

FALL

1989

# MIDNIGHT

# GRAFFITI

D A R K F A N T A S Y

\$4.95

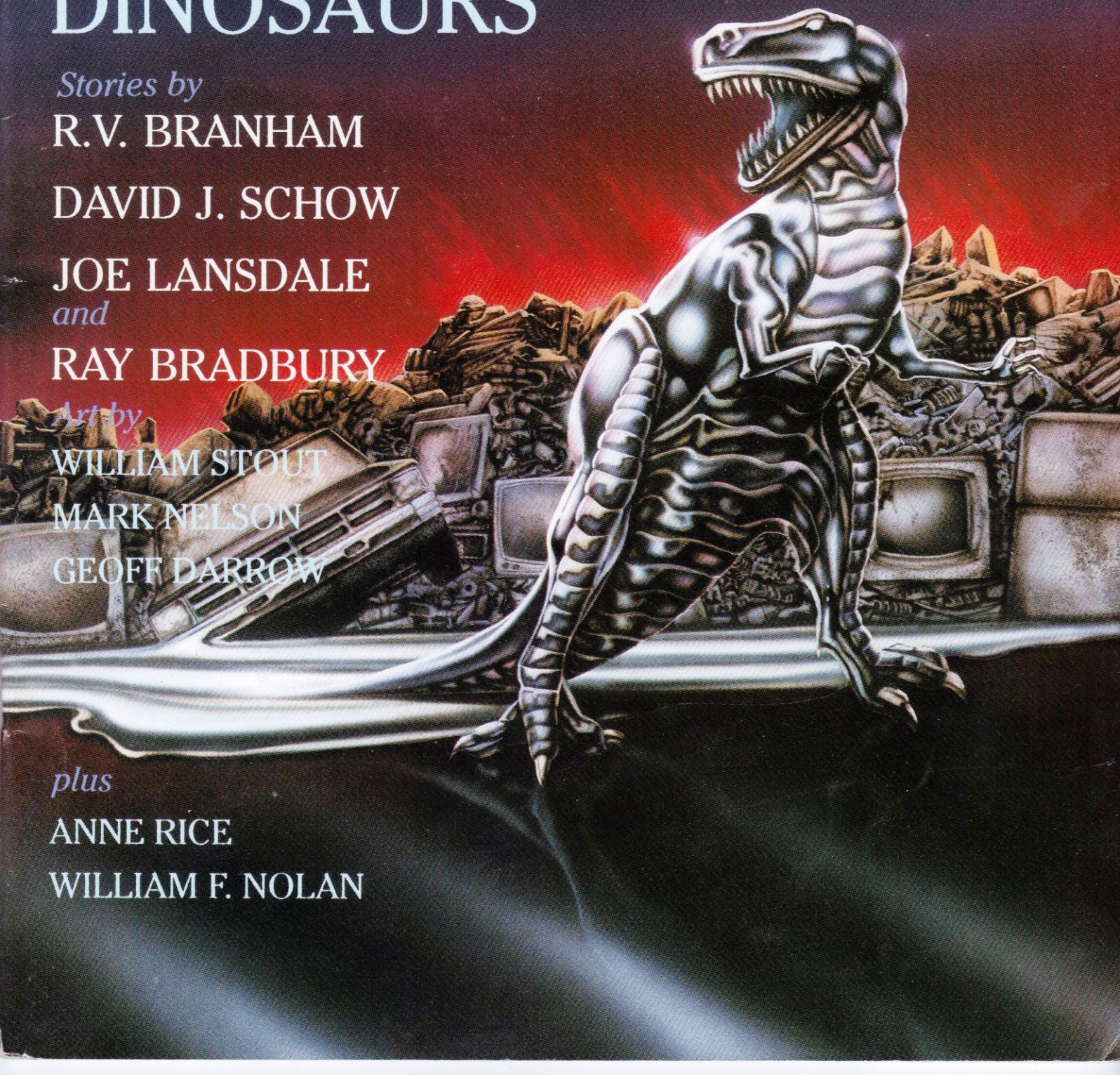
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*A special look at*  
**DINOSAURS**

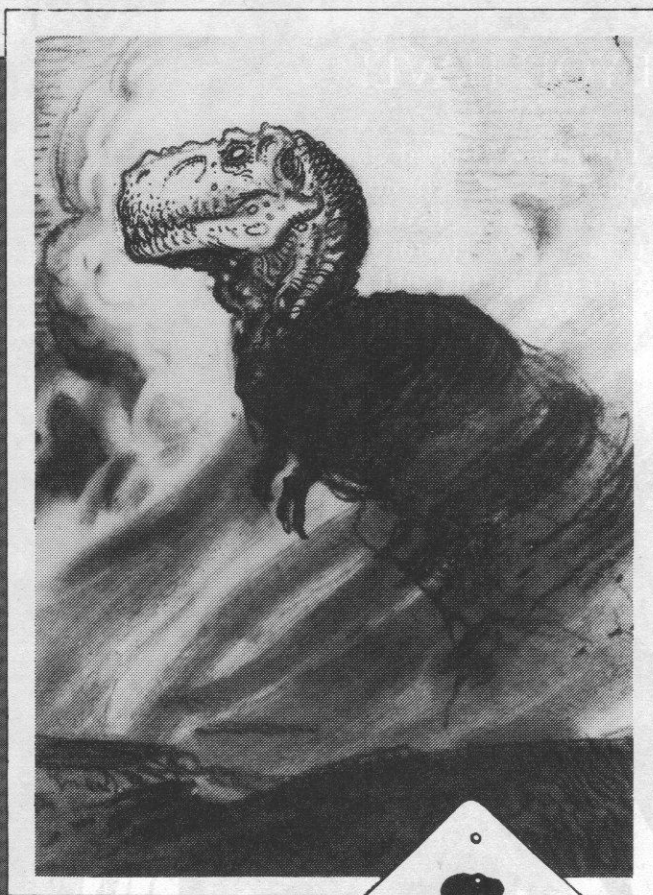
*Stories by*  
**R.V. BRANHAM**  
**DAVID J. SCHOW**  
**JOE LANSDALE**  
*and*  
**RAY BRADBURY**

*Art by*  
**WILLIAM STOUT**  
**MARK NELSON**  
**GEOFF DARROW**

*plus*  
**ANNE RICE**  
**WILLIAM F. NOLAN**







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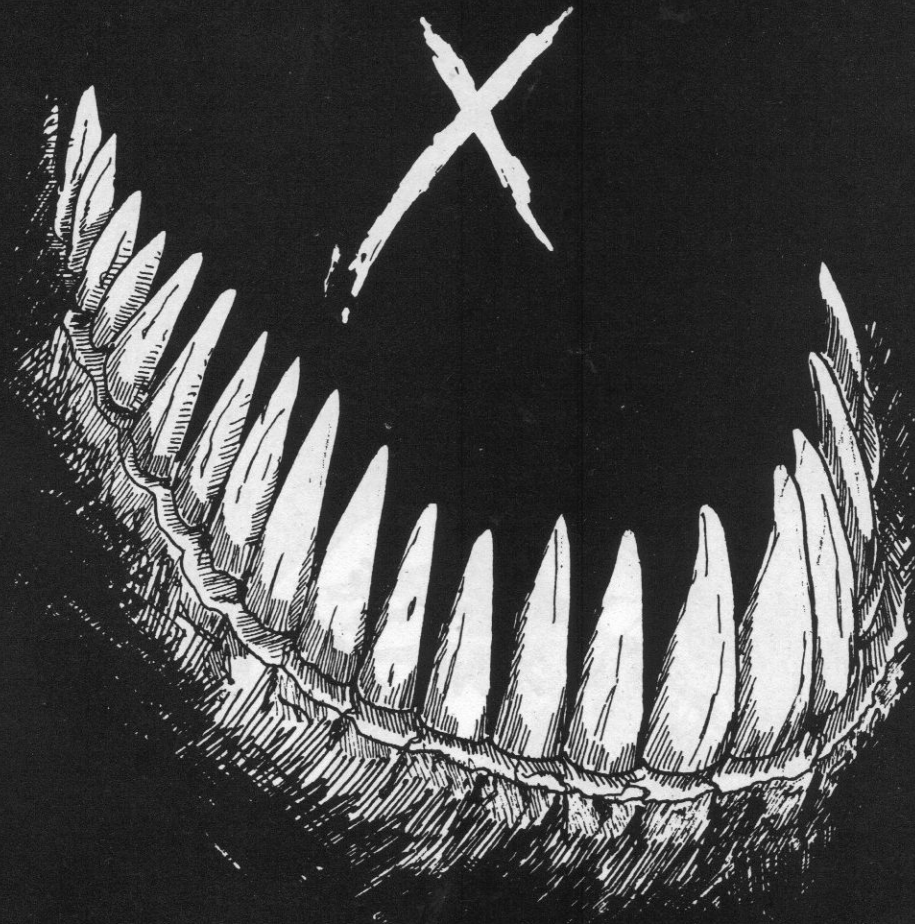
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## From the publishers

### MY—WHAT BIG TEETH YOU HAVE!

If the great big type and the picture on the cover hasn't tipped you off, this issue features a skewed look at dinosaurs past, present and future. Next issue we return with our next favorite thing: **Psychos**. We start our Serial Killer Serial—the Forgotten Heroes of Horror. Plus great fiction, interviews, a short course in brain transplants, and step-by-step instructions for creating your own nuclear wasteland. Till then—



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UNSOLICITED MATERIAL DEPT.: SO WE PUBLISHED ONE OR TWO STORIES THAT CAME OVER THE TRANSOM—IS THAT ANY REASON TO BE ENCOURAGED TO SEND US YOUR MANUSCRIPTS? JEEZ, YOU GUYS—YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW TO INCLUDE AN SASE. AND WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE! ESPECIALLY FOR UNSOLICITED MATERIAL. BE WARNED THAT OUR RESPONSE TIME HAS BEEN COMPARED TO THE JURASSIC AGE. THE DOG HAS TROUBLE TURNING THE PAGES. NOW, GO READ THE BIG TYPE.

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**T H I S I S S U E**

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**WHAT KILLED THE DINOSAURS?**

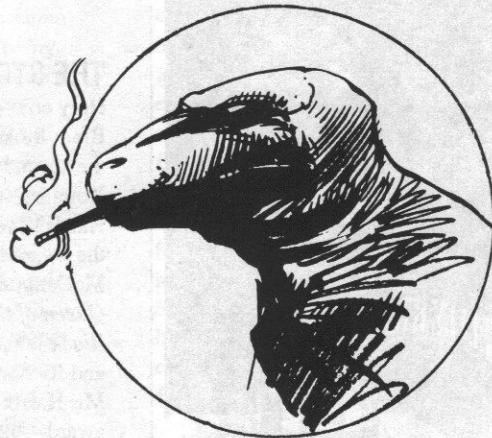
Bad management.

A good publicist would have declared 1989 the Year of the Dinosaur: 17 new books about the great beasts, four comic books, several calendars, innumerable posters—our love for the myths and facts of the great reptiles grows with time. Artists such as Bill Watterson (*Calvin & Hobbes*) and Gary Larson have popularized every kid's inclination to daydream about roaming through steaming, prehistoric jungles, listening for the sound of thunder.

This issue features fiction and art that explores the outer corners of our ongoing affair, kicking off with an introduction by Ray Bradbury from his beloved volume, *Dinosaur Tales*. David J. Schow, winner of the 1988 World Fantasy award, follows with an homage to Bradbury's classic story. Joe Lansdale makes his second appearance with an off-the-wall short and R.V. Branham debuts with "Dinosaur Pliés." Also included: art by William Stout, Mark Nelson and Tim Burgard, among others.

But there's plenty for you blood fiends—Anne Rice talks about vampires, Bill Nolan tells us a real ghost story, and we take a look at Horror's clichés...brrr!

—JH



# From Beyond

GARRIS

R.C.



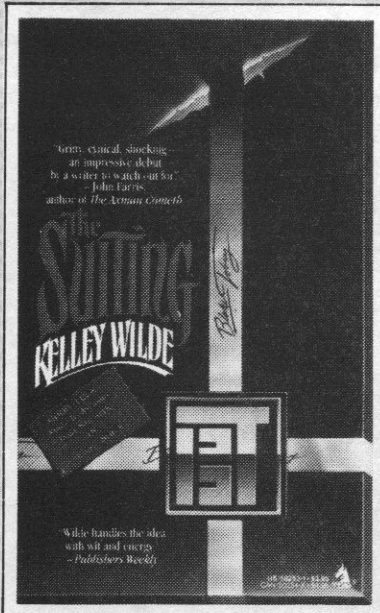
IF THIS IS THE FACE OF HORROR, WE'LL TAKE TWO.

## IN THE FLESH

MICK GARRIS AND RICHARD CHRISTIAN Matheson have solidified their deal for a collaborative horror script, *Red Sleep*, to be produced as a feature by John Landis. Though Garris has signed to write and direct Barker's *In The Flesh*, it may be postponed now that *Red Sleep* is on the boards, and Columbia Television has expressed an interest in Garris adapting and directing Robert R. McCammon's "Night Calls the Green Falcon" as a TV pilot for a proposed series.

## R.I.P.

First *Twilight Zone*, then *Horror Show*, and now...Dept: R.S. Hadji regretfully informs us that *Borderland Magazine* is no more, citing insurmountable obstacles. We'll always miss another magazine with an attitude, and Bob's was one of the best and most literate. Pick up *all the back issues...if you can find them.*



## THE STOKERS

Holy cow—has a year gone by? The Bram Stoker awards were presented for the second time last June at the Warwick Hotel in New York City—Thomas Harris' *The Silence of the Lambs* took the award for best novel over McCammon's *Stinger*, Anne Rice's *Queen of the Damned*, F. Paul Wilson's *Black Wind*, Joe Lansdale's *The Drive-In* and Richard Laymon's *Flesh*. Strangely, Mr. Harris was not present to accept his award—busy counting his money for his best-seller, no doubt. Joe Lansdale took short story honors for "The Night They Missed the Horror Show" in pal Dave Schow's anthology *Silver Scream*."

Best novelette went to "Orange is for Anguish, Blue for Insanity" by David Morrell (*Prime Evil*), while best first novel went to Kelly Wilde for *The Suiting* (Tor).

Best Collection went to *Charles Beaumont: Selected Tales* (Dark Harvest).

Lifetime achievement awards went to Ray Bradbury and Donald Chetwynd-Hayes. Bradbury also received a Grandmaster Nebula this year. The awards move to Rhode Island next year, noted past prez Charles L. Grant. The Stoker Awards remain a one-day event, though this year the event was besieged by 150 authors, editors, agents and other pros. Can Horror-Con be far behind?

## AW SHUCKS, DEPT.

Harlan Ellison's story "Function of Dream Sleep," first published in *Midnight Graffiti* N<sup>o</sup> 1, was the *Locus* poll winner for best novella. The story was also nominated for a Bram Stoker award, as well as the Hugo. We'd like to congratulate Harlan for his multiple nominations—and we're pretty darn proud to have published the story. Does that make us the magazine of good taste—or the magazine that tastes good? Can we put "Award Winning" all over the cover in big, gaudy type? Or should we be more subtle, and just put it on the ads? We appreciate your input.

## AROUND TOWN

Director William Friedkin returns to the Horror genre after a long absence (1973's brilliant Horror classic *The Exorcist*) to film *The Guardian*. Filming wraps late September on this chiller centering on the trials of a young couple who must save their child from an evil presence. The screenplay is based on the 1987 novel *The Nanny*, by Dan Greenburg. "This is a realistic film about inexplicable things," says Friedkin. The film centers on the basic fears of any young couple who place their child in another's care. *The Guardian* stars Dwier Brown, Carey Lowell and Jenny Seagrove. Look for an early 1990 release.

The Outer Limits, L.A.'s newest SF/Horror bookstore, hosted the Splat Pack the weekend of August 26th. Signing their various works were Richard C. Matheson, John Skipp, Craig Spector, David J. Schow and Mick Garris. Director Tobe Hooper and son William helped with the store's displays by lending original props from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II* and Tobe's latest film, *Spontaneous Combustion*, including Leatherface's apron and suit, the corpse puppet from *Chainsaw II* and various cleavers, knives and limbs from his cult films. Dropping by were *Chainsaw III* stars, Ken Foree (*Dawn of Dead*) and the newest Leatherface, R.A. Mihailoff.



## THEY'RE EVERYWHERE

**FREDDY IS EVERYWHERE DEPT:** How do you know when you've created a cultural icon? When good citizens who haven't even seen a *Nightmare on Elm Street* film or episode of the T.V. series know who Freddy Krueger is. That's visibility (hell, that's marketing and merchandising!). Two of the most entertaining plans: The opening of a *Freddy House* attraction at a major amusement park (no, it's not Unca Walt's), and a proposed gig for Freddy as the host of an installment of *Saturday Night Live*. Yesterday it was Superman, Tarzan, Micky Mouse. Today, Freddy. Tomorrow...do we begin to perceive a pattern here?

Dave Schow can't get Le Gloved One out of his life, either. First came an eleventh-hour request for a "dialogue re-write" of *A Nightmare on Elm Street part 5: The Dream Child*, during filming. "Pages were literally being messengered from my house to the set," Dave said. "The upside was that the exec producer read the new dialogue and was ecstatic, saying things like, 'I wish we could recast the film according to this dialogue!' The downside was that the loxes they'd already cast in the principle human roles were incapable of delivering the new dialogue...so most of it's gone. Since the only real actor in these films is

Robert Englund, I'm hoping some of the revised Freddy dialogue makes it to the final cut. Those are the lines an audience will remember — if they get a chance to hear them." A teaser trailer for the film (released August 11<sup>th</sup>) depicts Freddy's glove slashing up from the smoky depths of a hell pram. Yep — that's Dave's hand in the glove. "It was fun; we had a blade wiper on set, and a KY Jelly girl for the hell pram. It was shot by Jerry Olson, who directed my episode of *Freddy's Nightmares*, which is how I wound up in the glove." Those gloves, incidentally, are manufactured by effects man Ryan Effner, one of the stars of Somtow Sucharitkul's *The Laughing Dead*. Effner notes that he made about twenty of the gloves for the TV series and averages about fourteen gloves per feature. New Line Cinema vetoed the idea of a limited edition "Robert Englund Signature Glove" — a Freddy collector's item limited to 100 at a cost of \$1000 each, which is still a better deal than *My Pretty Pony*.

While publication of the hardcover edition of *Book of the Dead* lagged behind the paperback release (Bantam), Mark Zeising is preparing to unleash not one, not two, but three Joe Lansdale short

story collections on the world. First up is *By Bizarre Hands* and the second has just been titled *Git Back Satan*. Joe is open to suggestions for the third title, and will probably ignore them.

*On the other hand, dept:* Watch out for the highballing first issue of a new magazine, *Iniquities*, due circa New Year's and containing work by Dave Schow, Skipp & Spector, Chet Williamson, Melissa Mia Hall and others, continuing columns by Ed Bryant, Joe Lansdale and Bill Warren, and artwork by Tim Caldwell. Among others. Brave lads and lassies, these new-magaziners...

## BODY COUNT

Just who were them zombies, anyway? dept. *Midnight Graffiti* is proud to be the first journal to accurately report who was who on the celebrity *Zombie & Corpse* roster of Somtow Sucharitkul's film *The Laughing Dead*— a slate that has been misreported in print more times than we have competitors.

Apart from featuring Somtow and Tim Sullivan (editor of *Tropical Chills*) in major roles, one standout feature is the languid performance of Ed Bryant as a bus driver who gets his head squished. If you look fast you'll see Lydia Marano, founder of *Dangerous Visions Bookstore*, as the ubiquitous "Attendant."

Here's the living dead roll call:

Arthur Byron Cover	Zombie #1
Tim Powers	Zombie #2
Bryne Stephens	Zombie #3
William F. Wu	Zombie #4
Wyatt Weed	Zombie #5
Martin Weiss	Zombie #6
Kirk Mouser	Zombie #7
Forrest J. Ackerman	Corpse #1
Bill Warren	Corpse #2
Len Wein	Corpse #3
Beverly Warren	Corpse #4



LEFT, H.P. LOVECRAFT. ABOVE, POLICE ARTIST'S SKETCH OF THE ELUSIVE D.B. COOPER. YOU BE THE JUDGE.

## THE D.B. COOPER/H.P. LOVECRAFT CONNECTION

SEATTLE - The FBI is not talking about the recently revealed theory that D.B. Cooper, who hijacked a Boeing 727 in 1971 and parachuted into mystery with \$200,000 in \$20 bills, is really H.P. Lovecraft, who himself disappeared in 1936 when he supposedly "died."

Upon being featured recently on the television show *AMERICA'S MOST WANTED* as one of crime's great unsolved cases, the police artist sketches of Cooper were flashed on the screen and Lovecraft enthusiasts across the nation besieged the TV show's anonymous hotline, claiming that the drawings of the alleged hijacker are the spitting image of the influential horror writer, whose work influenced American dark fantasy in the 20th Century much as Poe did in the 19th Century.

"Ya' know, Lovecraft wrote stories about traveling through time and space. Maybe they were more than just stories,

huh?" remarked one researcher.

A criminologist contacted by *Midnight Graffiti* compared the few existing pictures of Lovecraft with the police artist sketches of Cooper and remarked that, "The resemblance is amazing. Note the shape of the face, the thin lips, the eyebrows, the same receding hairline and even the protruding ears. Why didn't he wear a mask when he committed the crime? Because he didn't believe there was anyone alive who would recognize him, that's why!"

When this story broke it was noted that, coincidentally, 1971 was the same year that August William Derleth (who had spent many years working to publicize Lovecraft's writing in all its forms) died at the age of 62. Had Derleth perhaps tumbled to the truth upon exploring one of Lovecraft's old haunts?

"I have heard that," said an unidentified investigator in the case, "But I also heard that Elvis is living in Detroit now. I put those two together."



## REPOSSESSED

Just in time to beat the release of *Exorcist 1990* to the theaters next Spring is the horror spoof, *Repossessed*. Starring Leslie (Naked gun) Nielsen as Father May I (a takeoff on the Max Von Sydow role of Father Merin), he gets to vomit all over Linda Blair, who plays a previously possessed victim, complete with bizarre green makeup and all. Whether she has carnal yearnings for a crucifix was not known at press time.

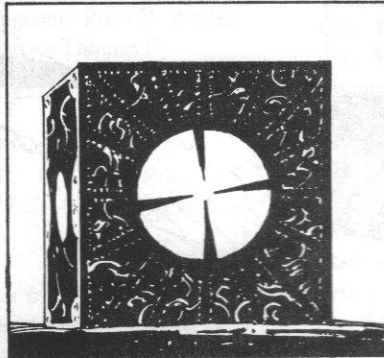
Co-starring in the film are Ned Beatty and Lana Schwab as Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker parodies who televise the exorcism.

The film is written and directed by Bob Logan.

## DEPT. OF NAKED SELF-PROMOTION

Dinosaurs. Dinosaurs. Dinosaurs. It seems wherever you look today you see dinosaurs, even in *Midnight Graffiti* of all places. Well, publisher/Co-Editor James Van Hise has contributed his own share to the proliferation in the *Real Ghostbusters* comic book. Van Hise has been writing the monthly comic book since it's first issue a year and a half ago, and in August and September of this year, a two-part story appears in the book, in issues 15 and 16, featuring the Ghostbusters getting mixed up with warring factions of a race of intelligent, talking dinosaurs from the Earth's core. As if that's not enough, a followup to this story is slated to appear in issues 20 & 21 next year.

Dinosaurs. Dinosaurs. Dinosaurs.



## HELLRAISER RAISES UP AT MARVEL COMICS

The pair of popular *Hellraiser* films are being spun off into a quarterly comic book series under the Epic Comics imprint at Marvel Comics. The first issue appears in October, 1989, and will be a full color, 64 page comic book issued in what has become known as the "bookshelf" format made popular by the *Dark Knight* mini-series in 1986.

"Clive Barker is supervising the project and reading all of the stories being written for series," stated editor Dan Chichester. Chichester, along with editor Archie Goodwin (who has since left Marvel for D.C.), helped bring Clive Barker to Marvel Comics. "Clive is giving input into them to bring them under a consistent viewpoint, since it is his universe," Chichester added. Barker is doing an introduction for the first issue, and if his schedule allows, Clive may also do some art for a forthcoming issue, possibly a cover or a frontispiece.

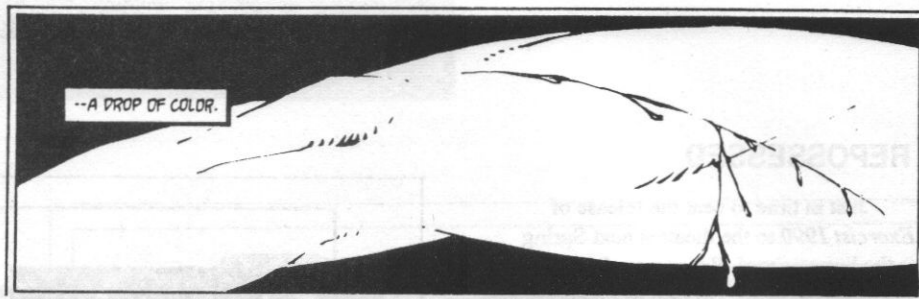
"*Hellraiser* is an anthology book and features an average of four stories per issue, all taking place within the same framework of this universe that has been set up and established. These stories take place not only in contemporary time, but in the past and the future as well. Writers involved in this series so far include Jan Strnad, Doug Murray, Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier. Peter Atkins, who wrote the second film, *Hellbound*, is doing a story for us. Nicholas Vince, who played the Cenobite called The Chatterer, is actually doing a story for me. I've also been in touch with John Skipp and Craig Spector. Some of the artists involved are John Bolton, Berni Wrightson, John Ridgeway, Scott Hampton, Dan Spiegel and Bill Sienkiewicz."

While these stories are set specifically in the universe created by Barker's story "The Hellbound

ART © NOW COMICS



# HELLRAISER



PANELS FROM BERNIE WRIGHTSON'S "WARM RED."



Heart" and the two *Hellraiser* films, they are more than just stories about different people's experiences with the Lemarchand puzzle-box.

"We've come up with a background for the Lemarchand box, who its creator was, why it was brought into being," Chichester explained. "And in the context of that we've also come up with other puzzles that were created in conjunction and prior to the Lemarchand box, and these puzzles were used throughout time by various people. These stories will not only get into what happens to them, but will also in some instances get into more depth with some of the Cenobites and some of the inner workings of Hell. We've done stories of individuals becoming Cenobites and what it takes to go through the process to become one of these demons, so we'll be dealing with that concept from the films. For the most part we're dealing with completely new characters, other than the Cenobites, but that doesn't stop someone in the future from picking up on something from the films, such as with the Frank character or with something else. But for now people have been much more interested in developing their own ideas."

The series was organized originally by both Chichester and Archie Goodwin. They got together with Clive Barker and wrote up a set of guidelines which serves as a bible for the series. This was then sent out to artists and writers who they thought would be interested in the material and it elicited a very strong response.

"A lot of people came back very enthusiastic with some neat, deranged stories," the editor stated. A strong element of the films are their very graphic nature in dealing with gore and violence, and Chichester stated that the *Hellraiser* comic is also pretty graphic. "I'd put it on par with the films to a large degree. We've definitely tried to keep true to the films because that's really our inspiration. So in terms of the visuals and in terms of the disturbance level of the content, we've maintained a very fair consistency. I

think the only thing we've not really explored yet in the comic has been some of the more sado-sexual imagery that's in the films. But we are not disinclined to getting into were somebody to develop a story which handled this well. We don't want the book to just become gratuitous or be a kind of violence fest. That's not what we're out to do. We're much more interested in really creating a whole texture of a very disturbing universe."

This is not to be confused with D.C.'s *HellBlazer* comic, which started publishing around the time the first *Hellraiser* film was released and in fact had to undergo a quick title change prior to publication to avoid being in conflict with the previously trademarked title of the film. To avoid confusion, Marvel's comic book is titled *Clive Barker's Hellraiser*.

"I think from our cover design and the way our book looks, there is little chance of our becoming confused with the John Constantine *Hellblazer* book."

But this is not going to be Marvel's only foray into the forboding realm of the imagination of Clive Barker. Two other major projects are already in the works; adaptations of Barker's new film, *Nightbreed*, and of the novel *Weaveworld*.

"Marvel is doing an adaption of his new film, *Nightbreed*, which will be coming out in February coinciding with the film's release. The first four issues of the *Nightbreed* comic will adapt the film and will be written by John Wagner and Alan Grant and illustrated by Jim Baikie. The title will then continue in new directions, extrapolating from the film itself but going off on its own.

"We're also putting together a three issue adaptation of *Weaveworld* which will be kicking into gear very soon and probably will be appearing late in 1990. It's being adapted by Eric Saltzgeber, a screenwriter who Clive connected us up with. The project has just come together within the last couple weeks so we haven't yet decided on an art team, but that will be a 3-issue, 64 page bookshelf format editions.

"It was Archie Goodwin's idea to do *Hellraiser* as an anthology extrapolating things from the films and with that working out so well, *Nightbreed* developed out of that naturally. I had suggested *Weaveworld* as the third part of the trilogy of Clive Barker projects at Marvel."

Other Clive Barker comic book projects ongoing at other publishers include *Tapping The Vein* from Eclipse (reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *Midnight Graffiti*) as well as an adaptation of "Rawhead Rex" slated to appear late in 1990 drawn by Steve Bissette for Arcane Comix. □

## AW SHUCKS II

Horrorfest '90 moves down the mountain to Denver next May. Though organizer Ken Morgan loved last year's Stanley Hotel location, the Estes Park site was a bit too remote for many folks. Nicknamed "Misery Loves Company," Horrorfest will be three days of panels, events and special guests. Appearing with writers Edmund Bryant, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, and Dan Simmons are (ahem) publisher guest James Van Hise and yours truly as editor guest of honor. Gee whiz, guys, I don't know what to say.

So come and join us in Denver May 11-13 at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center. Bring your ideas, manuscripts, and money for drinks, bribes, etc. We'll do lunch. For more information write: Horrorfest, P.O. Box 277652, Riverdale, ILL 60627-7652. For credit card memberships (only \$20.00 until March) and transportation *deals* call 1-800-798-2489 and ask for the Horrorfest desk.

The British Fantasy Society will once again host the 14th annual British Fantasy Convention at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham. Pixie Di Wather will welcome guests Thomas F. Monteleone, Brian Lumly and Stephen Laws.

For info, write:

Fantasycon XIV, 15 Stanley Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DE, England. Say hi to Di.

Speaking of our friends on the U.K., if you haven't had a chance to check out *Skeleton Crew*, the semi-prozine from Grim Reaper Design, do so now. This small format zine, published by Dave Hughes and Nick Belcher, features full-size interviews and fiction with Britain's top writers. Lots of art, chilling stories, author profiles—the works. For more info, write: Grim Reaper Design, 104 Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex, U.K.

## ONE MORE PLUG

One wild and witty newsletter we've just discovered is a *must* for Stephen King fans. Publisher Ray Rexer just sent us issue 5 of *Castle Schlock*, the 100% sodium-free Stephen King parody newsletter. The eight-page zine features crosswords, news bytes and a maniacal sense of humor. *Castle Schlock* reports on page 2: "New on your grocer's shelves—in certain test markets—Stephen Kings *Scary-O's*. A breakfast cereal for those of you who are not afraid to eat right!" And on Page 6: "Rarer than *The Plant*. More sought after than *The Gunslinger*. Mentioned in countless critical works. And available to the general reading public for the first time now! Stephen King's laundry list!" For more info and back issues, contact Dave Hinchberger at the Overlook Connection, P.O. Box 526, Woodstock, GA 30188.

## LITTLE DID THEY KNOW

You probably know by now that director David Cronenberg is featured as the sinister Dr. Decker in Clive Barker's latest cinemamuerte, *Nightbreed*. You may also have learned of the cameo appearances of John Skipp and Craig Spector in same. Terry Erdman tells us the film is now scheduled for release in February, 1990, and Clive will be in the States to promote the film. Some additional pick-up shots were needed in early August, forcing Clive to cancel a planned trip to the States. In L.A., a local nitery called "Bogart's" announced on radio and in local papers that Clive was scheduled to appear in mid-August to read from recent works. However, Clive was reported to know *nothing* about this nightclub's plans. What was Bogart's explanation? "It didn't work out the way we hoped." We guess that means someone forgot to ask Clive if it was O.K.

In the same spirit, we would like to announce that next issue will feature an interview with H.P. Lovecraft, a.k.a. D.B. Cooper, in which he reveals that he used all the money he stole for reconstructive surgery and a new identity as L. Ron. Hubbard.



DAVID CRONENBERG IS DR. DECKER IN *NIGHTBREED*.

