's this poor actress' turn.

Lovecraft and what a great influence he was. When I saw *Re-Animator*, that was the first time I was formally introduced to Lovecraft's work. So immediately upon seeing that film on opening night, I ran to the library at UCLA, where I was going to school, and

started reading everything he'd written. Then I found that that story was completely different from the movie, and that almost everything he wrote was fairly short. *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is the only novel he wrote; actually, it's a novella."



Life imitated art when three kids unintentionally reenacted this *Resurrected* scene on Vancouver's Fraser River.



Exclusive! After all our bitchin' and moanin', the producers of *The Resurrected* finally relented and released this one creature shot.

Resurrected Photos: Copyright 1991 Scotti Bros.

And when he did decide that he was going to script Lovecraft's longest work, Friedman really had his work cut out for him. "It's very non-linear," he says of Lovecraft's piece. "The whole book is divided into two halves. The first half is the backstory, which generally takes place in the 18th century and sets up everything that our main antagonist is up to before we get to the forestry, which is all about his great-great-great-great-grandson. So the hardest part was to come up with a way to set the whole story in the present tense and get the backstory across without having tons and tons of exposition.

"But if you read the book and then see the finished film," he continues, "you're gonna see that a lot of the big special effects set pieces were completely manufactured, in that they weren't in the story. Because in a lot of Lovecraft's horror writing, he just creates a kind of sustaining tension and then cuts away, so to speak. He'll say, 'What happened next was so inexplicable, so unexplainable, no one could talk about it for decades.' And it just paints a vision in your head which is very effective, especially if you're a kid reading this stuff."

Dan O'Bannon—not only the director of *Return of the Living*

Dead but the co-writer of such blockbuster flicks as *Alien*, *Blue Thunder* and *Total Recall*—knows whereof Friedman speaks. He's been a fan of Lovecraft since he first read the stories at age 12.

"That's how long I've wanted to make a Lovecraft movie," reveals O'Bannon when Fango finally pins down the director during his lunch break. With his gray hair and beard, spectacles, tweed coat and bow tie, the acclaimed SF/horror kingpin looks more like a quaint university prof than the man whose mind conjured up *Alien's* fearsome beastie. Pacing scholarlike across the floor, O'Bannon elaborates on just how faithful his adaptation is to the original work of his hero.

"It's very much so," he claims. "I wouldn't have it otherwise. But with that said, I should also explain that it's impossible to take Lovecraft to the screen without making some changes. For example, Lovecraft doesn't write dramas in the normal sense of the word, and that's what theatrical films are about—they're dramas. So when you translate Lovecraft to film, you've got to grapple with that particular problem.

"The way that Lovecraft approached *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is very curious,"

O'Bannon adds. "The main character is Charles Ward, but Charles Ward in the whole story is handled from a very remote distance—you never come too close to him. It's called a case report, and it is written like a case report, although you never know who's writing it. So when you try to turn it into a screenplay, you've got to ask yourself: Do I rewrite Charles and move him into the foreground so that he becomes the hero of the piece? That's the obvious solution, but I rejected it, 'cause it seemed to me that by shifting that emphasis you would destroy the entire feeling of Lovecraft. And that wasn't working.

"So the solution that I finally settled upon was to leave his story at exactly the same distance that it is in the book, but create a whole new set of characters for a foreground story, who I could make into more conventional movie characters, and create a frame, as it were, for the Lovecraft story."

One might wonder why O'Bannon would choose to film a story that's already been translated to the screen—albeit quite loosely—by Roger Corman in 1963's *The Haunted Palace*. "Well," he ponders, "even if they had been quite faithful to Lovecraft, books

(continued on page 63)

THE FOUR PHASES OF "THE TERMINATOR"

REALISTIC MASKS

FROM



These super-realistic masks show the four phases "The Terminator" goes through in **TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY**, as his human appearance—his "skin"—is torn away, revealing the endoskeleton underneath!

These masks are highest-quality all Latex, sculpted and toned to look like flesh. And, where the flesh has been ripped off, the endoskeleton shows through in realistic metallic silver!

Buy all four masks and you can be transformed—just like Arnold Schwarzenegger in **TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY!**

Each mask: only \$49.99 + postage!



PHASE 1 MASK

A full over-the-head mask of as "The Terminator," as portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, complete with full-length neck and a crew cut of sculptured hair.

PHASE 2 MASK

A full over-the-head mask of "The Terminator," as portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, complete with full-length neck and a crew cut of sculptured hair. But there are tears in the skin, revealing the silver endoskeleton underneath!

PHASE 3 MASK

A full over-the-head mask of "The Terminator," as portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, complete with full-length neck and a crew cut of sculptured hair. But this mask shows half of Schwarzenegger's face and half of the endoskeleton!

PHASE 4 MASK

A full over-the-head mask of the endoskeleton—head and neck!—in metallic silver!

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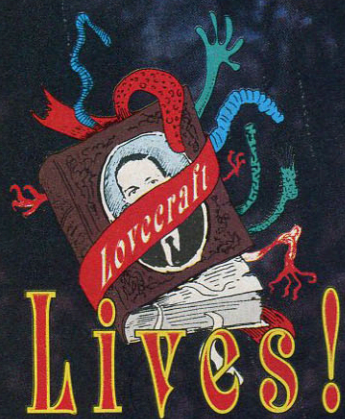


Photo: Kenneth Bank

"What? I'm the only guy with hair and fangs who was around the crime scene? There must be thousands..."

The eldritch scribe comes to HBO—but this time, he's a detective who's the only one not involved with dark magic.

By JAMES BONNY & RICHARD FINNEY

You'd think a private eye like Lovecraft (Fred Ward) would notice something like that lurking behind him.

Photo: Randee St. Nicholas/Copyright HBO

Where the *Necronomicon's* concerned, you can judge a book by its cover.



Cast a *Deadly Spell* (formerly *Lovecraft*), an HBO production set to air in September, begins as a standard '40s detective story. The title character, a down-on-his-luck private dick (Fred Ward) is hired by a reclusive millionaire (David Warner) to retrieve a valuable book which has been stolen from him. The tome turns out to be the infamous *Necronomicon*, a catalog of dark spells, and underworld (as well as netherworld) bad guys are out to get their hands (and claws) on it. Since Lovecraft refuses to use magic, a hangup from his past, he's forced to rely on his wits and his fists to see the case through.

The film is nearing the end of its tight 37-day shooting schedule, forcing cast and crew to cram as much work as possible into each day...and night. It means long hours for everyone involved.

"The problem is that there's a fixed amount of money that HBO can spend on this," complains British director Martin (*Criminal Law*) Campbell. "It just isn't viable

"There's a line in the script which says the zombies come six to a box, and when they rot, you throw them out."

—Tony Gardner, makeup FX chief

This is the city. Los Angeles, California, circa 1948. But this is not Raymond Chandler's LA. This city of angels is full of hobgoblins, witches, werewolves and evil sorcerers. Everybody here uses magic... everybody but Lovecraft, that is. H. Phillip Lovecraft, a hard-boiled gumshoe who shuns the black arts in favor of a more two-fisted approach to detective work.

Wait a minute. Private eyes, monsters and black magic? What's happened to the old neighborhood?

Time for a reality check.

Now we're in San Pedro, California, circa 1991. It's dark, cold, foggy and we're lost, driving blindly through the scattered remnants of an old Navy yard. San Pedro is an ugly harbor town, even worse than Oakland. Flames belch from towering smokestacks, *a la Blade Runner*, and everything seems to be made of pig iron. Finally, thankfully, we find our bearings and the movie set.

The film crew has set up shop in an old Navy hangar, a cavernous structure built for the repair of amphibious aircraft during World War II. Lately, it's served as an out-of-the-way but spacious

soundstage. *Invaders from Mars* was shot here, as well as the "N.T.I." sequence of *The Abyss*. Now it houses a circular cul-de-sac of identical Levittown cottages, representing an Orange County housing development from the late '40s. The setting looks normal enough, except for a pesky gargoyle dancing on the rooftops.

What a waste of a perfectly good suit.




Photo: Janet Van Ham

for them to spend a lot of money, because it's going directly to television. It's the highest budget they've ever had for a film [approximately \$6 million], but in feature terms it's a tiny amount."

Producer Gale Anne (*Aliens*) Hurd is certainly used to bigger budgets. The current *Terminator 2*, which she executive-produced, is said to be the most expensive movie ever made. For her, however, the small budget for *Cast a Deadly Spell* represents a challenge rather than a hindrance. "I started out with Roger Corman," she explains. "My training was steeped in the tradition that working in low-budget films does not carry a negative stigma. It's where we all start. Now, people often see it as simply a step on the ladder, culminating in big-budget movies. But I find it just as rewarding to make a film on a lower budget as I do on an epic budget. In fact, I get a perverse pleasure in making a film that people can't believe cost what it did."

A low budget is one thing, but isn't a TV movie a step down for such an accomplished producer? Hurd doesn't think so. "Filmmakers make a huge mistake if they feel they are compromising by doing a film for television," she maintains. "I approach it the same way I would a film destined for theatrical release. It's going to have a Dolby stereo score and the production values will be absolutely first-rate. There are no compromises in terms of special effects, the actors, the sets or any aspect of postproduction. You make the best film you can and it doesn't matter how it reaches the audience. You just don't compromise."

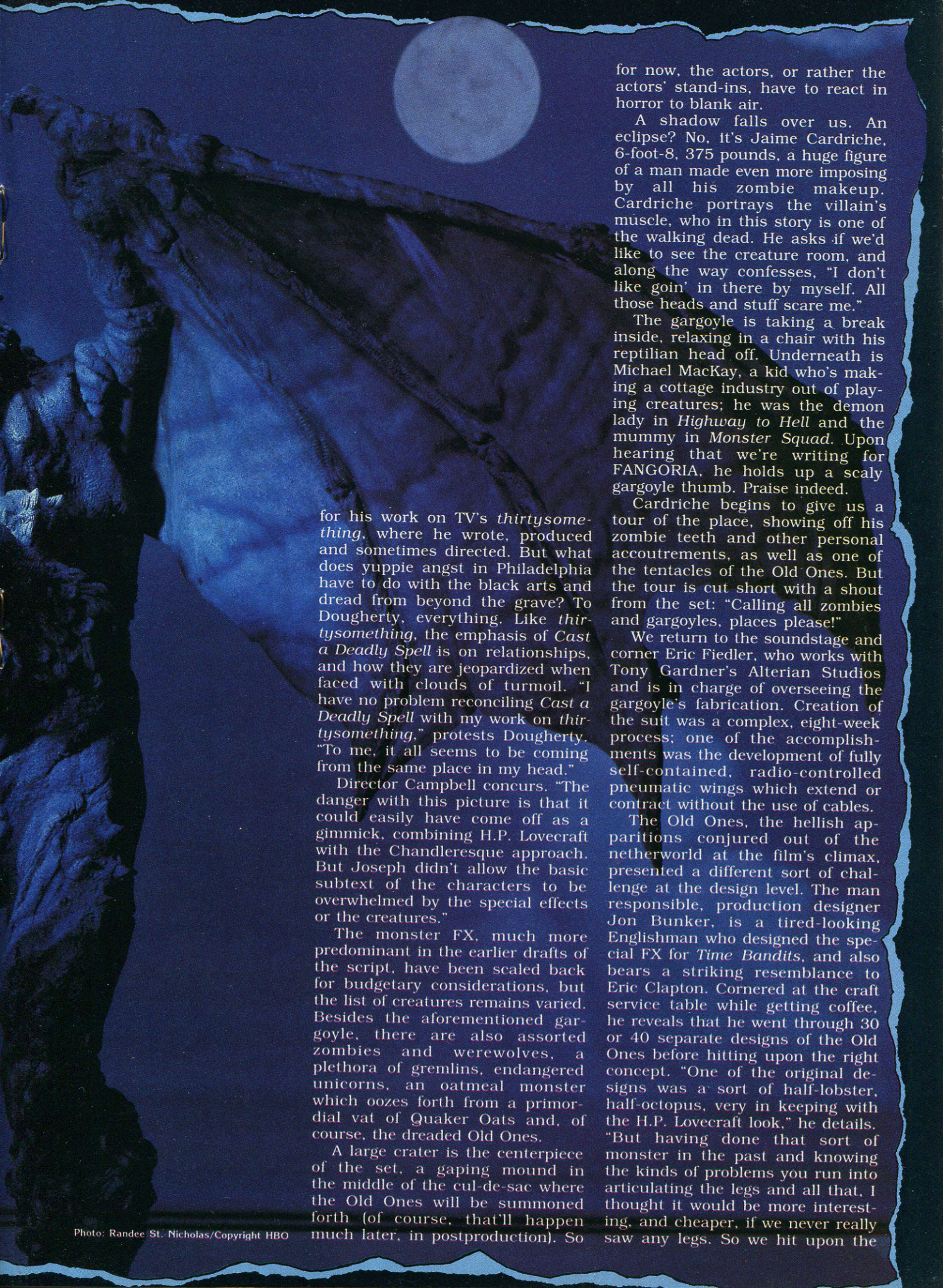
Compromise was a word that screenwriter Joseph Dougherty got used to as he tried to get his script for *Cast a Deadly Spell* before the cameras. Dougherty, a fan of both H.P. Lovecraft and Raymond Chandler, penned the first draft in 1984. As is often the case with a spec script, it knocked around Hollywood for years in various incarnations at several different studios. "Nobody wanted to make it as a period piece," the screenwriter recalls. "At one point it got set up with an independent producer who wanted to set the story in the future, so I ended up doing a nightmarish 1999 version, which was pretty lame. Eventually the option lapsed, and I decided the person who would get to make *Cast a Deadly Spell* would be the person who would make it as a period piece."



Michael Keaton and Adam West, look out! *Cast a Deadly Spell* features the best small-screen creatures we've seen all year.

That person turned out to be Hurd. "The script was first submitted to me as a writing sample from Joseph three or four years ago," Hurd reminisces. "I loved it, but the rights were controlled by another producer. Oddly enough, I was in discussions with HBO when they said, 'Are you familiar with a script called *Lovecraft*?' I said, 'Absolutely, I love it.' And they said, 'We have the rights to it and we'd love for you to do it.'" So, like one of Lovecraft's demons, Dougherty's creation was suddenly unleashed upon the world after laying dormant for years.

Dougherty refers to *Cast a Deadly Spell* as an "occult-noir," a story he fashioned when he "didn't think anyone would want to do a straight Chandler piece. I decided to set the story in a Lovecraftian world." Quite an unusual approach from someone who's best known



for his work on TV's *thirtysomething*, where he wrote, produced and sometimes directed. But what does yuppie angst in Philadelphia have to do with the black arts and dread from beyond the grave? To Dougherty, everything. Like *thirtysomething*, the emphasis of *Cast a Deadly Spell* is on relationships, and how they are jeopardized when faced with clouds of turmoil. "I have no problem reconciling *Cast a Deadly Spell* with my work on *thirtysomething*," protests Dougherty. "To me, it all seems to be coming from the same place in my head."

Director Campbell concurs. "The danger with this picture is that it could easily have come off as a gimmick, combining H.P. Lovecraft with the Chandleresque approach. But Joseph didn't allow the basic subtext of the characters to be overwhelmed by the special effects or the creatures."

The monster FX, much more predominant in the earlier drafts of the script, have been scaled back for budgetary considerations, but the list of creatures remains varied. Besides the aforementioned gargoyle, there are also assorted zombies and werewolves, a plethora of gremlins, endangered unicorns, an oatmeal monster which oozes forth from a primordial vat of Quaker Oats and, of course, the dreaded Old Ones.

A large crater is the centerpiece of the set, a gaping mound in the middle of the cul-de-sac where the Old Ones will be summoned forth (of course, that'll happen much later, in postproduction). So

for now, the actors, or rather the actors' stand-ins, have to react in horror to blank air.

A shadow falls over us. An eclipse? No, it's Jaime Cardriche, 6-foot-8, 375 pounds, a huge figure of a man made even more imposing by all his zombie makeup. Cardriche portrays the villain's muscle, who in this story is one of the walking dead. He asks if we'd like to see the creature room, and along the way confesses, "I don't like goin' in there by myself. All those heads and stuff scare me."

The gargoyle is taking a break inside, relaxing in a chair with his reptilian head off. Underneath is Michael MacKay, a kid who's making a cottage industry out of playing creatures; he was the demon lady in *Highway to Hell* and the mummy in *Monster Squad*. Upon hearing that we're writing for FANGORIA, he holds up a scaly gargoyle thumb. Praise indeed.

Cardriche begins to give us a tour of the place, showing off his zombie teeth and other personal accoutrements, as well as one of the tentacles of the Old Ones. But the tour is cut short with a shout from the set: "Calling all zombies and gargoyles, places please!"