—Jessica Horsting

BY RUSS BUCHANAN



## SIGN OF THE BEAST

I don't know. Call me an un-hip, out-of-it-to-the-max dweeb, but I thought that the peace symbol had gone the way of hip-huggers and tie dyed tank tops (Grateful Dead concerts notwithstanding). I mean, Everybody I know stopped wearing peace symbols about the same time Sammy Davis Jr. started doing his lawn-jockey bit at the Nixon White House with one dangling from his neck.

Well, I was wrong. According to my highly reliable fashion consultant-my friend Dave's thirteen year-old daughter, Alicia-kids all over the country are wearing peace symbols because they are "rad". Actually, she might have said "bad," she has a slight speech impediment caused by her braces. Anyway, Alicia knows about these kinds of things and she says everybody is wearing peace symbols.

I didn't have the heart to tell her about Pasadena, Texas.

In what appears to be the beginning of a districtwide ban, six schools in Pasadena, Texas have outlawed the peace symbol because officials are convinced that it is a sign of Devil worship, a fact heretofore known only by the John Birch Society and George F. Will. The recent occult killings of fifteen in Matamoros, Mexico somehow reinforced the Pasadena School Board's belief that the symbol is demonic.

As a friend of American public education, I have written letters to members of the board, praising their courage and innovative leadership in the never-ending struggle against Satan and his supporters. I also suggested that they look into the possibility of banning the flag of Texas, you know, the one with the big pentagram in the middle.



## GET A RECEIPT

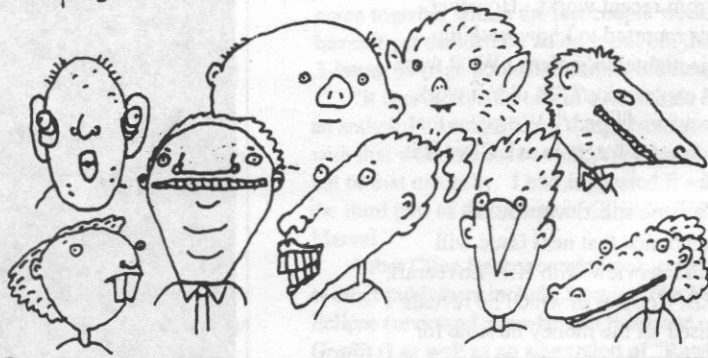
She doesn't like to talk about it, but for three weeks last April, Arkansan Cathy Barnes was held captive by five lizard-like beings from Outer Space and forced to become their UFO Love-Slave. For twenty-two days she swept their pods, bore their young, and cheered them up with her smile and up-beat personality. Then, without so much as a thank you or a souvenir, the ungrateful iguana-people beamed Miss Barnes back to her Little Rock trailer park. "I don't like to talk about it no more 'cause people don't believe me. The think I'm making it all up on account of I don't have a picture of the saucer or nothin'," explained Cathy. **DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU! If you are**

abducted by extraterrestrials, demand an affidavit, a photograph, or something that will substantiate your story. More than your credibility is at stake; \$10,000 and your freedom, to be exact.

Philip Klass will pay ten big ones to anyone who can prove they were abducted by beings from another world. There's a bit of a catch, however. Klass, a retired senior editor of Aviation Week and Space Technology magazine, will pay the money only after the abductee has filed a kidnapping claim and the FBI has investigated and confirmed the report. But, if the Feds find the claim to be false, the perpetrator will face a \$10,000 fine and/or five years in a federal penitentiary for filling a fraudulent criminal complaint.

## SILENT PICTURES MARATTA

The Folks behind the write-in campaign to save "Beauty and the Beast"



### A CROW-BAR AND A PRAYER

Now here's a headline you couldn't have missed if you tried—"GRANNY CAUGHT IN A DECK CHAIR FOR TWO DAYS." Even that serious-minded stalwart of the fourth estate, the Washington Post, had to jump on this one. Pathos, terror and lawn furniture, the story had everything.

For those of you just returning from your holiday on Pluto, these are the gory details: Eighty year-old Stockholm resident, Brigit Linder, was vacationing in Malmo, Sweden when she was attacked by a folding chair on her balcony. Apparently, Ms. Linder was catching a few rays when the chair's canvas seat gave way, and before she knew it, her bottom was resting on the terrace floor and her knees were up around ears. Brigit remained in this sorry position for more than forty-eight hours, hidden by the terrace enclosure.

Bad dreams and images of custom-made caskets were starting to take their toll on our girl when a workman spotted her and called the police.

Though Brigit escaped from her "deck chair of death" relatively unscathed with mild cases of dehydration and shock, no one, it seems, has given any thought to Ms. Linder's dignity.

How would you feel if the world knew you had been bested by a beach chair!

As a columnist for Midnight Graffiti, a magazine known to have the most compassionate readership in this hemisphere, I appeal to you. Let Brigit Linder know that she is not alone.

Send your real-life lawn furniture horror story ASAP to Brigit. Life threatening, blood blister, or just plain rusty-water-on-the-patio, she needs your story now. We will forward.

### A VERY PERSONAL GIFT

This is a nice tale—A little macabre, but nice.

Dennis Genz used to be fat, so he went on a diet. A serious diet. He lost 170 lbs.

Feeling like a scale model of his former self, Dennis was delighted with every bit of his new body, except one troubling feature—a twenty pound flap of empty skin hanging from his abdomen.

Meanwhile, a few hundred miles away, three month-old burn victim, Dexter Moore, was fighting for his life in an Indiana hospital ward. As Dexter lay suffering, his doctors put out an urgent call for the one thing that could save the infant's life. Skin.

Yep.

Mr. Genz had his flap removed and donated the four square feet of flesh to Dexter's burn ward, where physicians successfully grafted a portion thereof to the little guy.

The health of a generous man and the life of a courageous baby. What a diet!

### ANNDROID

She's bad.

She's beautiful.

She's vinyl.

Meet Anne Droid, crime fighting mannequin. With a camera in her eye and a microphone up her nose, Anne and her namesakes stand guard against apparel-lifters in a steadily growing number of stores across America.

Anne Droid Security Systems is the brainchild of former mannequin restorer, F. Jerry Gutierrez of Denver.

"My wife and I were in a jewelry store and they had a TV monitor set up, but I couldn't find the camera," said gutierrez. "then the jeweler showed me this tiny thing and I thought, 'my god, that would fit in a mannequin.'"

Priced at about \$2,400, not including monitors or timelapse VCRs, Ms. Droid is a bit more expensive than most surveillance systems, but Gutierrez and his

partner, Eric Freehling, believe she is worth it.

"It's got a perspective no other system has," explained Freehling. "And its hearing capability is extremely important because many shoplifters, working in pairs, actually discuss the theft while they're in the store."

Store owners seem to agree. As word about the new system spreads, orders are coming in so fast, Gutierrez and Freehling are having a hard time keeping up with them. "One Denver company ordered ten systems for one store," beamed Freehling.

As a security-mad America slinks toward its Orwellian future, we can all breathe a little easier knowing that well-dressed Anne Droid is standing tall and silent in the boutique - her eye watching, her nose listening.

Got any headlines I might have missed? Send your stories to Russ Buchanan, c/o Midnight Graffiti, 13101 Sudan Road, Poway, California 92604.

# PREVIEW: THE DARK HALF AND OTHER FRACTIONS

BY TYSON BLUE

Well, summer's come and gone and all of you reading this have doubtless already read the horror novels with which you whiled away those steamy days on the beach. But what, you may ask, can you look forward to in the fall and winter months to add that little extra snap to the air, that pleasurable chill to your spine? To make your task a little easier, we've been spending a little time reading the galley proofs and manuscripts which will become the books you'll be talking about this fall and winter, and maybe next year as well.

The big news for the fall is, of course, the publication of *The Dark Half*, Stephen King's first new novel in nearly two years. Although King's much-publicized five-year layoff from publishing new work has been shortened considerably, for most fans the wait has been long enough. In fact, one acquaintance of mine told me a few weeks ago that he was suffering from a heavy bout of Stephen King withdrawal.

*The Dark Half* should provide King fans with a solid fix for their entertainment bucks. Like the two novels that preceded it — *The Tommyknockers* and the Stoker-Award-winning *Misery* — the new novel is centered around a writer. In this case, Thad Beaumont is a novelist who has had a great deal of success writing violent thrillers under the pseudonym George Stark, but only critical and sales success with the handful written under his own name. He divides his time between the towns of Ludlow and Castle Rock, familiar King territory.

When circumstances force Beaumont to reveal and do away with the Stark pseudonym, a chain of events is set in motion which will link Beaumont to Stark in a novel and original turn on the classic Frankenstein tale. To say much more would ruin the readers' enjoyment of what is certain to be one of King's best

novels, a relief to those readers who were disappointed by *The Tommyknockers* (although, to be fair, it should be considered that *The Tommyknockers* was the last of five books King produced that year, was edited very fast under the supervision of two editors, and underwent substantially more revision during that process than any of the four that preceded it, including a sex-change for one of the two main characters!).

It is obvious that some of the spark for *The Dark Half* came from King's experiences with pseudonymous writing in connection with his five Richard Bachman novels. In fact, the original draft of this novel was credited to both Stephen King and Richard Bachman, although at present, Bachman's help is acknowledged in an author's note.

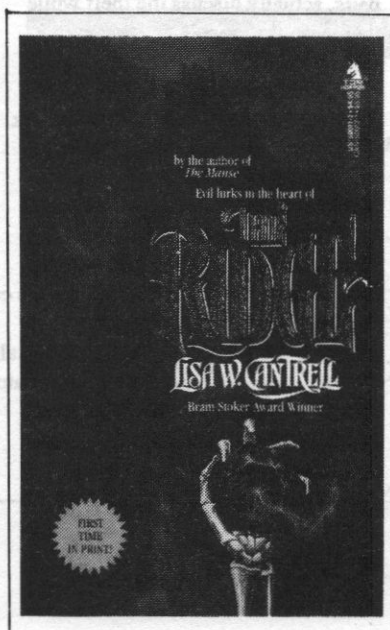
The book's cover features a bluish white skeletal face which is partially obscured by the orange title lettering, which breaks away from the brand name, stylized Stephen King logo Viking has used for King novels since 1982's *Different Seasons*. It is currently scheduled to be published in November, and will retail for \$21.95.



At about the same time, Tor Books will release its Halloween headliner, the long-awaited and eagerly anticipated second novel by Lisa W. Cantrell, whose first novel, *The Manse*, won the Bram Stoker Award for Outstanding First Novel from the Horror Writers of America. Her new novel, *The Ridge*, proves that her performance the first time out was no fluke.

The novel centers around The Ridge, a former monastery built on a narrow ridge of stone projecting out into the sea off the Carolina coast, which has been serving as the home of a family, who are (literally) splattered across the walls and ceiling as the story opens. Nick Vears, a tough-as-nails loner with a murky past and no qualms about dispensing violent death, comes to The Ridge to find that the only survivor of this catastrophe is his daughter, Sara, who apparently has strong psychic powers which can shield her from whatever killed her mother — Vears' ex-wife — and stepfather, whose sister Danielle, is wary of Vears' sudden reappearances in his daughter's life.

Added to the mix is a mysterious cavern beneath the old chapel of The Ridge, and a group of rock musicians whose leader, Set, is trying to unravel the secret of a glowing stone in that cavern.



The most intriguing thing about *The Ridge* is Cantrell's skillful use of suspense in this novel. The only real action in the book comes at the very beginning and the very end. Most of Cantrell's time is spent detailing the characters' search for the secrets of The Ridge, doling out enough detail to keep readers going until the final revelation is made. Granted, there is a little mayhem along the way, but by far the most outstanding thing about *The Ridge* is the remarkable gift Cantrell clearly has for building and maintaining reader suspense. It's a novel to look for, and a novelist to watch.

Another up-and-coming novelist is Rick Hautala, a Maine-based horror writer whose next novel, *Dead Voices*, should be coming from Warner Books late this year or early in 1990. Hautala has been gathering steam steadily since the publication of his third book, *Night Stone*, a few years back, and his new book is easily the best to date.

*Dead Voices* is the story of Elizabeth Myers, a young woman who returns to her hometown in Western Maine to escape her crumbling marriage and her confused feelings about the death of her daughter about a year before.

Instead, she is plunged into a gruesome nightmare of horror and necromancy in a bone-chilling tale of horror which centers around the eerie possibilities of speaking with the dead. Several methods for doing this are explored by Hautala in the novel, all of them depicted with an authenticity of detail which shows the care with which he researched his material.

Hautala was a student at the University of Maine at Orono at the same time as Stephen King, which may explain why he hits many of the same marks as King in his work. It is well worth the trouble to chase down his six previous novels, all paperback originals and all still in print. And to keep an eye peeled for *Dead Voices*, which might well be Hautala's *Pet Sematary*.



IF DINOSAURS HAD SURVIVED ...

"I may have gone too far with this one," Hautala told me recently. I don't think so, but then I thought *Book of the Dead* was kinda tame, so I may not be the best judge of this type of thing. Perhaps the most telling remark I can make about *Dead Voices* is this: about three-quarters of the way through the manuscript, I got a galley copy of *The Dark Half*. And even though I was dying to jump right into King's new novel, I still couldn't put Hautala's book on hold until I finished. I had to keep reading it until I finished.

It's that good.

Dean R. Koontz also has a new novel in the works, now slated for January 1990 publication. Entitled *The Bad Place*, it promises to be more or a horror-oriented novel than some recent Koontz novels, which have had a strong science-fiction slant.

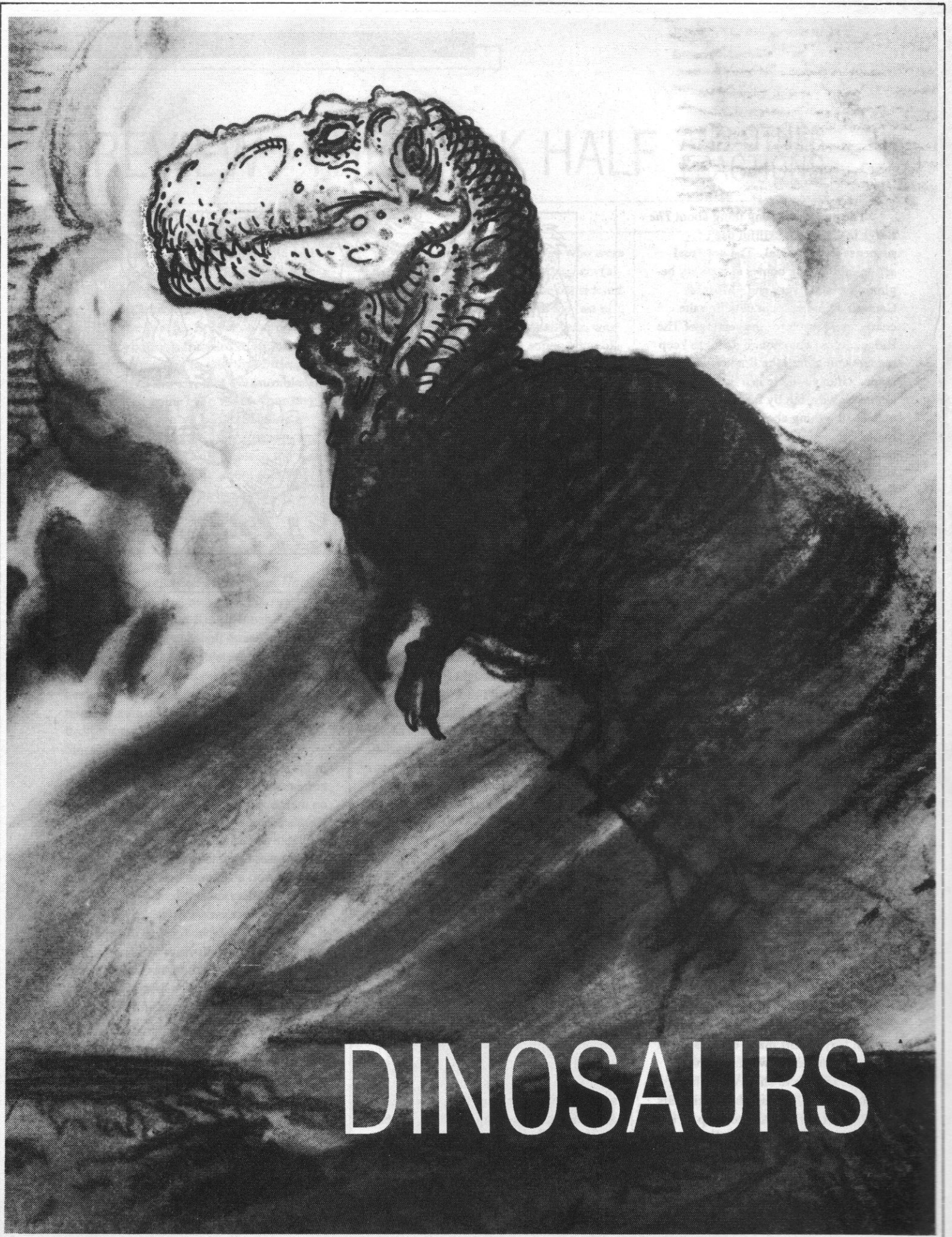
*The Bad Place* is set in Orange County, California, Koontz' own stomping grounds, and is the story of the Dakotas, a couple of private eyes who take on the challenge of their careers and get more than they bargained for. Koontz hasn't given out many details about the book yet — he's a man who likes to play

his hand close to the chest — But he has stated that he feels that the villain of the novel is perhaps the best and scariest he has cooked up since the psychopathic killer of his classic novel *Whispers*. We can only hope he's right.

There's some action on the film front in the fearcast as well: Castle Rock Entertainment is in the preproduction stages on their upcoming film version of Stephen King's *Misery*. Not much information is available as yet — it's still very early in the process — but here is what we do know.

Rob Reiner, who directed *Stand By Me*, which most people consider the best King film ever, is scheduled to direct the film, from a screenplay by William Goldman, who has written the scripts for such classics as *Marathon Man*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and Reiner's production of Goldman's own novel *The Princess Bride*. King, who has read an early draft of the screenplay, was reportedly quite impressed with it.

There is no word yet on either casting or locations for the film, but keep watching this space and we'll keep you posted.



# DINOSAURS



# INTRODUCTION

**A**t dinner one night, some years ago, someone asked each of us to name, in order of importance, our Most Favorite Subjects in All the History of the World!

"Dinosaurs!" I cried. Followed swiftly by, "Egypt. Tutankhamen. Mummies!"

To bulwark my selections, I recounted a short tale about my own life as a twelve-year-old genius-in-the-bud. Telling my friends I was off for life as a radio actor, I trotted down to the local station in Tuscon, Arizona, hung about friendless, rootless, emptying ashtrays, running for Cokes, and exerting my own peculiar animal magnetism. Within two weeks, I wound up On The Air reading the comics to the kiddies every Saturday night. Payment for same?

Free tickets for *King Kong* and *The Mummy*.

I was the richest boy I ever knew.

For doing what I loved to do, how nice that God, and the station

## BY RAY BRADBURY

manager, handed me passes to rub elbows with prehistoric monsters and dead Egyptian kings!

When I had finished saying all this, there was an instant revision of Lists at our table. Men and women, of all sizes, shapes, colors and ages, had to agree I had hit on Subjects Number One and Two.

But, especially One.

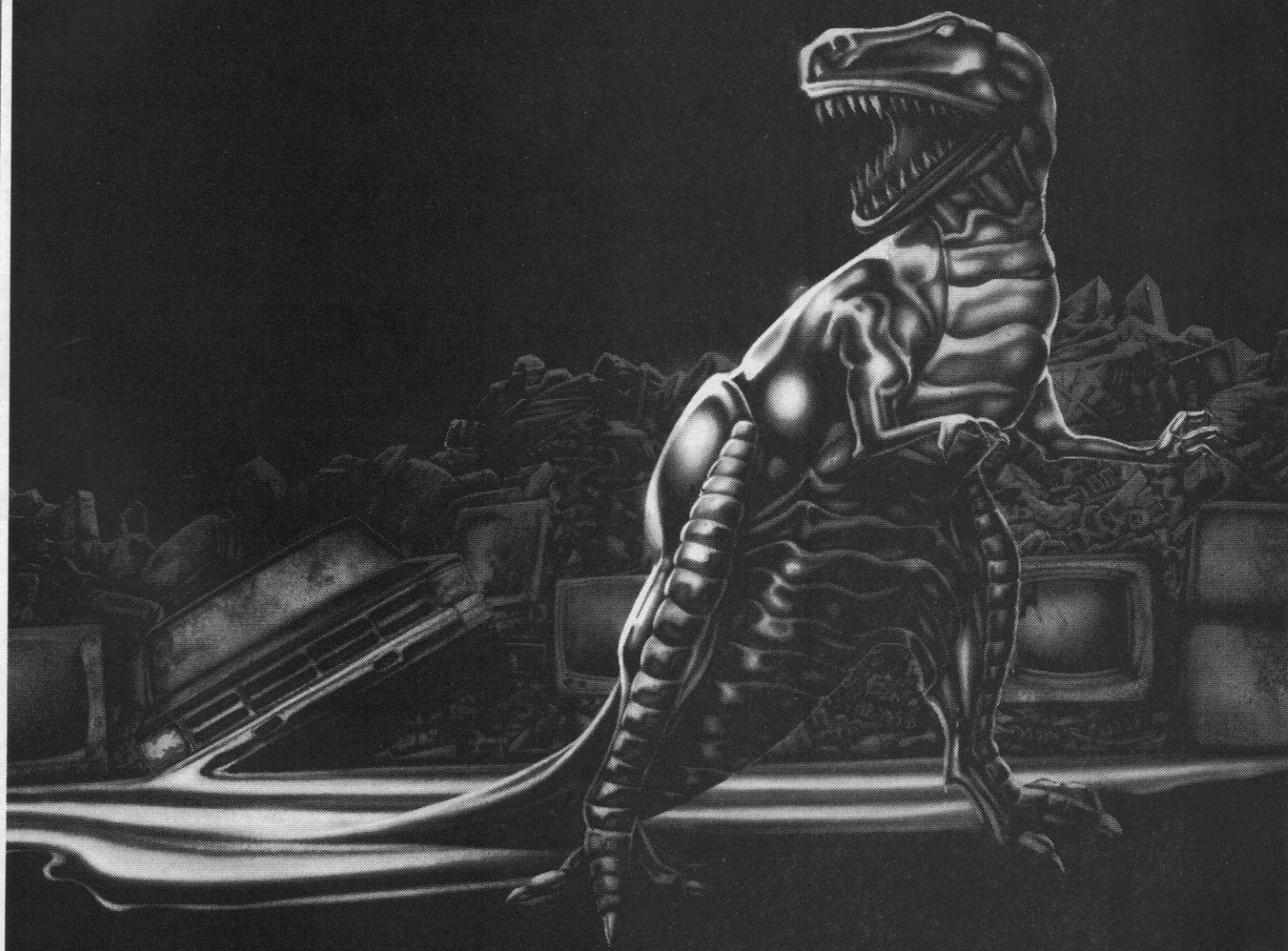
Dinosaurs.

For, as I put it to my friends:

"If, this very instant, a stranger rushed into this room crying, 'My God, there's a dinosaur outside!' what would you do?"

"Run out," everyone admitted, "and look!"

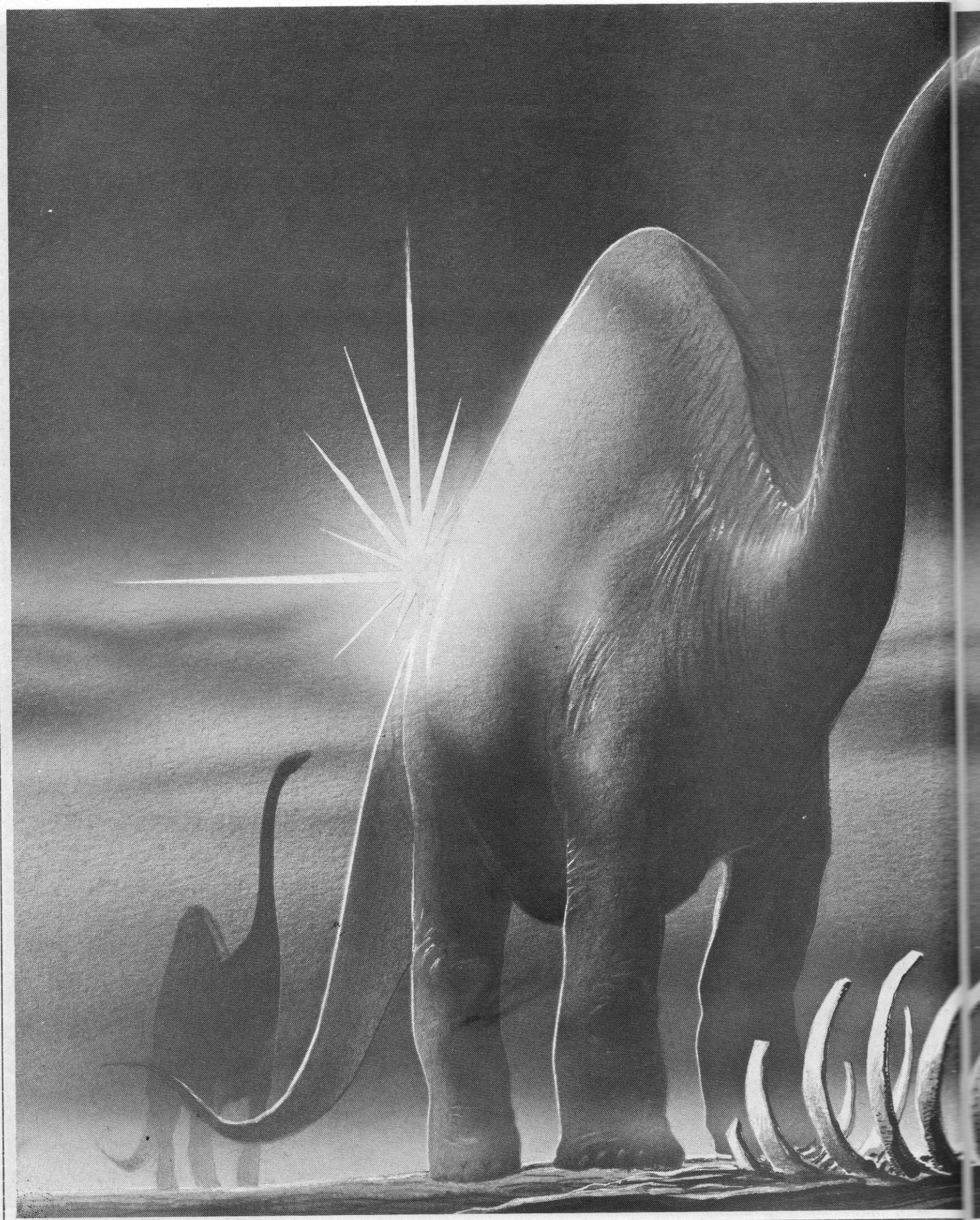
"Yes," I said, "even though you were absolutely sure it couldn't

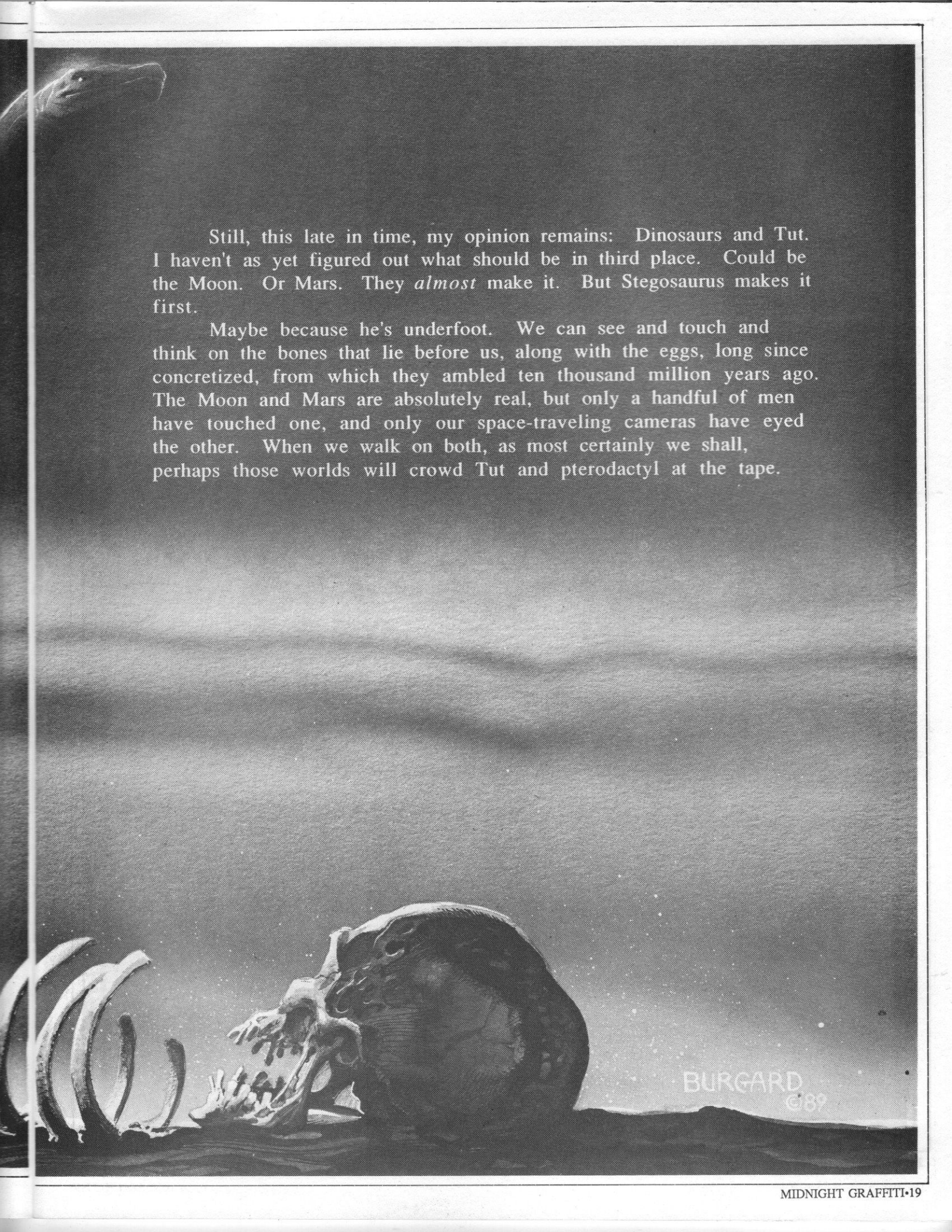


be true. How come, though, you would leap and run like that? Because you hoped for a miracle. In your secret heart of hearts you wanted brontosaurus, tame of course, to come back in the world.

"In fact," I added, turning to a television producer who had asked me, earlier, what I would like to write for television, "if you gave me prime time, and a few dollars, there's nothing I'd write better than a show called *Dinosaurs!* *Roots?* That was watched by only fifty or sixty million people. Our *Dinosaurs* would rampage the country and grab every eye. Please pass the pteranodons."

Of course, nothing ever happened. I got everyone at dinner to admit they'd love to see such a television special, and the shard feeling was that dinosaurs were just about the greatest children of history, but the network executive never called back. I think he awoke the next morning blaming the wine.





Still, this late in time, my opinion remains: Dinosaurs and Tut. I haven't as yet figured out what should be in third place. Could be the Moon. Or Mars. They *almost* make it. But Stegosaurus makes it first.

Maybe because he's underfoot. We can see and touch and think on the bones that lie before us, along with the eggs, long since concretized, from which they ambled ten thousand million years ago. The Moon and Mars are absolutely real, but only a handful of men have touched one, and only our space-traveling cameras have eyed the other. When we walk on both, as most certainly we shall, perhaps those worlds will crowd Tut and pterodactyl at the tape.

BURGARD  
©89



But as for now I accept the fact, and proclaim it quietly, that without dinosaurs my life would have been nothing at all. Dinosaurs started me on the track to becoming a writer. Dinosaurs helped push me *along* that track to acceptance. And a dinosaur who fell in love with the sound of a lighthouse foghorn in a story called "The Fog Horn," which I wrote and published in 1950, changed my life, my income, and my way of writing forever.

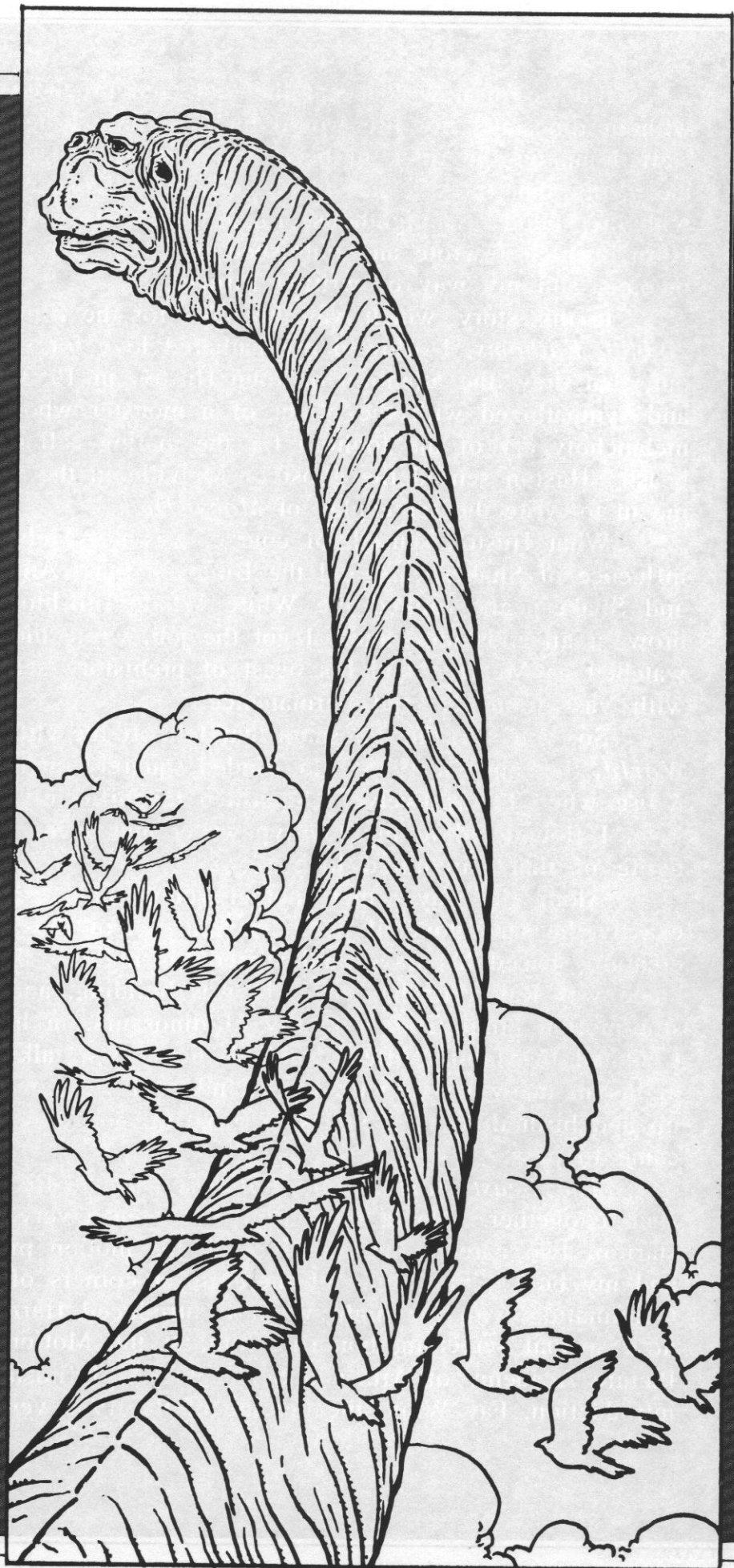
In this story, which was the basis for the film, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, I allowed my gathered love for such beasts to speak out; that drew the attention of John Huston in 1953. He read the tale and sympathized with the plight of a monster who took the melancholy cry of the foghorn for the mating call of yet another lost beast. Huston sensed the ghost of Melville in the whole, and called me in to write the screenplay of *Moby Dick*.

What Huston sensed, of course, was not Melville but the influence of Shakespeare and the Bible on me. And since the Bible and Shakespeare yanked the White Whale full-blown from Melville's brow, it all ends the same. I got the job, wrote the script, and watched as Melville and his beast of prehistory settled into my life with vast tonnages and permanence.

So, you see, the dinosaurs that fell off the cliff in *The Lost World*, that ancient 1925 film, landed squarely on me, as did *King Kong* when I was twelve. Squashed magnificently flat, breathless for love, I floundered to my toy typewriter and spent the rest of my life dying of that unrequited love.

Along the way I met another young man, exactly my age, with exactly the same love, if not to say lust. For those prehistoric creatures paced his days, and stirred his nights. The young man's name was Ray Harryhausen. He was building, and animating with stop-motion 8mm film, a family of dinosaurs, in his backyard garage. I visited the family often, handled the beasts, talked for hours, many nights in many years, with my friend, and we agreed: he was to grow up and birth dinosaurs, I was to grow up and dialogue them. And it came to pass.

*The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* was the first and only film we shared together. Not a great film, not even a very good one, but the start of two careers that finally took his motion pictures, his beasts, and my books, into some of the farthest corners of the world. Culminating with the night when I introduced Harryhausen at a special screening honoring him, at the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences. As I finished my introduction, Fay Wray, the heroine of the 1933 version of *King Kong*,





ran out of the audience, grabbed and hugged us both, and put the capper on two lives that had started with simple direct loves in museums, movie houses, and garages, a long time ago.

Along the way, Harryhausen and I had to put up with a lot of fly-by-night, round-heeled, always opinionated and always wrong pardon-my-feet-on-the-table producers. I became so enraged with the way one of them treated Ray that I wrote the story "Tyrannosaurus Rex" to restore my sanity.

Right now is confession time. Some thirty-odd years ago, Ray Harryhausen, my wife Maggie, and I attended a performance of *Siegfried* with the then eminent tenor Jussi Björling performing the title role. We went, of course, not to see Siegfried, or to hear the music, which was of course glorious. We went to see—God bless our lost, sweet souls—Fafner, the Dragon.

I realize, in admitting this, that Harryhausen and I will probably go on most opera lovers' lists as the coarsest, most unthinking, most damnable *Siegfried* attendees in history. I accept the damnation and live with the guilt. Nevertheless, there we were, the three of us, in the lower left hand side of the balcony, waiting for what seemed nine hours, and was probably only eight, for Fafner to appear.

He appeared all right. I saw an inch of his left nostril, Maggie saw one of his whiskers, and Harryhausen saw only the vast cloud of steam Fafner gave off in his brief "aria" before he vanished.

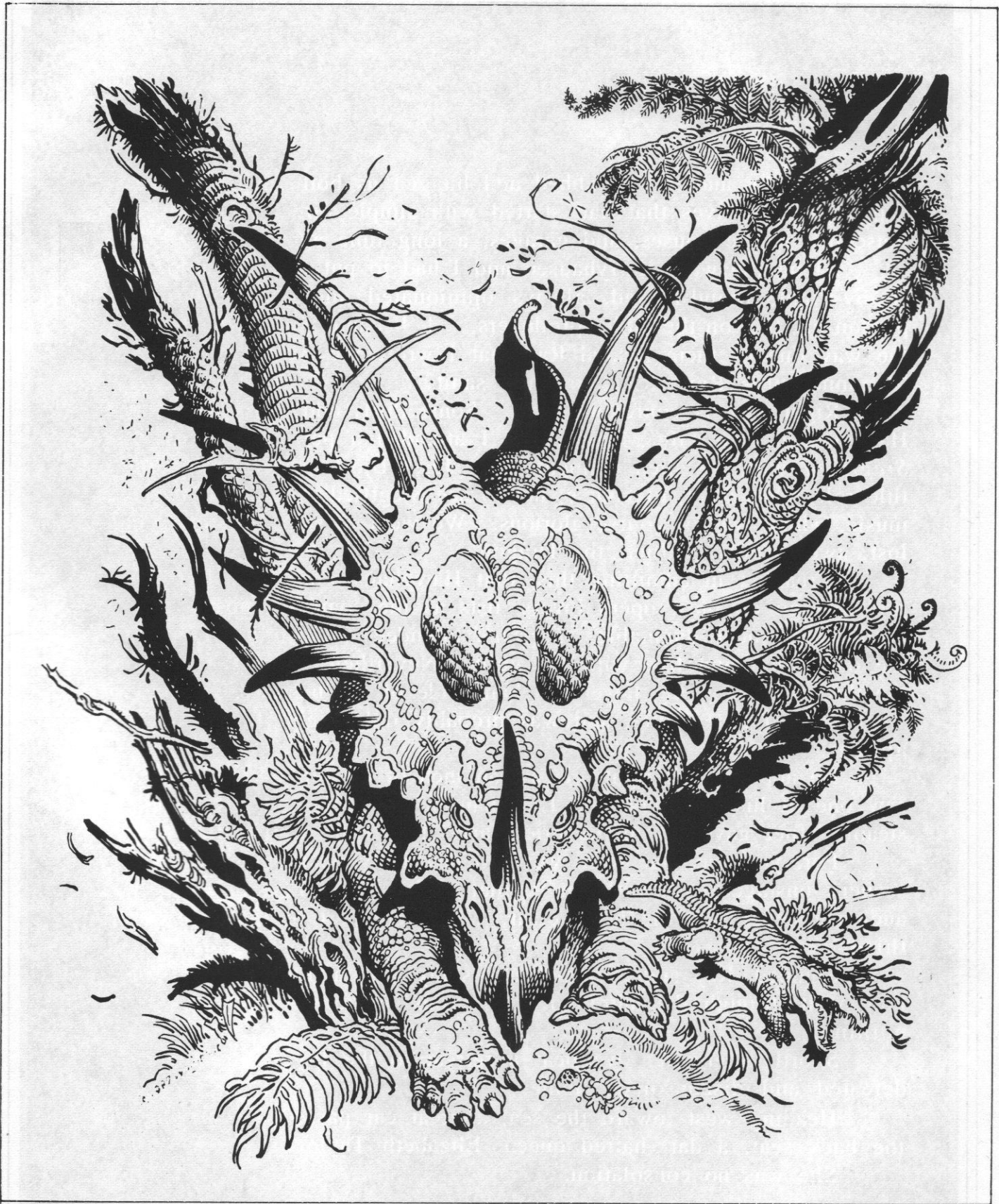
For, you see, our seats were so devilishly positioned, and the scenery onstage so cleverly built, that at least one-third of each audience never saw the brute clear. We were part of that one bereft third.

Stunned, Ray and I looked across my wife at each other. The long wait through the admittedly wondrous music was all for nothing.

Shortly thereafter, we beat a retreat to the foyer, and thence, defeated and disconsolate, home.

Heading west toward the sea, a great car passed us carrying, in the back seat, a dark-haired queen, Elizabeth Taylor.

She was no consolation.





David J. Schow makes his second appearance in *Midnight Graffiti* with the following time travel story, a tip of the hat to the granddaddy of such stories, Bradbury's "The Sound of Thunder."

## KAMIKAZE BUTTERFLIES

**"THAT STORY. IT'S A CROCK." ARENAS WAS BEING CONTRARY. "IT SUCKS."**

**"THAT STORY IS STILL THE REASON YOU AND I ARE HERE, ASSHOLE." SATCH SPAT BACK. LITERALLY SPAT: FLAKES OF BEEF SPREAD AND CRACKER SPATTERED ARENAS' COMBAT VEST. HE WAS BARECHESTED BENEATH, MUSCULAR, SWEATY.**

**TWO HOURS TILL NOON, AND ALREADY IT HAD BECOME HOT ENOUGH TO SIZZLE THE BRAIN WITHIN ITS CROCKPOT OF SKULL, WITH BOILING CEREBROSPINAL JUICE FOR BASTING. MASTERSON'S TEMPER KICKED FROM SIMMER TO PAN-BLACKEN; HE WAS IN NO BLOODY MOOD. "SHUT THE FUCK UP, YOU, LAMEASS, AND YOU, LIMPICK, OR I SHOOT ME SOME BOXCAR CRAPS WITH YOUR TEETH." THE THREAT WAS PRO FORMA; NOT MUCH SOUL BACKED IT UP. IT WAS TOO HOT.**

BY DAVID J.  
SCHOW

Arenas shifted back into his camp-complainer mode: "This ain't a military op, Sarge, so you don't really have any —"

"That's why it's *not* an order, buttplug."

The bitching never hung long in the suffocating humidity. They were all dedicated, irrevocably committed; just coarse, battle-tempered and badass nasty enough to believe they were right, the sort of surety that had, in other times, redivided the grid of the world map and changed the names of continents. The land itself endured. Only the nomenclature altered, according to the whims of the mighty or the subversion of the cunning. That was reassuring to Masterson, who in another war in another time had actually held the rank of sergeant. The only permanent thing was impermanence. Hold onto that.

Their plan was to change everything, but the land would always be the same.

The story suggested that if you hopped into a time machine, cruised backward, and meddled with the macreme of past events, you could disrupt in utero the world you had left. You could terminate a family line eons before its ancestors evolved to sentience. The seed of entire races and cultures could be ground dead like a cigarette butt; whole civilizations could be erased down to their skeletons and the bones mortared to timeless dust, all before the primordial amoebae of said civilizations struggled for their first food. History could easily be stabbed in the back, since it only marched forward, eyes front.

The squad that had designated itself Omega Team was counting on that story being right.

They quickly discovered that Heraclitus had been (or *would have been*, yuk, yuk) right, too: Time *was* a river. And if you paddled against the current, all the way back to the mouth of the waterway, and pulled your boat and supplies onto the shore, both you and the devices you carried would work just peachy, despite the paradox that neither would exist for millions of years. You could then murder every living thing in sight, napalm to soot cells that, in a mere burp of passing time for the planet, would eventually become *you*. Yet you would not, as the operatic cliché went, *die before you were born*.

You could get killed in back-time. Absolutely. But conventionally, and not thanks to a mean twist of plot.

McCullough had gotten killed, conventionally, just this morning, and his messy death was what had Arenas bummed. Boyo was damned near catatonic. Masterson noted that the men had reverted to calling him Sarge. It was something permanent, a reliable fallback in the jungle heat of what had been a one-sided war, until this morning.

Boyo squatted near the coffee fire, his blond rag-cut starch stiff with dry blood. Half of McCullough had dropped and splattered him, and three hours later he was still rigid and staring, eyes too wide and blinking too frequently. The few words he had spoken concerned McCullough. He wondered aloud whether the fluids of his partner's tissue, which now soaked his cami fatigues, contained microorganisms that were still alive. Germs that might someday evolve into a new McCullough.

They were all going to die on this mission. They knew it and it was no strain. McCullough, however, had been the run's first casualty, and the way in which he had bitten the big one was spectacular.

Rather, Masterson thought morbidly, it was the way the big one had bitten McCullough . . .

There were all sorts of special surprises they had not anticipated, despite primo recon. Like a Tyrannosaurus Rex coming at them from out of the trees, for example.

They had been hacking their own trail, staggered at three-yard intervals, Satch walking point. Just past dawn they spooked a herd of swan-necked Maiasaurs and massacred the hindmost. Franco and Arenas and Bull potshot the lumbering reptiles — "blowing their tires" was the expression Bull had coined for shooting out a large dinosaur's leg with an RPG. Blow the tire and the whole beast crumpled, then Boyo laid down a mist of fifty-fifty from his incendiary tanks, then Mendoza touched off the fireworks with a grenade after they'd all retreated. The smell was awful.

Twenty clicks to the south the jungle was busy consuming itself by conflagration. That had been a happy accident, yesterday, courtesy of one of Mendoza's half-smoked Luckies. The flames had engulfed an entire valley, feeding on the wind and defoliating hundreds of acres and barbecuing numberless animals. Including, Franco hoped, a lot of those football-sized roaches he'd seen the first day in back-time, one of which had scuttled over him while he dozed. It weighed at least fifteen pounds and he'd shot it to gruel with his monster .457 pistol. These sci-fi mutant bugs were virtually the only back-time life that could be killed with bullets. The bulk of Omega Team's ordnance was tagged for the big guys. Smokey Mendoza's riff with the cigarette had not cost them a round, and Sarge had been impressed.

Big reptiles could make the creepiest sounds when they died.

They sortied from brush to tropical thickets, where it was close and odious. The canopy of fronds meshed to block the sun and steam them slowly in thier togs. Bull and Satch managed to pick off several gliding, errant pterodactyls as they wafted from perch to perch on the sopping updraft of plant decay. Small arms fire sent them veering into trees and cartwheeling earthward to snap their airy bonework amid death-tangles of vines and creepers. Watching a creature with a twenty-two foot wingspan fold up and crash off-course was pretty comical. They had all the tensile strength of spun sugar. One that Arenas gunned down hit the turf right in front of Boyo, who stomped its head flat and, laughing, made mud of its greasy brains.

All nine men paused to chuckle or ignite smokes when the whole enclosed atrium of jungle seemed to vibrate, which froze them all, cat-alert. McCullough looked up and found himself at ground zero of a widening shadow, just like Wile E. Coyote, eyes whitely visible in the abrupt darkness caused by the Rex landing dead bang on his head. A tri-taloned foot the size of a Datsun mashed him the same way Boyo had danced on the twirly-bird. Nobody had foreseen a ton-plus of death roosting above them. Bushwhacked by a monster with barely a quart of brains. But hell, nobody had ever expected it to be such a virulent purple and yellow, either, and by the time the team could gawp at such wonderment and maybe wheel a LAWS rocket around to bear, McCullough had been gnashed in two. They all heard his ribs implode like cracking knuckles. Franco gut-shot it; damned-up digestive gases sometimes made the beasts explode, and this one did, drenching everyone. Boyo did not intend to block any of the debris, but part of McCullough came whirling and hit with enough force to tear the flamethrowing rig from his back. It was the



Art by Mahlon Fawcett © 1989

...the way he had been... This...  
...the way he had been... This...  
...the way he had been... This...

...the way he had been... This...  
...the way he had been... This...  
...the way he had been... This...



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half with the head, and when Boyo sat up and opened his eyes, there was that head in his lap, staring right back, the fluids that had made his buddy function now soaking his fatigues.

Out of the trees, thought Masterson, out of the goddamned trees.

JOURNAL OF MATTHEW KOPERNICK  
DATE (?)

*No conqueror in history has ever had the luxury of the perspective we experience every time we snuff out another antediluvian life. The lesson of the story is that butterflies count. Worthless bugs can change history. Hindsight is what determines a battle to be victory or massacre. Change the future? Fuck. We've been doing THAT all our lives. But now the difference is that we are assured that the changes we are wrecking (sp?) will be broad, sweeping, altering literally everything that is to come. Not that we'll live to see any of it. But we know, and for warriors, the knowledge is enough to sustain us.*

*One thing more: We are men, nothing less, but not gods or super beings. Should anyone ever dig up this journal and prove intelligent enough to fathom this language, that's the single fact we all want made diamond-clear: We sorted into our past and changed the building blocks all around, but we were men. Even with a purpose as heightened as we decided ours was, we could still die, and McCullough died like a soldier.*

Sarge handed the journal back to Kopernick. "You think this is important for somebody to know?"

"Somebody should say something, that's all." Kopernick had taken to speaking in hoarse whispers, like a man whose life was on the wane in a movie.

"Fine. Sign it, seal it in one of the vacuum cannisters, and maybe a billion years from now something with tentacles and eyes on stalks will dig it up and go bananas trying to decipher the meaning of the word *fuck*."

That elicited a phantom smile. "Yeah. Someday, maybe." Kopernick had been the one who timed the bomb to vaporize the time-travel lab thirty seconds after our departure. He'd always wanted to bash together an oil drum nuke, and since no one had chased them, Masterson assumed that puppy had detonated fearsomely, slamming the door behind them in a blast of hard radiation. The techs staffing the lab had not died as honorably as McCullough had. They had groveled and pleaded and, in microcosm, demonstrated all the traits Omega Team had come to despise in a world of wimpy politicians, do-nothing administrations, bread-buttering lawyers, mass child killers, greedy governments and the low common denominator of the undisciplined and unprincipled. Since the cancer was too entrenched, Omega Team opted to destroy the corpus and start anew with a fresh body.

Arenas, Frank, and Mendoza began calling themselves the Terrible Trio, once Kopernick told them that the Greek root of the word *dinosaur* translated directly as "dire saurians," not "terrible lizards." The lizards were nothing in the terrible department, not compared to them. They were armed, sentient men, and Greek was

now a language that would never exist.

What hey, victory.

The story went that the tiniest death, the soundless pulverization of a butterfly's fragile body in the past, could grow, in the future, to a thunderstroke, a palpable floodtide of sound that touched all, and changed all it touched. The payoff for death on a massive scale was therefore seductive to Masterson. Although the mission he proposed was a guaranteed one-way op, each member of Omega Team had volunteered. Each volunteer realized that each of their actions, even the tiniest, like Mendoza's smoldering cigarette butt, would yield results too large to be contained by any history book, ever. That power, savored briefly but equally guaranteed, was enough to recruit them. A story of people who never were, a fiction printed on dead trees in cheap black, could change the face of a world they scorned.

Stories could be rewritten. Authors die, tastes evolve, and all of a sudden some latter-day Mongol monarch decides recorded history should begin with him and razes entire cultures to ash and legend.

Technology has always existed to simplify ancient procedures. Just look at torture.

Franco, crazy fuck, decided he wanted to taste spitted dinosaur meat. Masterson said it would make him sick. Franco told him that it tasted like rattlesnake, only juicier. Then he died, vomiting blood and little foamy hunks of his own guts.

Dinosaurs: 2. Omega Team: 13,000+.

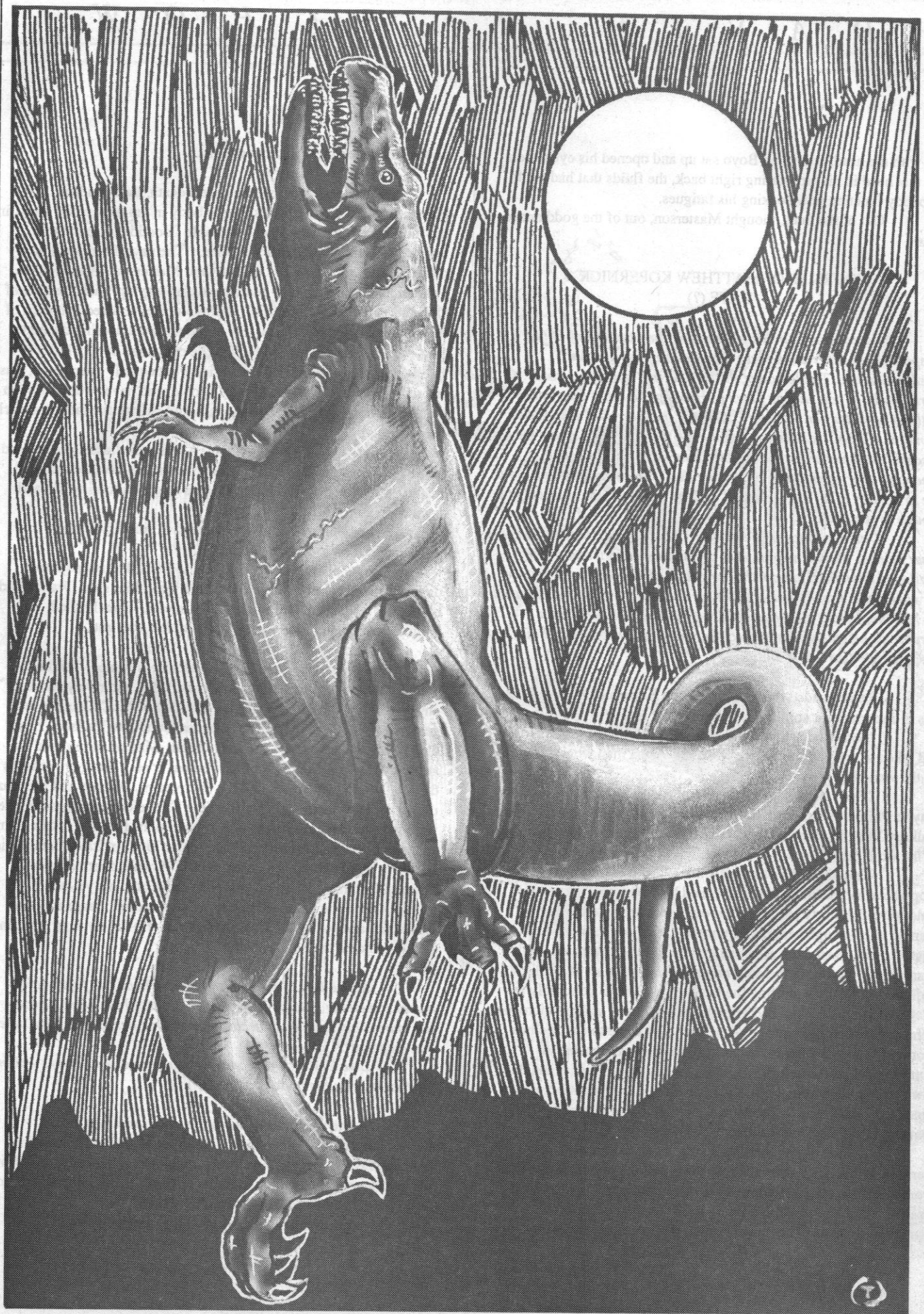
With two men gone, some cockiness waned. Fright and hostility took their turns. Kopernick shelled in and rarely spoke to anyone. Boyo's eyes stayed under the spell of McCullough's dead gaze. Satch got pissed and shot a tracer round into his face. Boyo died trying to slap out the fire in his head. Masterson returned the anger by blasting Satch out of his combat boots. The giant roaches dug up the military graves and ate the remains. Arenas and Mendoza, the surviving two thirds of the Terrible Trio, died together when they went searching for Bull, who had gone into the forest to take a dump and never come out. The Dire Duo took a lot of irritated prehistoric lifeforms along when they checked out. When Kopernick went insane, Masterson disarmed him and confiscated his yet-unburied journal. When he managed to cut his own cartoid, Sarge added a final entry and sealed the book up forever. He did not sign his name. What would be the point?

*All I'd like to do now is stop, and hope our fight really meant something, and go home. But of course I am home already. It's impossible to go back because all of time lies ahead. Like time, I can only march forward.*

*Like history, I can only spend my remaining hours waiting for that knife in the back.*

As he was putting down the cannister along with Kopernick's corpse, something flitted past Masterson's sweating face. It was a huge, glassine insect, much like a butterfly, its cobweb wingwork splotched with idiograms of color. It circled his head and lit on the grimed handle of the folding spade.

Masterson laughed, gently now, and let it live.







# DINOSAUR PLIÉS

## AN INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to Audition and Placement examinations for the Academy of Mesozoic Dance, First Year Forms. Applications are open to any dinosaur between two and six years of age, and must be stamped by a *parent* (Biological parent only. No Guardians, except for Orphans *or* Parricides. If one has questions, one should wait until *after* the examination results are announced.)

As with years past, we shall use *Le Sacre Du Printemps* for ambience.

And may the better dinosaur rip the flesh of the lesser, figuratively speaking of course.

**BY R. V. BRANHAM**

## ADOLESCENT DANCES

Will the Hadrosaurs—yes, *all duckbills*, please come to the bars as one's name is announced: Parasaurolophus, lambeosaurus, Saurolophus, Corythosaur.

— Please, Madame Maiasaurus! One must either watch impartially or be asked to leave! We do not want to have to resort to calling in Officer Rex, now do we?

Excuse me, girls.

When I call out a position, it will be executed punctually and without enquiry. Are we understood? Failure to follow instructions accurately may result in immediate disqualification.

Okay! Now—music, please! Girls: Demiplie, all positions, *except* the third. *Very* good. Watch your heads, use the Second Position of the Head until told otherwise. *Mademoiselle Lambeosaurus, must one be reminded that one is not holding a violin—?* Watch those Positions ouverte, Mademoiselle Corythosaur...do not separate the feet so wide. This is the *dance*, not the ablution. Five Poser derrieres, followed by ten Poser devants. Please give it more than your all, better than your very best.

*And what is the meaning of all this— ?!*

## DRESS REHEARSAL ABDUCTION

*Who's responsible for this— ?!*

*Who let those Heterodontosaurus in, the randy buggers—*

!/? Girls, come back! Where is Officer Rex when one needs him? We might as well continue....

## ROUNDS OF SPRING

Please come to the bars, yes, to the bars! When your name is announced. Now: Mr. Brontosaurus—you changed your name to *what* — ? To *Apatosaurus* — ? That may be fine and well for your egocentric parents, but it *wiillll* not do for the Academy, it will not do at all. Mr. *Brontosaurus*, Mademoiselles *Stegosaurus* and *Plateosaurus*, Mr. *Megalosaurus* — Please, members of the audience, one must refrain from fat jokes, *one must shut up*.

Yes. Music.

Please, young ladies and gentlemen. Keep a very wide distance between one's face and one's neighbor's tail. Speaking of tails, one must be *very, very* careful to control the motions of one's tail during the dance. It is the essence of the Dance.

Now! Five grand plies! Fair—not bad, not bad, not good, but not bad. At all times both Head *and* Tails in First Position. *Very* good, it shows pride. Positions soulevees, all of them—in no particular order. *Improvise*. Think *cloud*.

Better than one would expect. Interesting.

## GAMES OF THE RIVAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Everyone, being *all applicants*, to the bars! Stretching excersises! One may play, but no duals, no combat.

*We*, being your examiner and head of this Academy, will take a brief break for evaluation considerations.

Again, *behave*. There will be monitors in *our* absence.

## THE SAGACIOUS ELDER'S PUBLIC APPEARANCE

At this point in our Auditions, it is customary to wait for the Public Appearance of the Sagacious Elder, who founded this, the Academy of the Mesozoic Dance. But....

....The Elder never appears. Never has, in anybody's memory. But we are not barbarians. We wait.

Sixty seconds of quiet meditation, please.

## THE EARTH ADORED

And what time is it? Is it time for our lunch break? Is it time yet?

## EARTH DANCE

It is, I believe, time for our lunch break.

Let us reconvene these Auditions in one hour. Or so.

Let us now, then fall upon the Earth and feed our faces.

## ANOTHER INTRODUCTION

Welcome back.

I am sure you have heard some rumours— it being a smallish community—about my departure. Some of them have regarded the theft of some eggs from the hatchery.

It is not true. And the parties responsible—*we all know who they are*—shall be hearing from my Solicitor.

It is *true*, however, that we are retiring. But not *departing* from this dear circle of friends.

I can tell, from your restraint, from your lack of response, that you are deeply moved. *We* are deeply moved. One must, we suppose, show dignity.

This will be our last Audition together. Let us strive, together, to make it the best in living memory.

## MYSTERIOUS ARCS AND SECANTS OF THE ADOLESCENTS

Oh, so our duckbills return, as supplicants, if these garlands indicate anything. We must suppose that one cannot be held to blame when *one is being pursued* by platoons of paramours.

But what, we must ask, are these arcs and secants upon the floor of the Dance? Is there a significance oracular, occult—? Are they drawings of divinity or of delinquents?

## GLORIFICATION OF THE CHOSEN CANDIDATE

But, girls — ? You lay these garlands, these offerings, at my feet? It moves me to tears, to be so honored, and by those who will not even be my students (though I do indeed have a decision in their fates, as Students of the Dance).

## CONJURING THE ANCIENTS

It is now time, as tradition dictates, that we introduce our new Mistress. However, during lunch, she suggested a break with custom which would allow me a few more moments of glory.

I have gone over the examination results with our new Mistress, and selections have been made.

These selections will be announced later, at the banquet. To which all and sundry are invited.

So let us, instead, have another sixty seconds of quiet meditation. If not the Elder, then perhaps one of the Ancients may return.

## THE ANCIENTS' RITUAL

No Ancients. No Ritual.

Perhaps next year there should be a discussion among the Board regarding changing the format of these ceremonies.

## SACRED DANCE, THE CHOSEN CANDIDATE

Again, to the bars. I have decided to give you your first lesson. Why, some of you may ask, does one need the Dance? After all, it is instinctive with us dinosaurs. Yes and no, because yes you are born with basic technique and the vocabulary of the Dance, and *no* because you are *primitive* and *unrefined*, with no sense of nuance or subtlety.

Also, there is no place in the Dance for humor, for japes, for puns. We *heard* that silly joke about us not being *at* the banquet, but *being* the banquet. Jokes about our weight are in *bad* form, and form is the essence of the Dance.

So, let us see some demiplies—I feel like a Ringmaster, standing in these rings.

Demiplies, First and Second Positions—*what's this? Back to the Bars, everyone!*

And would our audience be so kind as to return to their seat?

Now. Heads and Tails erect, Proud! Do not bare your teeth! It is rude to bare your teeth on the dance floor. It is a sort of sacrilege and a definite act of aggression! Do not wag your Tails—we only do that when we are hungry. And have we not already had our lunch? Don't wag your tails—! Back, we say, Back — !