We return to the soundstage and corner Eric Fiedler, who works with Tony Gardner's Alterian Studios and is in charge of overseeing the gargoyle's fabrication. Creation of the suit was a complex, eight-week process; one of the accomplishments was the development of fully self-contained, radio-controlled pneumatic wings which extend or contract without the use of cables.

The Old Ones, the hellish apparitions conjured out of the netherworld at the film's climax, presented a different sort of challenge at the design level. The man responsible, production designer Jon Bunker, is a tired-looking Englishman who designed the special FX for *Time Bandits*, and also bears a striking resemblance to Eric Clapton. Cornered at the craft service table while getting coffee, he reveals that he went through 30 or 40 separate designs of the Old Ones before hitting upon the right concept. "One of the original designs was a sort of half-lobster, half-octopus, very in keeping with the H.P. Lovecraft look," he details. "But having done that sort of monster in the past and knowing the kinds of problems you run into articulating the legs and all that, I thought it would be more interesting, and cheaper, if we never really saw any legs. So we hit upon the



The Old Ones may spread for miles beneath the Earth, but what we can see is gruesome enough, thank you.

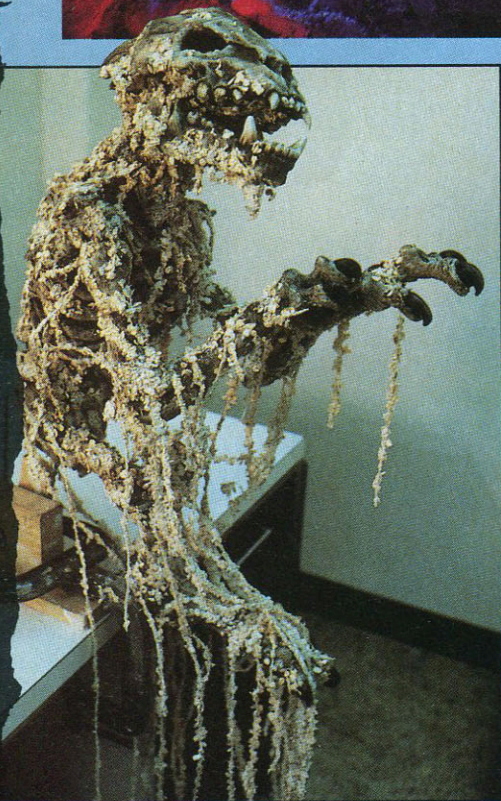


Photo: Janet Van Ham

One of *Cast a Deadly Spell*'s HPL-inspired beasts.

idea of roots. We wanted to convey the idea that you're seeing just the tip of this horrible thing, and that its roots spread throughout the Earth, miles in every direction. I'm not sure if we're going to be able to afford it, but I hope that's the look we'll achieve."

We're led out of the hangar and across the parking area to a chain of trailers. Along the way we pass a large white gazebo, erected at the edge of the lot, overlooking the dirty harbor water. A pyrotechnics team is wiring it for destruction sometime later in the evening. We enter the first trailer and meet Alexandra (*Dead Poets Society*) Powers, a stunning young vision in

a Veronica Lake wig. Introductions are exchanged. "FANGORIA?" she chirps. "Is that a fashion magazine?" We nod in unison, just to put her at ease.

Powers portrays Olivia, the daughter of Warner's character, Amos Hackshaw. "She's a virgin on the make," Powers giggles. "It's been an easy part, because all I have to do is flirt with Fred Ward—which comes naturally to me. I have a big crush on him."

Co-star Arnetia Walker also admits to having an attraction to Ward. "He's just *sexy!*" she exclaims. Walker portrays Hypolite Kropotkin, Lovecraft's offbeat

"The danger with this picture is that it could easily have come across as a gimmick."

—Martin Campbell, director

landlady. "She's a witch and a tap dancing instructor," she explains. "It's a good thing they didn't have a scene with me tap dancing, because it's a myth that all black people can do it. Anyway, when Lovecraft takes this case, he's confronted by a lot of people using black magic. Hypolite uses white magic. She's a good witch, and just about his only protection."

Julianne Moore portrays Connie, the obligatory femme fatale—an old flame of Lovecraft's who's now hooked up with villainous Harry Bordon (Clancy Brown of *The Bride*). "She's not evil," Moore explains, "she's just on the wrong track. The whole script is about morality. It's about right and wrong, and what you can and can't do to people. It reminded me of blacklisting. The magic in the story is an allegory for money and power. Connie got seduced by that and now she's compromised."

The evening wears on, getting colder and foggier. The promised demolition of the gazebo gets pushed back and back, finally scheduled for the wee hours. We opt to miss the fireworks, itching to get the hell out of San Pedro.

A week later, principal photography has wrapped and the crew has set up in a funky, Mom-and-Pop-owned soundstage in Hollywood for a long procession of photo shoots and creature pickups. We try to go in through the front door, but a voice screeches at us through heavily barred windows to "Go around! Go around!" We finally gain entrance through an open side door and come face to face with Lovecraft himself.

Fred Ward, dressed in a baggy, double-breasted suit, fedora tipped at a cocky angle, is posing in front of a large, midnight-blue sky backdrop, a misty full moon poised over his shoulders. He's smiling between shots and seems in good spirits, but also a little tired. We're informed that we can't talk to him until he's had a chance to rest after the photo shoot.

Instead, we're introduced to special FX designer Tony (*Darkman*) Gardner and look for a quiet place to conduct an interview. We try upstairs, but are chased out by one of the owners, who screams and threatens to call the police on us. We quickly head back downstairs and end up hunkering down next to a Coke machine.

Gardner was delighted with the variety of opportunities and the fresh slant offered by the story. "It's been nice to take things that have been done to death and try something new," he confirms. "For instance, there's a scene with a werewolf in a jail cell. In the script, he was described as wearing a zoot suit. We changed that, put him in grimy clothes and gave him a lot of scars, like a street fighter. We created a unique character, even though he's in the background.

"There's also a line in the script
(continued on page 63)

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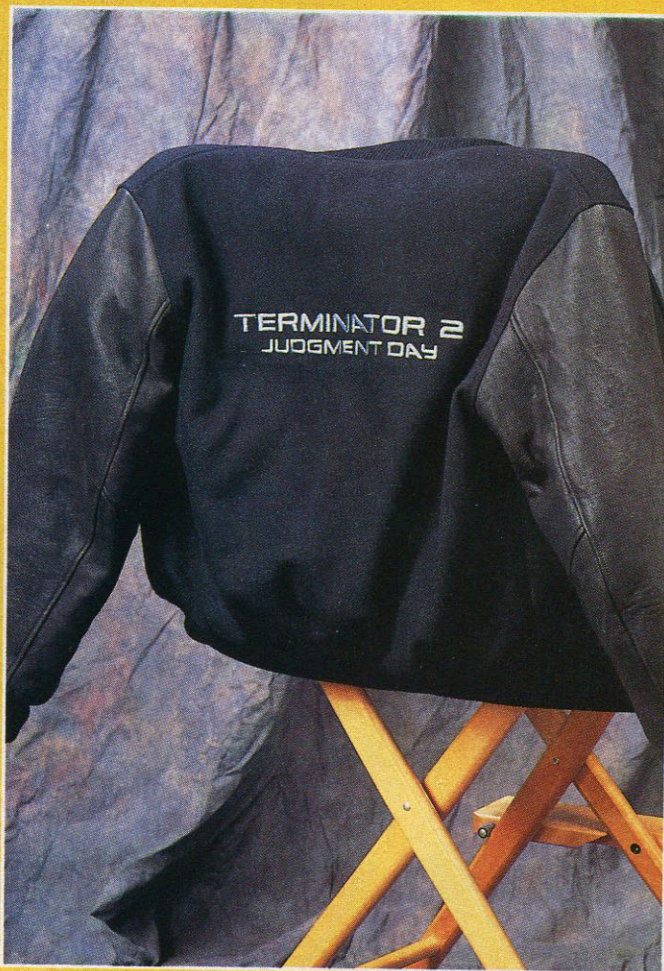
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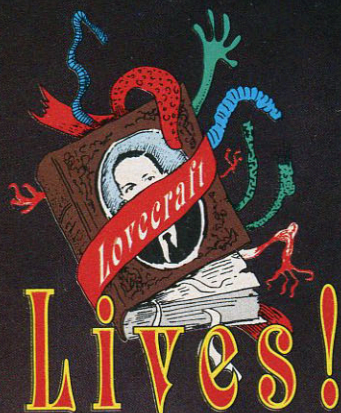
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By ANTHONY C. FERRANTE

The Lurking Film Projects

These days, it seems like Lovecraft has replaced Stephen King as the source author of choice. Here's a look at why, and what's coming up.



Chris Biggs' makeup test for *The Unnamable Returns* hints at Lovecraft goodies to come.



P. Lovecraft may have felt like a man out of his own time with his wild stories of supernatural horror and intricately constructed mythos, but the years have been kind to this master of Gothic prose. Now his writings are considered classics, which could explain the multiple film projects being developed from his large body of work.

"Lovecraft's bleak world view is something that people can relate to now," offers director Stuart Gordon, who brought Lovecraft's *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond* to

the screen. "In the '40s and '50s, people had a much cheerier attitude, and they were always looking for the kind of happy ending which Lovecraft never provides. People today understand that there is so much more in this world that is beyond our control."

Writer-director Jean-Paul Ouellette, who gave us the 1988 film update of Lovecraft's *The Unnamable*, counters, "Part of the reason why his stuff was not accepted in its time was that he was a man who truly believed he was born 100 years too late. He thought of himself as a 19th-century man, and much of his outsider feeling was not the world looking at him, but him looking at the world."

Still, moreso than any other horror writer, H.P. Lovecraft's written work has had the worst luck in making it to the big screen. Much of his short fiction was written for anthology publications like *Weird Tales*, and many of those copyrights have now fallen into the public domain, allowing his work to be up for grabs for anyone desiring to transform it into a movie.

In the late '70s, producers David Hurd and William Baetz attempted to bring Lovecraft's *The Cry of Cthulhu* to theaters as a \$6 million major studio production. Storyboards were designed, a director chosen and rights secured, but that didn't stop fate from intervening and keeping *Cthulhu* an on-again, off-again project for several years, finally floating away into that big development graveyard in the sky.

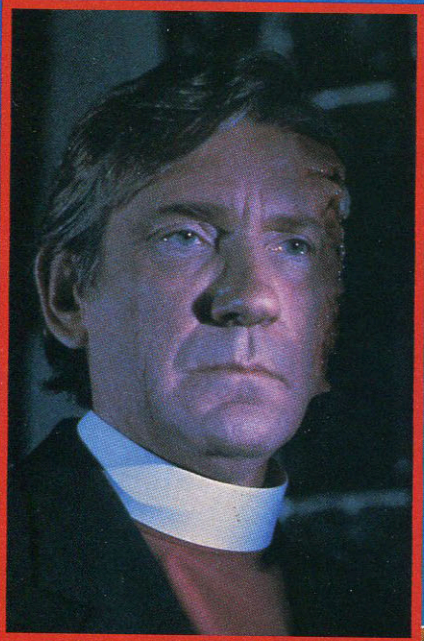
Makeup artist R. Christopher



SHADOW —OVER— INNSMOUTH

A STRANGE TALE
OF DEEP SEA LOVE
& TERROR

Art: Copyright Full Moon



David Warner
ponders the fate
of the shelved
Pulse Pounders.

Full Moon
designed new
artwork for
*Shadow Over
Innsmouth* to
promote presales
and relaunch the
project.

No wonder *Cry of
Cthulhu* never
got made—if they
filmed this Tom
Sullivan
production
design, the film
would have cost
as much as
Terminator 2.

Full Moon Entertainment Presents A STUART GORDON Film
SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH Director of Photography ADOLFO BARTOLI (A.I.C.)
Executive Producer CHARLES BAND Produced By ALBERT BAND
Directed By STUART GORDON
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Biggs, who created the elaborate creature for *The Unnamable*, offers that Lovecraft's otherworldly stuff is too expensive to successfully bring to the screen and speculates that this is the reason *Cthulhu* had such a difficult time getting made.

"In this day and age, you can do a nice little love story for \$10 million, but you can't do an epic horror film," Biggs opines. "There are role-playing games out based on the Cthulhu, and if there's enough information in the books to make up role-playing games, then you're talking pretty extensive stuff."

Re-Animator, however, remained true to the Lovecraft story and spirit, thus allowing fans to overlook its budgetary limitations. "Re-

"Because of the article in FANGORIA, there's been renewed interest in *Shadow Over Innsmouth*."

—Stuart Gordon, director

Animator showed that Lovecraft could work in films," asserts Gordon. "There is a tendency to want to sugar-coat Lovecraft, and

that doesn't work. Lovecraft is very dark, and unless you're willing to accept that, there's no point in making a Lovecraft movie."

Gordon followed that unexpected hit with another Lovecraft adaptation, *From Beyond*, and even admits that the Lovecraft philosophy later crept into the Disney film *Honey, I Shrank the Kids* (as well as its upcoming sequel *Honey, I Blew Up the Baby*), which he developed and was slated to direct.

"There are a lot of similarities between *Honey, I Shrank the Kids* and *From Beyond*, in the sense that they deal with experiments gone wrong," muses Gordon. "In *From Beyond* there are things around us all the time that are violent and life-threatening. That's what happens to the kids in *Honey*. They suddenly realize that in their own backyard is a primeval forest with creatures that can devour them."

Though *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond* were made during the glory days at Charles Band's now-defunct Empire Pictures, the moderate success of these films gave Gordon and producer Brian Yuzna the bug to adapt more Lovecraft tales. The closest one to getting made was *The Lurking Fear*, which Gordon envisioned as a starring

vehicle for Combs. "One of the more interesting things about *Lurking Fear* is that its main character is Lovecraft himself," Gordon says. "Most of his stories are written in the first person, but in the case of that story he talks about himself being a writer of bizarre fiction and short stories. He goes to investigate these strange goings-on in upstate New York and finds that the entire town has been wiped out by unknown causes."

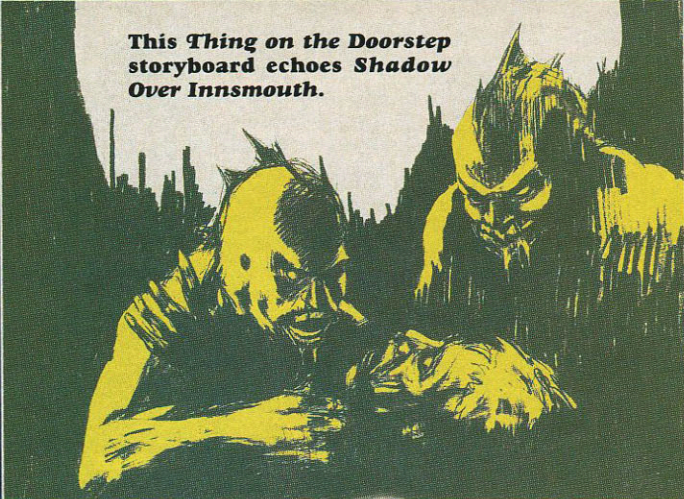
At *The Mountains of Madness* was another film Gordon talked frequently about with Yuzna, and one he felt could be a "fabulous movie"—although it would be quite expensive, since it takes place in Antarctica and is drawn from the Cthulhu tapestry. And "The Temple" is a story that Gordon has always been fond of: not only does he consider it one of Lovecraft's strangest pieces, he also feels a film adaptation could be a "horror version of *Das Boot*."

Perhaps the most talked-about Lovecraft-Gordon-Yuzna production was the ill-fated *Shadow Over Innsmouth* (see *Fango* #91). The long-planned film ran into financial trouble at Vestron Pictures, where it was developed. The company wanted to make *Innsmouth* for less than its originally proposed \$5-million budget, which would have been necessary to bring the epic tale of a town inhabited by amphibian-human hybrids to the screen. Gordon opted to let the production rest until proper money could be raised. He figured that "it was one of those projects that you have to do right or shouldn't bother doing at all."