FOR IGOR S., PROFORMA

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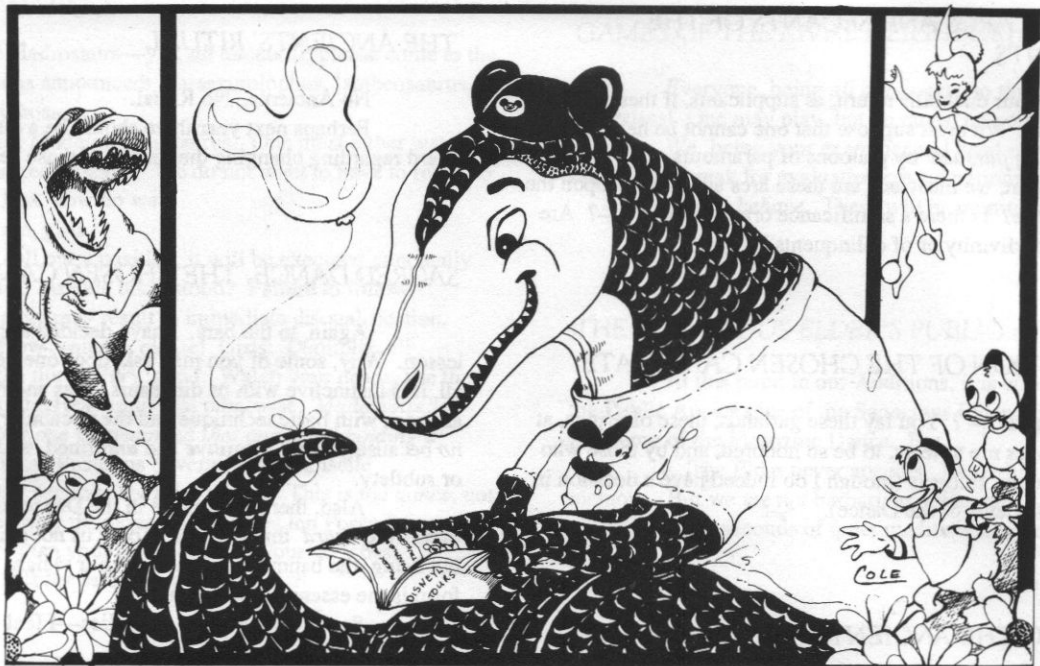
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# BOB THE DINOSAUR



Goes  
to

## DISNEYLAND

For a birthday present, Fred's wife, Karen, bought him a plastic, inflatable dinosaur—a Tyranosaurus Rex. It was in a cardboard box, and Fred thanked her and took the dinosaur downstairs to his study and took it out of the box and spent twenty minutes taking deep breaths and blowing air into it.

When the dinosaur was inflated, he sat it in front of his bookshelves, and as a joke, got a mouse ear hat he had bought at Disneyland three years before, and put it on the dinosaur's head and named it Bob.

Immediately, Bob wanted to go to Disneyland. There was no snuffing the ambition. He talked about it night and day, and it got so the study was no place to visit, because Bob would become most unpleasant on the matter. He scrounged around downstairs at night, pacing the floor, singing the Mouseketeer theme loud and long, waking up Fred and Karen, and when Fred would come downstairs to reason with Bob, Bob wouldn't listen. He wouldn't have a minute's

worth of it. No, sir, he by golly wanted to go to Disneyland.

Fred said to Karen, "You should have bought me a Brontosaurus, or maybe a Stegasaurus. I have a feeling they'd have been easier to reason with."

Bob kept it up night and day. "Disneyland, Disneyland. I want to go to Disneyland. I want to see Mickey. I want to see Donald." It was like some kind of mantra, Bob said it so much. He even found some old brochures on Disneyland that Fred had stored in his closet, and Bob spread those out on the floor and lay down near them and looked at the pictures and wagged his great tail and looked wistful.

"Disneyland," he would whisper. "I want to go to Disneyland."

And when he wasn't talking about it, he was mooning. He'd come up to breakfast and sit in two chairs at the table and stare blankly into the syrup on his pancakes, possibly visualizing the Matterhorn ride or Sleeping Beauty's castle. It got so it was a painful

BY JOE LANSDALE

(For Jeff Banks)

thing to see. And Bob got mean. He chased the neighbor's dogs and tore open garbage sacks and fought with the kids on the bus and argued with his teachers and took up slovenly habits, like throwing his used Kleenex on the floor of the study. There was no living with that dinosaur.

Finally, Fred had had enough, and one morning at breakfast, while Bob was staring into his pancakes, moving his fork through them lazily, but not really trying to eat them (and Fred had noticed that Bob had lost weight and looked as if he needed air), Fred said, "Bob, we've decided that you may go to Disneyland."

"What?" Bob said, jerking his head up so fast his mouse hat flew off and his fork scraped across his plate with a sound like a fingernail on a blackboard. "Really?"

"Yes, but you must wait until school is out for the summer, and you really have to act better."

"Oh, I will, I will," Bob said.

Well now, Bob was one happy dinosaur. He quit throwing Kleenex down and bothering the dogs and the kids on the bus and his teachers, and in fact, he became a model citizen. His school grades even picked up.

Finally, the big day came, and Fred and Karen bought Bob a suit of clothes and a nice John Deere cap, but Bob would have nothing to do with the new duds. He wore his mouse ear hat and a sweatshirt he had bought at Goodwill with a faded picture of Mickey Mouse on it with the words Disneyland inscribed above it. He even insisted on carrying a battered Disney lunchbox he had picked up at the Salvation Army, but other than that, he was very cooperative.

Fred gave Bob plenty of money and Karen gave him some tips on how to eat a balanced meal daily, and then they drove him to the airport in the back of the pickup. Bob was so excited he could hardly sit still in the airport lounge, and when his seat section was called, he gave Bob and Karen quick kisses and pushed in front of an old lady and darted onto the plane.

As the plane lifted into the sky, heading for California and Disneyland, Karen said, "he's so happy. Do you think he'll be all right by himself?"

"He's very mature," Fred said. "He has his hotel arrangements, plenty of money, a snack in his lunchbox and lots of common sense. He'll be all right."

At the end of the week, when it was time for Bob to return, Fred and Karen were not available to pick him up at the airport. They made arrangements with their next door neighbor, Sally, to do the job for them. When they got home, they could hear Bob playing the stereo in the study, and they went down to see him.

The music was loud and heavy metal and Bob had never listened to that sort of thing before. The room smelled of smoke, and not cigarettes. Bob was lying on the floor reading, and at first, Fred and Karen thought it was the Disney Brochures, but then they saw those wadded up in the trashcan by the door.

Bob was looking at a girlie magazine and a reefer was hanging out of his mouth. Fred looked at Karen and Karen was clearly shaken.

"Bob?" Fred said.

"Yeah," Bob said without looking up from the foldout, and his tone was surly.

"Did you enjoy Disneyland?"

Bob carefully took the reefer out of his mouth and thumped ash on the carpet. There was the faintest impression of tears in his eyes. He stood up and tossed the reefer down and ground it into the carpet with his foot.

"Did...did you see Mickey Mouse?" Karen asked.

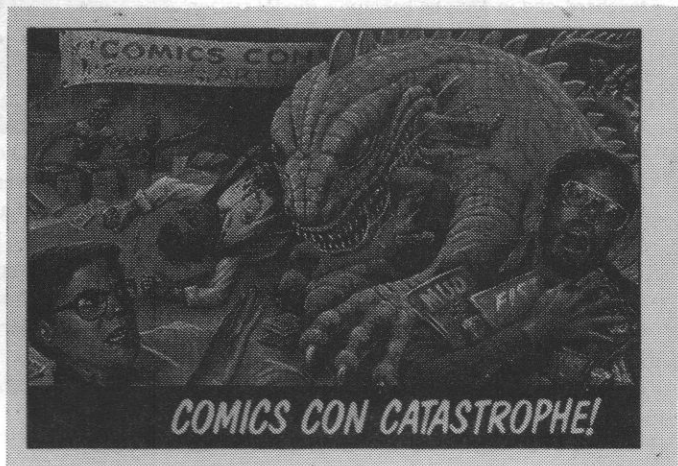
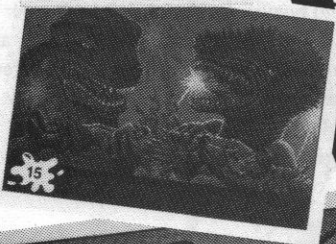
"Shit," Bob said, "there isn't any goddam mouse. It's just some guy in a suit. The same with the duck." And with that, Bob stalked into the bathroom and slammed the door and they couldn't get him out of there for the rest of the day.

*Joe Lansdale lives in a small town in Texas with an unpronounceable name. He is the recipient of the Bram Stoker Award for Best Short Story, and a World Fantasy Award nominee for his short story "The Night They Missed the Horror Show." Joe lives with his wife and his dinosaur, Bob.*



# DINOSAURS ATTACK!

BY JAMES VAN HISE



In a decade where nothing succeeds like excess, what better time to introduce a series of bubblegum cards whose logo on card number one is an image of a dinosaur, its teeth and claws gripping the earth, while blood flows over the world and particularly across the United States.

Issued by Topps several months ago (the same company who brought you a dozen different sets of The Garbage Pail Kids cards), the series was written and created by Gary Gerani (author of the book FANTASTIC TELEVISION and co-author of the movie PUMPKINHEAD).

"Basically, the series is an homage to everything I ever loved in science fiction pop culture when I

was a kid. Movies like Ray Harryhausen's efforts and the early Japanese stuff were among my favorites, and the posters for these pictures seemed to speak directly to us preteens. Obviously MARS ATTACKS was the single most important influence. It amazed me how powerful those nightmarish images and situations were. How they stuck with me year after year. How perversely satisfying to do the same thing for an entirely new generation!"

For those not up on their 1960's non-sports bubblegum cards, MARS ATTACKS is a series of cards which is highly prized today but which did not sell well when issued in the early Sixties. It featured fine paintings by Norman Saunders of the Earth being

invaded by grotesque Martians who visit violence upon us hapless Earthlings. The series climaxed with Earth launching a counter-attack on Mars. Today they are the most collected non-sports cards issued in the last fifty years and have spawned many articles, homages and even a 36 card imitation series produced in 1986 called URANUS STRIKES, which was produced with more enthusiasm than artistry. MARS ATTACKS was even reissued by an amateur publisher, but the cards were poorly reproduced by someone who knew nothing about the intricacies of reprinting that type of color when reshooting from a printed surface.

But what DINOSAURS ATTACK! brings to it which has more

of a modern sensibility is a sense of satire, as well as stepping up the violence quotient quite a bit. While *MARS ATTACKS* had only about ten cards which featured blood and gore to any extent, *DINOSAURS ATTACK!* features at least two dozen cards which push the mayhem to explicit limits far beyond that exercised in the early Sixties by *MARS ATTACKS*. There are scenes of people being torn in half (card

this was more than an accident as a sinister being was behind these events, manipulating things in order to bring about the destruction of our world.

The artwork for these cards are paintings done by John Pound, James Warhola, and Earl Norem, although the vast majority of them (42 of 55) were painted by underground artist Chet Darmstaedter, known in the field by the pseudonym XNO.

covers for such underground comics as *DR. WERTHAM'S COMIX & STORIES* and *WEIRDO*. When Darmstaedter first started doing the paintings, he tried to paint them realistically to the point of having the spilled blood look realistic as well, but Topps wanted the blood painted a brighter shade of red to make it show up better in the paintings. The original paintings for the cards are only 5" x 7", although the artist could



#15: THE COLONEL... SHREDD-ED!) as well as the bloody remains of a man who was stepped on by a dinosaur (card #31: OUR FORCES - FLATTENED!). The best cards, though, are not the particularly gory and grotesque but those which present a wild situation, such as a surfer on his board balanced precariously atop a dinosaur (card #23: THE PERFECT WAVE).

*DINOSAURS ATTACK!* is a crazed celebration of all our favorite scenes in the monster movies we loved as kids. It's as though the original *KING KONG* didn't have only three or four censored scenes of explicit violence, but dozens, and all of them just a bit deranged. The story involves a time travel experiment which goes awry causing hundreds of dinosaurs to be transported into the world of modern day Earth. But as the story unfolds we learn that

The scenes on the cards were all conceived by Gerani from his script and done in storyboard form. These were then redrawn and tightened up by such pencil artists as Herb Trimpe, George Evans and John Nemecek. The painters then used these drawings as the basis for their paintings. A series of eleven stickers were also released as part of the series although the artwork of those is by Paul Mavrides and Hal Robbins.

Some of the people who appear in the paintings are based on polaroids which Darmstaedter was provided by Gerani to work into the art as inside jokes. Fans were quick to pick up on this in card #36: *COMICS CON CATASTROPHE!*

"Jay Lynch recommended me to Topps," Darmstaedter explained, "after he saw some of my work over at Glenn Bray's house in California." Darmstaedter had previously done

have worked larger had he wanted to. "It's just that the work that had already been done was just twice the size of the cards, so I just went ahead and did the rest of them that size as well."

Although the sales of *DINOSAURS ATTACK!* has not been all that Topps hoped for, Warner Brothers has expressed some interest in possibly optioning the series for a film and Eclipse Comics has announced a graphic novel based on the series which would feature the sequel story already written by Gerani for the unproduced second set of *DINOSAURS ATTACK!* cards. Artwork would be by Chet Darmstaedter and each panel would be a painting in the same style as the cards. Darmstaedter had already done a few paintings for the second series before Topps cancelled plans to complete it themselves.





# EMPIRE OF THE DINOSAURS

## PREVIEW

Coming in 1990 from Dark Horse Comics is a four issue mini-series which has been several years in the making. "Empire Of The Dinosaurs" is being written by Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier and drawn by Mark A. Nelson. Nelson is fresh from his stint on the highly popular 6-issue ALIENS black & white series.

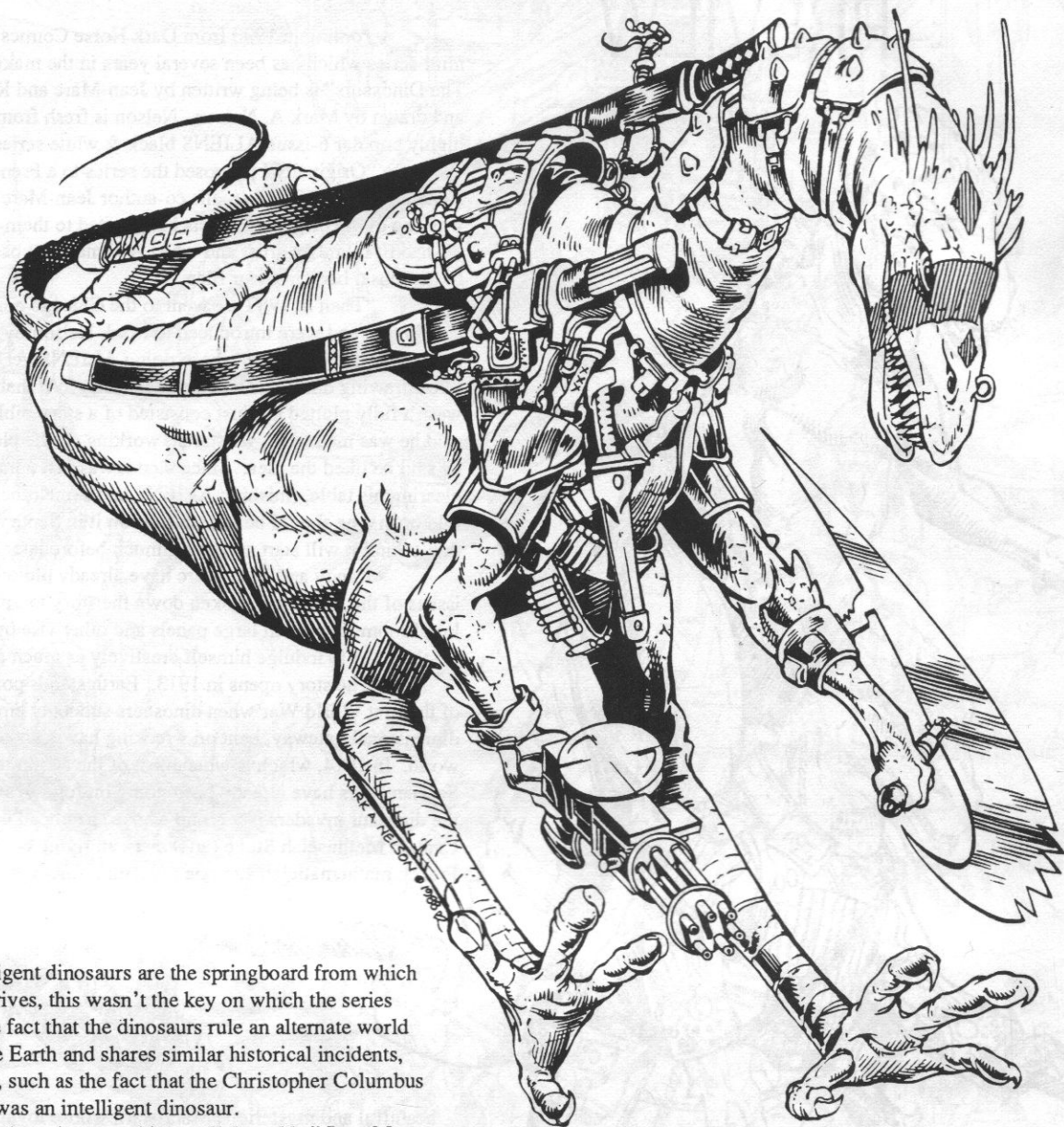
"Originally I proposed the series to a French publisher, Aedena, back in 1986," recalls co-author Jean-Marc Lofficier. "It was one of the original projects I suggested to them at the time. But we hadn't found an artist and when Aedena went bankrupt we just put the proposal back into our files.

"Then in 1987 we went to the Chicago comic book convention and were introduced to Mark Nelson by a mutual friend, Steve Smith. Mark hadn't been doing ALIENS yet but told us that he liked drawing dinosaurs and big machinery. At that time the series wasn't fully plotted but just consisted of a story bible. When Mark said he was interested, we started working on the plot some more and he said he liked the idea. Since then it was just a matter of Mark clearing his table, finishing ALIENS and some other work. He just told us that he should be able to start on it in September, although I don't think it will start appearing much before later in 1990."

Randy and Jean-Marc have already plotted out all four issues of the series and broken down the story to give Mark Nelson a lot of room to work in large panels and otherwise open up the story for the artist to indulge himself creatively as much as possible.

The story opens in 1913. Earth stands poised on the brink of the first World War when dinosaurs suddenly emerge from a dimensional gateway, bent on wrecking havoc and conquering our world. In 1914, which is when most of the action takes place, the Saurian Wars have already been going on for a year. United against the dinosaur invaders is a group whose spearhead is composed of Captain Methuselah Stone (an American flying ace), Poincare (a French mathematician and one of Earth's foremost scientists) and the

beautiful and mysterious Mata-Hari, whose loyalties are at first very much at question. "You may recognize a formula which we've used for storytelling purposes, which is the Flash Gordon formula of Hero, Girl & Scientist, which is not an inappropriate approach for a story which takes place in 1914. That is a deliberate attempt to use an archetype," Jean-Marc explains. "We are also using the factor of Reilly, Ace of Spies in the background, which is the only other aspect which doesn't derive from the parallel universe theme."



While intelligent dinosaurs are the springboard from which much of the action derives, this wasn't the key on which the series was based. Rather the fact that the dinosaurs rule an alternate world which looks much like Earth and shares similar historical incidents, except for little things, such as the fact that the Christopher Columbus of the alternate Earth was an intelligent dinosaur.

"I've always been interested in parallel worlds," Jean-Marc explained. "That's something that I really like. I miss the old Earth-Two from D.C. comics and I've had a lot of discussions with Marv Wolfman about this. I love parallel universes, but they have to be a lot more different than just simple things like President Kennedy wasn't killed in that one.

"I came up with this series about intelligent dinosaurs before I read the Harry Harrison WEST OF EDEN series, because that's the only thing I've seen which came close to what we have in mind, but his dinosaurs are really very alien. Ours are a lot more anthropomorphic, but I don't try to make them too human. For practical story purposes the society in that alternate world is divided into two main areas. One is equivalent to Victorian England and the other occupies most of what would be the Soviet Union and Asia. So it is a lot more anthropomorphic than Harry Harrison's story.

"Michael Moorcock has done something similar to my approach to an alternate world in his books WARLORD OF THE AIR and THE LAND LEVIATHAN. Nobody has done a British Victorian empire better than Michael Moorcock, so I would probably have to plead guilty to some kind of influence from there.

"The premise for EMPIRE OF THE DINOSAURS, with intelligent dinosaurs, was a lot more original when we came up with it in 1986 than it will appear to be when it comes out in 1990. Now there is DINOSAURS FOR HIRE and other books which have used the idea recently." But based on the plot outline of the 4-issue series, EMPIRE OF THE DINOSAURS holds the promise of being an exciting adventure with some of the most lush Mark Nelson artwork yet seen, if the accompanying visuals are any indication of things to come.

# ART

British artist Shayne O'Dwyer is a rising star in Great Britain, a mad blend of Ralph Steadman and urban expressionism. Coming soon is Shayne's first sequential effort, a 46-page comic called *Overload*, scripted by Paul Duncan. Look for Shayne's work in upcoming issues of Arcane's *Fly In My Eye* and *Taboo II*.

The following pages from *Overload*, are just a taste of the disturbing O'Dwyer wit and style, courtesy of the artist.





WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT? DO I THINK OF RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE, THE SATISFACTION OF DOING THE RIGHT THING?



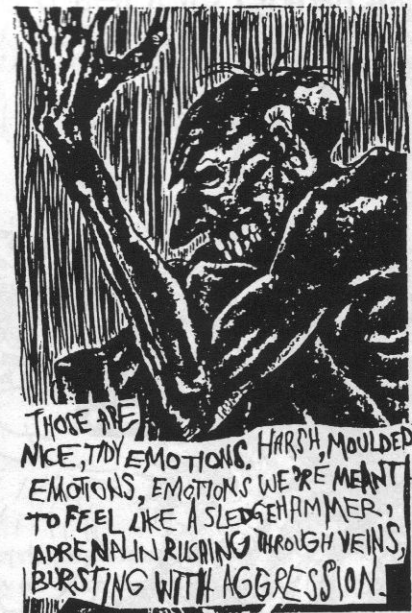
DO I THINK OF THE THRILL OF RELEASING ALL THE YEARS OF PENT UP ANGER AND FRUSTRATION IN A FLURRY OF MINDLESS VIOLENCE?



DO I THINK OF REVENGE, CLEARING MY NAME AND GRABBING BACK MYSELF RESPECT FROM THE EDGE OF INSANITY?



No.



THOSE ARE NICE, TIDY EMOTIONS. HARSH, MOULDED EMOTIONS, EMOTIONS WE'RE MEANT TO FEEL LIKE A SLEDGEHAMMER, ADRENALIN RUSHING THROUGH VEINS, BURSTING WITH AGGRESSION.



NO, I DON'T FEEL LIKE THAT.



I WANT A SOFT SKIN TO STROKE A MIND TO RELAX WITH



I WANT SOMEONE TO LOVE.



A PURE LOVE. NOT A SMELLY, LIQUID LOVE.

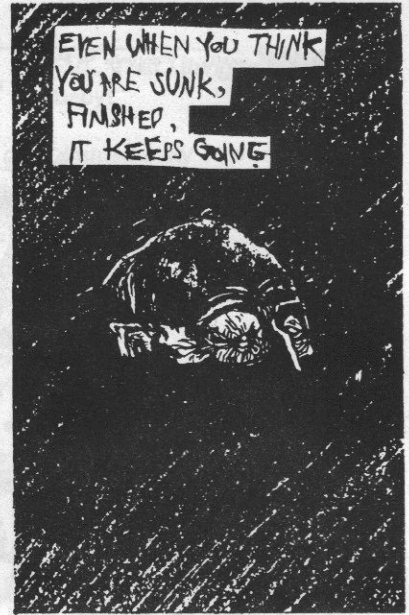
IT ALL SEEMS SO CLICHED I'M SURE.



I THINK THE MIND IS VERY RESOURCEFUL



IT WORKS SO QUICKLY YOU NEVER NOTICE IT IS THERE



EVEN WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE SUNK, FINISHED, IT KEEPS GOING



JUST LIKE THE SENSES NEVER STOP



THEY PESTER YOU WITH ALL SORTS OF INFORMATION WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT



THANK GOD THERE ARE ONLY SIX OF THEM



BUT THE BODY IS THE MOST REMARKABLE



ALL THOSE MILLIONS OF PARTS WORKING IN PERFECT ACCORD



THACK KOFF OFF HAC



# HORROR CLICHÉS FROM HELL



ould you be reading this right?

A comprehensive itemization of all the chestnuts that handicap and trivialize horror as we know it today?

Our field teams of specialists have spent hours hanging around supermarket paperback racks and loitering by the mall shelves labeled HORROR. Their conclusions? While there is a bunch of good, scary stuff out there, the avalanche of *awful* stuff that balances it is somehow even scarier. What *are* these all-important Warning Signs, these storm watch beacons for stupid horror fiction? The hints and clues that you should use the paperback as a doorstop, pronto.

## 1. ELDRITCH GODS /OLD ONES

That is, ancient, unspeakable, corrupt,

all-powerful, blasphemous, ultra-icky nether deity types whose very form overlooks the fact that *real* Old Ones would most likely be threadbare, senile, desiccated, feeble, doddering colostomy bag types. Same goes for ancient curses. Phew!

## 2. SINISTER CHILDREN

With malignant grins, wanton ways and really bad cover art.

## 3. EVEN MORE SINISTER NEW ENGLAND TOWNS

Usually boasting one or more possessed and/or sinister children.

## 4. BIBLICAL EVIL

Handily banished by religious rites or icons. Pshaw! Join the 20th Century, dudes.

## 5. PROTAGONIST ENCOUN-

TERS THE SUPERNATURAL, REAL-

IZES IT AT LAST....AND DIES  
The Number One Plot of the Famous Horror Writers School. Enrollment is limited! Send check or money order today!

## 6. EARMARKS OF (WOOOOOO!) EVIL

Such as cloven footprints, bat wings, slit pupils, reptilian features, an "aquiline nose," a cadaverous pallor, or an exotic name that means something nasty and ominous in a foreign language.

## 7. LUNATIC RAPIST KILLERS WHO WERE ABUSED AS KIDS BY TYRANNICAL, DOMINEERING MOMMIES, AND WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST FINE IF THOSE MOMMIES DIDN'T RATE FLASHBACK CHAPTERS

8. CONFLAGRATIONS OF CONVENIENCE  
Sort of like Drano for monsters. Same goes for STUPID INCANTATIONS.

9. ENQUIRER HORROR  
Or: *UFO Poltergeists Raped My Headless Elvis Triplets From Beyond the Grave*. We wanna know.

10. STORIES OR BOOKS THAT END JUST AS SOMEBODY STARTS TO SCREAM, BLEED, BLACK OUT OR GET EATEN

HONORABLE MENTION:  
Gerund titles, e.g., *The Gnoshing*.

And while we're at it, how about a Top Ten of dialogue cliches from science fiction and horror films? Stop us if you *haven't* heard these two times too often.

1. "It's quiet. *Too* quiet."

2. "That's crazy...But it just might work!"

3. "What the —?" or "Holy —!"

4. "Everybody knows there are no such things as *vampires!*" (substitute: *werewolves, zombies, ghosts, aliens, tulpas, ogres, virgins, unbiased editors or original monster story plots.*)

5. "We can't stop now for a lot of silly native superstitions."

6. "Now, let's not lose our heads over this."

7. "It's probably nothing, but we'll check it out anyway."

8. "That sort of thing never used to happen around these parts."

9. "But you've *got* to believe me!" or: "I *know* it sounds insane, but..."

10. "That...*thing* has got to be my baby!"

Immediately stop reading any horror novel that commences with a short prologue set in a previous century, then flashes forward to the arrival in town of the New Family. You can bet that *after centuries of waiting* something is ready for feeding time. It's probably pretty *blasphemous*. And *the horror was only beginning*. AVOID LIKE AIDS any story in which any character says, "Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo," Especially if this utterance is rendered ALL CAPS. Or any other word with the wrong letter stretched, as: "Bbutt Bbbbbbbbiillliee!"

Lines We'd like to hear, just once: "Gee Stacey, it looks like the power is out up at the Krolock mansion. Let's all split up and die stupidly."

## AFTER HOURS

The new magazine of dark fantasy and horror. It's the only publication devoted *exclusively* to stories that come out after dark! Here's what people are saying:

Mort Castle

-It's an impressive debut -- showing a lot of thought and a lot of ambition.

Chris Lacher  
*New Blood*

-A distinct and impressive debut. When the sun goes down, *After Hours* shines bright!

Gary A. Braunbeck  
*Eldritch Tales*

-The second issue not only equaled but *surpassed* the quality of the first. Congratulations!

Copies of the premiere issue are still available, featuring an interview with Robert R. McCammon, best-selling author of *Swan Song*. New stories by J.N. Williamson/John Maclay, Bobby G. Warner, Ronald Kelly, Anke Kriske, et al. Plus a classic from Tanith Lee.

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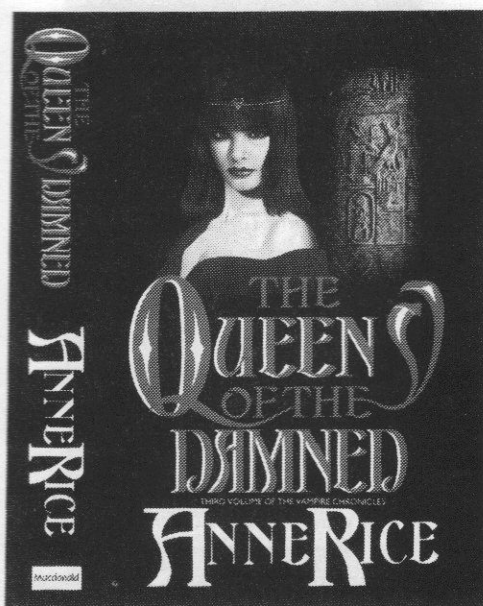
# BLOOD SISTERS

**D**O VAMPIRES REALLY EXIST? IF THESE DARK, SENSUOUS BLOOD GLUTTONS COULD DROP IN FROM BEYOND TO SHARE THE SECRET OF ETERNAL LIFE, THEY'D OWE A LARGE CHUNK OF IT TO THEIR FEMALE CREATORS, WHO HAVE GIVEN THEM MORE FREEDOM TO MINGLE WITH MORTALS THAN EVER BEFORE.

**BY KITTY PERDONE**







Women who write about vampires today have deemed them too hip to shrink from crucifixes, vain enough to reflect themselves in mirrors, and cursed with a craving to suck more than just blood. The Burgeoning vanguard of succubi pant with enough passion to make old Count Dracula feel his age.

Lately, the difference between man, woman and monster has ebbed with each new wave of horror fiction. On the front line, authors Anne Rice, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Tanith Lee, and Suzy McKee Charnas, have instilled an array of human qualities in vampires which make them seem as real as fear itself. In *Blood is Not Enough*, the most recent and only anthology in which vampiric behavior transcends traditional supernatural boundaries, *Omni's* fiction editor, Ellen Datlow, showcase the haunting, erotic world of vampirism with a collection of stories based on the draining of energy and will. The modern incubi in these tales include emotionally disturbed people who demonstrate symptoms of clinical vampirism, manipulative telepaths, life-sucking aliens and an actress who saps people's emotions. (see review this ish-ed.)

Wielding a huge variation of styles, all five women have developed 'vampire make-overs' which paint vivid metaphors for the human condition that range from emotional deviance to unbridled lust.

## LOVE AND THE OUTCAST

Anne Rice, creator of *Interview With the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat* and most recently, *The Queen of the Damned*, began writing her famous classic vampire chronicles from a whim.

"They're perfect metaphors for outsiders like gays, misfits and criminals, who are inside of society but locked out of it," She remarks somewhat hesitantly just after returning to her New Orleans home from a national book tour for *The Queen of the Damned*.

Critics have continually misunderstood Rice's themes of sex, death, power, and the search for identity which dominate her novels. This year, *People* magazine panned *The Queen of the Damned*, summing up Rice's richly detailed story of Akasha, mother of all vampires, as a "book without substance."

One wonders if Rice's insightful exploration of human relationships mirrored in the lives of her vampires are simply too scary for flippant audiences to own up to. Much of the intrigue of *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat* attributes to the delightful and shocking interplay of a "real" journalist documenting the confessions of Louis the vampire, followed by his cool, handsome, and very dead friend, Lestat becoming a rock star. The seed of rock and roll necromania cultivated by Elvis Presley and Jim Morrison manifests itself in the aura of *The Vampire Lestat*.

Rice's contributions to the architecture of vampire mythos also extends into the role of the female. By creating "those who must be kept", the mother and father from which all vampires originate, Rice reveals the intimate tenuousness of mother/son relationships. This occurs when Lestat turns his dying mother into a vampire, and again in *The Queen of the Damned* when Akasha choose Lestat as her lover. The power of Rice's stories generates from the internal conflicts vampires deal with as an isolated race in which the state of perpetual death segregates them from achieving true intimacy.