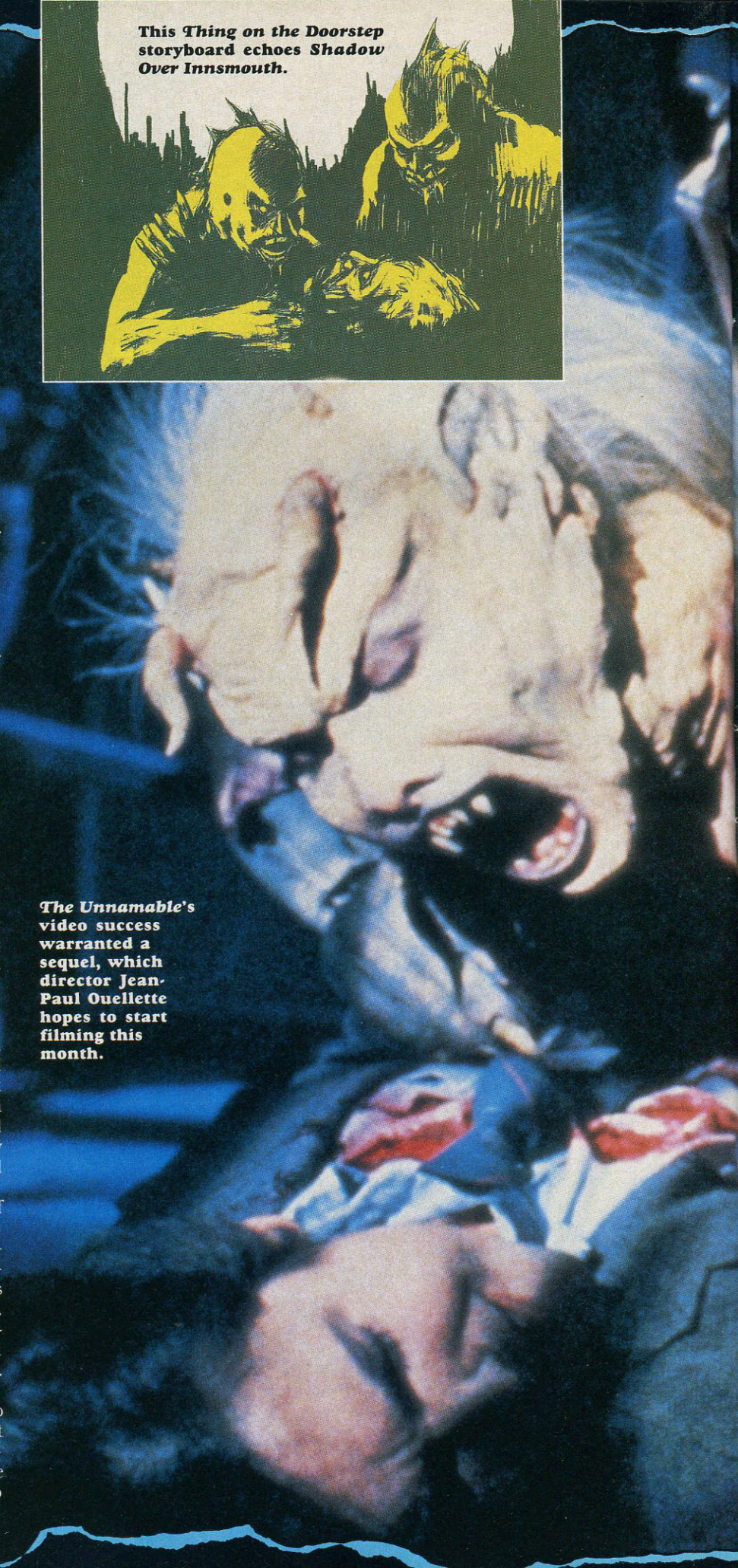
"It went into suspended animation," sighs Gordon. "It's a very ambitious film. It's not your typical slasher kind of movie, so it's kind of a hard sell to a major studio. But lately, as a result of the article in *FANGORIA*, there's been renewed interest in the project. Now Charles Band is doing it as a Full Moon production."

Salvaging *Innsmouth* out of Vestron's financial wreckage was no simple task. Carolco, the company that bought Vestron, considered the film an asset and has since kept it from being produced. "All this had to be worked out legally before we could really take it anywhere," explains Gordon. "When Charlie expressed interest, he had to talk to all the people who had been involved with the project from the beginning, and in the process of doing that, it looks like he will ultimately get clearance to produce it."

This Thing on the Doorstep storyboard echoes *Shadow Over Innsmouth*.



The Unnamable's video success warranted a sequel, which director Jean-Paul Ouellette hopes to start filming this month.



"The 20th Century Horror stories dark and baroque prince"
- Stephen King.

H.P. Lovecraft's



THE THING ON THE DOORSTEP

Hopefully, this early ad for *The Thing on the Doorstep* will have a hypnotic effect on potential HPL movie investors.

"It's a film that's wanted to get made for years, so we kind of rescued it," adds Band, now president of Full Moon. "Stuart will be directing and Dennis Paoli [who scripted *From Beyond* and *Re-Animator*] wrote the screenplay, so it's the old team reunited. We're hoping to shoot later this summer in Malta."

Like Gordon, Band has his own Lovecraft battle scars to reflect on. During the last days of Empire, Band was directing *Pulse Pounders*, a trilogy made up of minisequels to the previous Empire pictures *Trancers* and *Dungeonmaster* in addition to the Lovecraft adaptation "The Evil Clergyman." Utilizing the same repertory group from *Re-Animator*, Band reteamed Combs, Barbara Crampton and David Gale for this mini-goo fest.

Though all the footage was shot for *Pulse Pounders*, Band explains that the film never made it to post-production because of a legal conflict with the previous owners of Empire and the film's financiers. "It's one of those lost treasures that we'll hopefully extricate one day," predicts Band.

Ouellette's *The Unnamable* followed in *Re-Animator*'s successful wake. But Ouellette wasn't just jumping on a hip new filmic fad; Lovecraft was a part of Ouellette's childhood, since he grew up in New England (where the author set many of his tales).

"Part of my life was spent in Rockport, Massachusetts, which is within 10 miles of where Arkham and Innsmouth are fictionally set," explains Ouellette. "I must have

been about 10 or 11 when my father told me about Lovecraft stories. Every library was filled with them. They were the thing to read."

Ouellette got the opportunity to make his feature debut after his impressive 2nd unit work on *The Terminator*. An investor wanted to see what Ouellette could do on his own, and he went straight to his childhood for inspiration. Having been familiar with Lovecraft literature, Ouellette knew of the difficult task of translating the scribe's tales into feature form, since often the stories are quite short.

"One of the beauties of Lovecraft is the language, which sets him above all other writers, including the people who imitated him," judges Ouellette. "It's his prose that creates that illusion of horror, and that's almost untranslatable to film unless you have unlimited amounts of money. Plus, many of the stories are not plot-driven action pieces. They deal with very internal feelings of characters, and those are hard to project into a motion picture." For example, he adds, "*The Unnamable* is an eight-page story involving two men talking in a cemetery about things that happened in this house."

Though *The Unnamable* found a strong audience in the home video market, overseas interest has provided Ouellette with the funds to do a sequel which will hopefully make the theatrical rounds this time out. However, since the initial source material was so thin, Ouellette chose to mix another Lovecraft tale, "The Statement of Randolph Carter," into the follow-up's storyline. In *The Unnamable Returns: The Statement of Randolph Carter*, the original's hooved she-monster is separated into two entities, leaving the human elements in one form and the monstrous elements in another.

"My intention is to do a different type of movie," declares Ouellette. "In fact, this one is just as much a love story as it is a horror film. And because I don't want to be a sequel maker, the trick is to be able to add new elements and go beyond the original story."

Another Ouellette-Lovecraft project, *The Thing on the Doorstep*, was initially going to be shot back-to-back with *The Unnamable Returns*, but interest from major studios and big-name actors has pushed the film beyond its modestly-budgeted ambitions and is slowly developing into Ouellette's largest project to date. "*The Thing on the Doorstep* is the story of two

(continued on page 58)

CHILD'S PLAY 3:

Chucky the Toy Soldier



He's back... because the producers know you'll keep paying to see him.

Photos: Peter Iovino/Copyright 1991 Universal

The folks behind the deadly doll's third rampage swear that this will be more than just another sequel.

By **MARC SHAPIRO**

OK, people, it's a wonderful day to jump on a hand grenade. Let's shoot it!"

Child's Play 3 director Jack Bender is all smiles as he crosses through the mock forest set inside a Universal Studios soundstage. Crew members damp down the dirt while the film's stars, Justin Whalin, Perrey Reeves and Travis Fine, outfitted in camouflage green, are positioned. More than a dozen extras, likewise attired, are set at strategic points behind trees, boulders and on hillsides. Bender is ready to roll.

"Somebody get Chucky!" yells Bender's assistant. A crew member walks to the side of the stage, where a second-string Chucky doll sits sprawled on a director's chair with his name stenciled on it. The doll is brought over and positioned behind a tree.

The *Child's Play 3* shoot is heavy on POV and reaction shots, with the actors playing to everything from open space to garbage cans. But the death of a main character, in this case bad-boy military cadet Shelton (played by Fine), requires more literal motivation. Hence, the offscreen placement of the dummy Chucky for Fine to react to.

Bender calls for action, and the troops slowly advance from out of the woods toward the camera. At Bender's signal, an explosion sends the soldiers diving to the ground. Fine slowly rises and, rifle at the ready, moves forward. His eyes suddenly widen in shock. From behind the camera comes some dummy dialogue.

"Hi, soldier."

Shelton curses.

Blam! Gunfire rings out.

"Cut!" yells Bender, who emerges to correct some minor missteps on Fine's part and a couple of extras. The scene is repeated a half-dozen more times, followed by a few close-ups of Fine's reaction. The actor is then hustled off to be wired up with squibs for the continuation of his military sendoff.

Yes, *Child's Play 3* is already upon us, even though it seems like only yesterday that *Child's Play 2* was unspooling in theaters. Point of fact: As the above scene is going

before the cameras, there are still several screens in Los Angeles proper where one can catch its predecessor on the big screen.

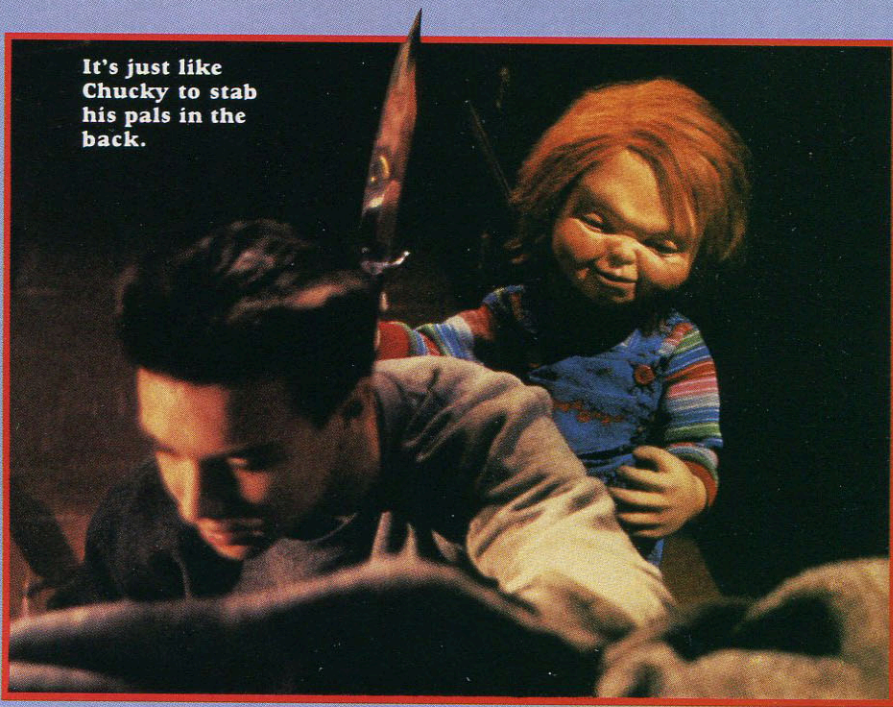
Screenwriter Don Mancini was given the green light to write *Child's Play 3* before *CP 2* had wrapped principal photography. Two editing teams and a short postproduction schedule, assigned to get Chucky's newest adventure into theaters this August, are in effect. To some onlookers, this might smack of a rush job, but its makers insist that the film's quality won't suffer.

"I wouldn't call this a rush job," declares producer Robert Latham Brown, who is back for his second *Child's Play* stint. "Getting *Child's Play 3* out at this time has been a very carefully thought-out process." To its advantage, *Child's Play 3* takes the now all-too-familiar exploits of Chucky (a.k.a. Charles Lee Ray) in a different direction. It is eight years later, and Andy Barclay (Whalin) is now a troubled 16-year-old who has been shuffled off to Kent Military School in an attempt to get him straightened out the manly way. Unbeknownst to him, the "Good Guy" toys have been put back into production—and guess who's the first one off the assembly line?

It isn't long before Chucky has tracked Andy down, but we soon discover that the doll is interested not in Andy, but a young cadet named Tyler. Andy goes on the offensive, while Chucky goes on the expected killing spree, one that makes extensive use of the military school's weapons arsenal with a few surprise offings thrown in. The body count piles up and climaxes with a mano-a-mano confrontation at an amusement park.

Chucky always did have a problem with authority figures.

It's just like Chucky to stab his pals in the back.



In addition to Whalin, Reeves (playing Andy's girlfriend De Silva) and Fine (whose Shelton provides Andy a human antagonist), *Child's Play 3* features Dakin Matthews, Donna Eskra, Peter Haskell and a hair-raising bit by *Hellraiser*'s Andrew Robinson. Kevin Yagher, Chucky's creator and supervisor, did a bit of fine tuning on the doll's mechanics but was too busy on other projects to put in more than sporadic appearances on the set.

Whalin, seeking the sun outside the set during Fine's squibbing, likes the idea that his entry into the *Child's Play* sweepstakes involves a change in his character's direction. "I'm not the one being chased in this one; I'm chasing Chucky," he observes. "I'm more the hero figure than the victim."

Whalin, a San Francisco native whose previous credits include stints on the short-lived TV series *One of the Boys* and the Clint

Eastwood thriller *The Dead Pool*, claims to be moving up a notch as an actor with this film. "The main challenge I'm finding is having to play Andy as disturbed. He's isolated himself quite a bit from people and is reluctant to let anybody into his life. And just when things can't get much worse, here comes that damned doll again."

Whalin is called back to the set where Fine, squibbed and ready for action, is given instructions by stunt coordinator (and former Michael Myers actor) Dick Warlock on how to react when the explosives master secreted out of camera range trips the switch. Bender checks the camera angles one last time and gives the go-ahead.

BANG!

Holes rip through the actor's uniform, quickly followed by smoke and blood. Fine half-falls, half-flings himself backward and tumbles into a heap. "That was great!" enthuses Bender. "Let's get him wired up and give it another go."

After completing Shelton's demise, Bender retires to his trailer. A veteran of such movies for television as *Dreamer of Oz*, *Shattered Vows* and *Side By Side*, the director reveals that he was concerned at the prospect of directing *Child's Play 3*. "You'd be nervous too if you had never done anything with a killer doll before," he chuckles. "I felt at first that it would be tough to justify a third film, especially if it involved the young Andy again. Had that been the case, I would have felt that the story had run dry. But once I read the script and saw that Don had taken the *Child's Play* concept into a new arena, I knew I could make



something exciting out of it."

In order to give Chucky that intensity, Bender is returning to the tenets that made the first *Child's Play* such a suspenseful bit of business.

"With this film, we're attempting to keep Chucky more of a shadowy figure who is a legitimate threat," maintains the director. "And that's going to be tough, because *Child's Play* is a known commodity. The audience is ready to be scared and have a good time because they know what Chucky can do. For this to work as a scary movie, we've got to work real hard at keeping the audience off balance as to what's going to happen next."

Bender's key to keeping moviegoers on edge centers around avoiding the emphasis on laughs that was present in *Child's Play 2* and not exploiting 3's military element the wrong way.

"This is not going to be Chucky as Rambo," Bender confirms. "I didn't want to do anything that cute. This film will have its funny moments, but the key to it really working is the rough edges we've built into it."

FX master Yagher was right in the middle of *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*, his *Tales from the Crypt* work and giant infant duty on *Honey, I Blew Up the Baby* when the folks at Universal called him with the announcement that it was Chucky time again.

"They said, 'We want to do this thing and get it out for the summer,'" recalls Yagher. "I said, 'Can't this wait?' and they said it couldn't. I was totally tied up, but I couldn't give up the doll."

Yagher's solution was to do the lab work from the comfort of his shop, hire a crew with *Child's Play* experience for the on-site Chucky wrangling and make occasional appearances to monitor dailies. Given the hurry-up nature of *Child's Play 3*, it should come as no surprise that the doll's improvements for this round are few and far between.

"The main thing we did this time out," Yagher details, "was to build a slave system into the doll that would allow one person to create all the physical movements. We've also installed some computers in the doll to cut down on the number of puppeteers, and added more human eyes to give him a more sinister look. But that's about it."

"At this point in the series, it has pretty much been established what Chucky can do, and so there really is not much left for us to add. To do anything really new

would necessitate taking Chucky apart and rebuilding him, and nobody really wants to do that."

On another day on the *Child's Play 3* set, nothing approaching slaughter by firepower is on the horizon. What is about to happen, as indicated by a nearby office/penthouse set, is the murder of corporate nasty Sullivan (Haskell), the toy company president and the only adult to survive *Child's Play 2*. As with the other day's shooting, a Chucky doll is on hand to provide POV inspiration, but Bender seems more intent on fine-tuning Haskell's movements in the split-level mockup. Mission accomplished, Haskell retires offstage to await his death call and explains how he managed to survive Chucky's wrath in 2 and consequently get a CP 3 callback.

"I knew I was dead meat in *Child's Play 2* when I told my employee to stick the doll up his ass," Haskell laughs. "Chucky never forgets, so I knew I was a goner. But when it came time to shoot the ending, they could not think of any logical way to get Sullivan back to the factory. So they let me live. When they tested the film, however, the comment people always seemed to have was to ask why Sullivan didn't die. So when this film was announced, they decided to bring me back and let Chucky finish the job."

Haskell, who refuses to disclose the method by which Sullivan is turned into Chuck steak, jokingly hopes that reports of his demise will be greatly exaggerated. "I have this vision of a theater marquee that says *Child's Play 4: Chucky's Nightmare*. And the catch would be that I would be his nightmare."

If such a sequel should come to pass, it would more than likely be scripted by Mancini, a veteran of all three *Child's Plays*. The writer was all ready to turn his creative attention to the film adaptation of *The Green Hornet* when *Child's Play 3* sent him racing back to his word processor. On the set this day to observe filming and to add last-minute changes to the multicolored pages that populate the final shooting script, Mancini claims that for him, the third time had to be the charm.

"After having done two of them, which were basically set in Middle American households, I felt that for a third one we really needed to come up with something different," he offers. "This kid running from this doll was starting to get real old. I wanted to put Andy on the

(continued on page 68)

**"This is not going to be Chucky as Rambo. I didn't want to do anything that cute."
—Jack Bender, director**

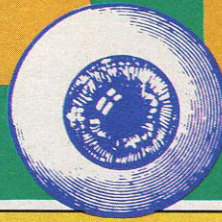


Shouldn't a girl De Silva's age have outgrown playing with dolls?

Shave and a throat cut, two bits!



THE VIDEO EYE of Dr. Cyclops



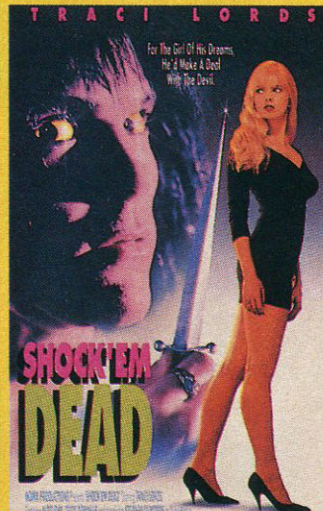
Except where otherwise indicated, all videocassettes are available by mail or telephone order from: MARSHALL DISCOUNT VIDEO SERVICE, Box 328, Trenton, MI 48183 Telephone: (313) 671-5483



THE CHURCH (SOUTH GATE): Just ignore the historical-religious hokey served up in the script for this latest Dario Argento production, and you may find yourself amazed at the technique of director Michele Soavi, who reveals a compelling style as potent as his mentor's. The film opens with charging Teutonic knights decimating a town full of what they suspect are witches—a sequence done with lavish action, beautiful editing and sweeping camerawork. Later, a church is erected in the hamlet on the site of a mass burial. The film switches to the present, where a new librarian has been hired to get the church's archives in order. Needless to say, the seal to the crypt is eventually broken and a group of people—including a pair of bikers, a bunch of schoolkids on a field trip and a photo crew—become trapped within the church. As can be predicted by anyone who caught fellow Argento pro-

tégé Lamberto Bava's *Demons* or *Demons 2*, the folks start getting offed in a myriad of gory ways. Two killings in particular—one by subway, one by sharp fence—are *tours de force* that really point up Soavi's command of his craft. They're the kind of scenes at which you stare, mouth agape, and say, "How'd they do that?" If you can forget about the silly story and sometimes boring explanatory dialogue scenes, and just marvel at the elaborately conceived tracking shots and the sacristan's supremely icky suicide by jackhammer, you're bound to want to enter this *Church*. Argento's daughter Asia, by the way, is featured in a pivotal role as the sacristan's daughter.

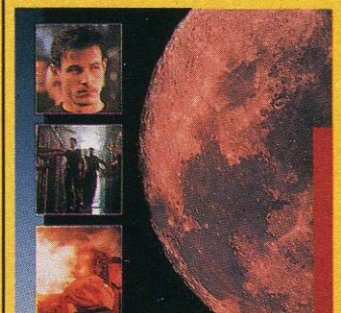
SHOCK 'EM DEAD (ACADEMY): Bad-movie buffs everywhere will probably embrace the mother lode offered by this direct-to-video release. In it, Martin, a bespectacled supernerd, quits his job at a pizza joint to audition as a guitarist for a loser rock band called Spastique Kolon. After he's rejected by the lead singer (who makes Gerrit Graham's Beef in *Phantom of the Paradise* look positively macho) and humiliated by his boss (Aldo Ray in one of his last roles), he sells his soul to the devil in exchange for becoming "the greatest rock star in the world." After being stabbed in the chest by a voodoo woman, Martin awakens in a master bedroom, looking like Nikki Sixx, with three of his very own metal groupies fawning over him. Now calling himself Angel, he natu-



rally tries out again for the band that dissed him and—wouldn't you know it—his technique has improved immeasurably, though the band members have no idea that this fast-fingered ax master is the same shmoe they just threw out. Angel soon discovers that when he signed away his soul, he also gave up the pleasure of eating, as he now needs to suck out human energy to survive. He is also attracted to the bassist's girlfriend (who doubles as the band's manager), which leads to a supernatural love triangle plotline. If this all sounds really dumb, that's because it is. But for all its cheesiness, stupidity and relentlessly dopey dialogue ("That's negative energy, man," "Someday, I'm gonna be somebody" and "I do believe in you" are just a few of the script's bon mots), *Shock 'Em Dead* is surprisingly watchable. The cast also includes a burnt-out-looking Troy Donahue and former underage porno queen Traci Lords, who gets top billing as the group's manager and object of Angel's affections. She's not given much to do here but look pouty, and since all of the film's gratuitous nudity is

relegated to the lesser-known starlets, Lordsaphiles will no doubt be disappointed. The technical credits are shaky at best, with poor sound recording throughout and typos in the closing credits.

MOON 44 (LIVE): This might have been a reasonably entertaining SF/action epic, but the people involved labored overtime to fudge the works, fashioning a screenplay that's more than a little vague in spots and then peopling it with malcontent characters whose ultimate vital-signs status will mean nothing to you. *Moon 44's* roots are foreign, judging by the ocean of diacritical marks and umlauts in the closing credits (not to mention first names like Ute and Ha), but its plot seeds are all-American, a tossed salad of themes from *Star Wars*, *Top Gun* and *The Dirty Dozen*. The year is 2038, and (as in all future-set movies) this poor planet of ours is all shot to hell. Our natural resources are completely depleted and rival corporations that "rule the universe" are locked in a bloody battle in outer space for control of farflung moons and their precious ore. (All of this scientific advancement in just the next 47 years?) Into this highly fanciful framework steps Michael Paré, beefcakey internal affairs agent for one of the dueling companies, sent to Moon 44 in the



guise of a work-release convict-turned-fighter pilot and striving to unmask the renegade employees (Malcolm McDowell, Leon Rippey) who have sold out to the opposition. There are plenty of special FX tinkertoys on display, and lots of fancy (miniature) airships dogfighting in smoke-filled alien ravines, all of which is fine if that sort of pyrotechnic stuff is all you want out of a movie. But since the dividing line between the bad guys and the "good" guys (violent cons, militaristic goons, corporate tightasses, even a drug dealer) is hair-thin, and there's nothing but mutual animosity between the convict/pilots and their gangly teenage navigators, *Moon 44* becomes just a mean-spirited men-in-war/find-the-traitor movie with acres of flashy hardware and hardly a spot of human drama. Cold, ugly and impersonal, it'll probably find its only audience amongst the Nintendo crowd.

FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER (RHINO): The world's made up of two types of people: those who get a bang out of bad movies and those who won't admit that they do. And for fans with a fondness for the old B&W horror jobs, the kind dished up by Elvira, Rhino's one-joke (or would that be two-joke?) horror hostess, the top of the line has always been *Frankenstein's Daughter*, director Richard Cunha's 1959 addition to the Monster's movie legacy. In Cunha's version, it isn't the original Dr. F. who's off stitching in the lab, it's his demented descendant Oliver, well-played by Donald Murphy. Oliver's problem is that the lab's not his; down to his last dollar, he's reduced to working incognito in the home of a craggy-faced old chemist (Felix Locher, father of camp star Jon Hall) who hasn't the foggiest notion what's going on. To fill up the film's slightly excessive 85 minutes, Oliver also has designs on the geezer's hot young niece (Sandra Knight, briefly Mrs. Jack Nicholson), but since she won't let him get to first base, he contents himself by spiking her lemonade with a serum that

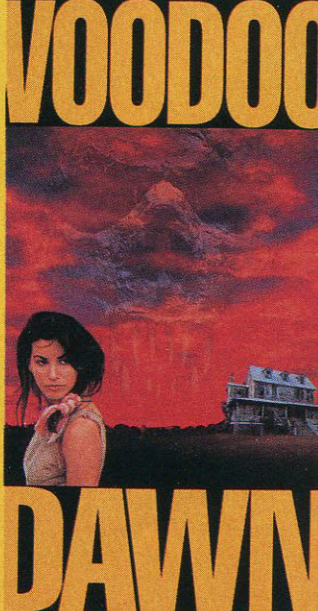


turns her into a blue-skinned she-monster almost as ugly as her uncle. Back in the lab, meanwhile, while Page Cavanaugh and his musical trio rock 'n' roll on his front lawn, Oliver finally bestows life on his pieced-together creation, a big bruiser with a mangled face that's supposed to look female, except Cunha forgot to tell that to his makeup man. It's probably not smart to try to pass this thing off as anything more than a light snack for junk film junkies, but in between the unintended laughs, *Daughter* sometimes plays surprisingly well, thanks to artful use of close-up and shadow, a better-than-average score and a full lineup of gruesome murders; climactically doused with acid, Donald Murphy's makeup as he rears up for one final scream is years ahead of its time. Lively, funny, yet almost-scary in spots, *Frankenstein's Daughter* remains one of the very best of the worst.

VOODOO DAWN (ACADEMY): Nobody likes it when weekend plans go astray. Just ask Kevin and Miles (Kirk Baily and Billy "Sly" Williams), two college boys whose idea was to drive into the Deep South and visit a friend. But the friend's dead (bad start!), there are zombies laboring in the fields, and some tall character has started leaping out of trees with machete in hand, cutting various organs out of his victims. ("Look, I know this isn't the weekend we planned on!" Kevin shouts at the stressed-out Miles.) Instead of turning tail and sensibly heading home,

Kevin, Miles and Tina (Gina Gershon), a white-trash field worker, decide instead to take a stand, joining with an uppity gaggle of field hands to wipe out the voodoo scourge. That's the gist of *Voodoo Dawn*—or, at least, as much of the gist as I could determine, watching with my one eye in constant danger of closing and my mind busy deciding between the fast-forward and eject buttons. *Voodoo Dawn's* a sort of low-budget, low-class cross between *Night of the Living Dead* and those cheap old Monogram zombie movies that always had a white hero and the black Mantan ("Feets, do your stuff!") Moreland ensconced in a murky voodoo stronghold. In *Voodoo Dawn*, our sweat-stained teenage heroes slog feverishly through the fields, make getaways on roller skates, attack the zombies with a barrage of blows and a flurry of four-letter words and take in enough mumbo jumbo to overflow all the empty graves that dot the dreary countryside. Sad to say, John (NOTLD) Russo takes partial blame, topping a four-man writing team (though, to be fair, the film bears little resemblance to his novel of the same name, and his script was mostly rewritten). Sadder yet, this may have been the last film of the dignified actor Raymond St. Jacques, who dawdles around mouthing his share of the hogwash dialogue and

FEATURING THE STAR OF THE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD



picking an occasional pea while everyone around him invokes curses on one another. And while you rock and writhe in your chair and curse yourself for picking *Voodoo Dawn*.

BLACK MAGIC WOMAN (VIDMARK): Who'd ever expect to find ex-*Star Wars* pipsqueak Mark Hamill in a video-bound erotic thriller? Not many people, I'd bet. Still boyish after all these years, Hamill lacks the charisma and, well, oomph to pass himself off as a video stud. This project doesn't help either. It's a tiresome heavy-breather, lacking in both believable plotting and sympathetic characters. Hamill plays an owner of an upscale art gallery who, much to his girlfriend/partner's (Amanda Wyss) dismay, returns to his womanizing days when a mysterious, dark-haired seductress (Apollonia) browses around during an opening. Seduced by her charms and her bottle of bubbly, Hamill engages in an after-hours tryst with the beauty. When her constant affection starts interfering with Hamill's personal and professional life, however, Mr. Non-Commitment spurns her. In response, she dogs him with a *Fatal Attraction*-like persistence, and soon he finds gutted birds hanging over his bed and snakes slithering in his room. He's then stricken by an apparently voodoo-inspired disease that's alleviated when a Hispanic doctor rolls eggs over Hamill's body—all this just before people around him begin turning up dead. All of this uninspired nonsense leads to a "surprise" ending that this reviewer anticipated at about the half-hour mark. When it does finally arrive, the twist is really a cheat—and fairly arbitrary to boot—since the moviemakers load the flick with clues that all seem to point in another direction. Unfortunately, for her part, the former Prince squeeze displays more of her limited acting abilities than skin. (Those looking for a more explicit erotic thriller are advised to look elsewhere.) This is just tame late-night Cinemax fodder at best, a \$2.99 rental ripoff at worst. ☠

Dedication, Tough Talk and

BODY PARTS

Gordon Smith, the artist behind some of film's most disturbing makeups, won't tolerate less than the best from himself or his movies.

By MICHAEL ROWE

Gordon Smith, makeup FX master, is preparing to bring John F. Kennedy back from the grave. The table in his design studio in downtown Toronto is littered with Xeroxes of the doctored face of an actor being considered for the title role in Oliver Stone's forthcoming *JFK*, an epic dealing with Kennedy's assassination.

"What do you think?" he asks his visitor. "Not bad?"

The likeness is jolting. Smith's associates are debating whether or not the actor playing Kennedy would consider temporary collagen implants to make the illusion perfect. Smith has said that the best FX are no FX at all, meaning invisible, seamless ones. He has made this quest for perfection his trademark in such films as *Jacob's Ladder*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Platoon*, *Dead Ringers* and the current *Body Parts*.

His design studio, FXSmith, is across the street from a slaughterhouse and until recently, his neighbors included Ron Oliver, director of *Prom Night III: The Last Kiss*. His design studio used to be a coffinmaker's workshop.

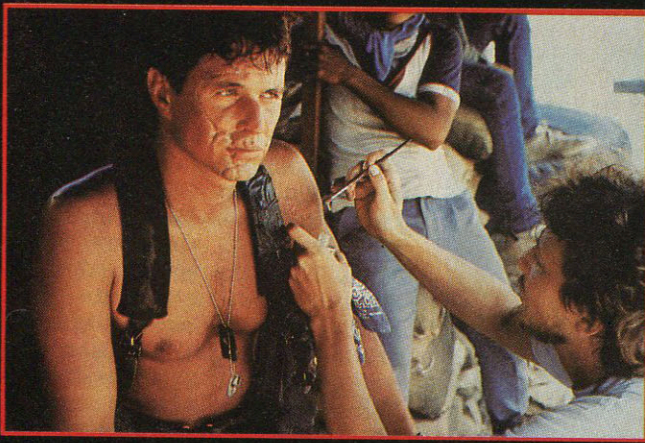
Curious, then, to hear that the man who brought the world the ravenous vampires of *Near Dark* and the carnivorous giant rat of *Graveyard Shift* has a deep-seated loathing for most horror films, particularly slasher films. "I seriously don't like them," he declares. "They are arrogant and disrespectful to the public." Perhaps sensing that his body of work to date might throw such a sweeping statement into question, he is quick to clarify that it is not the terror of the films that he objects to, but exploitative, meaningless gore for its own sake. "Horror movies can be quite spectacular," he avers. "There have been some horror movies that are indeed wonderful. *Jacob's Ladder* is a horror movie that touches into the realm of what real terror is. Suspense is the thing." He praises *Near Dark* for similar reasons. "The script worked. It had a beginning and a middle and an end. It was an honest portrayal of a distasteful subject. Honesty is all that it takes to be good."