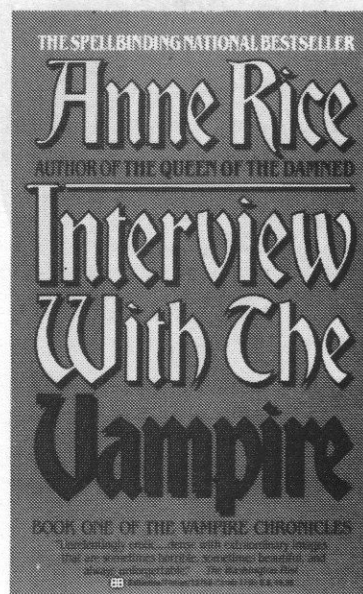
"Vampires capture the essence of being alienated." Rice adds. "Because after all, they will always be the aliens in a world they have to depend on for

survival."

Suzy McKee Charnas' fascinating vampire protagonist, doctor Edward Weyland of *The Vampire Tapestry* must also cope with his desperate need to blend in with human society while still having to kill people for the sheer sake of getting a decent meal. Charnas, unlike her contemporaries, has created only one vampire, who happens to be male.

Observing Weyland, her 2,000 year-old alien blood sucker masquerading as a distinguished college professor who preys on his students and associates, Charnas comments, "A male is the only kind of person in this society who can have a predatory style and be admired for it. There is a correspondence between the vampire style and the successful, older male style, which is why I use Weyland's cover."

Vampires of this nature reflect a host of mental aberrations which amalgamate fiction with fact; blurring the definitions of supernatural monster and social psychopath. In a recent issue of *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Herschel Prims comments on deviant individuals who attack people and ingest their blood, "Vampiristic activity appears to occur in individuals functioning at a very primitive mental and emotional level...which may well explain the connection between clinical vampirism and schizophrenia."





Externally, Charnas' Weyland is the mild-mannered, attractive intelligent American citizen. At the core, he is an animal composed of simple brutality. His superimposed, complex intellectuality is revealed when his female therapist discovers that all the crosses, holy water and sunlight in the cosmos cannot destroy this macho predator.

"Passion becomes his destruction," Charnas remarks. "In order to survive he's got to stay cold. But somewhere inside him is a seed of heat. When his relationships with mortals fan that seed into a flame, he can't live with the warmth because it will connect him too much to the people he has to kill." If Stoker's *Dracula* was the embodiment of a perverse, sexual evil, Charnas' Weyland acts it out as if it were a normal and logical condition.

#### WHY PICK ON VAMPIRES?

"One of the books I really adored as a kid was *Dracula*, though at the time I didn't realize how badly-written it was." Charnas, who is an ex-New Yorker now living in Albuquerque, muses on the afternoon of her birthday. "I wanted to write a vampire story after I saw the *Dracula* revival on Broadway, and an Off-Broadway show called *The Passion of Dracula*."

"Both plays were charming and delightful, but I felt they were missing the point. I wanted to take a crack at

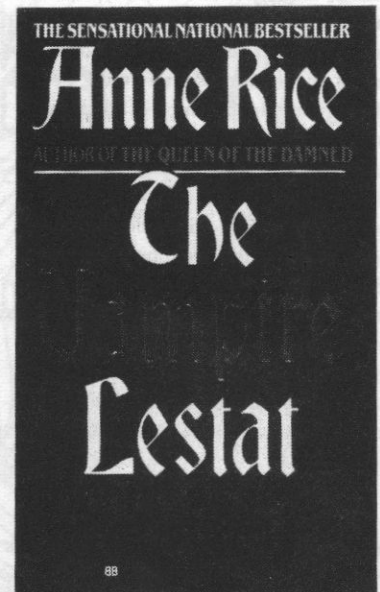
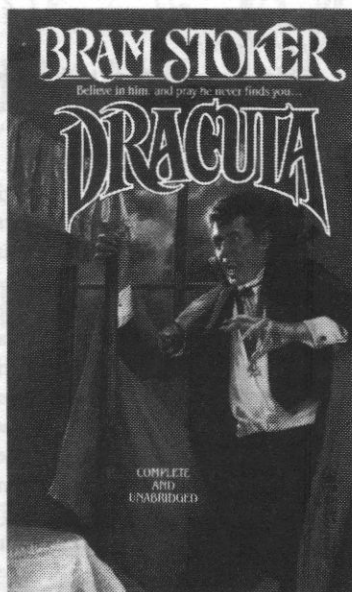
figuring out what these stories were missing." Charnas' face lights up like a kid who just won a game of hide-and-seek. "The predatory nature of the vampire was missing in *Dracula*, so I wrote *The Vampire Tapestry* treating this creature as a predatory animal, not a romantic ghost."

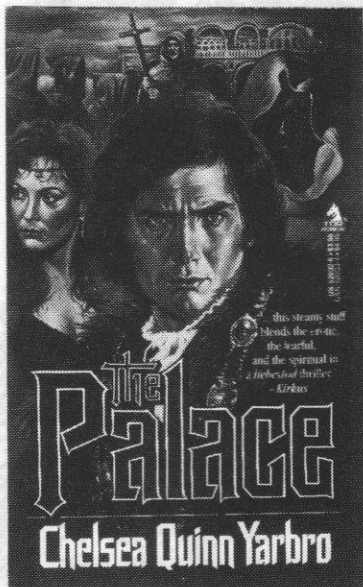
Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, America's foremost author of historical horror novels is celebrating another year of mortal life with Charnas at a Mexican restaurant near her home in Berkeley, California. Yarbro, who became fast friends with Charnas when they met on a midnight vampire panel at a horror writer's convention, shares equal enthusiasm for blood suckers, but portrays them in a very different style and context.

A mysterious glimmer dances in her intense, green eyes.

"I get a tremendous kick out of vampires," she quips. Concerning Olivia Clemens and Count Saint Germain, the seductive vampires who are the heroes of ten out of Yarbro's forty published novels, she comments, "My vampires are just regular people who just happen to be vampires. Part of this concept resonates to what Suzy deals with, but comes out with a different solution. They are monsters but they don't have to act like them. They have that option."

Yarbro had just completed *Candles for D'artagnan*, out last summer from Tor Books, which is the third book of the





Olivia series which includes *A Flame in Byzantium* and *Crusader's Torch*. In this series, Olivia draws blood and nourishment from her intimate relationship with men, relationships which are constantly threatened by the conservative, Byzantine society in which she exists. Olivia survives through the sieges of war, the fall of empires and rampant disease while struggling to maintain her elitist lifestyle.

"I call my books historical novels because to me, it's the history that's horrifying, not the vampires," Yarbro adds.

On the other side of the Atlantic, England's Tanith Lee, author of forty assorted fantasy, horror and science fiction novels, is currently working on *The Blood of Roses*, a dark tale of religious vampires, due to be published by Arrow Books next year. Lee, who also met Suzy McKee Chamas and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro on the same midnight vampire panel five years ago, has created a cross-genre of intriguing vampires who prey on alien societies.

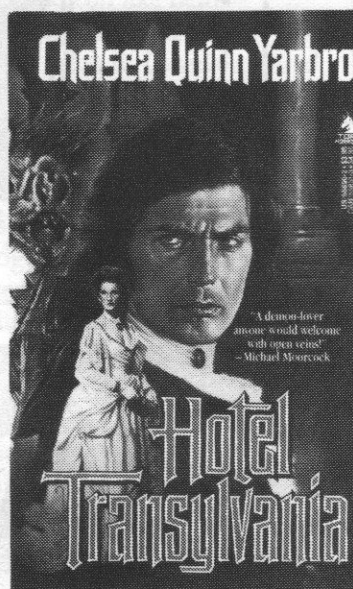
*Sabella*, her first tale of the only female vampire living in a future society on Mars, was directly inspired by Stoker's *Dracula*.

"*Sabella* is a result of an awful lot of thoughts I've had about vampires since I read *Dracula* when I was twelve," Lee recalls, as she sips white wine in Cafe Pelican, one of her favorite London haunts. "I remember taking the book out of the library feeling as if I had something very illicit and dark. The erotic aspect of

the book was so strong, I marveled at the fact that it got past the censors."

Lee smiles reflectively. "*Sabella* came into my head while I was stuck in the middle of a science fiction book. I resisted for three days, but she was so insistent. It was literally like having someone standing over your shoulder tugging at your arm."

Although *Sabella*, who comes from a Quasi-Catholic culture on Mars, is Lee's most indoctrinated, guilt ridden, succubus, she is a perpetual magnet for attractive men who eventually succumb to her allure and get to have intercourse with her before she kills them off.



"*Sabella* came from the process of being very interested in male vampires and seeing the woman as the swooning, white victim being carried off by the tall, dark man," Lee observes. "she is the classic reversal, the dark woman who's men become swooning victims."

## LUST VERSUS LAW

Within the amassment of Tanith Lee's work, which also includes several collections of short stories, teleplays and radio plays, she portrays many different types of vampire incarnations from a nubile girl in "Red as Blood," the biting revision of *Snow White* in Greenberg and Waugh's anthology, *Vamps*, to her latest tale, *The Janfria Tree*, featured in Ellen

Datlow's *Blood is not Enough*, about a tree that drains people's energy. Though Lee abandons most of ancient folklore's traditional vampirical mythos, a great many of her vampire stories, along with Anne Rice's, are rife with religious undercurrents.

"The doctrine that Christ died and rose again, with people drinking his blood to commemorate him, is a very interesting symbol for a vampire. Religion doesn't have to be the compulsion, but frequently is," notes Lee.

Though Quinn Yarbro's vampires cavort throughout the height of religious empires, from the Florentine Renaissance in *The Palace* to eighteenth century Paris in *Hotel Transylvania*, they are too sophisticated and worldly to bother with the church.

"Until recently, part of the vampire myth was that it wasn't always easy to be sure someone was dead," comments Yarbro. "All the devices used to make certain that people are dead, such as the wake, the headstone, and tied-up corpses at neolithic burial sights don't really apply anymore. A lot of this image of the vampire as something that ought to be dead wasn't as much of a fiction as it is now."

The earliest vampire stories written by John Polidori, (*The Vampyre*), and Bram Stoker have done much to inspire the alliance between religion and sexuality, to the evil, sensual side of the soul. Stephen King notes in *Danse*



*Macabre*. "In matters of sex, a highly moralistic society can find a psychological escape valve in the concept of outside evil...which Stoker's *Dracula* humanizes."

Ellen Datlow, who's fascination was sparked into gathering stories for *Blood is not Enough* by Frank Langella's provocative Broadway performance in *Dracula*, agrees that a great deal of vampire allure is seduction and power.

"I'm fascinated with relationships," says Datlow. "And vampirism is just another aspect of weird relationships. People who seduce others and drain their energy are around us everyday. Broadening and updating this concept creates more possibilities for the vampire."

Rice, Charnas, Yarbro and Lee along with the many prominent writers who contributed to *Blood is not Enough* have created some vivid analogies that seem to transcend the fascinating boundaries between evil and illness, myth and reality. These stories perpetually ask the question: Do vampires co-exist with humanity? Reading any of these authors books will keep you wondering. □



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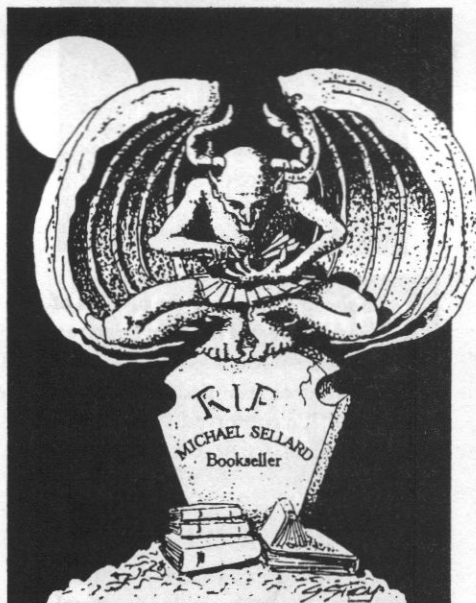
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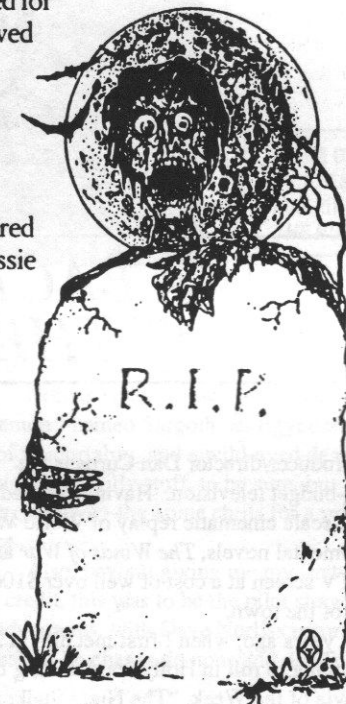
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# RAISING THE DEAD WITH DAN

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## A BACKWARD LOOK AT THE NORLISS TAPES

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Right now producer/director Dan Curtis is the undisputed king of big-budget television. Having devoted most of the last decade to a full-scale cinematic replay of World War II, bring Herman Wouk's monumental novels, *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*, to the TV screen at a cost of well over \$100 million, Dan is the current talk of the town.

However, 17 years ago, when I first met him in June of 1972, he was just beginning to roll in Hollywood, hitting big with his Vampire-in Vegas Movie of the Week, "The Night Stalker," and its sequel, "The Night Strangler" (both scripted by Richard Matheson).

Until the early 1970s, Curtis had been a New York man, and his one major credit before setting up shop in California was the bizarre daytime soap, "Dark Shadows," also starring a vampire (Jonathan Frid).

In her memoir, *My Scrapbook Memories of Dark Shadows*, Kathryn Leigh Scott writes of the series' genesis: It was a dream [Dan] had. He was at an old country house, which was haunted by the ghost of a young woman. . . .

Curtis told the dream to his wife who encouraged him to develop it into a project for television. Dan sold the idea to ABC — and produced and directed it for nearly five years, following it up with two sequel films, *House of Dark Shadows* (1970) and *Night of*

*Dark Shadows* (filmed in 1971).

These provided him with the necessary clout to establish his own Dan Curtis Productions in California early in 1972. He immediately purchased a massive house along Coldwater Canyon Drive — which he later claimed was haunted. (Yes, haunted by the ghost of a young woman! But I'll get to that later in this piece. . . .)

Dan had just settled into his new offices on the Twentieth Century Fox lot when I went to talk to him early that summer. It had been my old pal Matheson's idea. "You should go see this guy," Dick told me. "He's a dynamo. Believe me, he's gonna build an empire out here."

When we met, my initial impression was of intensity. Dan Curtis radiated intensity. After we'd shaken hands, and I'd seated myself on the couch opposite his desk, Dan fixed his dark eyes on me. . . .

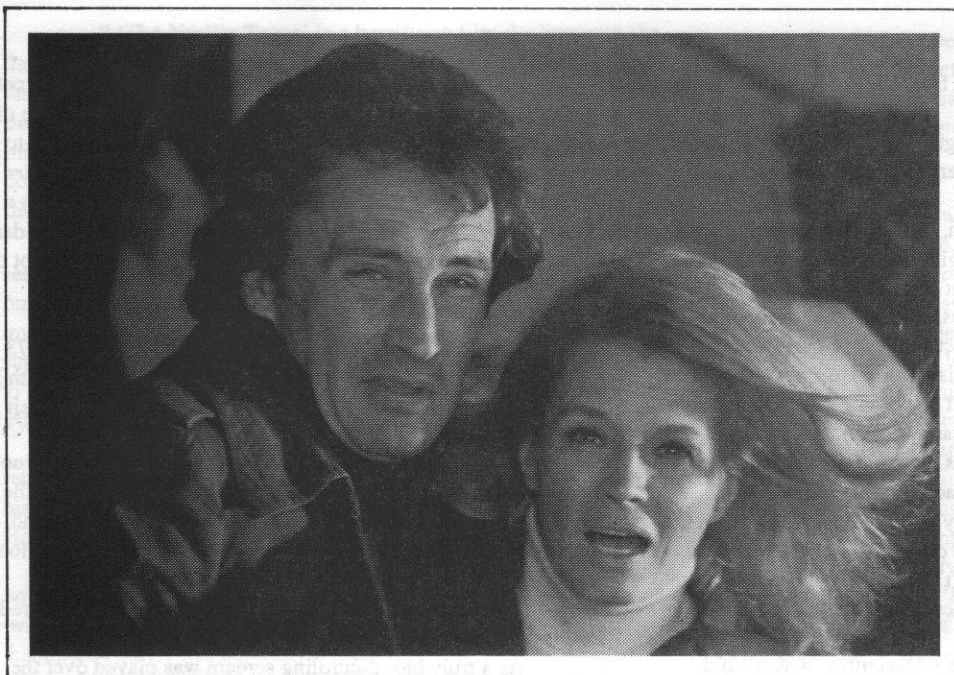
Years later, for a Curtis profile, I would write:

A compactly-built, curly-haired, fierce-eyed man with a toothy wolf's smile, Curtis achieves high drama during each working day. He thrives on crisis, and much of what he says is delivered in a shout. He bellows over a phone, yells down the hall to his ever-patient secretary, shouts at his camera crew. Working with Curtis is ulcer-producing, but never dull.

---

## BY WILLIAM F. NOLAN

---



ANGIE DICKINSON AND ROY THINNES BATTLE A WIND MACHINE IN THIS STILL FROM *THE NORLISS TAPES*.

Now, at our first meeting, Dan was raking me with his eyes, probing — as I later discovered — for weakness. He liked working with strong people. And considering the pressures they were subjected to, his people *had* to be strong.

He asked about my credits, and we talked for a few minutes. Edged, wary talk. Then, abruptly, he snapped: "You want to go to work for me?"

"In what capacity?"

"As part of my production team?"

"No," I said.

He looked startled, then smiled tightly: "What *do* you want?"

"I want to write scripts for you."

A silence. Then: "We'll see."

The meeting was over — and I figured I'd never hear from him again.

A month later a package arrived in the mail. An outline, written by Fred Mustard Stewart, for a shock thriller. From Dan. I read it and phoned him at Fox.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"This isn't much good."

"Tell me something I don't know," Dan growled. (Curtis loves to growl.) "Can you do anything with it?"

"First thing I'd do is throw away this outline and start over."

Dan agreed. "Do me a treatment," he said. "I'll call your agent and set up the deal."

By mid-August I had turned in a 40-page plot treatment. We talked it through, page by page, and Dan okayed it. As a Curtis/Metromedia Production.

"Write the script," he told me.

Completed in three weeks, my 80-page teleplay was approved for production that October by Curtis and NBC. We were off and running on "The Norliss Tapes."

My hero, David Norliss (played by Roy Thinnes), was an occult investigator called in to see Ellen Cort (Angie Dickinson), who

tells him she's afraid of her husband. What's to be afraid of? Well, for one thing, the guy's been dead for three months.

Norliss is thus drawn into a complex situation involving a nasty demon I named Sargoth, an Egyptian scarab ring with the power of immortality, and a wild-eyed deadman who just won't stay put in his crypt. Silly stuff, to be sure, but with the potential of providing some up-the-spine chills for a primetime television audience.

Also, beyond giving me my first Movie of the Week writing credit, this was to be the pilot show for a projected series of occult adventures, with Dave Norliss recording his exploits on tape each week as he chases demons and devils across the TV screens of America.

And the pay was good.

We decided to use bad weather as a mood device in the production; it would *always* be raining, by day and by night. (Which meant a half dozen crew members standing at the sidelines of every outdoor scene with gushing hoses raised high.) Dan also decided on taking the cast and crew to San Francisco, Carmel, Sausalito and along the Monterey Peninsula for location sequences, and these proved quite effective. However, most of the script was shot in the Los Angeles area.

While Dan headed for Monterey in early November, I holed up in Taos, New Mexico, to script a three-hour version, for Dan, of the classic Henry James ghost story, "The Turn of the Screw." It was set for a two-night presentation, from Curtis Productions, for ABC's *Wide, Wide World of Entertainment*.

I spent most of November on a 130-page draft, returning in time to join the "Norliss" crew for location shooting in Hollywood. The site was a rambling, two-story Gothic mansion in the hills overlooking the Sunset Strip.

When I arrived for the day's shoot, the cameraman was being positioned so just sat down next to a white-haired old gentleman who told be he had just bought the house and would be moving after we'd finished shooting there.

"Guess a place like this is worth something," I said.

"Well, they wanted a million five, but got 'em down to just a million," said the old man.

I blinked. Who was this old guy? Back in 1972 you could buy almost any luxury mansion in Beverly Hills for well under a million.

Turns out he's Noah Dietrich, the retired financial wizard responsible for building the Hoard Hughes fortune. "Just a million," was, for old Noah, no more than pocket change.

When Dan's on the set he dresses in a style I think of as "Early Brando": black leather jacket, scuffed boots, cord pants. Astrosocially, he's a Leo — and rules his world. He's always pushing, and his production crews don't appreciate this. Once, when we were on a shoot in Scaramento, I was sitting in the cab of an open-back truck with the driver. Dan was riding in the back.

"He coul fall right into the road," I remarked.

"Yeah. Well, if he did, I'd lay odds against anybody on the crew stopping to pickp him up, said the driver.

That this kind of thing doesn't bother Dan. "I'm not out to win popularity contests," he told me once. "I'm out to get a job done. That's all that counts."

Our next "Norliss" site, in early December, was the old Selznick studio in Culver City where a lot of *Gone With the Wind* had been filmed. I had written a sequence in which Sargoth is trapped by our hero in a blood circle of roaring flame. Dan was having trouble with his "stunt burn" — wherein the "demon" (a stunt man in a flame-resistant bodysuit) is set afire by Norliss in an artist's studio.

"He doesn't look like a frigging demon," Dan fumed. "He looks like a frigging stuntman in a suit!"

More smoke from the fogger (to obscure details of the demon figure) solved the problem, and Dan got the scene wrapped.

We moved outdoors for a night sequence.

Scene: Norliss sets Sargoth afire inside the studio. He grabs Ellen's hand and they rush from the place as the studio begins to burn behind them, pausing on the porch to peer back inside to be sure the demon is destroyed. (The "pause" was not in my script; it was Dan's idea.)

Dan rehearsed the scene with Angie and Roy as the crew prepared to torch the "studio" — which was actually just a standing wooden false-front, with an attached porch. At the last minute Dan decided to have the two of them exit and *not* look back as the studio begins to burn.

Angie and Roy are alive today because of this change. A mistake was made by the tech crew; they applied far too much ignitable rubber cement to the walls and when the camera rolled the entire false front literally *exploded* into a tower of flame just as Roy and Angie cleared the doorway. Had they stopped on the porch to look back they would have instantly been engulfed in the inferno.

Dan was white-faced at this near-disaster. "No more lousy fire scenes!" he vowed. He swung around and pointed at me. "Nolan, don't *ever* write another damn fire scene into a script of mine!"

We shot more night stuff at a cemetery crypt. Inside the crypt, as Ellen gropes her way forward in the darkness, she is not aware that the body of her murdered sister has been brought here. Suddenly Ellen's probing hand touches the dead flesh of her sister's face, and she screams. Angie's shriek was real and jolting and this scene is still, to my mind, one of genuine terror.

In the next sequence Ellen's husband rises from his coffin and madly pursues her as she runs for her car. She makes it to the vehicle, locks herself inside, and fumbles with the key, trying to start the engine. The deadman reaches the car — and pulls *the entire door* off! They were going to use a Chevy for this, but I insisted on a Mercedes. "When this dead guy pulls off the door of a Mercedes," I told Dan, "then we *know* how strong he's gotta be. It's just not the same with a Chevy."

Dan agreed — and I got my Mercedes.

The holidays intervened, but by early January of 1973 Dan had wrapped production and was into the editing process. With his rough cut completed in early February, he asked if I'd like to sit in on the "mixing" session. Of course I would.

He gave me the address of a sound studio in Hollywood. When I got there Dan was processing screams, working with the sound man to select just the right scream, in tone, intensity, and length, for each scene that required one. All this as the silent footage unreel on a screen in front of us.

"Roll it back and lay in the third scream," Dan ordered.

"That last one sounded like a dying chicken!"

As a truly blood-curdling scream was played over the loudspeaker Dan smiled his wolf's smile. "That's the one," he said. "Lock it in."

Next came gunshots. Some were too hollow, others sounded too much like popping firecrackers. Then we proceeded through tires on gravel, falling bodies, shattering windows, footsteps on a stairway, and a demon's howl — a full spectrum of sounds to bring "Norliss" to life.

It was a fun afternoon.

With his final answer print in hand, Dan arranged for an advance showing of "Norliss," inviting certain writers he wanted to work with on future episodes. We were all certain, at this point, that we did indeed have a network series.

Reaction to the film was enthusiastic. Moody and chilling. And the pace was fast. "Norliss" delivered.

After the showing Dan invited us (the four selected writers) to his home on Coldwater Canyon. We all sat around his backyard pool discussing plot ideas. I remember that science fiction writer Jerry Sohl was there, as was John Tomerlin (now an editor with *Road & Track*). Our main problem had to do with the demon, Sargoth. Dan wanted him to survive what had appeared to be his fiery doom to bug Norliss in further episodes.

Each of us pitched ideas at Curtis. Dan was in a blue towel robe, lying on his back in a reclining chair at the edge of the water, hands behind his head, eyes closed. At each Sargoth suggestion he's open one eye and slowly shake his head. "No, no, no. . . ." he'd say. "That's not good enough."

Finally I came up with an idea I called "The Return." Ole Sargoth would use his demonic powers to draw Norliss back into his own childhood. Norliss would literally be absorbed by his younger self and, as a child, would be vulnerable to Sargoth. Nutty idea, but Dan loved it. He opened both eyes. "Do me a treatment," he grunted.

And the poolside story conference was over.

While I was drafting "The Return" I got my hands on the "Norliss" production notes, prepared for press release at the telecast of the show later that month. To quote:



"The Norliss Tapes' is a horrifying film dealing with the darkest of all man's fears: the unknown. It dwells on demonology and lingers on life after death. It examines man's search throughout the centuries for his own immortality, a search unanswered in the minds of many but very definite to those few whose claims of communication between the two worlds cannot be proven or disproved.

"When a woman suddenly confronts her dead husband, seemingly alive in the middle of the night three months after his funeral, she turns to author David Norliss, famous for his investigations into the world of psychic phenomena and the supernatural (played by Roy Thinnes). Together they risk their lives to determine whether she suffered a hallucination — or is telling the truth.

"The pilot for a projected series, 'The Norliss Tapes' could return Thinnes to the millions of television fans he acquired through his previous series, 'The Invaders,' and the daytime drama, 'General Hospital.'

"On 'The Norliss Tapes' Dan Curtis worked closely with writer William F. Nolan, a prolific author whose name ranks high with aficionados of fantasy. The script for 'Norliss' was not hammered out, it was carefully wrought.

"Angie Dickinson, lovely blonde actress known for her vivacity and beauty, was signed as Ellen Cort, the widow who confronts her dead husband and fires a blast at him from a double-barrelled shotgun. In a physically-demanding part, Miss Dickinson endured ordeals by fire and water with charming grace. A star of more than a dozen motion pictures, Angie is most selective about accepting television offers, but found the script too frightening to put down. She *had* to do it, she claimed."

Dan had not been satisfied with Angie's performance (though she was a "sweetheart" on the set and the crew loved her) and he claimed that he had to leave half her lines in the editing room. "She's over-rated," he growled. "I just hope to God the reviews don't crucify her!"

They didn't.

When the show was telecast, as an NBC "Wednesday Mystery Movie," on Feb. 21, 1975, the worst Angie got was a light knock from *The Hollywood Reporter*. The reviewer complained that the role of Ellen Cort was "just a bit stiffly played by Angie Dickinson." But he ended up calling the movie "a lot of fun."

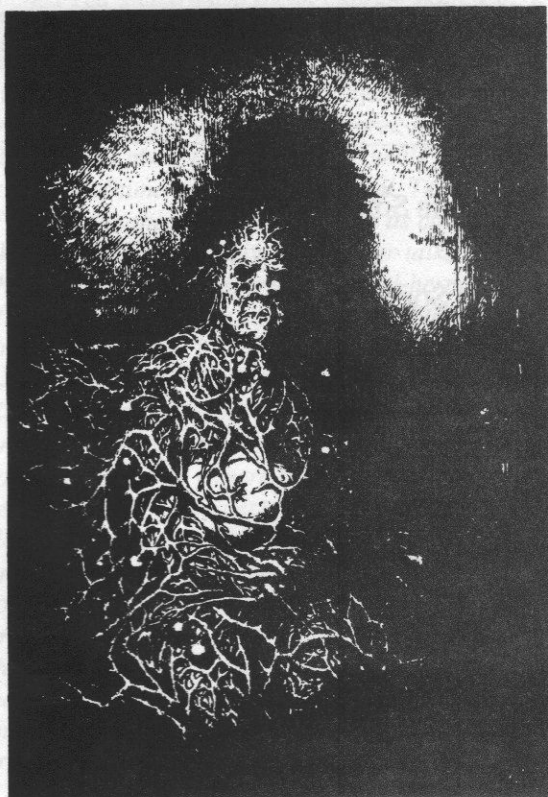
*Daily Variety* liked Dan's work, commenting on his use of "stormy weather and a nice sense of foreboding in building atmospheres." Their sum-up was very positive: "Curtis directed with an eye to tension, and that he manages. The idea behind Nolan's script has validity with its open dependency on the supernatural. Basic thrust, to scare, is what counts, and there Nolan, Curtis, Thinnes and company succeed."

*Weekly Variety* (the showbiz "bible") found strong series potential in "Norliss." "Slickly produced, it qualifies as a definite prospect for the 1973/74 season. . . . Murder, mayhem, and suspense were generated in good measure. The pilot works exceedingly well. With Curtis' track record, it seems likely that NBC will give it a long, hard look."

The network did just that, and on March 5 they okayed my treatment ("The Return") for script development as the second show of the series. The heady smell of success was in the air.

Then: disaster!

On March 6, 1975 (which also happened to be my birthday), the Writers Guild of America West called a strike against



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the TV/film industry. All writing was frozen; I was not allowed to do any work whatever on "Norliss."

Picket lines were mounted, signs brandished: "More Pay TODAY!" . . . "We Write to Live!" . . . "Fair Pay is Fair Play!" The strike lasted more than three and a half months — into late June — with "Norliss" growing colder by the day at NBC.

On the afternoon after the strike ended I got a call from Dan. His tone was dark. "The network dumped the series. It's all over."

Indeed, David Norliss was dead. Demons and walking deadmen couldn't kill him — but the writer's strike could, and did.

Happily, my working relationship with Dan extended far beyond "Norliss" While he was in London filming my *Turn of the Screw*, I scripted most of "Trilogy of Terror" for him. And, much later, the Bette Davis theatrical motion picture, *Burnt Offerings*. Other Nolan/Curtis Movies of the Week included "Melvin Purvis, G-Man," "The Kansas City Massacre," "Slaughter House" and "House of Terror." (The last two were never produced.)

And, as a follow-up to "The Night Stalker" and "The Night Strangler," I also wrote a third Kolchak Movie of the Week (with Richard Matheson) called "The Night Killers." It was approved for production in Hawaii by the network, and I got set to go over for the location shoot. A week before we were to leave Kolchak was sold as a weekly series (which did not involve Dan) and the project died aborning.

Anyhow, I did a lot of writing for Curtis, often working over script drafts with him at his Coldwater house on weekends.

Which is when I found out the place was haunted.

Dan told me about the strange things that were happening there. Library drawers had jumped from the wall to spin across the room. Household items abruptly disappeared, then just as abruptly appeared again in extremely odd places. Footsteps were heard in totally deserted parts of the house. . . .

"Once I went to the door at the end of our downstairs hall," Curtis related. "I'd heard my wife walking the length of the hallway.

She had a walk I knew very well. But the sound of her high-heel steps stopped just as I opened to door to speak to her. I was stunned — because *nobody* was in that hall, and I could see clear to the other end. I later discovered that my wife had been out shopping that afternoon, and that I'd been alone in the house."

On Halloween, Dan told me, long after the family had retired for the night, the downstairs phonograph suddenly began playing "horrible sounds" in the darkened living room.

"We heard crying and demented screams," Dan reported. "But when we went down there everything was back to normal, and the machine was silent. The point is, even if someone had turned on the phonograph as a practical joke, there was no recording of any such sounds. That record just didn't exist."

The final frightening incident that prompted Dan to give up the house came after we'd gone our separate ways — me into other scripting and book jobs and Dan into the Wouk novels. I learned about this incident from Dick Matheson. . . .

Dan had purchased a Ouija board. He felt, very strongly, that someone needed to contact him. Indeed, the board's marker jumped wildly of its own accord from letter to letter — spelling out the same message over and over: "I AM TRAPPED HERE. HELP ME! . . . I AM TRAPPED HERE. HELP ME! . . ."

The board revealed that the spirit of a young girl was trapped in the house. Perhaps it had been *her* screams Dan had heard that Halloween night.

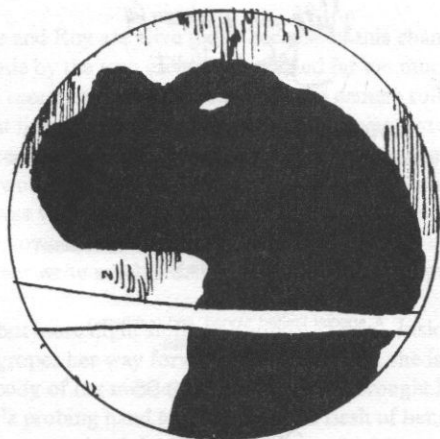
It seemed that Dan's life had come full circle, in that his original dream of being in a house haunted by the ghost of a young woman (the basis for *Dark Shadows*) had now taken on a horrible reality.

The hard-boiled director of "The Norliss Tapes" and more than a dozen other classics of horror had himself been thoroughly spooked. He quickly sold the house on Coldwater.

I've often wondered what the new owners think of it.

Maybe someday I'll stop by and ask them.

Or maybe I won't.



## THE BONE SONG

LISTEN SOFTLY

TO THE GRASS.

IT SINGS A LOW SONG

ABOUT


WHEN IT DROVE

DINOSAURIA

INTO BONE.

BY SCOTT E. GREEN

TED  
STURGEON



The  
Last  
Interview

P A U L  
S A M M O N

*I*n this last part of Paul Sammon's interview, Ted Sturgeon shares his thoughts about television and the inception of the infamous "Sturgeon's Law." Paul's introduction picks up where we left off last issue.

*In the summer of 1977, Sturgeon and his Lady Jayne (Tannehill Sturgeon, remarried since Sturgeon's death), were living on the upper floor of a modest, two storey wodden frame house. This structure was located in a lower middle-class San Diego neighborhood, and in 1978 it narrowly escaped total annihilation when PSA Flight 182 crashed only two blocks away (leveling most of that same neighborhood and cutting a bloody swatch through the history of great air disasters).*

*You reached Ted's apartment by an interior staircase. Once inside, the ceilings were low, the decor retro-hippy; silks, cushions, pallet bed. And Sturgeon liked unicorns. Figurines, paintings and drawings of the beasts were everywhere.*

*As for the way he wrote—the actual, physical process—this was unconventional. Sturgeon had an old Royal manual typewriter perched on a three-legged stool about eighteen inches off the carpet; obviously, Ted pecked away on this machine while sitting crosslegged on the floor.*

*We spent a lot of time up in that apartment, Ted and I. Our interviews were conducted informally, with myself slipping in the pertinent questions as casually as possible, letting Sturgeon speak with his own voice. Luckily, Sturgeon genuinely enjoyed our talks.*

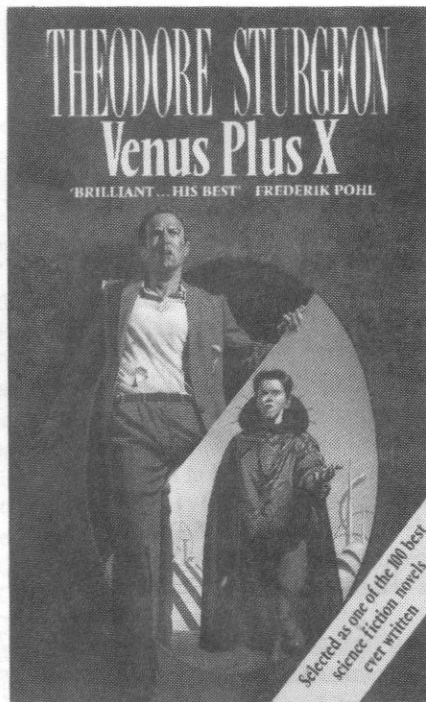
*Over the next few years Ted lived as a semi-hermit, first moving from San Diego to Los Angeles, then to the Pacific Northwest. As for myself, I entered the film business. Suddenly I was watching Clint Eastwood blowing up model helicopters off the beaches of Catalina Island (for Firefox) or hanging out with Arnold Schwarzenegger in Spain (for Conan I). Eight years passed while I hyped genre films for the major studios, and what with also making over two dozen documentaries while simultaneously producing TV shows in Japan and writing/producing/directing my first feature film, A Sense Of Wonder was relegated to the back burner (where it still, unfortunately, simmers at a slow boil).*

*Then, early in 1985, I unexpectedly ran into Jayne Sturgeon.*

*She told me Ted was dying. A respiratory ailment was literally sucking the moisture out of his lungs, turning them into the organic equivalent of drywall.*

*Theodore Sturgeon died a few weeks later, in May 1985.*

*But here he is again, the Ted of 1977-78. Sitting on the floor of his little apartment and making jokes (he loved the fact that we were both named after fish), still sucking on his ever-present pipe (the pipe that finally killed him). I think you'll find things here you didn't know before, which was always my intent. Perhaps you'll go away with a memory of a reclusive yet open, gentle but maddening genius, a world-class writer who never scaled the commercial heights.*



**C**ontinuing with the idea of privacy, how do you handle all this attention now? You have people like me who are essentially strangers, who visit your life for awhile, then leave...

A number of things have happened. I was a recluse for many years. I never went near the various Star Trek and science fiction conventions, for instance. Conventions filled me with a strange mixture of anger and terror.

One thing was, you sit up there with the bright lights on you and scratch your nose, and a kind of ripple goes through the crowd. "He is Theodore Sturgeon, and he is picking his nose." You find out what they're really doing is writing a script for you, and you're supposed to behave that way. You're not supposed to violate their script. And I don't like people to write scripts for me. I want to behave the way I want to behave. I don't like to be told how to behave by a bunch of strangers. This bugs me, and that's where the anger comes from.

The terror comes from the fact that there's a great deal of admiration and emulation and so on that I do invoke in people by what I write. And from that they construct a human being. But I had the feeling for many years that, when they met me, they would also find out that I got dirt between my toes, that I sweat under my arms, that I had trouble with the IRS. Things like that would shatter their image. When they found all that out, I also thought, "They will be mad at me." It took me a long time to analyze that. But in order to keep that from being angry at me, I'd just as soon not be in sight at all.

*Did you get that expected reaction from other people?*

No, no. It was one of those *bette noirs* that you have to chase down and kill.

*You mention your personal problems...you know, in that Bester collection I mentioned earlier, he also says something interesting about you in his Afterword. Let me see...He's talking about the success of The Demolished Man, and how it made him a science-fiction somebody. "I was invited to*

*gatherings of the science fiction Hydra Club, where I met the people I was curious about; Ted Sturgeon, Jim Blish, Tony Boucher, Ike Asimov, Avram Davidson...I was particularly attracted to Blish and Sturgeon. Both were soft-spoken and charming conversationalists...Sturgeon and I used to meet occasionally in bars for drinks and talk. Ted's writing exactly suited my taste, which is why I thought he was the finest of us all. But he had a quality which amused and exasperated me. Like Mort Sahl and a few other celebrities I'd interviewed—Tony Quinn is another—Ted lived on crisis, and he wasn't in a crisis, he'd create one for himself." End quote.*

Well...(laughs) What can I say? As I mentioned before, I've had troubles with the IRS, for example. But now I have a beautiful wife, Jayne, who's straightened all these things out for me. She's taken things I've had years of trouble with and put them right in hours. She's just an amazingly beautiful woman. Yeah. I've met fans who say, "You know, I saw you at such-and-such convention a few years ago, and I was afraid to come up and talk to you." My advice to them is to walk straight up to your writer, bring your foot down hard on their metatarsal, and say, "I'm here. Hey." And they'll pay attention to you. There isn't any reason why you shouldn't do that. Just because you've published so many millions and millions of words doesn't mean that you're some kind of an ogre, and that you're going to bite their heads off.

*It's unfortunate what a certain amount of fame does to some, though.*

Yes, and I've talked to people it has done that to. It is unfortunate.

You know, besides facing my fears, the other reason I'd come out of hiding was—well, a number of things had happened. Just for example, I was in Italy not long ago, and a woman came up to me dragging an interpreter. The interpreter said, "She doesn't speak any English at all, and she urgently wants to tell you something. First of all, you're the only writer in any language she's ever encountered who can think like a woman." Which I take as a great compliment.

*It certainly is.*

"And, secondly, because of something you wrote, she did not kill herself one night." At which point the woman began to cry. Now, if you're going to have that much effect on people, you really have to re-orient yourself.

Another time, in New York, a guy came up to me at a convention and told me that once he was at a party and there was a girl there sitting in a corner. He caught her looking utterly miserable, and lonely. Above all, lonely. Loneliness—you can always see that, everyone understands it. Now in one of my stories there is a poem, about five or six lines long, called, "To the Loneliest One." It's in "A Saucerful of Secrets."

This guy had memorized the poem, which I haven't done, by the way. So he wrote it down on a piece of paper, walked across the room, and laid it on her lap. She read it and they got to talking, and, ultimately, they fell in love and got married. So then this fellow says to me, "I want you to meet my kid." And there was this five or six year old child.

So there's a woman in Italy and a kid in New York both walking this earth because of things that I wrote. I had to

pay attention to this. I find that what I do and what I say has affected people. Here's one more example.

I made a speech at a convention one time, the thrust of which was that we are social animals. That gregariousness is not just a pleasure, or an entertainment; it's a vital necessity for human beings. I went on from there to social consciousness, and littering. I said, "How many of you have ever picked up somebody else's litter? You saw a piece of paper on the street, you picked it and read it, and sat there, stunned." Cause the question is not "Have you ever done it?" but "Why haven't I ever done it?" "Well, it's not my litter." That's not an answer. And why isn't it the answer? It's something beyond that. It's because—well, you've seen that symbol of mine, the letter "Q" with an arrow through it?

Yes.

Then we'll tell the others what it means. It means "Ask the next question." So I just pursued my talk that way.

Ok, this approach is apparently very effective. Somebody told me that later on in the convention, about two in the morning, he was walking down the hotel corridors and there was a guy lying there in some kind of distress. And the observer's feeling was, "Oh Jesus, why can't these people hold their liquor?" And then he stepped on past the guy and walked to the elevator. And then he stopped. Because he had remembered what I'd said about picking up other people's litter. But going on from there, "Why don't you care about what other people do?" So he went back and looked at the guy and couldn't get any response out of him. He got a little panicky and started banging on the nearest door. Somebody came out, and he said, "Can I use your phone? There's a sick man out here." He called, got the paramedics. The fellow had had a heart attack or whatnot, and they took him away.

But he made that action because of my speech.

*Mmm...You know, we've been talking at length about your life and your written work. Would you mind if we talked a little bit about film, which you've also had a hand in?*

Here's one thing I want to say about the whole approach of a writer towards film. I've got to disagree with Harlan Ellison, who will write every nuance of every scene, every shot, every frame of the picture. Now he has taken his lumps and he has given his lumps too. He is a fighter and so on, and he gets a lot of charge out of doing and being that. I don't happen to get my jollies that way. But there is a picture we all have of a very sincere writer coming out to Hollywood and seeing his vision distorted. I get asked time and time again, "How do you feel about having your work changed for the screen?"

Well, when I write a story, it's between me and my typewriter. Sometimes between me, my typewriter, and my editor, but that's it. So I have that much control over what goes on. But if I come out to Hollywood with the idea that many writers have, that I'm going to have that much control over a work that is going to be put on the screen—forget it. It's not going to be like that. It's not because people out here are ugly, or mean, or determined to distort everything you do. Because they're not. Out here in Hollywood there are experts. They're probably the finest experts on the entire Earth. Some of them are second and even third generation

experts. Some people have been in lighting, or make-up, or whatever for all their lives. And I've met some of these people. Marvelous, hard-working, totally dedicated to their craft. Again, these are people who are in lighting, people who are into set designing, who are grips, costume designers, people who've been in and around films after their fathers and mothers who were also in and around films. They are totally self-confident. They are good at what they do.

So here comes your writer. He writes a scene and says, "The lighting has to be here," and "The costumes have to look like this." Then he also tells the actors how to act. You then have the situation where you, the writer, are trying to bring something to the screen, but you've made the mistake of telling all these people you need to bring something to the screen just how to go about it.

Now my way of handling a script, and I've found it very successful indeed, is to say as little as possible about what these people should do. They're much more familiar

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## ...GREGARIOUSNESS IS NOT JUST A PLEASURE, OR AN ENTERTAINMENT; IT'S A VITAL NECESSITY FOR HUMAN BEINGS.

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with the state of the art and the mechanics of film than I could ever possibly be. I don't care if I take classes on cinema and bone up on it, there are still advances that have been made since that textbook's been printed or since the teacher taught me anything. These people really know their stuff. So instead of saying, "Close-up here"—I tend to think in terms of close-ups and medium shots while I'm visualizing a script, by the way—I write, "Another angle. Another angle." I do that simply to break things up that tend to be talky. But only when it's absolutely essential to what I am writing will I say, "Orange light comes from the right," and so on. There are very few cases indeed when I'll do that.

*That's interesting, because the new format in scripting is exactly the method you're talking about.*

Well, you see, the script is handed to a floor manager and a cinematographer, and they start breaking it down, making shots, clumping it. because what you see on the screen is not shot in the sequence you eventually see it in, which I'm sure you already know. But if they have a similar set which is to be used several times throughout the picture, they tend to shoot that all at once, even though it may only appear sporadically. Things like that. So you write to

account for that. You respect the expertise of the experts. You make it easy for the experts to be experts.

If you can do that, than you're going to get a lot more cooperation on the lot than you would get if you commanded them to do this, and commanded them to do that. especially when you don't know anything about their specialties. So mine is a totally different approach from Harlan's.

*As you've already said.*

One of the best lines I've ever written in my whole life, anywhere, including in television, was in "Amok Time." At the very end of the picture Spock, as far as he knows having killed his captain in his battle over the princess, then turns her over to the rival he was battling over her for in the first place. This is after winning the princess fair and square. He's now in command of the *Enterprise*, and he's going to go back to Starbase and give himself up for killing the captain during this mating frenzy Spock had found himself in.

And in the middle of this anguish, Spock says to his rival about the princess, "You can have her. After a time, however, you may find that having is not so pleasing a thing as wanting. It may not be logical, but it is often very true." I'm immensely proud of that line. Not only that, it was crucial to the entire plot of that particular *Star Trek* episode. It brought the whole story to a point right then. The plot was meaningless without it.

Now I happened to be on the Paramount lot when they were doing the rushes of "Amok Time." The picture was finished and they'd done a paste-up. The paste-up is when the episode is just glued together, with no music and no sound effects. Anyway, they ran the episode through in the screening room, and I was sitting there waiting for this line of Spock's. And it wasn't there. It was gone. And I just flipped out. Usually I'm a very quiet and unaggressive person, I don't like to make trouble. I always feel that the other guy knows more than I do.

But this time I went roaring down to Bob Justman's office, *Star Trek's* executive producer at the time, and I just raised hell. Just stamping and screaming. At first he thought, "Oh Jesus, we've got another Harlan Ellison here." But gradually he began to understand what I was saying. Suddenly he jumped up and said, "Come with me." We went down to the cutting room, where they were cutting my episode. By the way, that was the first time I'd ever seen a cutter at work, and my reaction, again, shows my almost reverence for these people's expertise, when they're really good at what they do.

They were already fifty-two feet over length on my episode, and the scene with my missing line was twenty-six feet long. So, really, there was seventy-eight feet to deal with. We've got to get rid of fifty-two feet and then still go back another twenty-six in order to replace this segment.

So the cutter starts running this scene forward and backwards on this machine. Here's a little shot where Captain Kirk looks into the camera and then turns to the left. Ok. Cut the bit where the captain looks into the camera. You keep where he turns to the left. That's two and a half feet right there. Now, all the while, this editor's got this thing going on in his head, "Seventy-eight minus two and a

half," and whatnot. He keeps this going until he's gradually reduced that seventy-eight to zero. Then he builds the twenty-six feet of my line back into the picture, splicing all the time. It's invisible mending, he's made no appreciable effect on the film at all. Yet he restored this scene to me.

And it was the most wonderful thing...I was absolutely flabbergasted by the way that man worked. Beautiful stuff, it really was. Later on I had the happy experience, during one of the perennial parties in Gene Roddenberry's office, of having Bob Justman drag me over to Gene to say, "Hey. This is the man who saved our show for us." Which just goes to show that they had not made that cut on purpose. They didn't cut that line because they hated me, or disliked my writing. They did it because they had their noses so close to the work they couldn't see they were destroying the crucial point of the whole thing, to say nothing of a particularly beautiful and quotable line. There's no *Star Trek* fan in America who can't quote that line.

*You've brought up some problems in working with television. So I have to ask you, How do you manage to function in that medium? It's so restrictive...*

It's never going to be my major outlet. I don't like the medium or the people who work in it, mostly. Let me give an example.

I remember going to the screening of the pilot for *It Takes A Thief*, and afterwards I absolutely blew my top. I went to the producer's office after the screening and said, "This is the most immoral picture I have ever seen in my life. I would rather have my children see stiff phalluses and wet vulvas than I would the likes of that. At least then they'd learn something about human behavior, and about loving."

But to glorify a guy who couldn't kiss a girl without stealing her earrings, which is what happened in the pilot, who was a thief and the son of a thief, whose value to society was that he was a thief—this I considered immorality of the highest order. And the producer didn't know what I was talking about. So I lost my temper, and I said, "If it became fashionable to trepan babies on television you'd do it as long as they paid you for it." Then I thought a minute about his series and I said, "Before very long, the CIA is going to have real black marks against it, and here you have a similar government agency in your pilot. But this exposure is coming, sure as hell. When the general public finds out what the CIA's been doing—" He interrupted and said, "But it's not the CIA. We call our organization the SIA." He just didn't believe or understand me.

You know, this kind of thing has happened to me many times before, I do forecast things like that, and they do come true. But, invariably, they're much later in coming true than I said they would be. I figured that the explosions on the CIA would be booming in about eighteen months. Well, it took nearly eight years before they finally blew. But I knew that it was coming, and that any series like that...television was just full of glorification of the CIA at that time.

*"I Spy."*

*I Spy*, for example. Also *Mission: Impossible*. I just

couldn't believe my eyes. People were being cozened into believing how heroic and univertive these spies were. But, particularly, they were being fed the fact that these guys could bust into anybody else's property. I guard my privacy very carefully. It's my castle. I have my own lifestyle and I don't like it being interrupted from outside. Nobody else seemed to have that feeling, and the whole American public—by the tens of millions, literally—being educated that your home was your castle, except when the CIA or the FBI wanted to get into it.

*Or the police.*

Yeah, in which case it comes down to the police state. And in which there's no recourse to defending your own property, or protecting your own privacy, or having your own individuality respected by the law in general, or by the public agencies you're paying for in particular.

*And all this because of one show. If you multiply ALL the attitudes television is trying to inculcate, it really gives you pause, doesn't it?*

Yeah, you're right. That's just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

So let us say that there are areas of television I couldn't get through. And the attitude of television is simply incredible. Absolutely incredible. Did I tell you about my recent experience along those lines?

*No.*

Just a few months ago I was called in to do a pilot. Part of the Bible, the basic show format, had to do with this guy who went around beating up baddies with this karate thing, and so on. And his father could communicate with him at all times by means of this bug that had been planted in his son's head. Daddy was turning the knobs, working the transmitter, getting the calls, giving the directions, and so on. So the hard science aspect was in there, the young guy was also being very physical, and I says, "Yeah, that sounds like a valid format to me."

But I had a suggestion. That the scientist in the laboratory would not be his father, but his mother; a top-grade scientist with a first order mind. What I visualized was the kind of woman you see on the commercials, who's playing tennis with her daughter, wins a point, and leaps over the net to shake hands with her. Active and attractive. And they immediately said, "Uh-uh. No way." I said, "Why not? The time has come, and it's past time, for a woman to have a strong dramatic series." Of course at this point in time there's already a *Police Woman* and so on, but this is a sex change operation with the same old crap. But there's nothing where a woman does a woman's kind of thing. An intuitive, sensitive kind of woman, with a very strong dramatic role. They said, "No, it just won't go." And again I said, "Why not?" They said, "Listen. The only kind of women people want to see on television are fuckable. And a woman at that age is not fuckable." I says, "Hey now, wait a minute. There's a lot of women I know of at 'that age' who'd really take offense at that. There are women at that period of life all across the USA who'd be thrilled to see a woman like themselves being that active."

And again they said, "Nope. That just won't wash. Because the only women *they* want to see are fuckable." So I asked, "What women are fuckable?" He says, "Eighteen to

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twenty-five. That's fuckable. The older women want to watch the eighteen to twenty-five year olds too, because that's what they identify with. Not with themselves, or those of their own age." I says, "Now think a moment. I think the time has really come for a good, strong, dramatic role for a female, one that's not Lucy, and not 'fun in the kitchen', and not 'daddy is an oaf', and just generally not sit-com. A real dramatic role." And the guy said to me, "Listen, Sturgeon. What the networks want is what they had last season. What we want is to get our show out on the air. And we're not gonna be the cutting edge for your crusade."

*God, that sounds like a line straight out of Network. He really said that to you?*

Verbatim.

*That sort of directness is a little unusual in that industry, isn't it? But that attitude's not.*

That's right. It's all the way through, but here's one man who would come right out and say it in so many words. Really, the producer I went to after seeing the *It Takes a Thief* pilot just didn't know what I was talking about. He just sat there and smiled his false smile and blacklisted me, and I never got a chance to go back there. As long as he was around, anyway. But this other fellow...

*Did they peg you as a trouble maker?*

I don't think as a trouble maker. They just felt I couldn't be controlled. I don't think they're interested in the slightest in controlling me for the sake of controlling me. I'm not paranoid. They're not interested in keeping me in line for their own egos, or anything like that. It's just that they find thinking like mine unpredictable. I don't think it's unpredictable at all. I think I'm one of the most predictable people in the world.

This guy, the one who told me he didn't want crusaders, understood what I was saying. And he was able to articulate, flat out, what it is the public wants to look at, what the studios and the networks want, what the sponsors want, and what *they* want. They want to get on the air, and they're going to get there by giving the public what it had last season.

That reminds me very much of something that happened when I first started to write. I'd had an experience when I was married the first time, which was a very unusual kind of experience to have.

*Just as an aside, how many times have you been married?*

Five. Anyway, I wrote this experience into a short story, and sent it off to a women's magazine. She rejected it. Great big-name editor, big magazine, and she rejected it with great regret. She loved the story, loved the way it was written, liked the people in it. But she said, "The woman doesn't exist who would take a chance like this." Which was fascinating to me, because I wrote that story because the woman *does* exist, and she did indeed take that chance, which was the whole strength of the story. "The woman doesn't exist." What a fascinating statement. What she was saying was that the woman didn't exist in women's magazine fiction.

She went on to say, with a perfectly straight typewriter, that what her magazine needed desperately was new, fresh, original ideas. But nothing outside the readers' experience. Does that grab you?

*As you said, with a perfectly straight typewriter.*

Yeah, and this is part of the same Hollywood syndrome. Still, I don't think these people are evil.

People who are intelligent go into television and produce things that are intelligent, things like Reginald Rose's *The Defenders* and so on, but these people invariably seem to come in strong, peak up, and then start to diminish. That does seem the case.

But it's not that they run out of ideas. It's, first, that the pressure to get those pages out is so enormous. Television is a hungry, hungry animal, man, it gobbles up pages and pages of material. Hundreds of millions of pages. And it does it so fast that the people who produce these pages are always hard put to get them out fast enough. So that's one aspect. The other aspect is the encroachment of the studio's reluctance to take chances, and the sponsors' reluctance to back programs that are quote, "controversial," unquote. So,

gradually, you get things that aren't "controversial." And pretty soon you see scripts that turn on whether or not the pancake batter comes out alright.

*More Than Human is also under option for filming in France, isn't it?*

Yeah. I'm negotiating, and negotiating very carefully. It's something that I want, but it isn't something that I need. Let's start with that. You'll do an awful lot of things when you're hungry that you wouldn't do when things are a bit more stable.

To date, *More Than Human* is my magnum opus. I don't think it'll remain so. I think my new work in progress, *Godbody* will be, ultimately. In the meantime, *More Than Human* is, *de facto*. *More Than Human* has been printed in seventeen languages, all over the world. And I want it filmed with the same qualities, the same factors that made it go into seventeen languages. Eighteen, actually—it's going to be published in Hungary next spring.

So I want it on screen with those particular qualities, and I know what those factors are. Consequently, I don't want anyone—producer, director, screenwriter—to take these elements out. So this is why I'm proceeding with extreme caution. I'm not leaping to close any deal. I won't, unless I'm absolutely sure that the people I'm dealing with will be able to do what I expect from them.

Of course, I know better than to think that as a single individual I can take control over a film production. No one can do that. It takes too many people with too many kinds of expertise to do it. But I do want to know who I'm dealing with. Again, the peculiarities that make *More Than Human* what it is, that has made it so popular in so many editions for so many years, I just don't want them to be deprived. I want them to be in there, and until I'm sure they are in there, I won't close any deal.

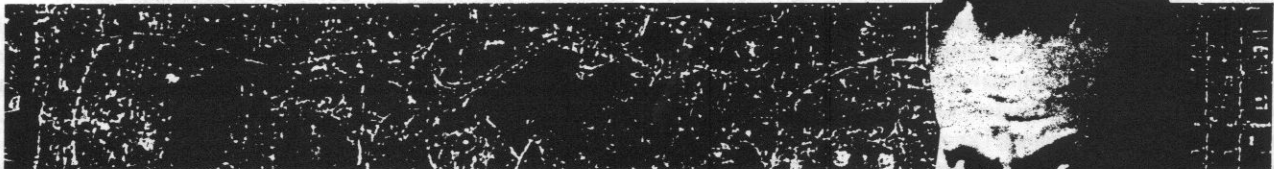
*Is one of those conditions doing your own screenplay?*

I'll do my own screenplay, or I'll do it with the director. But I will not turn it over to anyone else.

*As in the case of Killdozer?*

Yeah. I won't do that with *More Than Human*. This book has been sold twice before, you know...One was an agency caper, purely an agency caper, and it was ridiculous. Never mind the details on that one.

The other deal was rather more interesting. I had Orson Welles as a director. With Orson, I did a screenplay and two complete revisions in twenty-eight days. It was an insane piece of work. Just incredible. We worked so hard...And





then the company we were working for blew apart, and Orson disappeared. He showed up four days later, in Rome, at one of his classic windings.

Then I got a chance to look at the work we'd done, really look at it, and was absolutely appalled. Welles had changed it so drastically it was no longer *More Than Human*. But he is such an overwhelming personality that you don't realize what has happened until long after he's removed his magic from the scene.

I don't want to sound too strong on this, but if I ever get another chance to work with Orson, I won't. He is just too much people. And his ideas, although they seem to be good ideas while he is around applying the charisma, are not good ideas.

I happened to see a film with the most extraordinary color I had ever seen. I ran to him and said, "Orson, I've got to take you to see this picture! It's perfect, it's incredible, this color!" Now I was excited about a technical development, understand. He said to me, "I will nevah go to see anothah man's pickchuh." That's his attitude, and here it was an electrochemical process I wanted to show him. He won't keep up with the state of the art, and he will force his own ideas when, really, his track record is such that his own particular ideas are not all that necessarily great. They were. There's no question about that. And I think he still has it in him to do it. But I also think that he, at the very least, had better force himself to go see another man's picture. To at least see what's new with the camera, and with film chemistry.

Just as Robert Bloch is known as the "the author of Psycho", so to many people are you known as "the author of

*Sturgeon's Law*", which says that ninety percent of everything is crap. Could we finish this off by explaining how all that came about?

Actually, I called that "Sturgeon's Revelation" at first. "Sturgeon's Law" was, "nothing is always absolutely so." I still like that and regard it as one of the few dependable truths in the Universe, but it goes unnoticed. Somebody like Jim Blish or Damon Knight or Algis Budrys got to calling the Revelation the Law, and by now automation has set in.

"Sturgeon's Law" derived from a debate I had in the fifties (I forget where or with whom), in which my opponent stayed up all night with a copy of every book and magazine the hotel news shop could supply, and convulsed the audience with a reading of the most Godawful syntax, trite characterizations, stupid situations, bad science, mixed metaphors and flawed logic that any of us had ever seen dumped into the same basket. He then demanded that I concede that ninety percent of science fiction was crap. I had a sudden rush of brains to the head and conceded the point, and then went on to explain that ninety percent of everything is crap, and was then able to make the point that S.F. has been ghettoized because of this—and ghettoized by the same people who can recognize a spectrum of excellence in, for example, the Western story, between Shane and Hopalong Cassidy. Or, in Mysteries, between Mickey Spillane and The likes of Grahame Greene and Dorothy L. Sayers.

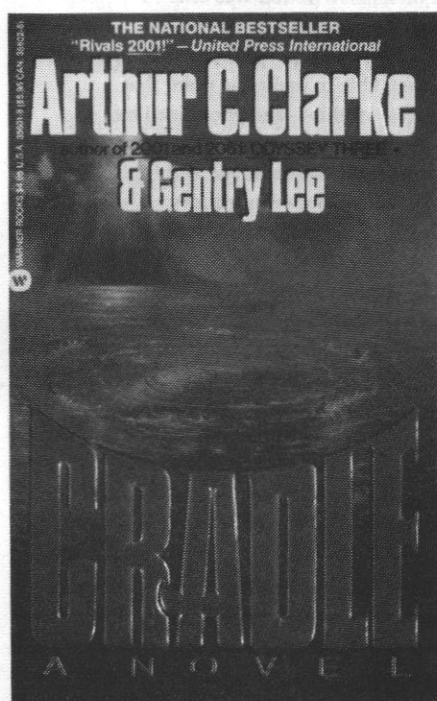
So what you're ultimately saying is—

Denied it's spectrum of excellence and damned to the ghetto science fiction has done what so many ghetto survivors have done. It has grown stronger.

*Paul M. Sammon is a writer/producer/director with two dozen documentaries and one feature film to his credit. His latest film credit is as the co-screenwriter of Stereotypes, the first coproduction of an animated film between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. As the founder of Awesome Productions Inc. (in 1981), Sammon has handled specialized publicity for such films as Dune, Robocop and Blue Velvet. He has also written extensively on film for such publications as Omni, American Cinematographer and Cahiers Du Cinema, and is the American co-producer of the Tokyo-based, nationally telecast (throughout Japan) entertainment television program Hello! Movies. His short story "In Late December, Before the Storm" appeared in The Year's Best Horror Stories: Series XIV.*

*Sammon's current projects include a stint as the Unit Publicist on Robocop 2 (opening summer 1990) and writing a massive film reference book (to be published by Simon and Schuster in 1991) titled Blood and Rockets, the definitive guide to the best science fiction, horror and fantasy films available on videotape. He is also editing Splatterpunks, a high-profile collection of the greatest writers in this genre and a book tentatively set for a 1990 release.*

# recommendations



## CRADLE

ARTHUR C. CLARKE  
& GENTRY LEE.

(WARNER BOOKS, 408 P, \$4.95)

HYBRID NOVELS ALWAYS CREATE THE problems of determining what strengths and weaknesses do you ascribe to which author. Poumelle and Niven, for example have styles so similar that their joint works don't differ significantly in tone from their solo works. The Arthur Clarke/Gentry Lee collaboration,

"Cradle", however is much different from Clarke's last few solo works, so is this a good Gentry Lee book, or a lazy Arthur Clarke novel?

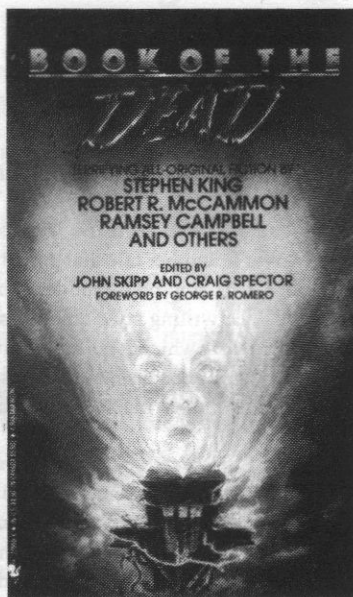
Like a slew of other recent books and movies hitting this general theme, "Cradle" presents a mysterious Whatsis that's crashed near Key West. A science savvy and aggressive female journalist gets enough wind of a story that she heads in that direction almost as quickly the Navy effort to locate and determine what happened to the test flight of a new missile prototype that vanished in the area.