His aversion to visceral horror has deep roots. "I am blood-phobic because my father died of leukemia when I was born. I either had to put myself in an institution or deal with it personally by the time I was 32." Smith's method of "dealing with it" was to plunge himself into his work, and the energy expended in wrestling with his demons has produced a collection of truly horrifying images, the one common thread being realism. "If you're going to frighten someone, you do it well," he maintains. "You don't back off from it. You don't pretend that you're not doing it."

Smith's denunciation of some of his previous projects is scathing. Of *Humongous*, a low-budget Canadian schlocker, he simply frowns. "Horrible. Incompetent people doing a lot of drugs on set, a lot of screwing of actresses, stuff like that. It was disgusting, almost enough to make me stop cold turkey. I actually sat in a room where a producer said, 'Either this girl takes her shirt off in this scene, or I pull my money out of this movie.' There was no reason for her to take her shirt off."



All FX Photos: Courtesy Gordon Smith



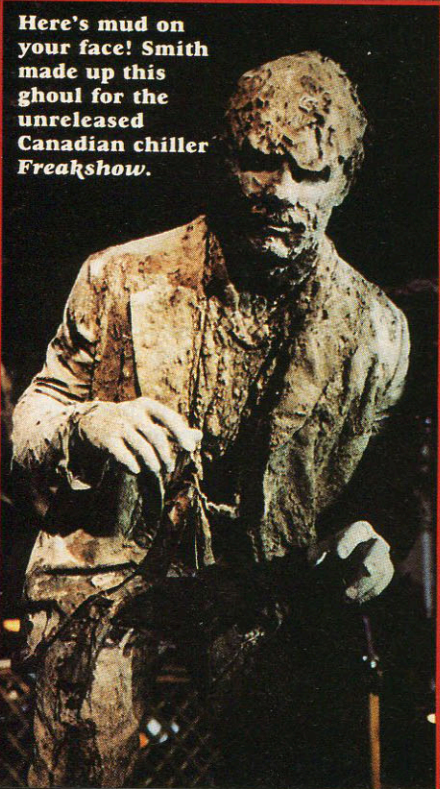
Smith applies the cinema's most famous scar to *Platoon's* Tom Berenger—who claimed it was as painful as getting a real one.

“All the limbs you see have a life of their own. They can all be disconnected from life support systems and still move.”

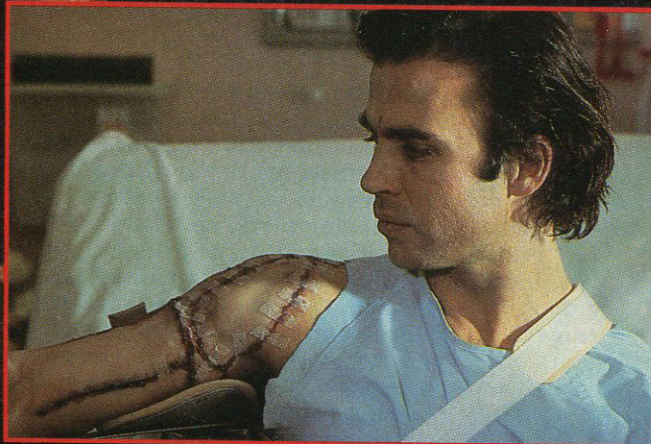


No bones about it—many fans probably wanted to see the apparitions cut from *Jacob's Ladder*.

Here's mud on your face! Smith made up this ghoul for the unreleased Canadian chiller *Freakshow*.



You'd need six eyes too to spot this Smith creature in *Jacob's Ladder*.

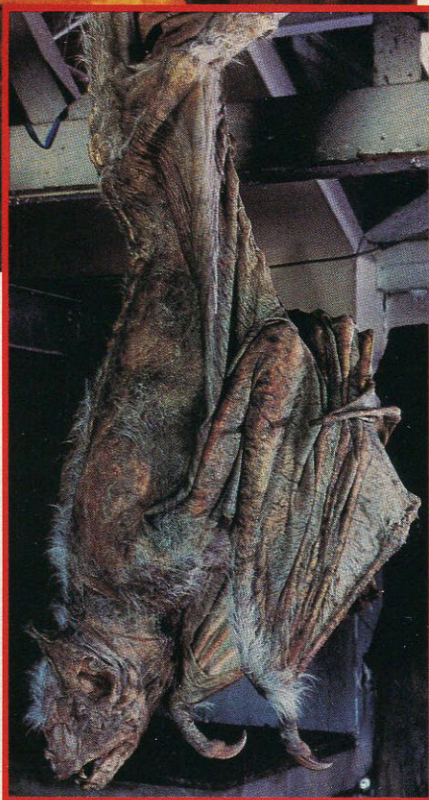


Jeff Fahey sports the transplanted arm creation, which Smith fought to keep within the bounds of reality.



It's a dirty job,
but someone had
to bring all those
body parts to
and from the set.

If only the
Graveyard Shift
bat-rat had
looked this good
on screen.



Although Smith does not identify specifically with his audience, on certain levels he feels that he has a moral responsibility to show them the reality of what they are seeing, be it a giant rat attack in *Graveyard Shift* or the haunting image of a disemboweled Vietnamese girl in *Platoon*. He feels that sanitizing the effects of weapons on human beings desensitizes them to real violence, and that this is morally wrong. Scare them, sure, if that's the job, Smith believes, but show them the horror of death as well.

"A handgun," he says coldly, "is used for killing human beings. There is no other use for it. They will never show you what that gun can do to a person. With normal ballistics, he'll have a couple of pounds missing. If it hits him in the head, he'll be hamburger." Then, disgustingly, he mimics, "Guns are cool."

He is no less critical of the make-believe horrors he is called upon to bring to life. "Because the genre they're working in is horror," Smith says of some producers, "they figure, 'OK, it's only horror.' They don't try to be perfect, they don't *try* anything. They hire the cheapest actors they can, they get the worst scripts they can get, the cheapest effects...none of that matters to them.

"On *Graveyard Shift*, I fought tooth and nail to simplify it down to its basics," Smith continues. "They wanted the creature to take people's heads in its mouth and pop them like grapes. It was obscene and stupid. No animal could take a human's head in its mouth and pop it like a grape. You're talking huge amounts of money to do it properly, huge amounts. But their concern was not in being proper, it was to come up with something that would have a great deal of blood involved."

Smith's work is now in front of

audiences again with *Body Parts*, Eric Red's second directorial effort, hitting the screen. The film, superficially, is a reworking of the old appendage-with-a-life-of-its-own theme which has been done again and again, from *The Hands of Orlac* to *Basket Case*. He declines to call the film an FX showcase, but will admit that it features some truly spectacular animated limbs. "All the limbs you see have a life of their own. They can all be disconnected from their life-support systems and still move. That was one aspect of the film that I put in, and the director could not understand it. He didn't know what I was talking about until I turned the thing on and started to do it."

Smith says he was initially reluctant to do *Body Parts*, although he says of Eric Red, "He did exceptionally well considering it's only his second movie. He's got an excellent film on his hands. I didn't want to do it at first, and I told him so. The script was stupid. He had this big Popeye arm that looked like it belonged to Godzilla or something like that; medically, it's impossible, and physically, it's a joke. Every time something like that is seen, it would be a laugh. Then there was a guy with legs that look like King Kong's, and then there was another guy with somebody else's head on his skinny body. It would only work if you were animating it, like a cartoon."

Smith recalls that he and Red argued about the film's realism. Of one scene, "I told him it was physically impossible to do it. He said, 'We'll do it anyway.' I said, 'Fine, get somebody else. I will not do it.' There was a great deal of battling about bringing it a degree of medical accuracy. He was afraid of losing the gore element, the horror. I kept saying that the horror comes from life. Add the fact that when these limbs come off, they are *alive*."

Smith also says he refused to go to rushes, announcing that should they agree to change something if he didn't like it, he would go.

Nonetheless, whatever rough-riding occurred on the set, the creative process speaks for itself. If Smith sounds like a prima donna, he clearly has the goods to back up the attitude. He is remorselessly driven to perfect the special effect. "Our experiences have been with urethanes," he details. "The first two times you see scars in the movie, they're OK. Believable. By the time we get to the end of the movie, they are flawless. As someone who does it for a living, I was excited."

If there is a progression in Smith's body of work, it is because

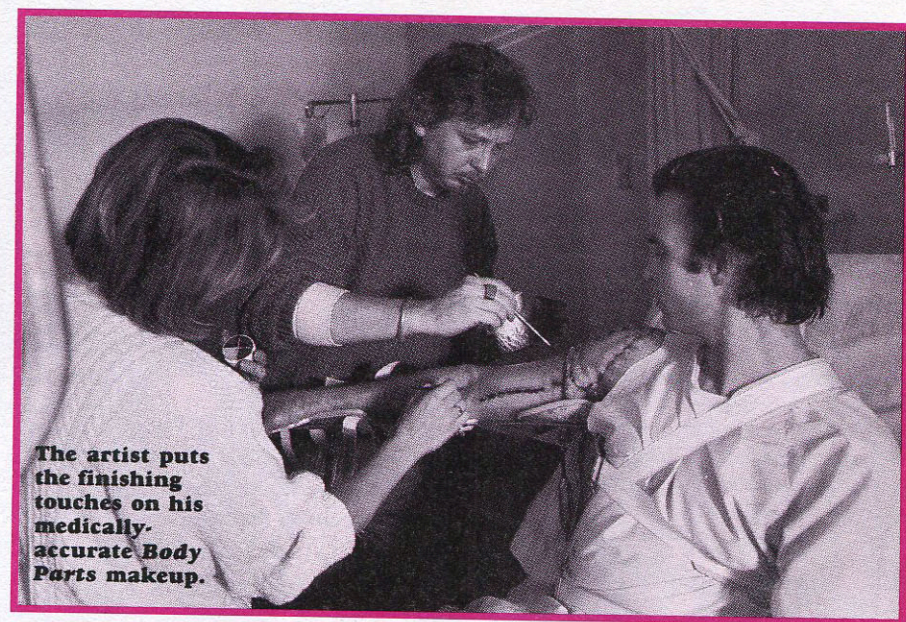
he is always aware of what's new, and whether or not he can make it better. "We're experimenting with new methodologies," he muses. "That's what I do. I don't care to know how to make a foam prosthetic...I've only seen it work maybe twice in my life. Most of the time, it's a piece of rubber glued to somebody's face with way too much makeup on it. It looks OK, but it's still somebody wearing a prosthetic. I use translucent material that will accept the light and look like skin tissue and can be colored through its depth, rather than just color laying on the surface." Smith is credited with producing the cinema's most famous scar, the diagonal slash on the cheek of Tom Berenger as Sgt. Barnes in *Platoon*. He tells an anecdote about how the daily application of the scar became so painful for Berenger that he jokingly told Smith that they could let their lawyers battle it out if the makeup caused him any real damage.

Despite such potential problems, Smith lays all of the praise that he has withheld from previous colleagues at the feet of Oliver Stone. The director, whose films showcase some of Smith's most disturbing and moving work, is simpatico with Smith. According to the artist, they occupy a similar headspace—two arms, as it were, of the same body.

"If you're going to frighten someone, you do it well. You don't back off from it. You don't pretend that you're not doing it."

Both are dedicated to commentary: Stone to the reality and horror of war and carnage, Smith to graphic and realistic depiction of it. Both men have done well by the medium, marrying their ethics to commerce with brilliant results. They are also friends; Stone gave Smith an up-front credit at the beginning of *Platoon*, not a small coup even for a war-hardened craftsman like Smith.

"I don't make any money when I work for Oliver Stone," Smith comments, a little incredibly. "They're not willing to pay me, but they're willing to pay my costs. No one else on the planet," he laughs, "can get away with that kind of crap aside from Oliver Stone. Oliver is completely dedicated to the movie he is making." Smith makes no bones about the fact that he makes money with his more garish work; he makes art with Stone. When asked how he felt when the director picked up his Oscars for *Platoon* and *Born on the*



The artist puts the finishing touches on his medically-accurate Body Parts makeup.

Fourth of July, Smith pauses, leans back in his chair and thinks for a moment. "Jealous," he admits. "I wished I'd won one too."

David Cronenberg, who many feel was also snubbed by the Academy Awards over *Dead Ringers*, worked with Smith on that film. According to Smith, they also came into conflict over the method. "David was very gracious and kind," judges Smith, "but the goods I delivered were completely less than adequate.

I don't think he'd hire me again. And I wouldn't blame him."

It is difficult not to have at least a grudging admiration for someone who nails his colors so sturdily to the mast, even if they are a little forbidding at times. Smith is clearly a craftsman with an artist's temperament. He does not suffer fools gladly or at all, and appears to have no patience with anyone not keeping up with him.

During the course of the interview, there were several interruptions, one being a telephone call from a young, aspiring FX artist who wanted advice and direction. Given Smith's stature within the industry, and given his freely-expressed and boiling opinions, the calm and gracious manner with which he took the call was unexpected, given that the young man clearly thought nothing of ringing up one of the world's top makeup artists just to chat about his life's direction. Not once

did Smith announce that he was too busy to talk, or that he was in an interview. Instead of finding it an irritant, Smith handled the call with a generosity that was oddly touching. "Nice kid," he says after the caller hangs up. But then, when the topic turns to some of his other calls, his tone turns contemptuous. "I don't want to talk to people who want to

(continued on page 68)

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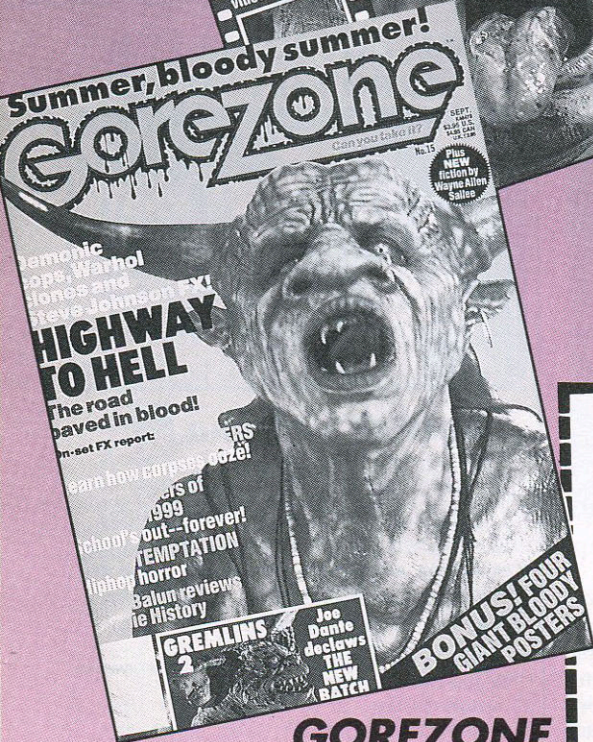
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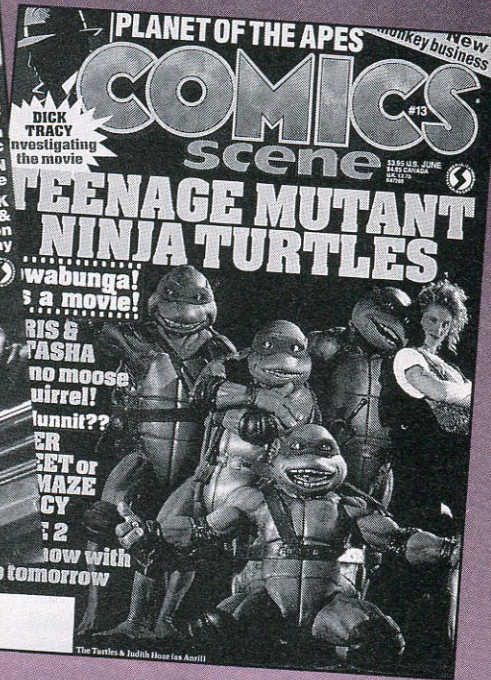
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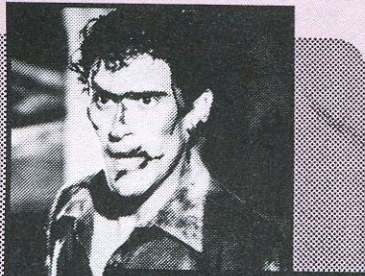
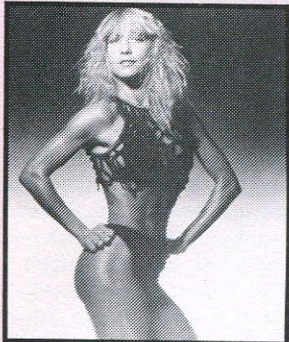
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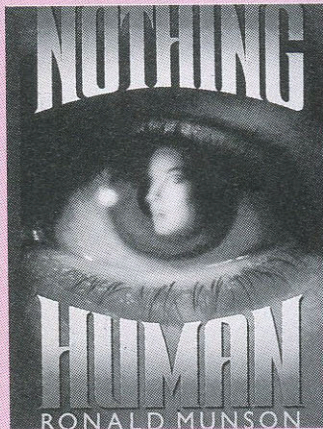
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Nothing Human
By Ronald Munson
Pocket Books
304 pp, \$19.95

Yes, we all enjoyed *Silence of the Lambs*, but now it's time to get ready for *The Attack of the Serial Killer Books!* The action in Munson's plodding, predictable first novel centers around a cardboard trio of main characters—female victim, male threat and male rescuer. The opening cuts right to the meat, with a detailed description of a body's neck stump recently divorced from its head, the second such victim of a killer who calls himself "the Jaguar." The mutilated corpse disgusts the investigating officer, Lt. Eric Firecaster, both physically and morally. This sometime philosopher hopes to champion the victims and "give them back their dignity by making their killers feel the teeth of the law."