The rest of the book reads like a cross between John D. MacDonald and Clarke, with a little William Gibson (in a good mood) thrown in. The heroine hires a two-man charter boat worked by a tech-nohip black writing and involved computer adventure game, and a bummed Harvard burnout still nursing a broken heart and looking for a way to even the score with some sleazy ex-partners who stole a good chunk of treasure from him. The stew also includes the trio of ex-partners, who can sniff that something's up, and a Navy commander who, in a subplot of no discernable intent, is an amateur actor falling for his 17 year-old co-star in a Tennessee William's play. Just to make sure he's got something to feel guilty about, the commander was also one of the flyers on a Libyan raid a couple of years back.

Hero and Heroine are so obviously slated to fall in love that the only suspense about it is when they're going to stop blustering at each other and start getting soft and goey about what childhood/teen trauma made them the thick-skinned bastards they are today. The romance is punctuated occasionally by the plot, either

switching one of the Earth characters to some place new, or cutting to a running narration set back on G Whiz that explains what's been going on all this time from the E.T. standpoint. Although a little too derivative of "Star Trek IV", these brim with invention and are the book's best sections, although again I wish I knew whether they were mostly Clarke's or Lee's. Clarke's own style, which was never very chatty to begin with, has gotten so spare in the years since "2001" that he mostly shorthands his books anymore by having Big Objects do Big Things, and depending on his enthusiasm, filling in the details. Clarke's last book, "2061", was such a throwaway that it seemed little more than a vehicle to float some odds and ends that are apparently needed for the next installment but wouldn't fit properly in it. "Cradle", on the other hand, is positively chatty with also a very sly and subtle strain of bureaucratic satire working in it. The ideas feel like Clarke ideas, but that Gentry Lee was the one to fill things in and couldn't resist showing off a little, so that the real stars of the book aren't the aliens or the humans but a slew of micromachines described in loving detail. No black monoliths wailing here, these plucky agents come in all shapes and sizes including an all-purpose device resembling a doormat that steals the show from the people every scene it's in.

In the end, it all works out. Love triumphs. The black guy and the Navy guy get to show what good joes they are, and all the species and missions are saved with a minimal amount of jiggering, but I'm not sure it was worth 408 pages to learn this. Maybe they should have quit after the book got through with the giant carrot...



**BOOK OF THE DEAD, Edited by John Skipp and Craig Spector**

*"What's going to come out of those people who think that Night of the Living Dead isn't enough?"*

— Robert Bloch

This book is what. John Skipp and Craig Spector took an ancient fear, liberally seasoned it with tremendous writers, buried it in a coffin until the flesh was nice and ripe, and then dug it up for your late-night all-alone-with-the-lights-dimmed-and-the-covers-wrapped-around-your-ears reading pleasure. I picked up the anthology with a distinct gleam in my eye expecting to sink my teeth into a midnight snack of rotting flesh. I was not disappointed. Releasing a cloud of green putrescence, I slowly turned the pages to the table of contents. Sixteen tales of putrid horror from such masters in the field as Stephen King, Robert McCammon, Ramsey Cambell, David Schow, and others! With an introduction by George Romero, the king of the dead, and Skipp and Spector! Wow! A veritable feast of carnotropic delight. Not even bothering to tie on a bib to keep the flesh and blood from my clothing, I began to feed.

"Blossom," by Chan McConnell, is the first corpse to drag itself from its grave. It concerns a rich man who, after he kills his date in a small game of sexual perversion, receives a big surprise and a small education in the sexual needs of the newly dead. Written in a tight, neat style, "Blos-

som" shows itself to be a fine starting point for the anthology.

"Mess Hall," reads the next headstone. Richard Laymon weaves a brilliant tale about a serial killer who's victims come back to show him some good old fashioned retribution. Told from the viewpoint of his intended eighth victim, the revenge of the living dead is slow and gory. When the dead start to come after her, though, things quickly change.

Ramsey Cambell's offering to the feast is "It Helps If You Sing," giving a little nod and twist to the normal dead story with voodoo. Two religious zealots, vaguely reminiscent of Jehova's Witnesses, show up at Bright's apartment to usher him into their leader's private army. An all around rousing tale of a bleak future. "Wet Work," by Philip Nutman is a well written piece with a *Twilight Zone* ending, showing that the good guys are not always the ones wearing the uniforms.

"A Sad Last Love at the Diner of the Damned" is Edward Bryant's contribution to the dead mythos. Unfortunately for me, and the rest of his fans, it is not up to his normal par. It does, however, have its moments. Likewise with "Home Delivery," by Stephen King. About a pregnant lady who must learn to survive and think for herself while the dead rise around her. The story suffers, however, from moving too slow, a curse in stories of this type.

"Bodies and Heads," by Steve Rasnic Tem gives a different view of zombies. Starting as a virus, the disease quickly spreads and mutates, causing a different version of the walking dead in each area. It is an interesting idea and a well written story.

"Choices," by Glen Vasey, "The Good Parts," by Les Daniels', and Steven R. Boyett's "Like Pavlov's Dogs" all deserve honorable mention as being very good living dead yarns. "Less Than Zombie," by Douglas Winter is an interesting story of the decadent rich's offspring, but deals only briefly with zombies. Despite that, it is a very good story.

"Saxophone," by Nicholas Royle, draws an interesting picture of the living and the living dead coexisting and it poses a very interesting cure for the dread disease of death. While "Saxophone" shows

both coexisting, even if tenuously at best, "On the Far Side of the Cadillac Desert with Dead Folks," by Joe Lansdale, a story about badmen and the badman who hunts them, and "Dead Giveaway," by Brian Hodge, about a very entertaining game show with some unusual prizes, show that the dead will eventually outnumber the living.

"Jerry's Kids Meet Wormboy," a brilliant offering from David Schow, is a tale concerning a fat kid with some very unusual appetites. As always, Schow's writing hits like the 'D' train from Hell and leaves one wishing for more.

The final grisly offering on the plate is "Eat Me," by Robert McCammon. As the blurb on the cover states it "answers all the questions about love among the newly risen." Set in a dead singles bar and an apartment, "Eat Me" shows how one lonely couple escape an eternity of living death.

Well, that's it. The plates have been cleaned and the table cleared. Shall we have drinks? Perhaps a Bloody Mary? And then perhaps I could just have a nibble or two. . .

—Phil Gardner

**THE WEREWOLF'S TALE**  
by Richard Jaccoma (Fawcett)

Since Robert McCammon's next book is about a werewolf fighting the Nazis in WW Two, it intrigued me that another book using the same idea would be released just four months before *Hour of the Wolf*.

Set in the New York City of 1939, the main character is a private eye named Jimmy Underhill, a world weary type written about by many other writers, particularly Ross MacDonald. While the plot is interesting, with all sorts of gremlin, ghoulies and beasties, it is sometimes offset by the portrayal of Underhill. Although he wears his sense of humanity on his sleeve, he treats virtually every woman he encounters like cheap trash. Not only does he want to have sex with anything in a skirt, he usually does, and often in the sleaziest manner at his disposal. When he meets a gentle young woman and falls in love with her, we don't necessarily hope

he gets the girl of his dreams. Underhill may talk about women with respect, but the manner in which he treats them bespeaks anything but.

When Underhill is bitten by a mysterious she-wolf and gains miraculous shape-shifting powers, it only seems appropriate since his animalistic side has predominated his behavior anyway. Perhaps the rough edges to Underhill's personality are supposed to give him character and the story grit, but he comes across as being more like a man-child with over-active hormones rather than a man. Like I said, having him able to turn into an animal is more than appropriate.

Here we have a Nazi plot to conquer the world with the aid of the supernatural and an eons old survivor of Atlantis, as well as a resurrected mummy. The plotting is swift and we meet some interesting characters along the way, but the ending rings like it was twisted out of shape to leave holes for the sequelmobile to drive through. An entertaining book with an above average plot and good, strong writing, but the juvenile sexual attitudes regarding women in the story leave much to be desired.

—James Van Hise

#### BLOOD IS NOT ENOUGH

edited by Ellen Datlow

(William Morrow & Co.)

320 pages, hardback, \$19.95

Vampire fiction has come a long way since the days of *Dracula*. The monster is now our next door neighbor, or a friendly stranger on the beach, a famous model, a juvenile delinquent, a face in a dream. The rules Bram Stoker set down on paper so long ago are now being challenged, broken, or often completely ignored. The idea of vampirism, people preying on other people, whether for blood or something else, is a theme that is being taken very seriously by writers of today. *Blood Is Not Enough*, edited by *Omni's* Ellen Datlow, is a book of 17 such stories by authors who take the theme a step further than pure horror/adventure and deal with topics of survival, control, guilt, immortality, mad-

ness, loneliness and love.

A few stories in this book seem to be written merely to shock the reader. But most of them delve deeper into the characterization of the vampires or the victims, and give insight into a fantasy/nightmare that has obsessed millions.

The first story, "Carrion Comfort" by Dan Simmons, deals with a kind of vampire that can manipulate and control others telepathically for its own macabre pleasure by sheer force of will. These vampires coldly compare notes on the latest disasters they are responsible for. One vampire, however, discovers she is losing interest in the game of controlling others. Simmons takes the reader on an adventure of destruction, and the expected battle between sort-of-good and mostly evil, set in a city of imaginative characters and events. What makes this story unique is the writing and the characters. The vampires are monstrous in their lack of morality and feeling, but they are real people, too. The most interesting stories are the ones that show villains in sympathetic as well as antipathetic situations. It's not that they should be justified in the evils they do, it's just that if an author can garner a little understanding for the character, the story will be all the more chilling. Simmons does that in "Carrion Comfort."

Another story which shows the vampire as a real person who has, through circumstances, become a monster, is "A Child of Darkness" by Susan Casper. This is about a girl who, through a strange disease, has come to believe she is a vampire and behaves accordingly. Vampirism has become so strangely attractive in this culture due to books such as *Interview With A Vampire*, and *The Vampire Lestat*, and the movies *The Lost Boys*, *Fright Night*, *My Best Friend Is A Vampire*, and even Frank Langella's version of *Dracula*, that some people might end up preferring to think of themselves as vampires instead of merely 'sick' or 'different.'

"To Feel Another's Woe," by Chet Williamson deals with an emotional vampire who is an actress. The main character in this story isn't the vampire, but is the potential victim who makes a rather startling decision of wanting to become a vampire himself. Again, the allure of the

myth is strong. The temptation of power cannot be overcome.

"The Silver Collar," by Garry Kilworth, a gothic love story about a woman who will risk all to be with her vampire lover is another tale that perpetuates the idea that vampires can be desirable and erotic. The writing style embodies a story within a story which is quite effective dramatically, and adds a sense of realism to an otherwise rather incredible experience.

Harlan Ellison's story, "Try A Dull Knife," shows vampires as real, everyday people. They are people we've all met and known, the kind that clamp onto another who is perhaps a natural leader, charismatic, or famous, in the hope that they can be part of such greatness. Sometimes they are called fanatics, or fans. And poor Eddie Burma has nothing left to give anymore in this poetic, timely account of his last hours alive in a world that has sucked his essence dry.

Like "Try A Dull Knife," The stories "Dirty Work," by Pat Cadigan, "Return of the Dust Vampires," by Sharon N. Farber, and "Lazarus," by Leonid Andreyev also deal with a non-literal vampire who does not necessarily suck blood, but drains the life of others around him so that he can continue to live. "Lazarus" is by far the most haunting of the group. Not only does the Biblical connotation give it a sense of supernatural realism mixed with occult belief, but it hints at the need for separation of life and death indicating the two were never meant to be mixed.

Stories written for shock alone, with the notorious Hitchcock twist at the end, have their place in this anthology, as well. Gahan Wilson's "The Sea Was Wet As Wet Could Be" is a bizarre interpretation of what Louis Carrol's Walrus and the Carpenter were really doing as they walked, weeping, along the sandy beach. The characters of this story have entered a twilight zone of metaphorical irony. Interesting, to say the least. Another shocker is "L'Chaim," by Harvey Jacobs, which is a short short about a victim who joins a vampire fraternity that likes to age its carefully chosen 'wines' before 'opening' them for special celebrations. It is a cold story, but its unique angle keeps it from

falling short of the more psychological horror most editors seem to prefer these days.

If you like gross (no punches pulled here) stories, "Varicose Worms," by Scott Baker is the one to read. This is about a shapeshifter/magician/shaman who uses tapeworms as one means to control or drain his victims. This character, Eminescu Eliade, is so intent on trying to control his world, his future and those around him, that he never finds time to just live. His manipulations wear him out until he grows careless and ripe for revenge. Even with all the run-on sentences and complex descriptions of Paris and shamanism and the history of Eminescu's life, this novelette is probably the most original and most disgusting story in the entire anthology. If you can wade through the main character's many physical changes (not to mention the parenthetical descriptions throughout) you won't be disappointed.

Probably the award for the most poetic, romantic story would go to Tanith Lee for her image-filled story "The Janfia Tree," about a woman who has lost all hope in life and exists in an indifferent vacuum-like mental state described aptly in this line from the story. "It was all very beautiful, but one comes in time to regard mortal glammers rather as the Cathars regarded them, snares of the devil to hide the blemishes beneath, to make us love a world which will defile and betray us." Her supernatural experience will change her forever, and Lee's superb storytelling talent makes this story the reviewer's choice for personal favorite.

"Good Kids," by Edward Bryant is a story of seemingly innocent children confronting a vampire of extreme age and power. It's not *The Lost Boys* retold, but rather a comforting tale showing that children do not always have to be victims if they stick together and use their minds. Adults aren't always the stronger ones. The lesson seems to be: never underestimate the victim. Bryant makes that perfectly clear in this interesting, very realistic experience.

Vampires have many, as yet unexplored, powers. Fritz Lieber's "The Girl With the Hungry Eyes" concerns a woman who models and instantly becomes a hit

because of something in her eyes that attracts attention. She is the advertiser's dream. You can't not look at her. Any product she sells is a guaranteed success. Can vampires contribute to society? This one does somewhat, but takes more than she gives, as it always seems to be. That is the art of vampirism, the taking...and not stopping until you have it all.

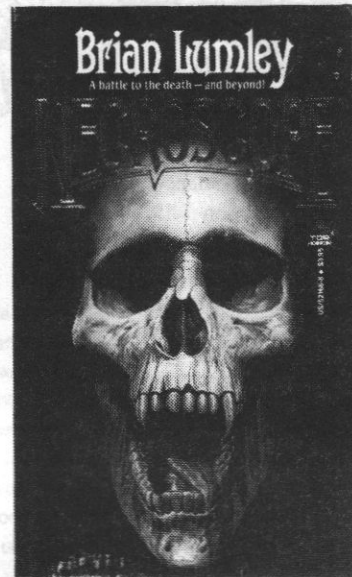
One story, with a reputation for its controversial nature, involves a vampire in a Nazi concentration camp during WWII. I'm not sure the controversy surrounding the story, "Down Among the Dead Men," by Gardner Dozois and Jack Dann, is about the vampire in it. It seems that just about anything written about Nazi's and their victimization of Jews becomes controversial in itself due to the overly sensitive subject. In this story, however, the camp happens to be the setting of one vampire's home. The Nazis are invisible and the story centers on the prisoners and one man who discovers a vampire among them. Perhaps this story is too well written for some. It paints an ugly, real picture of people and their suffering which make up an uncomfortable reality we don't like to admit to, or see. And that's what vampirism is all about. If we close our eyes, it's not going to go away. Writing about it is the best cure. As Jack Dann says in his afterward to this story, "The vampire is us." That's why I like this anthology. It's about people. When we talk about vampirism, blood is definitely not enough. There's so much more to being hunter or prey than the blood that results in the contest of death.

The last two stories in this collection are, suprisingly enough, poems. "Nocturne," by Steve Rasnic Tem is about a relationship that fails. Too much taking and not enough giving definitely fits the theme of this book. And "Time Lapse" by Joe Haldeman addresses the same theme in a poem about a father who takes the innocence, character and privacy of his daughter until she has nothing left. It would have made a good prose story, too, but as a poem it leaves the reader moved with quick, fleeting images that chill as well as any of the stories in this anthology.

You don't have to be a fan of vampires to like this book. You must be, rather, a fan of life. If you like supernatural

realism, science fiction, fantasy, horror, gothic or mainstream literature, you will like this book. Make Way for the new vampires, a breed that is real, and as fascinating as it is unpredictable.

—Wendy Rathbone



**NECROSCOPE**  
by Brian Lumley, Tor Books, 1988,  
505 pages, paperback, \$3.95.

This interesting novel, the first in a trilogy from Tor, is not what you might expect from Brian Lumley. While *Necroscope* does have its moments of Lovecraft-inspired description, its plot owes more to the technothriller than it does to the Cthulhu cycle. And though it's not the standard fare for Lumley, he handles this tale of supernatural cold war quite well.

The novel opens in January 1977 as Alec Kyle, a member of a secret branch of the British government, sneaks into his recently deceased boss' office. There he is confronted by a ghost, who happens to know all about the agent and the secret ESPionage branch he is connected to. The ghost proceeds to tell Kyle about the events in 1971 to 1976 that led up to his boss' death.

With the framework established, Lumley launches into his tale of two gifted men, both of whom can communicate with the dead. In Moscow, in the service of the

Agency for the Development of Paranormal Espionage, Boris Dragosani plies his trade. Dragosani, a rabidly patriotic Slav, is a necromancer—a man who can steal the secrets of the dead by violating their corpses and taking the information he seeks from the dead.

We soon learn that Dragosani acquired his power with the help of a vampire, Thibor Ferenczy. Dragosani discovered the “old devil in the ground” when he was a boy in Romania, and the vampire still rests there, waiting to bargain for his release with the necromancer. Through Dragosani’s interaction with Ferenczy, Lumley weaves a slightly new variation on the vampire theme. Specifically, Lumley postulates that vampirism is caused by an amorphous, parasitic entity that possesses a victim and turns him into a creature of the night.

Parallel to Dragosani’s tale, the ghost tells the story of Harry Keogh, a young Englishman who is necroscope. Like Dragosani, Keogh can learn things from the dead, but he doesn’t need to violate their corpses to communicate. He can simply talk to them. The dead, who are basically isolated in the afterlife, resent Dragosani when he more or less rapes them for information. On the other hand, they love Keogh. He gives them a chance to interact with other beings again.

Keogh, for various reasons, is dragged into the world of international ESPionage, and a conflict with Dragosani, now a vampire, becomes inevitable.

The mix of horro and espionage in *Necroscope* is refreshing, and Lumley comes up with a few intriguing scenarios—like ESPers who are “nuclear sensitive” keeping track of submarines and missiles for the Soviet government. However, this aspect of the novel is overwhelmed by the supernatural plot, especially the slightly Lovecraftian vampire. The book certainly would have benefited if more time were spent on the ESPionage scenes and a little less on Dragosani’s relationship with Ferenczy.

In fact, Dragosani’s character really didn’t seem to merit the extensive background created for him, especially regarding his abhorrence of sex. By the end of the book, the mad Slav is really just a cliched meglomaniac, a walking obstacle for the hero to overcome. Most readers will find

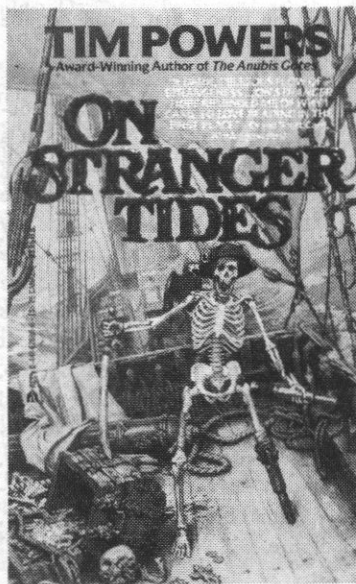
his ultimate fate interesting only because of the metaphysical spin Lumley puts on it, and not for any real interest in the villain himself.

The hero, however, is a very promising character, and Harry Keogh certainly has the potential to be a vital protagonist in the other two books of the trilogy. While Dragosani remains a rather static villain throughout the novel, Keogh develops slowly and steadily from a beleaguered schoolboy to a strong, quick-witted master of his power.

The prose in the book is sometimes rather impenetrable, and the narrative is very choppy. This is especially true in the first half of the book, when Lumley uses a large number of flashbacks to reveal how Dragosani discovered the trapped vampire. At one point during the framing tale, the mysterious ghost tells Alec Kyle that “he’s sorry to jump around like this” as he’s relating the histories of Keogh and Dragosani. The reader will certainly feel that the apology should be directed toward him, too.

The second book in the trilogy, *Vamphri* is all ready in bookstores. The third novel should be out soon. If Lumley can develop the ESPionage aspect of the novels, balancing it more carefully with the horror plots, the trilogy could turn out to be a very interesting series. In any case, *Necroscope* is certainly worth a look.

—by Jim Lowder



## ON STRANGER TIDES by Tim Powers (Ace)

Ace is for some reason labeling this “science fiction” rather than fantasy, even though it’s clearly dark fantasy through and through. Unlike *The Anubis Gates* in which a 20th century man travelled into the past, everyone in this story is at home in the early 18th century setting and makes the best of it.

Tim Power knows how to take historical settings and turn them into highly imaginative dark fantasies. Settling on using the colorful backdrop of the days of pirates of the Caribbean for an adventure in magic is an inspired choice. The main character, John Chandagnac, goes from commoner to pirate in the best Rafael Sabatini manner. Along the way he has to deal with a pair of wizards who have a falling out, returning people from the dead to crew a pirate vessel, a stopover in Florida to visit the actual Fountain of Youth (which is in another dimension), as well as Blackbeard himself.

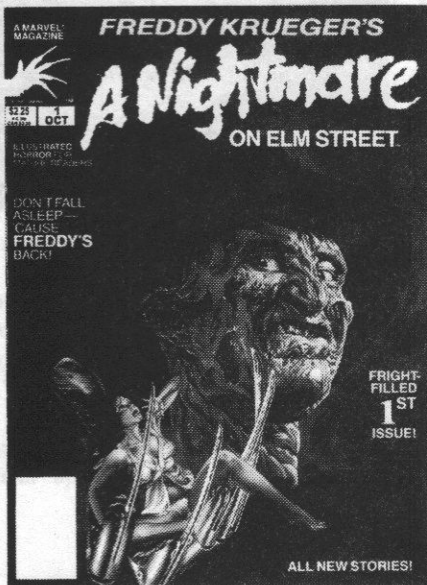
Characterization in the story is strong and the pacing is tight and strong. Just when a scene seems like it’s going on to long, we find that we’ve been lulled by the author so as not to expect the sudden turn of events which turns everything on its head. It’s a story who narrative pace doesn’t flag from the beginning, right up to the last page, and while it’s an unabashed adventure, it recalls the best of such stories, recapturing the stylish sense of romance we never expected to find again in a tale of swashbuckling strangeness.

Tim Powers has carved out a niche with the historical dark fantasy and he writes them with such verve and energy that he makes the past seem rich with wonder and excitement. Under his hands the past becomes a place of mystery and amazement just as though it was an alien world rich in possibility and promise.

—James Van Hise

COMICS

“show me your teeth!”



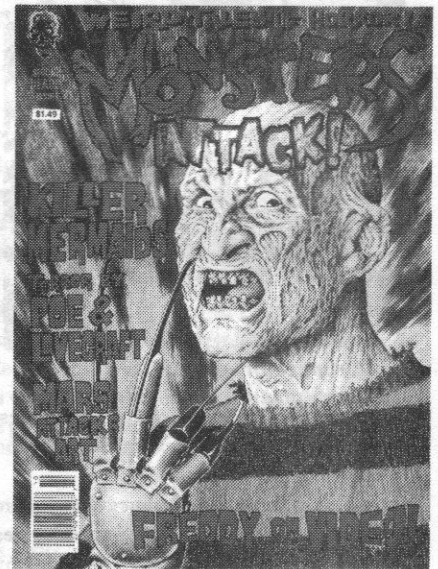
## FREDDY KRUEGER'S A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

#1

MARVEL COMICS

The “bastard son of a thousand maniacs” is back to wreck havoc in Springwood, following the same tried and true formula established in the NIGHTMARE ON ELM

STREET movies. Freddy haunts people in their dreams and those people fight back, with varying degrees of success, aided and abetted by artists Rich Buckler and Tony Dezuniga, although you can't tell where one ends and the other begins because the slick inking of Alfredo Alcalá overpowers any artist he inks, making the work look like Alcalá's own. Alcalá's excellent use of black areas and his style of shading are perfectly suited to black and white horror comics. Steve Gerber makes the best of the series' restrictions and in this premiere issue he manages to spin a tale of Freddy's two current objects of ill intent while also revealing the facts surrounding Krueger's conception (as revealed in A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART THREE: DREAM WARRIORS) as well as adding never before told tales of Freddy's childhood. These are the most interesting parts of the story as Freddy's terrorizing of people in their dreams tends to get repetitious as there's only so much you can do. Gerber does come up with some fine horrific images, though, including the bodies of children tumbling out of an elevator as well as two women sinking into Freddy's brain tissue in a giant version of Krueger's head. But the last two Freddy movies, and those occasional episodes of the TV series which feature him in stories, tend to keep reworking the same plot, just dropping in different characters meeting different sorts of grisly conclusions at Freddy's hands. It would be nice if the comic book series at least tried to break out of the formula and tell some different kinds of stories using Krueger and the parameters of his deadly powers.



## MONSTERS ATTACK #1 & #2

GLOBE COMMUNICATIONS

With the demise of Warren Publishing's CREEPY & EERIE, the black and white horror magazine seemed to drop from favor and the format was abandoned by comics publishers. Now suddenly several different publishers are returning to that form with new and quite different approaches.

MONSTERS ATTACK (seemingly

inspired by the names of the "Mars Attacks" and "Dinosaurs Attack" bubblegum card series) is brought to you by the people who publish CRACKED, the only MAD magazine imitator to survive from the Fifties to today.

This is an anthology horror magazine very much in the tradition of what CREEPY & EERIE were like and in fact uses some of



the same artists who worked for those titles, including Steve Ditko, John Severin and Gray Morrow.

The stories are okay, but generally are not very imaginative. "The Sex Vampires From Outer Space" is about a teenage boy who's hoping to meet this all girl rock group to see if they're real vampires. He's disappointed that they're not because he is a vampire himself. The Gray Morrow art is top notch and makes the story seem better than it is.

"A Monster For All Seasons!" by Pat Boyette starts out well when a man befriends a demon, which is forcibly taken away from him by the rulers of the kingdom who want the imp for themselves. Rather than revealing much about the demon, the story just follows to a predictable conclusion.

"Return of the Golem!" written by Mort Todd and drawn by John Severin is the best story in the issue and features the Golem legend coming to pass in World War

Two Germany. The story is very effective and Severin's art maintains his usual high level of quality.

Ditko's entry is a surreal effort titled "In Solid!" about a transformed scientist who takes revenge on the man who tried to kill him.

"Weirdbeard" is the strangest and most violent story in the issue and concerns a man who has some sort of little alien monster living under his thick, bushy beard. It takes place during the winter in Northern Canada and is written and drawn by the artist Rurik Tyler, who uses the pseudonym "Madman." It's both moody and frightening, with the title character being an original concept in the realm of horror.

Issue #2 leads off with a Severin cover of, who else, Freddy Krueger! It's tied to a short article in the issue.

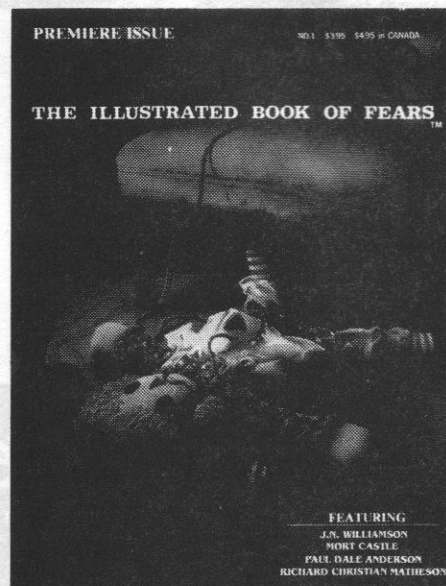
The lead story, "Aquacarnivora" is drawn by Gray Morrow once again and is an adequate little story about carnivorous mermaids.

Bhob Stewart, whose well written articles and interviews have appeared in numerous publications over the years, chronicles the career of painter Norman Saunders, whose work is best known to fans from the paintings he did for the "Mars Attacks" bubblegum card series in the early Sixties.

Two classic (and public domain) horror stories are adapted in this issue. They're Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado!" and Lovecraft's "The Outsider."

Ditko provides another oddball science fiction entry while the final slot is once again occupied by a very weird story by Madman called "Abra Cadavera." Madman hasn't received a lot of recognition although he does do some very individual and original work. His solo black & white comic LUNATIC BINGE was reviewed in MIDNIGHT GRAFFITI #1 and we spoke highly of much of the work on display there.

In just two issues, MONSTERS ATTACK! has demonstrated a definite focus and sense of itself as the stories form an interesting cross-section of talent and variety. Although priced at \$1.49 makes it look like an El Cheapo monster magazine, it definitely has work to recommend it.



## HORROR: THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF FEARS

NORTHSTAR PUBLISHING

Although originally announced as a color comic, this too has emerged simultaneously with the other new black and white magazines and it doesn't suffer for the lack of promised color.

The lead story, "Timed Exposure," is written by Richard Christian Matheson and is the kind of eerie psychological horror tale that he excels in. The artwork by Mark Bernal is adequate if a bit amateurish.

Vincent Locke's art on Paul Dale Anderson's "Bug House" is excellent, though, and perfectly captures every element of the story. Locke is best known for his work on the *Deadworld* comic book series.

"The Crushing Death" by Bob Weinberg and Gary McCluskey is an interesting story marred by having two pages printed



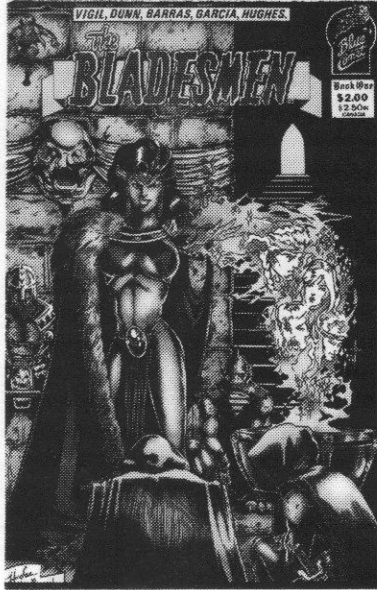
out of order. This is one of those production problems which bedevil writers. I should know as I've had it happen to me.

"Perhaps, Dreamed by Many" by Monty Sheldon is a very surreal story which achieves its intent of reproducing the visual impact of a nightmare.

The longest story in the issue is also the best, because it takes advantage of the extra length to develop the character and tell an interesting tale. "And of Gideon" written by Mort Castle and drawn by Mark Bernal & Gary McClusk runs 28 pages but tells the life story of a serial killer in chilling psychological detail. The artwork is a bit on the fancish side, as though we're seeing the art of someone who'll be doing some interesting work a couple years from now, but at this point the inking by McClusk is not as good as the draftsmanship of Bernal. The only other annoying aspect of the story is that the typesetting in the captions tends to change in size depending on how much room the text in the caption has to fill. The hand lettering in the word balloons is thus jarring in contrast because it introduces a third typeface style, plus the hand lettering is a bit on the crude side. And yet the story is strong enough to overcome these production problems and works in spite of them.

This premiere issue shows a magazine with a lot of promise and which, while an anthology horror comic, has a distinctly different approach than that found in

MONSTERS ATTACK! and an identity all its own. This is one worth watching and I hope it continues.



## THE BLADESMEN BOOK ONE

BLUE COMET PRESS

It's back to normal sized comics with this 36 page B&W sword & sorcery comic.

This comic introduces The Bladesmen and features a single story titled "A Gathering Of Hawks" and deals with the finest warrior from each of four kingdoms chosen to battle the might of an evil witch. With the secret help of another wizard they defeat her in a very standard 17 page story. Even the climax is predictable and occupies less than 2 pages even though this is what everything was building up to. The main problem lies in the lack of space allotted for plot development as the rest of the book consists of pin-ups of the main characters rendered by various artists. Considering these characters were only just introduced and haven't done enough to endear us to them, a dozen pages of pin-ups of them is really putting the cart before the horse. While this is something done periodically in *Marvel Fanfare*, at least there it's with characters who have been around a couple decades and have stood the industry test of time and have actually developed a following who would want to see such a gallery of illustrations. It's a bit early to presume that The Bladesmen have such an eager horde of fans.

The best art in the issue is a very nice color rendering by Steven Hughes on the back cover. The front cover, also by Hughes, is less effective as the rendering of the witch is a victim of amateur anatomy as her breasts are practically the size of basketballs, a sure



sign of an inexperienced artist at work.

THE BLADESMEN has its moments but is a pretty amateur effort overall.