The murderer, John Haack, is a Harvard grad who identifies with Paul Atrides from *Dune*, the Mayans, great hunters and ancient astronauts. Rather than hanging together in a meaningful mad-

ness, Haack's delusions are but haphazard attempts at "color" in an utterly unconvincing psycho character. Worse, he's not even very scary. His next chosen victim, Jill, takes her received threats to Firecaster. Within pages they are kissing, and she goes to stay at his house where she'll be "safe." Not only does Firecaster leave Jill alone to investigate the decapitation of her friend, but, learning that the Jaguar is on his way, she decides to trap him herself. These two deserve each other.

Spunky Jill gets several opportunities to use the hunting skills Daddy taught her, but must ultimately depend on her hero and his gun. In the end, everything is neatly resolved with all the excitement and morality of a *Dragnet* rerun. *Nothing Human* is Nothing Special.

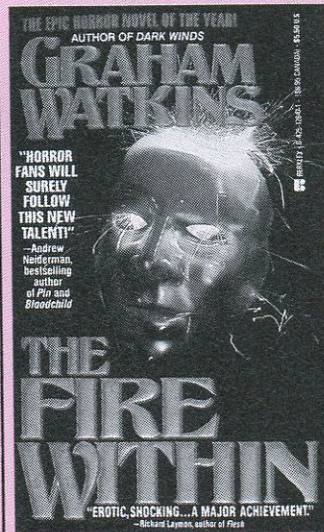
—Linda Marotta

The Fire Within
By Graham Watkins
Berkley Books
556 pp, \$5.50

Graham (*Dark Winds*) Watkins' second horror novel *The Fire Within* features more author blurbs on the front and back cover than any other novel this reviewer can recall—seven in all. And this should tell the reader one of two things: Either the novel is a great piece of work, or the publisher is pretty nervous about putting it out there sans hype.

Well, to be fair, *The Fire Within* falls somewhere in between. It's a lengthy book, following several characters as they leave the United States and travel to a mysterious jungle paradise. There's

a young couple; two others are traveling men; a third is a psychic. All, however, seem to have been drawn to this place (ostensibly they've won a free vacation through a sweepstakes, but we know this isn't the whole story), all have seen visions before they've even left and all are quite horny.



The jungle paradise is sort of like Fantasy Island meets Stephen King. Watkins lades on plenty of sex and comes up with a few good set pieces. One, in which a woman's appetites get the better of her, will stick in your mind for quite some time. And soon, everyone is caught up in an ancient native ritual that involves death and transformations. It's quite gruesome stuff.

But the book has a major flaw—length. Big books can be riveting reads; there's King's *The Stand*, Robert McCammon's *Swan Song* and Dan Simmons' *Carrion Comfort*. But all too often there's more padding than

real plot in paperback horror novels that go on for more than 400 pages.

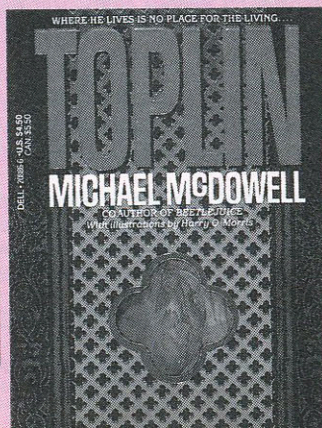
Watkins' chief problem with *The Fire Within* appears to have been the setup. The author spends more than 180 pages just getting his characters to the jungle paradise. Bram Stoker, by comparison, brought Jonathan Harker to Castle Dracula by page 24.

—David Kuehls

Toplin
By Michael McDowell
Dell/Abyss
277 pp, \$4.50

The return to horror fiction by Michael McDowell is a cause for great rejoicing—even if it's with a book as weird as *Toplin*. Fans of *Cold Moon Over Babylon*, *Gilded Needles* or *Beetlejuice* (which McDowell co-scripted) may be disappointed by this bleak novel's lack of colorful characters, dialogue or setting. Like L. Ron Hubbard's *Fear*, it is a first-person account of one man's psychological nightmare. Previously available in a limited edition, this version includes the original illustrations by Harry O. Morris.

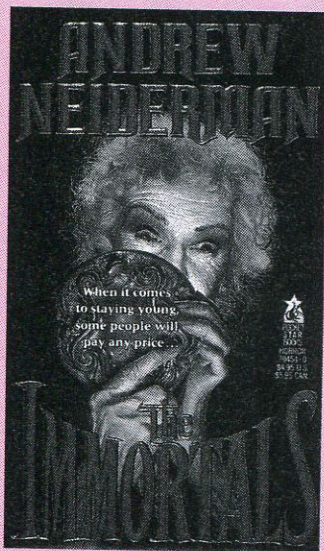
The nameless narrator lives in a run-down neighborhood and works as a clerk in a



nondescript office. Unable to detect colors, he sees the world as gray, black or white. He believes himself far superior to the rest of humanity and is sure that others are against him, "the perfect out-cast, the faultless stranger." Anal doesn't begin to describe his perfectly ordered existence. He obsesses over his six black suits (S1-S6), alphabetically arranged cook-books and portentous feces. He cleans the bottoms of his doors. The world turns for his benefit, and he belabors the symbolic connections of his vague and absurd reality. Hardly the craziest character in the book, he is surrounded by grotesque, troubled neighbors, gang violence and vagrants shrieking their inanities. They all become players in his plan to help a waitress so loathsome, he perceives she must undoubtedly wish to die.

Once in a while, an artist will produce a work so odd that some will call it "genius" and others will shake their heads in confusion. This one succeeded so well in its atmosphere of profound alienation that it left me rather stumped and sad. As the anonymous narrator puts it, "Uninterpretable signs are everywhere, and you rarely understand the curses with which you are cursed."

—Linda Marotta



The Immortals
By Andrew Neiderman
Pocket Books
281 pp, \$4.95

Andrew Neiderman can structure a horror novel as well as anyone in the busi-

ness, and this makes his books quite attractive to the movies. *Pin*, his first novel, was made into a film, and Warner Bros. has optioned *The Devil's Advocate*. *The Immortals* follows in that pattern: It's a quick, fluid read, easily filmable. But that's about it.

The story concerns a miracle rejuvenation cream called Youth Hold, put out by a mysterious Florida-based company called Leon (get it?) Enterprises. The company doesn't advertise or sell to drug stores; it works strictly through salespeople. And one such new salesman is Drake Edwards. Drake has a nice wife and family and a good job, but when he runs into the Youth Hold people, they urge him to put that part of his life behind him.

With Youth Hold, Drake regains the use of his bum knee, and the neighborhood women begin to find him exceedingly attractive. It doesn't bother Drake a bit that several of his co-workers' wives have been found dead. But it disturbs his wife, Cynthia. She accompanies Drake to Leon Enterprises' corporate headquarters, where they meet the head honcho himself. And then Neiderman wraps up the novel with a happy ending before you can say "worry lines." Cynthia even forgives Drake, despite the fact that he was going to kill her!

One of these days, Neiderman ought to sit down and write a good horror novel, not a synopsis for a film. He has the talent. But then again, maybe Hollywood is drawing him the way Youth Hold attracts Drake Edwards.

—David Kuehls

Science Fiction Stars and Horror Heroes
By Tom Weaver
McFarland
461 pp, \$35

You know Tom Weaver, of course. For years, he's been tracking down mostly unheralded, underappreciated and overlooked figures from the fantastic cinema, engaging them in some first-rate conversation about their careers and sending the transcribed results to FANGORIA and STARLOG, where they have

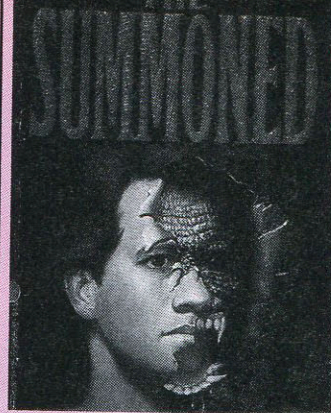
consistently delighted those of us with an interest in pre-Freddy Krueger horror. In *Science Fiction Stars and Horror Heroes*, McFarland gathers 28 of Weaver's interviews into a fascinating, photo-illustrated volume.

Several things make Weaver's collection tower above many of the others. For one thing, he doesn't round up the usual suspects. This tome features the likes of actors Richard (*The Undead*) Devon, Gregg (*The Creature Walks Among Us*) Palmer, Acquanetta (*Captive Wild Woman*) and Robert (*The Slime People*) Hutton, none of whom you could call overexposed. And even when he talks to someone who's become a darling of horror fandom—such as *Carnival of Souls* auteur Herk Harvey—he finds a fresh approach and questions.

You also have to admire how Weaver handles his interviewees. The Q & A format Weaver uses looks deceptively simple; in fact, it takes a damn good writer to do it right. A good Q & A writer makes the interview sound completely spontaneous, when in fact he has deftly edited pauses, mid-sentence shifts and bits of repetition and irrelevancy. All the while, he has to be conscious of the rhythm, tempo and conversational uniqueness of his subject.

Weaver's done so here—each of his people emerge as distinct and interesting personalities who have some compelling observations to make about their days in horror and SF. Sometimes, in *Rashomon* fashion, there will be different comments on the same subject. It should also be noted that the interviews have been expanded from their magazine versions.

Although the likes of actresses Anna (*Bedlam*) Lee and Acquanetta made their horror marks in the mid-'40s, the bulk of the book seems dedicated to that grand period in the early to mid-'60s, when genre movies were booming at the theaters, on TV and the magazine shelves. Weaver has done a dandy job of capturing not only one of the great horror eras, but also giving voices to several unsung horror heroes. This



book is great fun from start to finish and a valuable historical service as well.

—John Wooley

The Summoned
By Steven Ray Fulgham
Charter/Diamond
323 pp, \$4.50

No brains are needed to get through *The Summoned*, a silly hungry/horny monster story with a strong enough narrative to at least keep you mindlessly turning the pages. It's published by Diamond, Berkley's line of "disposable" horror, intended primarily for the supermarket shelves. These books follow the romance novels' model of few reprints, just next month's EZ-reading replacement.

Stan is a misfit teenager who fools around with the occult and summons up an incubus who sodomizes him, then runs off to hang out in the local haunted house. The demon, Bargolas, appears to victims as the thing they most desire. (One enjoyable scene has teenagers chewing on rat turds and broken glass, thinking they are chocolate chip cookies.) Following seduction, he usually makes a postcoital meal of his partners. Early on he assaults a coyote, smashing through her until she's a bloody mess. You can imagine the effect his "ridged arousal" has on human orifices.

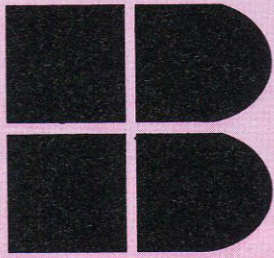
As Stan and his friend try to stop the fiend, we learn of Bargolas' birth to a nun raped by a monk during the Inquisition. A ward of the devil, he exists in limboland until some lonely soul conjures him up as a lover, then sends him back when his extramarital murders get out of hand.

If the corny title and obvious sex=death motif don't keep you away, you should seriously examine your junk food consumption.

—Linda Marotta

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(continued from page 43)

very good friends who grew up together," Ouellette describes. "One is an architect and the other a writer of horror stories. The writer falls in love with a woman capable of switching bodies with him who intends to steal his body—to become a man. What I'm attempting with *Thing on the Doorstep* is to make the most accurate recreation possible, so that 95 percent of the script is from the story."

Biggs, who will be providing special makeup FX for both Ouellette projects, adds, "*Thing on the Doorstep* has some really neat stuff in it. It's not just a hunt/slasher/monster-on-the-loose type of thing. There's a lot of psychological stuff in it. It's a cross between Hitchcock and Cronenberg."

Though *The Thing on the Doorstep* incorporates references and characters from the "Innsmouth" story and, by the same token, Gordon's *Shadow Over Innsmouth* takes elements from the "Doorstep" tale, Ouellette feels that there's no fear of jumping into each other's territories.

"'Innsmouth' is a wonderful story, but it's very different from 'Thing on the Doorstep,'" counters Ouellette. "'Thing on the Doorstep' is almost film noir mystery, whereas 'Innsmouth' is epic history. They're of different types, and I don't think we're going to end up stepping on each other's toes."

Gordon adds, "We borrowed an idea out of 'Thing on the Doorstep' about a man who marries a woman from Innsmouth, because one of the problems with Lovecraft's work is that it's rare that he writes women characters. In most movies, you need a strong woman character."

For Ouellette, however, Lovecraft adaptations won't end with these two endeavors. In the development stages are several possible short animated Lovecraft tales, the first being *The Cats of Ulthar*, which could potentially be played as a short before *The Thing on the Doorstep* if it is completed in time.

"What we'd like to do," Ouellette confirms, "is take a couple of small Lovecraft stories that are not capable of being adapted into larger pictures and do them as animated shorts, under seven minutes, which capture the stories' Gothic fun. Attempting to make a larger picture out of 'The Cats of Ulthar' would ruin it. It's such a beautiful little piece."

Still on the horizon is Ouellette's dream project, a feature version of

Lovecraft's "The Whisperer in Darkness." The already-written script brings back Randolph Carter and Eliot Damon Howard, characters that Ouellette is carrying through the two *Unnamable* pictures and describes as a "Sherlock Holmes and Watson-type team."


"'The Whisperer in Darkness' was the one that always grabbed me," muses Ouellette. "I grew up with science fiction, since my father was an astrophysicist, so it struck me as both a ghost story and a science fiction horror story, which was different from most of the stuff I had read up until then."

Also in the planning stages is *Beyond Re-Animator*, though Brian Yuzna (who produced *Re-Animator* and directed its sequel, *Bride of Re-Animator*) claims it will have less to do with its source author than its predecessors. "We kind of used up all the Lovecraft ideas in *Bride*, so I don't think there is anything left in his stories to milk," says Yuzna. "Jeffrey [Combs] is really excited. He wants to do another one, and we're just trying to find a title to work from. I prefer *Beyond Re-Animator*, but I don't know if that will be it."

In addition, Yuzna has a few of his own film wishes. He's particularly fond of "The Dreams in the Witch-House" as well as "The Whisperer in Darkness," but he thinks he'd most like to update "The Dunwich Horror."

Though Lovecraft is finally winning the attention that eluded him for so many years, Ouellette hopes that this current boom won't turn into another Stephen King craze where every other month, a new adaptation crawls out from under a rock just to cash in on the famous monicker.

"Lovecraft is still someone whom many of us love, and once he becomes a bankable name, a lot of people who don't care will start producing material," Ouellette frowns. "That's going to hurt the rest of us who really enjoy Lovecraft for those elements that are literate, intelligent and true to his original idea."

"Plus, it's very important that anybody attempting to adapt Lovecraft knows why he is such a cult figure in literature. He's the second most imitated 20th-century author, after Hemingway. There is a very literate element to all of Lovecraft's work, and what makes these pictures interesting is their adherence to that tradition. And if you're just going to take Lovecraft and do a movie with monsters and blood, there will probably be little interest in getting it done." 

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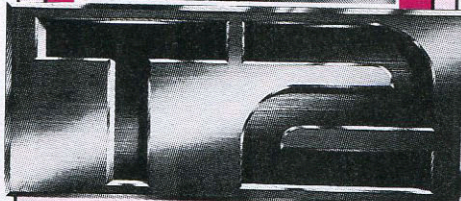
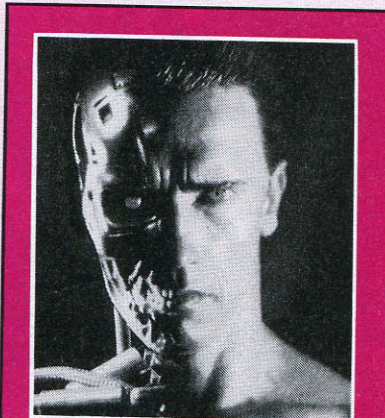
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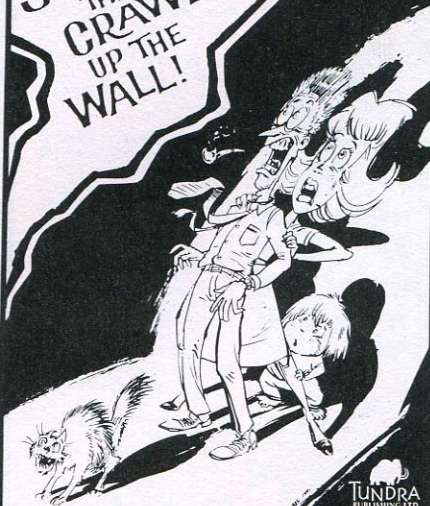


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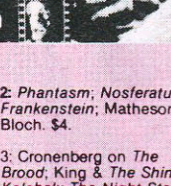
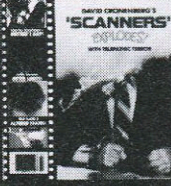
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2: *Phantasm; Nosferatu; Frankenstein*; Matheson; Bloch. \$4.

3: Cronenberg on *The Brood*; King & *The Shining*; Kolchak: *The Night Stalker*; *Dracula* & *Frankenstein*; Matheson; director Jack Arnold. \$4.

6: Bottin & Savini shock FX; King & Romero team up; *Friday the 13th*; Sean Cunningham; Vincent Price; *Quatermass*; Hammer history. \$10.

7: Munro & Savini on *Maniac*; Chris Walas; *The Shining*; *Curse of Frankenstein*; Price; Hitchcock. \$4.

8: Carpenter; *Zombie* gore; Danforth & Allen; *Horror of Dracula*; AIP monsters. \$6

16: *Basket Case*; Dick Smith; Chris Tucker FX; Straub & *Ghost Story*; Barker FX; Harryhausen; Adrienne Barbeau. \$4.

17: Craven; Smith & *Ghost Story* FX; *Sexy Fiona* & guy H.G. Lewis; Alan Ormsby's *Cat People*; *Halloween II*; *Dark Shadows*. \$6

18: Burman on *Cat People* and *Beast Within*; On set: Carpenter's *The Thing*; Romero's *Creepshow*; *One Dark Night*. \$6

19: *The Road Warrior*; Cronenberg, Carpenter & Landis meet; Greg Cannom; *Poltergeist*; Dick Miller! \$4.

21: Reardon & *Poltergeist*; Bottin & *The Thing*; *F13—Pt. 3*; Zacherle; Cannom FX; more with Carpenter, Landis & Cronenberg. \$6

22: Romero & *Creepshow*; *Halloween III*; *F13—Pt. 3* FX; Tor Johnson; Elvira; Ingrid Pitt \$6

24: *Poltergeist* ILM FX; *Q; XTR0*; *The Sender*; *Blood Farmers*; Klaus Kinski. \$4.

25: Cronenberg on *Videodrome*; Savini after *Creepshow*; *Alone in the Dark*; Whitley Streiber & *The Hunger*; *Poltergeist* FX; McGavin on *Kolchak*. \$4.

26: Smith & *The Hunger*; H.G. Lewis; FX of Caglione, Beswick; Michael (Mark of the Devil) Armstrong; Ted (Corpse Grinders) Mikels; Ed French FX. \$4.

27: Savini book excerpt; Tony Perkins; *Evil Dead* FX; Peter Walker slashers; *Brady* on horror. \$10

28: *Psycho II*; FX of Smith, Fullerton & Buechler; *Dead Zone*; AIP days; Veronica Carlson. \$4.

29: Cronenberg on *Dead Zone*; George (Mad Max) & Dick Miller; *Twilight Zone* movie; H.G. Lewis; Lucio Fulci; *American Werewolf*; *Dead of Night*. \$4.

30: Joe Dante speaks; Reardon *Twilight Zone* monster FX; *Cujo*; Carpenter; Freddie Francis; Vincent Price; James Herbert. \$4.

31: *Dead Zone*; *Amityville 3D* FX; *Exorcist* mechanical FX; *Pieces*; Matheson. \$4.

32: Carpenter's *Christine*; Scorsese on Cronenberg; *Cujo* FX; Subotsky; John (Living Dead) Russo; C.H.U.D.; Herbert; Stan Winston. \$6

33: Maley's *Keep monster*; *Futurekill*; *Strange Invaders* FX; Italian zombies; Ed French FX. \$6

34: The early Rick Baker; *Chainsaw*'s Ed Neal; *Mutant* (Night Shadows); Argento; Berryman on *Hills Have Eyes 2*; Reardon & *Dreamscape*; *Firestarter*. \$4.

35: Cannom/Shostrom/Lazarini rock video makeup; King interview; *Children of the Corn*; Baker; Argento; *Firestarter* burnings. \$4.

37: Dante on *Gremlins*; Dick Miller; Baker's best; Gene Simmons; John Amplas; *Hills Have Eyes 2*; Mark Shostrom FX; Stuart Freeborn. \$10

38: Dante; Walas *Gremlins* FX; Craven speaks; *F13* retrospective; *The Mutilator* gore; Freeborn; Jonathan (LSOH) Haze. \$4.

39: The Shape vs. Leatherface & Jason; *Gremlins* FX; *Ghostbusters*; Freeborn; *Dreamscape*. \$4.

40: *Nightmare on Elm St.*; *Return of the Living Dead*; *Night of Comet*; Schwarzenegger on *Terminator*; Hammer vamps; Michael McDowell \$10

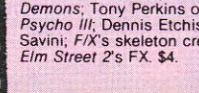
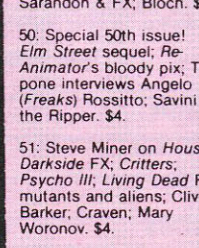
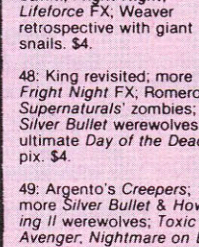
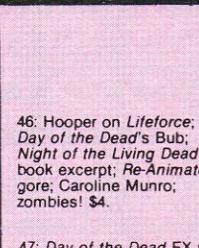
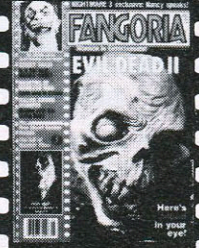
41: Jim Cameron on *Terminator*; Chris Lee; *Ghostbusters* FX; *Darkside*; C.H.U.D. FX; *Creature*; Larry Buchanan. \$4.

42: *Blood Simple*; King & Straub; Tucker's *Company of Wolves* FX; Mario Bava; De Palma on *Body Double*; Chris Lee 2; Buechler. \$4.

43: *Day of the Dead* set visit; King & Straub; *Cat's Eye* & *Silver Bullet*; John (Brides of Blood) Ashley; Rambaldi FX; Bava 2. \$4.

44: *F13—A New Beginning*; creating Freddy Krueger; O'Bannon on *Return of the Living Dead*; *Company of Wolves*; Siodmak; Jonathan Frid; John Saxon. \$4.

45: *Elm Street*'s Heather Langenkamp; *F13—Part 5* FX; Dean R. Koontz. \$4.



53: *The Hitcher*'s hell highway; *Transmutations* FX; the other *April Fool's Day*; Jack Harris on *The Blob*; Romero's *Living Dead* remembered; Jason poster. \$4.

54: *Poltergeist II*; *Maximum Overdrive*; *Creeps*; Ramsey Campbell; John Agar; *Critters* FX; Empire screenwriter; Freddie Francis. \$4.

55: *Fly* set preview; *Aliens*; *From Beyond*—first pix; *Psycho III*; Hooper on *Invasaders from Mars* & *Chainsaw 2*; Buechler; Barker; Bates & Beswick. \$4.

56: *From Beyond* set visit; King on *Maximum Overdrive*; *Vamp*; Chris Lee; Savini on *Chainsaw 2*; *Aliens*; Winston; Craven's *Deadly Friend*; Cronenberg on *The Fly*. \$4.

57: Cronenberg's *The Fly*; *Texas Chainsaw 2* set visit; Craven on *Deadly Friend*; *F13—Part VI*; *Overdrive* & *Aliens* FX. \$4.

58: Chris Walas & the FX of *The Fly*; writing *Chainsaw 2*; David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*; Ken Foree on *Dawn & From Beyond*; Robert Englund on *Freddy*; King retires! \$4.

59: Stuart Gordon on *From Beyond*; *Darkside* preview; Thom Mathews (a.k.a. Tommy Jarvis) of *Jason Lives*; *Demons* FX; *Trick or Treat*; David Carradine. \$4.

60: *The Exorcist* remembered with Dick Smith, Linda Blair, William Blatty and others; *Scream Queens* Barbara (Re-Animator) Crampton, Linda (Terminator) Hamilton and Kristy (Deadly Friend) Swanson. Plus new *Little Shop of Horrors*. \$4.

61: Exclusive *Rawhead Rex* preview; Dick Smith, teacher, Jeffrey Combs on *Re-Animator* & *From Beyond*; Sam Arkoff recalls his AIP days & Michael Carreras relives Hammer; Dick Miller update; more *Fly* stuff. \$4.

46: Hooper on *Life Force*; *Day of the Dead*'s Bub; *Night of the Living Dead* book excerpt; *Re-Animator* gore; Caroline Munro; zombies! \$4.

47: *Day of the Dead* FX with Savini; *Fright Night*; *Life Force* FX; Weaver retrospective with giant snails. \$4.

48: King revisited; more *Fright Night* FX; Romero; *Supernaturals*' zombies; *Silver Bullet* werewolves; ultimate *Day of the Dead* pix. \$4.

49: Argento's *Creepers*; more *Silver Bullet* & *Howling II* werewolves; *Toxic Avenger*; *Nightmare on Elm St. 2*; *Fright Night*'s Chris Sarandon & FX; Bloch. \$4.

50: Special 50th issue! *Elm Street* sequel; *Re-Animator*'s bloody pix; Tim-pone interviews Angelo (Freaks) Rossitto; Savini as the Ripper. \$4.

51: Steve Miner on *House*; *Darkside* FX; *Critters*; *Psycho III*; *Living Dead* FX; mutants and aliens; Clive Barker; Craven; Mary Woronov. \$4.

52: John Carradine; *Demons*; Tony Perkins on *Psycho III*; Dennis Etchison; Savini; FX's skeleton crew; *Elm Street 2*'s FX. \$4.

62: *Nightmare on Elm St. 3*; *Evil Dead II*, special *Friday the 13th* salute; more Arkoff; Jason poster. \$4.

63: The unrated joys of *Evil Dead II*, the lovely Nancy of *Nightmare 3*; Alan Parker on *Angel Heart*; Italian zombies; the fall of Hammer. \$4.

64: Robert Englund's "Making *Nightmare 3*"; Raimi on *Evil Dead II*; *NOTLD* remake; *From Beyond* FX; Savini as *The Creep*; Skipp & Spector. \$4.

65: *Lost Boys* & *Predator* previews; *Nightmare 3* hero; Freddy poster; *Hellraiser* exclusive; Bruce ("Ash") Campbell. \$4.

BACK ISSUES

66: Special makeup FX issue, with Kevin (Nightmare 3) Yagher, Rob Bottin on RoboCop, Hellraiser's Bob Keen and Greg Cannom's Lost Boys; the unseen Argento (rare pix); Monster Squad. \$4.

67: Hellraiser, Lost Boys hero; Evil Dead FX; Cushing talks; Street Trash gore; Larry Cohen; The Believers; John Farris. \$6.

68: Jason actors, pt. 1; Rick Baker, slasher beach party; The Hidden; The Unholy; Lost Boys poster; Cohen 2; Pumpkinhead. \$4.

69: Jason actors 2 & Jason poster; Carpenter's Prince of Darkness; Brain Damage; Linnea Quigley; Stan Winston's Pumpkinhead; Running Man. \$5.

70: Werewolf, Pumpkinhead FX; F-13—The Series; Gunnar ("Leatherface") Hansen tells all; Living Dead II; Anne Rice. \$6

71: NOTLD salute with REAL color pix! Uncle Bob on Brain Damage; Craven's Serpent & the Rainbow. \$5.

72: Censored Brain Damage scenes; Poltergeist III; Bad Dreams; NOTLD cast remembers; Maniac Cop; Howling. \$5.



73: Dead Heat; scream queen Jennifer Rubin; England's 976-EVIL; '50s monsters remembered; The Seventh Sign. \$5.

74: Exclusive Friday the 13th, Part VII interviews; the making of Beetlejuice; will there be a Re-Animator 2?; Hammer's Anthony Hinds; Michael Biehn; Critters 2; Bob Keen. \$6

75: On set with Phantasm II and Monkey Shines; making Friday the 13th, Part VII; Traci Lords is Not of this Earth; Ghost Town; Hellbound: Hellraiser II; Child's Play; Hammer days. \$5.

76: Summer sequel spectacular: Hellraiser II, Phantasm II, Fright Night 2 and Nightmare on Elm Street 4; Return of The Blob; Steve Johnson FX, Romero interview. Fango con. \$6

77: On set with Nightmare on Elm Street 4; Special Makeup FX issue; Tom Savini, the FX of Fright Night 2 and The Blob; Elvira, Mistress of the Dark; Halloween 4. \$5.

78: All aboard for Hellbound: Hellraiser II—in-depth Clive Barker interview; Nightmare 4 FX—exclusive photos!; Carpenter on They Live; bloody Waxwork; Blob FX; Dead Ringers. \$5.

79: On set with Halloween 4; Nightmare 4 FX—the Roach Motel; Chris Sarandon on Child's Play, Watchers movie; Cronenberg talks; Tony Perkins interview; Ken Russell on White Worm. \$5.

80: On set with The Fly II; Exclusive interviews with Duane (NOTLD) Jones and Donald Pleasence; I, Madman; Steve Miner's Warlock; Elvira poster; Hellraiser's Ashley Laurence; Cronenberg; F-13 TV. \$5.

81: Special issue: directing horror, with Chris (Fly II) Walas, Tom Burman, Sean (DeepStar Six) Cunningham and others; superbloody previews of Horror Show, Toxic Avenger II; on set with Pet Sematary, Monsters and Freddy's Nightmares. \$5.

82: Pinhead Doug Bradley speaks; Books of Blood comics; Return of Swamp Thing; Leviathan; Reggie (Salem's Lot) Nalder; Fly II FX. \$5.

83: Special Friday the 13th issue—interviews with all the women, composer Harry Manfredini and producer Frank Mancuso Jr.; also Pet Sematary FX and Roger Corman talks! \$5.

84: More Friday the 13th; Stepfather II; Ghostbusters II; new Tales from the Crypt; The Borrower; Michael Gough. \$5.

85: Incredible Jason & Freddy issue—set visits to Nightmare 5 & F13 VIII; Fay Wray; Document of the Dead; Corman. \$5.

86: More Freddy! Exclusive Jason Journal by Kane Hodder; Nightbreed set visit; Tom Savini in Heartstopper; Fango con. \$5.



87: England as Phantom of the Opera; Halloween 5; King speaks; Barker speaks; weird Society. \$5.

88: Halloween salute—the Shapes interviewed! Texas Chainsaw 3 journal by Dave Schow; Craven's Shocker; MPAA; Phantom; scripting Nightmare 5. \$5.

89: Chainsaw 3 log; Donald Pleasence; Monsters; MPAA vs. video; Richard Matheson; Poe salute, including Romero & Argento's Two Evil Eyes. \$5.

90: Cronenberg on Nightbreed; Frankenhooker; Franco talks; Matheson; Freddy's Nightmares; Chainsaw 3; Joe R. Lansdale. \$5.

91: Clive Barker on Nightbreed; Bride of Re-Animator set visit; Basket Case 2 report; Friedkin's The Guardian; Tremors. \$5.

92: Nightbreed FX; violent Hardware; on set—Tales from the Darkside movie; Tobe Hooper's Spontaneous Combustion; more. \$5.