## PREDATOR #1 (of 4)

DARK HORSE COMICS

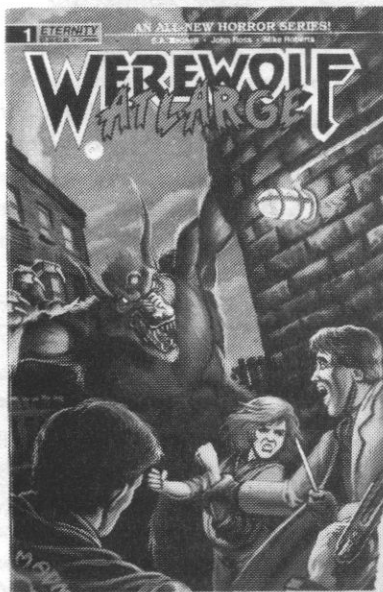
This color comic is a spin-off of the science fiction hit of the summer of '88. Dutch Schaefer (the character played in the film by Arnold Schwarzenegger) is absent and instead we have his brother. This is probably because Twentieth Century Fox would like to make a sequel to PREDATOR even though Arnold has gone on the record in recent years against doing sequels, preferring to move on to new territory.

And so we have Dutch Schaefer's brother, a New York City police detective who keeps coming up against strange massacres (as opposed to ordinary massacres) in which some of the victims have been strung up by their feet and skinned. One massacre is of a gang of drug dealers, but the other is of a subway car full of yuppies. It's clear that the Army knows what's going on and there's a scene indicating that Dutch

Schaefer disappeared after his foray into Central America.

The script by Mark Verheiden is much more tight and to the point than his plot in the ALIENS B&W mini-series, and the writing and the dialogue move the story along swiftly with just the right amounts of tension and suspense.

The art by Chris Warner and Sam de la Rosa, and the coloration by Chris Chalenor, all combine to form a perfect synthesis of story and art. Being the first issue of a four-issue mini-series means that more is introduced here than is explained, but this has the makings of an exciting series. There's nothing deep or significant in the writing, but then neither was there in the movie, either. This is a thriller and it delivers on that promise in a slick, well-realized package of entertainment.



## WEREWOLF AT LARGE #1

ETERNITY COMICS

There's been a resurgence of interest in werewolves in the genre lately, what with various novels featuring them as well as the short-lived TV series of two seasons back.

But unlike the traditional tales of werewolves, this comic is in keeping with the other more contemporary approaches which feature the lycanthrope as the unlikely hero.

"The Monster and Martin Cross" introduces the title character and his alter-ego in a story written by S.A. Bennett and pencilled and inked by John Ross and Mike Roberts. There's some awkward panels here and there in this B&W comic, but overall the art is pretty good and the inking by Mike Roberts makes good use of the black & white comic book format.

Our friendly werewolf is introduced as a good guy up front when he saves a little girl from a child molester, and later rescues a lady reporter, Casey Casternak, from a gang of Satanists. This sets up the series as we meet Martin Cross, who can change into a werewolf at will, and his psychic grandmother. The grandmother, one Marta Monrovich, is very casual about all this, perhaps too casual for the reporter. In a very realistic scene the reporter comes to decide that this is all too much and these people must be nuts while Martin is undressing in the next room so that he can demonstrate his shape-shifting power. Casey takes a powder, not wanting to stick around to watch Martin in the buff. She quickly learns the error of her ways.

Although it's not explained what the significance of it is, the "Next Issue" page features an illustration of the werewolf in front of a full moon, rendered by Tim Vigil. It's a very nice illustration but whether it means Vigil will be doing any further art in the second issue isn't revealed.

The story and art are better than average and this is a title worth following to see how it develops.

## LAST KISS

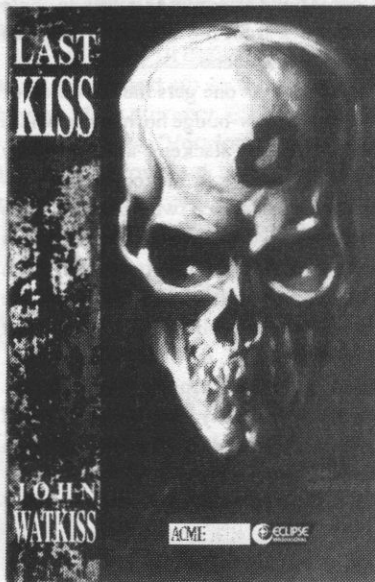
BY JOHN WATKISS  
ECLIPSE

This B&W 52 page comic is a showcase of the work of British artist John Watkiss. His style is one of fluid, inky grace making much of contrasting blacks and whites. In some respects his work resembles that of Alden McWilliams in its grace and flow of the pen and the style of inking. But it still retains a definite individuality and a

lot of dramatic cinematic touches such as using angles which emphasize the context of the characters in a setting or landscape which dwarfs them, particularly in "The Scarecrow."

The stories are interesting but are more sedate than the more frenetic type of horror that American readers tend to expect. Monsters are not the subjects or objects of these tales so much as cruel fates and forces beyond man's meagre control or understanding.

Two adaptations are Poe's "The Black Cat" and D.H. Lawrence's "The Rocking



Horse Winner," both very different kinds of stories which nonetheless emphasize the inescapable inevitability of fate.

The one story which steps far apart from the others is "April's Fool," a metaphorical tale which satirizes the arbitrary nature of a ruling elite.

"Kiss & Tell," a two page interview with the artist, demonstrates that artists are sometimes best seen and not heard. Here the 26 year old artist voices arrogant opinions sure to one day make him wince, such as completely dismissing the entire artistic output of Hal Foster.

But such lapses aside, Watkiss remains an interesting artist and one can hope that more of his work will make it across to North American shores.



## ALIENS #1 (OF 4)

(DARK HORSE

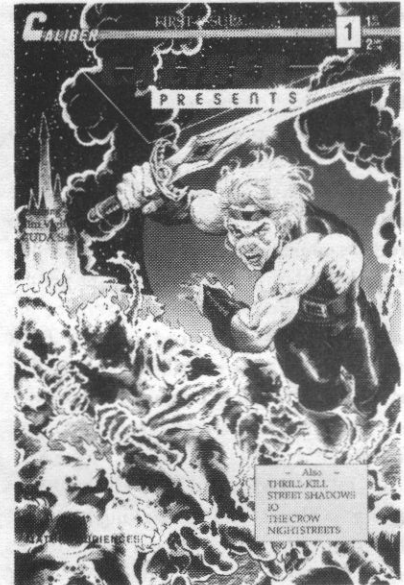
No, this is not the same issue we reviewed back in M.G. #2. Rather this is a color follow-up, the first issue of a second ALIENS mini-series which picks up precisely where issue #6 of the recently completed B&W series left off.

Written by Mark Verheiden, the story involves Newt and Hicks as the sole human survivors on a spacecraft returning from the alien homeworld. Along the way they have to fight off three of the monsters who are aboard ship. It's an effective little thriller with only one lapse of logic near the end. When Newt is examining the exterior of the craft, she encounters an alien hiding inside one of the rocket engine tubes and only just manages to clear it before the tube is activated to crisp the alien. The only problem is that Newt, while clear of the direct end of the tube, is so close that she still would have been fried. It may just be that the artist needed to draw her that close to fit her in the drawing. Call it artistic license. The movies certainly have their share of that.

The painted art by Denis Beauvais is quite lovely, doing for the series in color what Mark Nelson did for it in black and white. The work is really exquisite and is

much more painted comic strip art than most of the attempts at this approach taken by Marvel & D.C. comics.

Try it. You'll like it.



## CALIBER PRESENTS

### #1-3

CALIBER PRESS

This black and white series of anthology comics has quite a variety of material. While it's of a hit and miss quality, it at least tries to present some different short strips and is similar in approach to the DARK HORSE PRESENTS anthology series.

In the first issue, the lead story (which is a serial continuing in each issue) is "Heart Of Darkness." This sword and sorcery story is written and drawn by Tim Vigil (a rightly popular artist in B&W comics these days) and inked by Tim Tyler. The story is your typical barbarian swordsman fights black magic series with Vigil giving himself lots of interesting images to draw. The writing is passable but none of it is memorable. We tend to feel like we've seen it all before and

only Vigil's art makes it pleasant to see again.

The second story, "The Crow" by Jim O'Barr is a weird interlude in which a bizarre character who looks like a vampire street-mime encounters a burly burglar and proceeds to terrorize the man. The thief stabs the man, who bleeds but it otherwise untroubled by the wound. The stranger warns the thief to tell them he's coming, but who he is and who is supposed to be told that he's coming remains unclear. It's still a damned effective story both because of the art and because it's truly weird. The restraint in this story has more power than the graphic violence of many other tale told these days in comics.

"Thrill Kill" by Mark Winfrey is the beginning of another serial about an alien world established as a prison world in spite of it already being inhabited, and the people there don't like it that the denizens of the galaxy and being dumped in their front yard. The first three installments of this just set up what is going on and who the warring factions are without advancing the plot very far. It's an okay SF series.

"Io" by the Barbed Wire Halo Studios is long on visuals and storytelling style and short on information. Appearing in issues one and three, it appears to be some sort of futuristic Vietnam type of jungle war story with high tech used for hand-to-hand combat. The mixture of high-tech (futuristic guns and tanks) and low-tech (20th century style combat uniforms and no apparent body armor) tends to scew the logic behind the technology. We also have no idea what's really going on other than that it's Commies versus Yankees. Even one of the main characters, a cyborg with a mohawk haircut, is introduced with no background, but then neither is anyone else introduced with an explanation. We're apparently supposed to be impressed with the down-and-dirty warfare graphics and how everything blows up real good.

The story is fine from a graphics point of view, but if we're supposed to read a story one must be given enough information so that we can follow it and logically understand what's going on. Otherwise it becomes a comic book equivalent of a mind-special effects film.

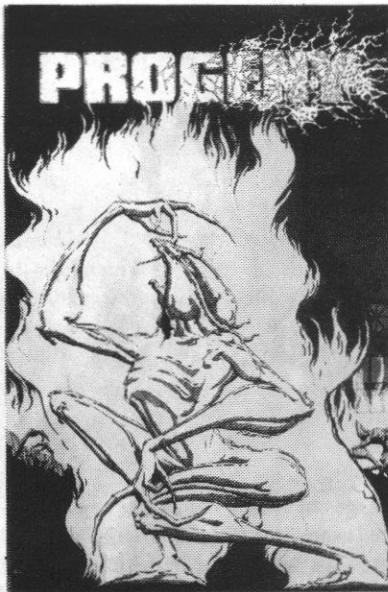
Issue two has a couple interesting one-shot tales, including a "Deadworld" inter-

lude by Vincent Locke which is very much in the style and approach used in the backup stories currently running in the **Deadworld** comic book. Some human characters are introduced who are introduced to and wasted by some of the zombie characters who appear in the regular series. It's an interesting study of people facing death. Locke's art is as individual and entertaining as ever.

The lead story, "Gideon's" by Kyle Garrett and Jim O'Barr, is about a kid who's actually a 200 year old vampire. He wants the curse lifted for a few years so that he can grow to manhood before returning to his immortal ways. Guess what happens as soon as he's mortal again?

There's some other interesting miscellaneous stories as well as a short preview in each issue of one of Calibre's other titles with an excerpt from the story in the spotlight.

It's an interesting series. Uneven in quality, perhaps, but interesting nonetheless.



## PROGENY

CALIBER PRESS

This 90 page black & white graphic novel is written and drawn by J. Calafiore

and tells an interesting story about a police detective who discovers evidence of a demon loose on earth. It's a very dark and fatalistic story but told in a straightforward fashion which reminds one of the movie **Angel Heart**.

The style of art makes interesting use of shading and shadow even though the rendering of faces is sometimes stiff and awkward. Still, the artists knowledge of composition and page breakdown is quite effective and his approach to the story is very cinematic in its sense of narrative pacing and dramatic angles. The scene when the police detective enters the morgue on page 10 and finds the bodies of two slain policemen on the floor is quite effective as it uses an angle looking down from the ceiling to heighten the effect of the scene.

Reading this one gets the sensation of seeing a good, low-budget horror film where the pacing never slackens and the story moves with a sense in inexorable and unstoppable horror. Each twist and turn leads to another twist and turn and keeps you guessing until you don't trust your own guesses any more. It's effective, and while the art may not be as slick or refined as what you normally find in a Marvel or D.C. comic, it's also willing to take more chances. The artist's reach may occasionally exceed his grasp, but that doesn't stop him from doing his utmost to succeed.

A very interesting touch is a small subplot involving a man contemplating suicide and trying to build up his courage to carry out the act. While this sidebar to the story doesn't contribute anything directly to the plot, it does contribute a sense of impending death which underscores the darkness already existing in the story. This approach is more what one would commonly expect to find in a prose novel rather than a comic book story as it is not visually important but does enhance the mood of the story. The subplot even forms the period to the end of the larger story, having an effect much like the slamming of a door in an empty house when you thought you were alone. It's quite good and adds to the overall effectiveness of the narrative. There's nothing here that will revolutionize the form or shake up the genre, but it is a good horror story well told. □

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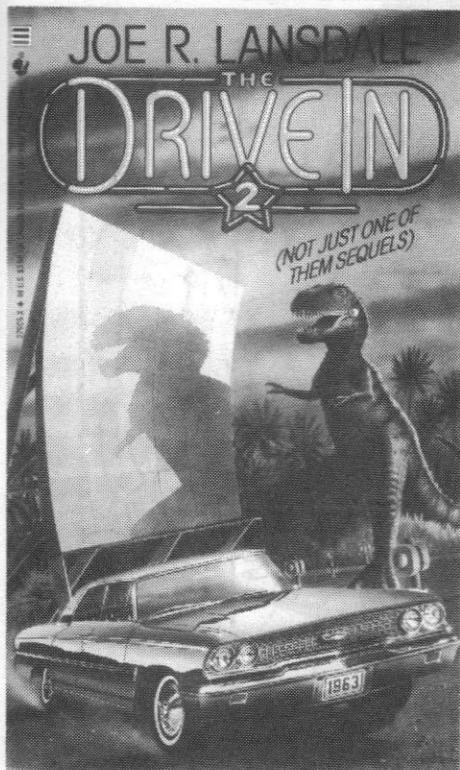
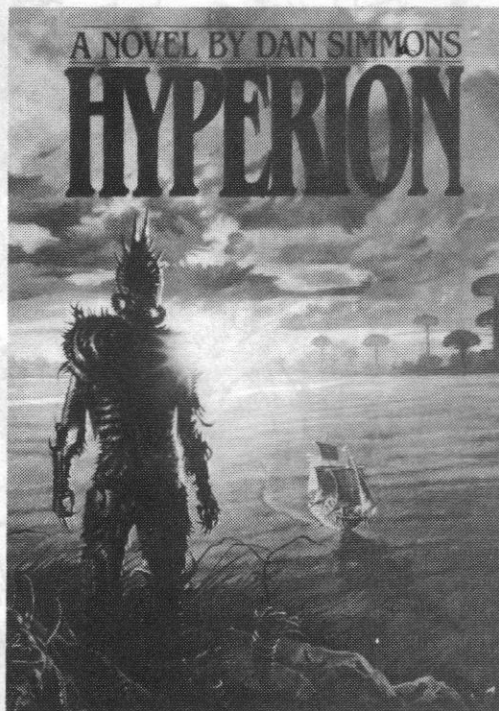
All this and it's **FREE!!!!** Just give us a call or drop us a line and we'll send that sucker out pronto! Or my name isn't Roy! (it isn't but I just saw Die Hard - WHEW!). We're open M-F 6 p.m. to Midnight and Sat-Sun Noon-Midnight!

My name's Dave and I'm MIGHTY damn glad to meet ya!!!

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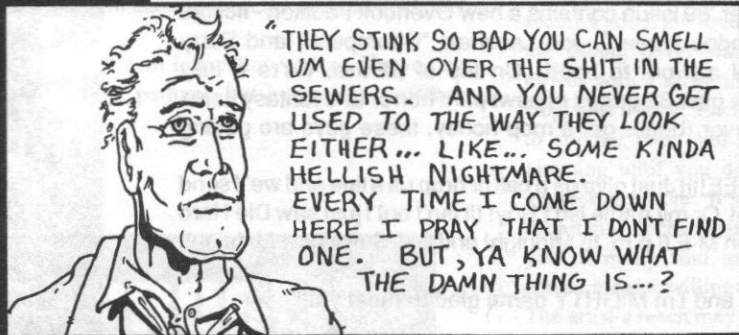


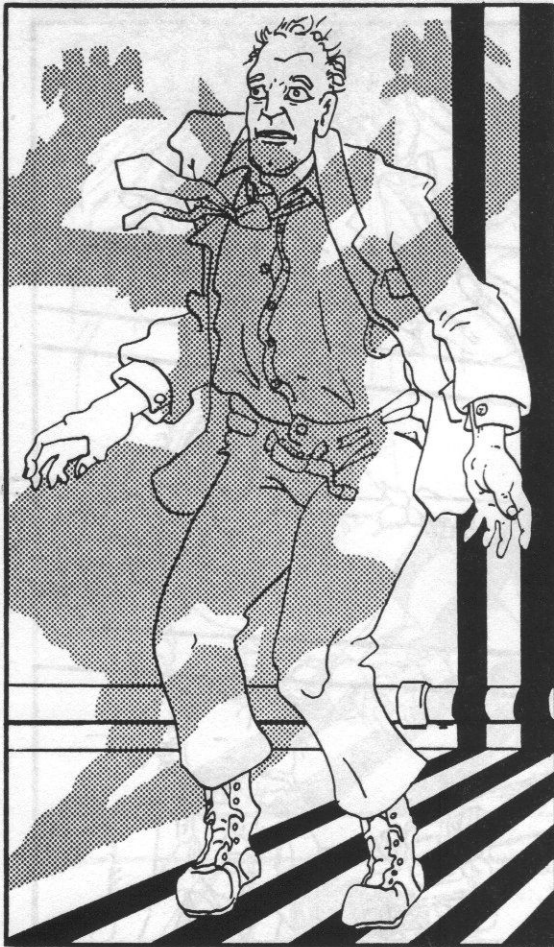
# PEST-CONTROL

"EVERY NIGHT FOR 20 YEARS I BEEN COMIN' DOWN HERE LOOKIN' FOR THOSE BASTARD THINGS. THE PROBLEM HAS GOTTEN SO BAD WE WORK ON ROTATING SHIFTS 24 HOURS. THE FORMAN LIKES TO SAY 'IF THEY'RE IN THE SEWERS IT'S JUST A SHORT STEP TILL THEY'RE IN MY HOME.' BUT... LORD, THERE MUST BE MILLIONS OF UM BY NOW, AN I SWEAR THEY GET SMARTER EVERY YEAR."



STORY+ART  
BY  
KEEGAN





EVERY TIME I MEET  
ONE OF THE THINGS THEY  
SEEM JUST A LITTLE  
BIT BIGGER...



...AND A  
LITTLE BIT  
FASTER  
**DAMN!**

THREE MORE YEARS TILL  
I CAN RETIRE AND  
GET MY PENSION.



ONLY THREE  
MORE YEARS...



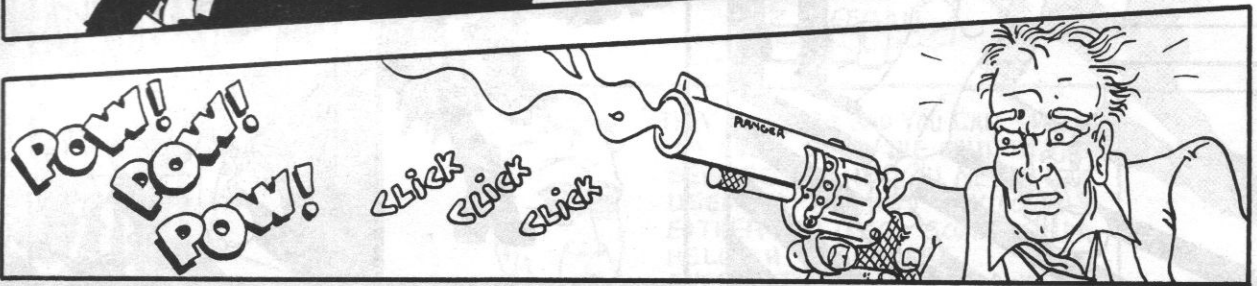
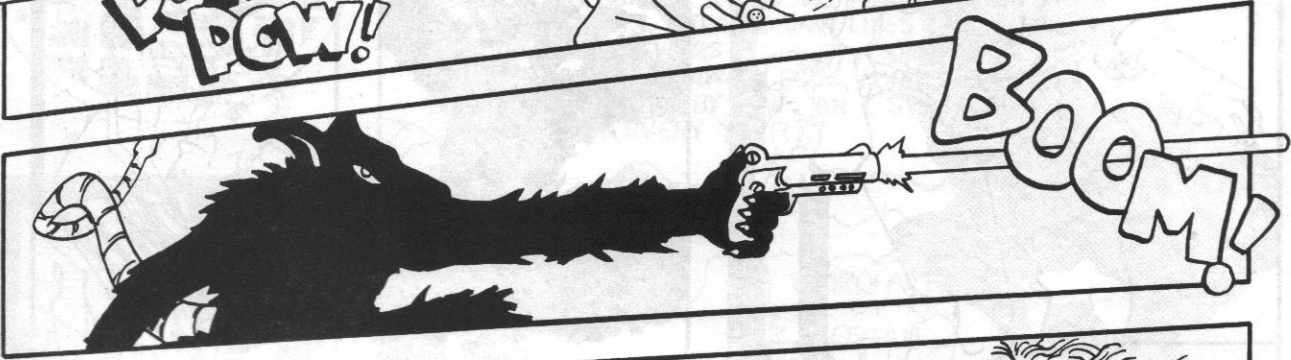
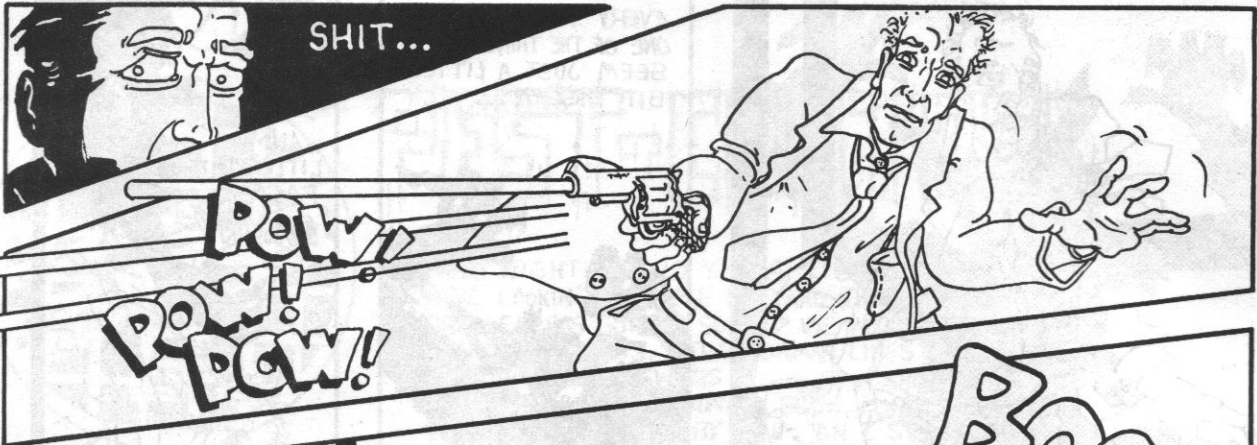
... TILL I CAN PUT AWAY THIS  
GUN FOR GOOD AND STOP  
HUNTING THESE MONSTERS.



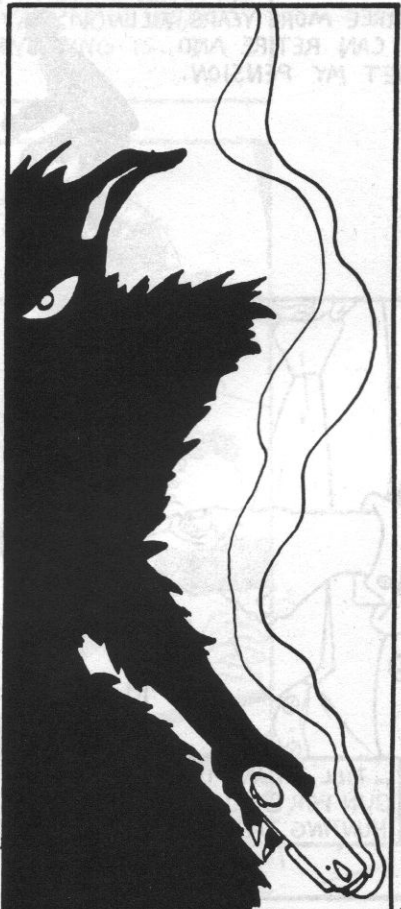
THE FAT POLITICIANS TELL  
THE CITIZENS THAT THE  
PROBLEM IS UNDER CONTROL  
AND THAT THEY...  
**HOLY MOTHER...**



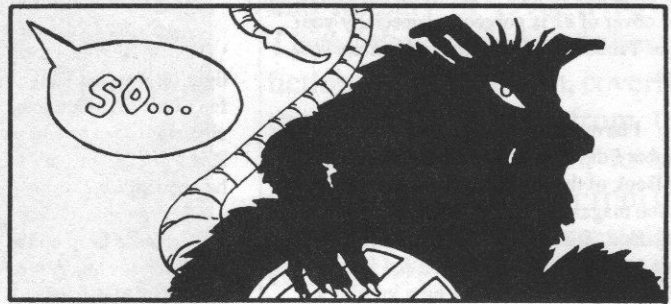
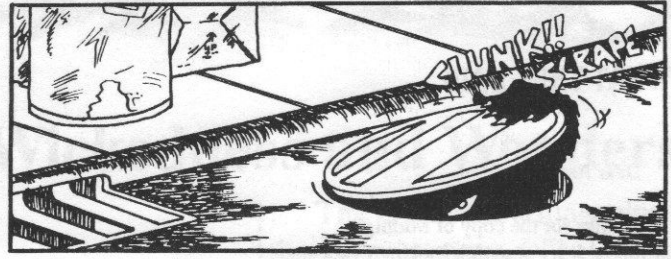
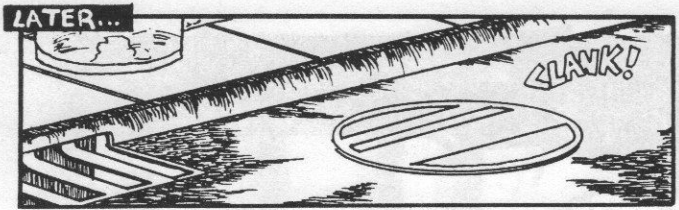
WHERE DID IT GET THAT!



**BOOM!**

A large, stylized, textured 'BOOM!' sound effect is written vertically in the center of the page.





# letters

## WHAT THEY SAID

Dear Jim,

Thanks for the copy of *Midnight Graffiti* #2. It's a stunning looking magazine, and I'll look forward to seeing future issues. The cover of #2 is gorgeous, especially your logo. Production values throughout are very high.

I haven't read much of the fiction in #2 yet, but I did get to most of the features and the *Book of the Dead* excerpts. Rather than a fiction magazine, I'd call MG a total media magazine. It's a marvelous approach you have, and with the demise of TZ, I imagine you will benefit by picking up a lot of it's readers. I was never particularly thrilled with TZ, never read it regularly. MG I would read regularly, and hope to do so.

Best,  
Mark Rainey  
Publisher/Editor  
Deathrealm Magazine

Dear Jessie and James,

Issue #3 of *Midnight Graffiti* was, as usual, excellence realized. It is uncommon to find such a high standard of literature and art in one magazine, but to maintain a consistently high standard, and to do so in these high cost times when magazines are falling by the way side left and right; And to do so with a sense of humor both self effacing and refreshingly bizarre (as evidenced in your "From Beyond", "Headlines", and "Humor" sections), is a feat both admirable and praiseworthy.

You have my undivided attention.  
Long may you run.

Best wishes  
Dorman T. Shindler  
Grafton, MA.

(Thank you. - Ed.)

Dear Jessie and James,

Loved your spring 1989 issue highlighting Stephen King. Although I'm a big fan of his What attracted me to your magazine was the excellent story "Sweet Pea" by Rex Miller. This guy's fantastic! Where has he been hiding?

Please keep up the wonderful work you are doing for this genre. Good material like your magazine is what helps this country realize that Horror is here to stay!

Sincerely  
Bob Kratz, Jr.  
Allentown, PA

Dear Jessie and James,

Congratulations on your first issue of *Midnight Graffiti*. It's excellent! Your magazine is different from everyone else's and that's what it takes to be successful - originality.

Best wishes,  
Ann Stevenson  
Night Winds Books  
Kansas City, MO

Dear People at *Midnight Graffiti*,

Just wanted to drop a note to you saying I thought your first issue was great. Better then you made it sound. I can't wait till the next. Thanks & stay well.

Good luck,  
Nicholas Caudeloui  
Trenton NJ

## WHAT THEY MEANT

...too many articles.

...not enough fiction.

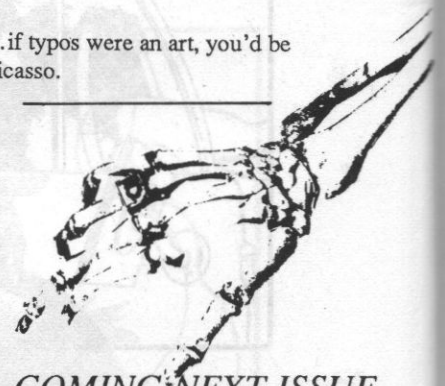
...I don't see what's so funny.

...I don't know why you guys don't print on slick paper.

...Stephen King never sent us a story.

...I guess it's the best I can do since *Twilight Zone* folded.

...if typos were an art, you'd be Picasso.



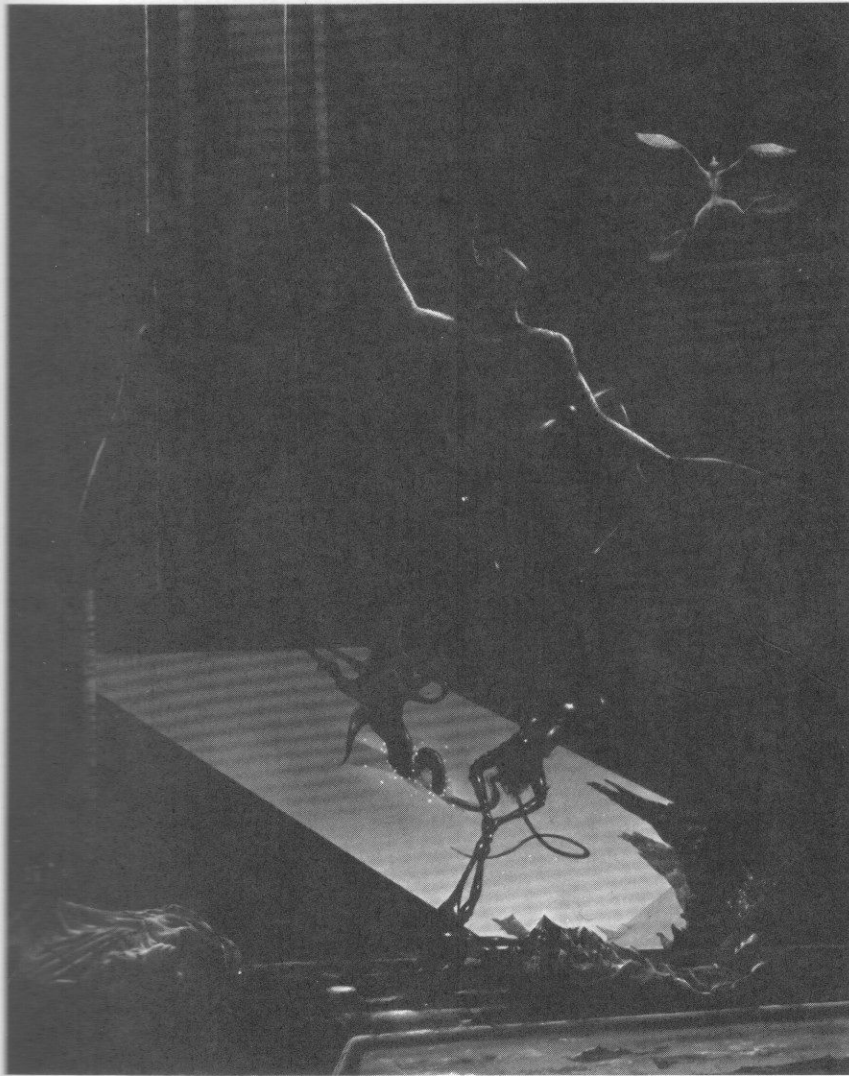
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