93: Joe Dante on Gremlins 2; Bride of Re-Animator zombie acting; On set: Class of 1999 and Prom Night III; sick puppets in The Feebles. \$5

94: Exorcist III: Legion; horror actors Christopher Lee, Michael (Henry) Rooker, Tom (RoboCop 2) Noonan; Repossessed; Tales from the Crypt. \$5

95: Summer FX issue: Gremlins 2, RoboCop 2, Bottin's Total Recall; Arachnophobia; Two Evil Eyes; Darkman; actor Brad (Exorcist III) Doufir. \$5

96: Raimi on Darkman; Frank Marshall on Arachnophobia; RoboCop 2's animation FX; On set: Maniac Cop 2; Dick Miller; The Boneyard. \$5

97: Night of the Living Dead remake; On set: Child's Play 2; FANGORIA Films' Mindwarp; The Gate II; King's Graveyard Shift; Eve of Destruction. \$5



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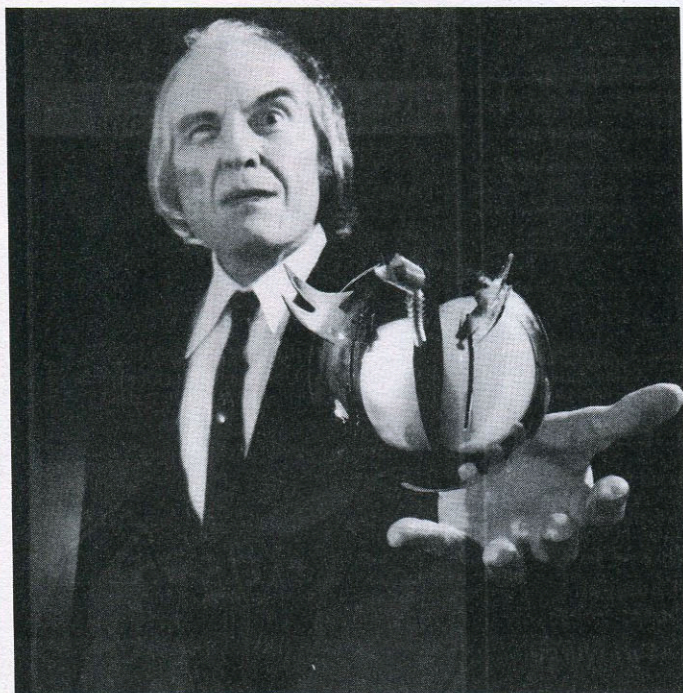
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CTHULHU

(continued from page 27)


toms of heart trouble. So, after thinking it over, we were forced to look for someone else, which was when we got in touch with Cushing. Getting Cushing for the film was a real stroke of luck, because it was a treat to work with such an extraordinary and professional person. In fact, the main character in *Cthulhu Mansion* was written with Cushing in mind, but unfortunately, he was unable to leave England at the time of shooting."

And how about everybody's favorite Latin lycanthrope (see Fango #103-104)? "Paul Naschy was dying to get a chance to work with Peter Cushing, which was the reason he accepted such a small role in the introductory prologue to the film. But unfortunately, due to various and sundry circumstances, Paul and Peter's schedules never coincided on the shoot. They never met at all during the filming."

As a veteran independent filmmaker, the Valencia-born Simon has experienced critical acclaim and attack, financial success and failure and, most of all, a great deal of hard work. Looking back, he comments, "I don't have a favorite among my films, but I like different aspects of all of them. All of my films have been difficult to shoot. The end product always winds up going overbudget, which makes my work all the more difficult. But perhaps *Supersonic Man* [a 1978 superhero fantasy] and *Slugs* were the toughest. The work that went into those two was something else!

"On *Supersonic Man*, we were shooting for nine months, six days a week, working 12 to 14 hours a day. Except for making the coffee, I was involved firsthand in everything! It was a great experience, but extremely exhausting. There were days when I was just too tired to go home, and I slept right on the set in my studio. But I had a good time in spite of it all," he admits.

So what's next for Simon? "I always have a lot of projects; impossible, possible and crazy schemes. Of the possible, the most probable right now is an adaptation of *The House on the Borderland* by William Hope Hodgson. I would like to have Vincent Price in this one.

"And, as a scoop for FANGORIA, there will be a continuation of *Pieces* entitled *Two Pieces*. This one will be much wilder than the first...so the critics can start sharpening their claws now!" 

RESURRECTED


(continued from page 32)

and movies *do* get made more than one time. There were three versions of *A Star is Born*, there were two versions of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. However, as it happens, the approach that Corman took in *The Haunted Palace* averred quite widely from Lovecraft's book, and it did not do any of the things I wanted to do here. So I felt it was basically still unmade.

"Certainly [screenwriter] Charles Beaumont is a distinguished name in the science fiction/fantasy writing field," continues O'Bannon, "and Roger Corman a distinguished director. And I know they took their effort seriously. So it would be an interesting exercise some time to run the two films back to back to see what a different set of results two teams of filmmakers came up with from the same source material. I personally think that *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is a difficult nut to crack—it's not easy to find your way through to a cinematic solution."

Concerning the rigid veil of secrecy over *The Resurrected's* FX, O'Bannon is a little more straightforward than the film's producers. "I wouldn't say that we have anything all that revolutionary to show the public," he admits, "but I would at least like them to see it for the first time when they see the movie. I'm really getting tired of the type of pre-exploitation that was done on *Total Recall*, in which long before you ever go to the theater or rent the cassette, you've been told everything about the story and know what everything looks like. So I'm trying to counteract that."

While O'Bannon emotes, a production assistant sticks his head in the door and politely informs him that his presence is needed on the set. O'Bannon is not perturbed. "Tell 'em to move along and I'll be down there in a second," he instructs. "It's all blocked—they know what to do." With the end of the interview in sight, it's time to throw out a net for any humorous stories or anecdotes on the shooting of *The Resurrected*, but few are forthcoming. That doesn't mean filming's been a drag, however.

"You get most of your funny stories out of desperately troubled pictures," explains O'Bannon, "but I've never been on such a smooth shoot in my life. As a working experience, this is the finest filmmaking experience I've ever had. And the most fun." 

DETECTIVE

(continued from page 38)


which says that the zombies come from Jamaica, six to a box, and when they rot, you throw them out. It was basically a throwaway line, but it set the whole concept for me. We got the biggest person we could find, Jaime Cardriche, and talked him into letting us shave his head. We gave him tribal facial scarring and fitted him with white contact lenses. In a weird way, he's a negative image and a homage to good ol' Tor Johnson."

Word is passed that Ward is ready to talk. We amble outside to his trailer, along the way passing the ongoing photo session, which has progressed to inanimate objects. The *Necronomicon*, which looks a little like an old, gilded phone book, is propped up on a pedestal in front of the same mid-night/full moon backdrop.

Cast a Deadly Spell represents a reuniting of Ward with producer Hurd. "I had a lot of fun working on *Tremors*," Ward reveals while lounging in his trailer. "I wanted to work with Gale and her people again, but it was the script that really grabbed me. I just fell in love with all the smart-aleck dialogue."

When asked how he deals with acting next to special FX, the actor grins. "Well, you deal with it almost as another person. I haven't done many films where I had to stare into a blue screen or anything. Here, there's an actor in a gargoyle suit, and I'm relating to that. It's quite easy for me to believe the situation in that moment, because the costume is impeccable and completely animated."

Leaving the trailer, we cross the soundstage to where Campbell is coaching the gargoyle in the fine art of lunging at the camera. In another corner, shielded from view by a myriad of partitions, a team of special FX puppeteers are crouched beneath a jacked-up '30 Chevy, operating the tiny gremlins, which are making a feast of the car's engine.

Gargoyles, gremlins, hard-boiled detectives, femme fatales, black spells and Lovecraftian dread—what does it all add up to? Producer Hurd claims to have the answer. "In *Cast a Deadly Spell*, magic is a metaphor for greed. It's a way for the other characters to get ahead without being honest. Taking a shortcut. Our hero is the only one who refuses to sell out." No need for a reality check here. We're in Hollywood, where refusing to sell out is a mean trick indeed. 

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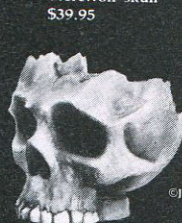
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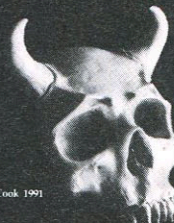
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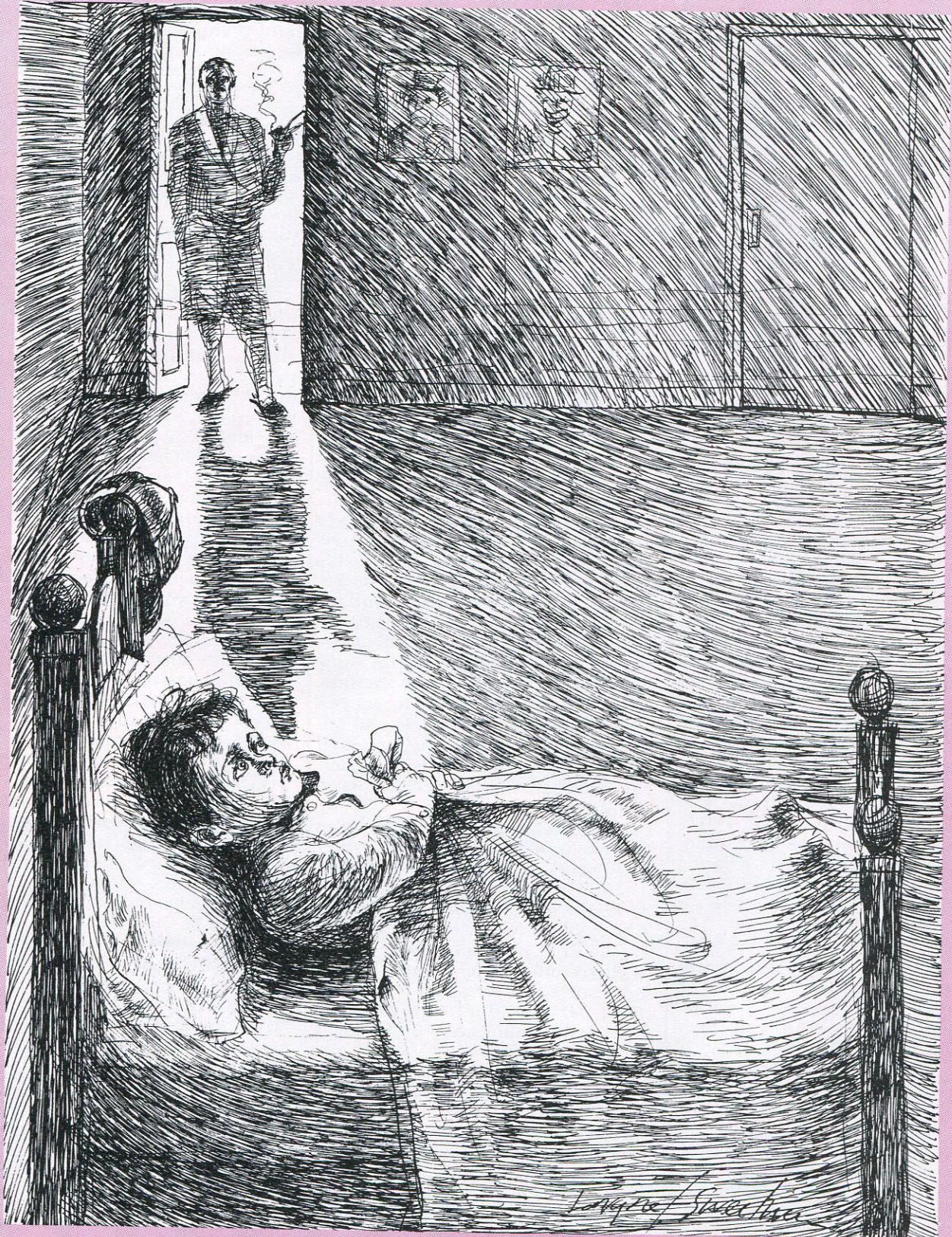
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CONTRIBUTORS' CRYPT

Larry Barsky, for some unexplained reason, visited the set of *Hell Comes to Frogtown II*. **James Bonny & Richard Finney** are LA-based screenwriters. **Anthony C. Ferrante** traveled to the *Waxwork II* and *976-EVIL II* locations. **Linda Marotta** met Stephen King at a book party. **Will Murray** is a leading Lovecraft scholar. **Steve Newton** continues his talk with Dan O'Bannon in a future issue. **Michael Rowe's** walk-on in Ron Oliver's upcoming *Intimate Delusions* (ugh!) met the cutting room floor. **Marc Shapiro** penned most of our *Freddy's Dead* magazine, on sale 9/10. **David Szulkin** is preparing a tome on the making of *Last House on the Left*. **John Wooley** signed a book deal with Dell/Abyss.

THINGS TO COME

Autumn's on the way, the leaves will soon be falling... and so will the bodies! Catch a new season of fear with *Fango* #107.

Our next issue will be hitting the stands just days before the most celebrated death in recent genre films. Yep, **FREDDY'S DEAD**, and **THE FINAL NIGHTMARE** will head up our next edition. We'll be taking you behind the scenes as the folks at New Line do their best to send the gloved one out in style—and 3-D.

In the mood for something darker? How about the new one from **Wes Craven**, with two *Twin Peaks* veterans as cannibalistic homeowners with some very unwilling guests? **THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS** is the name, and you'll eat up our on-the-set coverage.

Monster fans won't go wanting either, as **THE GUYVER** prepares to assault audiences. Based on a popular Japanese comic, this creature rally finds a karate-student-turned-superhero taking on a bevy of bizarre mutants commanded by *Re-Animator's* **David Gale!** This one promises to be the wildest flick of the year.

On a literary note, we'll have a talk with fast-rising author **Dan Simmons**, plus more of our beloved news, reviews and previews. The leaves are turning red—and so are the pages of **FANGORIA #107!**

ON SALE: SEPTEMBER 10

CHUCKY

(continued from page 47)

offensive and give him somebody to protect.

"That's when it occurred to me that a military academy, that bastion of male macho bullshit, would be the ideal situation to underline and amplify that idea," Mancini continues. "It also didn't hurt that placing the story in a military school would give Chucky access to some really nifty weapons."

Mancini, like others, says he's learned several lessons from *Child's Play 2* that helped him in constructing the *Child's Play 3* script. "The big problem with 2 was that it wasn't scary enough, and it was too funny," Mancini admits. "Also, Chucky talked quite a bit and was seen a little too often. With that in mind, I tried to keep the mystery surrounding Chucky alive a little longer in this one. In 2, the first time you saw Chucky he was making a phone call, which kind of turned the film away from the scares. The first time you see Chucky in this one, he will definitely be doing something scary."

One of the most difficult challenges in keeping Chucky's exploits fresh has been to create new methods for the doll to maim. "It's a special problem with Chucky because he's so small," judges Mancini. "In a way, he has the perfect cover for a psycho killer because he can appear in the same room with his intended victims, and they don't even know it. But finding new ways for Chucky to kill is tough. The military school environment has made things easier. We have guns, hand grenades, even a death by barber."

Mancini wanders back to the set, where Haskell's character is about to permanently sign off. It's fun to watch, but the enjoyment is tempered by the knowledge that Chucky will most certainly get his in the final reel—and then, should the box office fates allow, he will be resurrected yet again for *Child's Play 4*. Bender agrees that it's tough dealing with the sequel's inevitable elements.

"We're working real hard on how to end this film and still leave the door believably open," the director allows. "I don't think I'm blowing any secrets by saying that the kids triumph at the end and Chucky dies. And I don't think I'm taking the enjoyment out of this film by saying that when Chucky dies in *Child's Play 3*, it will be in a way that won't make audiences feel ripped off when *Child's Play 4* comes out."

BODY FX

(continued from page 53)

be effects artists because they 'love gore' or like car-crashes. I advise people that I only work with experienced artists, and the best way to get experience is art school...and to have a thorough knowledge of the human anatomy."

He is dismissive of the current trend to glorify FX designers, and has an almost physical reaction to the films *F/X* and *F/X 2*, calling them "disrespectful to the industry. For the same amount of effort, they could have gotten 10 percent, 20 percent, 100 percent production value by showing the truth instead of pretending that they knew what it was all about."

Smith is just as adamant about what happens inside his own walls. "This is not a 'shop,' it is a design studio," he insists. "I do not hire people from the motion picture industry; I hire sculptors, moldmakers, colorists. We don't farm work out, and if anyone gets an attitude—becomes 'glitized' as I call it—they are out. My success lies in my crews. I have the best sculptors in North America, if not the world. I make a fair-to-excellent living, and I do the work because I feel very strongly about representing it as it is. I do the work because I can. I am not in it to make the most grotesque thing possible."

Smith's success lies in an ability to manipulate reality and to do it as well, or better, than most. One suspects he already knows that scathing indictments of the hands that feed him may earn him the ill wishes of the less-successful and the less-talented, and even the anger of his peers. He is perhaps likely to find himself branded as "difficult." One also suspects that this doesn't bother him very much at all.

In fairness, he has fed the hand as well; he has produced images that allow one to leave the theater free of the nagging feeling that they only saw a movie. He allows the illusion to linger by making it seamless. "It's only magic on the screen," he says, knowing what it takes. And on some level, clearly, at least part of what makes him such a force in the industry is the constant battle with his own demons. Van Gogh cut off his ear because his talent drove him mad. Gordon Smith could fake it, and no one would know.

"Once you embrace your demons," the artist concludes, "they become angels. And you can die." He looks away for a moment, and smiles. "The only problem is that I'm not allowed to die."

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